2010 CITY COUNCIL RETREAT
MINUTES
March 12-13, 2010
Council Chambers

Friday, March 12

Mayor Haddix called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Council Members present: Vanessa Fleisch, Eric Imker, Kimberly Learnard, and Doug Sturbaum.

Copies of all PowerPoint presentations are including in the meeting file.

Review 2010 Budget, Year to Date

Financial Services Director Paul Salvatore reviewed the FY 2010 budget, saying that the City was right on budget. Major issues included the decline in the property tax digest values, and the estimates were consistent with a 2.5% decline. The shortfall was $80,000. Salvatore said he would know more after the tax assessors meeting on March 18, adding that the City's real estate values were holding better than the other areas of the County. The Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) had an increase of $92,265 (4.4%) over the same period of time last year. Salvatore noted major shortfalls in the franchise checks from Georgia Power ($81,000 less than last year) and Coweta-Fayette EMC ($58,000 less than last year), as well as the insurance premium tax ($69,606), all building permits ($113,042), recreation program fees ($200,000), County recreation contribution ($6,000), Municipal Court fines ($128,500), and interest earnings ($148,513) . Imker said that loss needed to be explained by the electric companies. Salvatore said a request for proposal (RFP) for a utility audit had already gone out. Sturbaum said they needed to keep an eye on the franchise tax because there had been some talk at the state about giving relief to the utilities. Salvatore added that the County's recreation contribution was short due to the County's across-the-board cuts. As for interest earnings, there were several factors. Staff was watching it. Salvatore continued that the net shortfall for FY 2010 should be $621,674. The City Manager had asked directors and chiefs to identify 2.5% of their budgets for possible cuts. Imker clarified that the $621,000 was on top of the $400,000 that had been taken from the cash reserves, so the actual shortfall was over $1 million. Salvatore said that was correct, and he would give more information on that the next day.

Salvatore showed the five-year model with a projected 0.25 millage rate increase in effect for FY 2011. Imker said that, if no millage increase was approved, the actual shortfall in the FY 2011 model would be $1.2 million. Sturbaum said that, based on the modeling, staff had been right on target with the budget. He continued that Council needed to look at the millage and make up the future value of the 0.244 mill increase that had not been approved last year. Haddix said they could not move forward without doing something. They had to look at cutting services, using more cash reserves, or a tax increase.

Robert Brown said the City needed to look at staff efficiency. The City was headed in the right direction with the cash reserves. City policy was to keep 20% in cash reserves, and the cash reserves were going down. Haddix said a study had been done, and the City ranked in the middle to the lower side as far as number of employees and pay. Brown said the City needed to look at the number of people and whether they were doing their jobs efficiently.

Tim Lydell said the City needed to look at the objectives they were trying to achieve, then look at what was needed to achieve them. The City had a lot of services and asked if anyone would care if they went away. Until then, no one would know. A baseline was needed to build on so intelligent decisions could be made. If there was not enough money to do what was needed, then there would be a tax increase. The City might need to spend money to get the efficiency that was needed. He pointed out that the defined benefits pension plan might not cost much today, but would cost the City more in the future. He said there were ways to address it, buy the plans out, and move on with less cost dependent plans.

Steve Thaxton told Council he did not want a tax increase; costs needed to be controlled, and spending should be reduced.

2010 Resident & Business Survey Results

Public Information Officer/City Clerk Betsy Tyler presented the survey results. She continued that the results were not a true statistical survey of the City. It was mailed to 13,600 residents, and 1,619 were returned. All the businesses in the Occupational Tax database received a notice about the survey, and 55 responded.

Haddix said the citizens made it quite clear they wanted to see more mowing. As for the subdivision entrances, there had been e-mails regarding wanting to see more flowers and plants. With the cost of that, Haddix said more homeowners associations (HOAs) needed to join those that were already doing that themselves. Tyler added that the City had never planted seasonal flowers, but the frequency in the mowing and entrance maintenance had decreased with the contractor.

Robert Brown noted that the satisfaction with City staff was very positive and gave kudos to staff, saying they were doing a great job. Based on the household information, the City was turning into a retirement community (20.9% of respondents were age 65 or older). Learnard suggested that the older the residents were, the more likely they were to fill out the survey form.

Wayne Jolly said this was his second move to the City, noting it was a special place to live. He was willing to pay more taxes to keep the quality of life. He was concerned about the commercial and industrial vacancies. Diminishing the amenities and lifestyle would not bring more business to help offset the cost. Learnard pointed out that the decline in home values had hit the City less hard than other places.

2010 Streets and Cart Path Resurfacing Update

Interim Public Services Director Scott Hicks gave the update, noting a significant decline in cart path paving in 2009. Learnard asked if the decline was due to the economy. Hicks said that the asphalt plants had shut down, and the City had not been able to get the materials needed to do the paving. City Manager Bernard McMullen added that phase one of the SR 74 widening had been going on at the same time, and the Department of Transportation (DOT) required a different type of asphalt. With the start of phase two, the same thing could happen in 2010.

Imker questioned using Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funds or increasing the millage rate to maintain the roads and path system. He said day-to-day repair should be the purpose of the General Fund. If SPLOST funds were used for that purpose, then the General Fund money was spent on other things and that was what got the City in this situation. That problem needed to be addressed. Haddix asked Imker how big a tax increase he was looking at for paving and maintenance of the roads and paths. It would take at least 1.5 mills. Imker said the funding was to come out of the SPLOST for the next few years. The City needed to wean itself off the SPLOST funds. The paving should come out of the General Fund in the future, and that was the direction staff should be given during the next day's budget discussion.

Juan Matute agreed with Imker. He noted his subdivision streets were not on the paving list, and they were not in the same condition they were when he bought his home. Roads could not be built, and the maintenance of them thrown to the wind. Cracks and potholes were developing all over the City, and the degradation needed to stop.

SPLOST Project Update

City Engineer Dave Borkowski went over the SPLOST project list, noting the completed projects, as well as projects that had been taken off the list, such as the tunnel under SR 74 from Marketplace to Westpark. McMullen explained that the DOT had originally planned to raise the elevation road bed for the first 100 yards or so north of SR 54 when the additional lanes had been added. The DOT did not do that, so the project became unfeasible.

Learnard asked what would happen with the Recycling Center because of phase two of the SR 74 widening and whether another recreation field could be added at Meade Field once the SR 74 South widening and Rockaway Road realignment were completed. Borkowski said staff was still trying to figure out what to do. The tunnel under SR 74 to the Rite-Aid would be in that corner of the intersection, and there would not be enough room for the Recycling Center once the path connections were put in. McMullen continued that the cell tower, the topography of the area, and the cart path would make it difficult to carve out a field.

Borkowski discussed the proposed Peachtree Parkway/Walt Banks Road intersection improvements. He noted that the current level of service was good, but it was projected to be an F by 2027. Right-of-way acquisition would be required in one corner. Approximately $74,000 had been spent, and it would cost approximately $700,000 for the right-of-way and construction, not including the design. There were some grant and developer funds available for the project. Borkowski recommended canceling the project due to right-of-way concerns, the current good level of service, and the increased cost of the project.

Borkowski continued that they also recommended cancelling the Peachtree Parkway North improvements at Loring Lane and Tinsley Mill, adding the existing volumes did not warrant widening the intersections, which would cause speeds to increase. Approximately $8,000 had been spent on traffic studies, and staff did not recommend pursuing left turn lanes. There was a recurring pattern of rear-end accidents at Tinsley Mill Road (Smokerise), and staff recommended setting aside $10,000 to pursue traffic accident mitigation studies in that area instead.

Borkowski said that unspent/unencumbered SPLOST funds totaled $3.35 million. The bulk of that money would be reallocated to street resurfacing.

Learnard pointed out that more people were crossing SR 54 East to get from Publix to CVS on foot and in golf carts. She asked what needed to be done at that intersection. McMullen said that one issue was that the Publix shopping area was in the County. The Fayette County Sheriff's Department had authorized golf carts to cross SR 54 at that crossing. There were pedestrian lights at the crossing. Robert Brown pointed out that the cycle time was very short. McMullen said he would talk to DOT.

Brown suggested the City strongly encourage subdivisions and HOAs to enter into a trash collection agreement with one company, adding his neighborhood went from four trucks to one, which saved wear and tear on their street.

Juan Matute said that, at a certain point, encouraging residents to do this and making things happen were two different things. Decisions had to be made. The problem was pervasive. The City's streets would wear out. An even plane needed to be maintained across the board. Having one trash collection company was very efficient, the City knew where the trash went and how it was handled, and it worked.

Imker referred to the $134,700 set aside for the SR 54 West gateway bridge. He knew there was a substantial grant for the bridge, but questioned whether they needed to spend the money now versus delaying the project. Haddix said there were potential alternatives for funding now that would take the burden off the City, and the City needed to have active projects for those alternatives. McMullen added that projects had to be "shovel ready" to receive any federal stimulus funding that might come down. It was good to have projects on the shelf with the design complete, making the probability of getting that money higher.

Beth Pullias asked how often streets were evaluated. Hicks said every three years. She asked how many streets had never been repaved. As the City aged, more streets would need repair. Haddix agreed, adding that many things had not needed repairs before and the costs were increasing.

Imker summarized his observations to this point in the Retreat. He noted that the City's goal for the cash reserves was 20%, and the reserves were now at 32-34%. He proposed taking any money above the 20% cash reserves and setting up a future escrow account. The City needed to identify capital projects that would be needed in the next 10-20 years and set aside money in every budget for that escrow account. The money should be targeted for a specific purpose. The residents would understand why the money had been set aside. It was a policy decision Council needed to make at the end of the meeting. Haddix asked how future Councils would be stopped from raiding the fund. Imker said that was why there were elections every two years.

Stormwater Utility Update
Stormwater Manager Mark Caspar gave an overview of the Stormwater Utility.

Learnard asked Caspar if he was able to inspect the SR 74 South widening project for stormwater issues. Caspar said he was not as the DOT was exempt from the City's ordinance, but staff did have a good relationship with the contractors. When staff called the contractors, the issue was taken care of quickly. If the City was unable to work with the contractor, the next step was to report issues to the state's Environmental Protection Division.

Learnard asked how involved it was to replace drainage pipes before a road collapsed. Caspar said they usually videoed the pipe first to see what other damage there was. If possible, they would replace the lining without tearing up the road. If the pipe was collapsed, the road had to be closed to replace the pipe. Learnard asked about the types of replacement materials. Caspar said if the replacement was within the City right-of-way it would be replaced with the high density plastic pipe with a useful life of 50 years or more. If the pipe went under the road, the replacement would be concrete.

Haddix asked how the high density plastic pipes held up to ultraviolet light, adding the plastic broke down when exposed. Caspar said he would have to look up the answer, but the pipes were not ordered until the project was ready to go, so the pipes were not stored in the sun. Haddix asked if they were finding most of the pipes in the system were too small. Caspar said they were.

Sturbaum noted that 42.9% of the pipes in the system were at the end of life and repair and asked about the cost of the repairs to pipes. Caspar said, assuming they were all 18-inch pipes and four feet deep, the cost of material and back trenching was approximately $36 per foot, so a total replacement would be over $5 million. The current annual maintenance budget was $50,000.

Haddix asked if there were any problems with incomplete systems. Caspar said there were, which was why staff now required video footage for new systems. They needed a visual assessment of the inside of a system to help determine what needed to be done.

Imker asked if the utility funded all the work and whether anything came out of the General Fund. Caspar said everything was paid by the utility. Imker asked if Council had to approve any rate increases. Caspar said Council was the utility's Board of Directors and approved any increases.

Al Yougel noted that his subdivision, Cypress Pointe, and 21 others owned its own streets and paid higher than normal user fees because of the additional impervious surfaces as well as taxes as if the City maintained them.

Fleisch asked if stormwater structures were looked at as part of any street repairs. Caspar said that was a process that needed to be incorporated into the evaluation process, and they had an overlay of the inventory to help with that.

Robert Brown asked if the City was reimbursed when Public Works employees assisted in any stormwater work. McMullen said it was. Brown asked what City projects would not get done if the employees were working on stormwater issues. Caspar said there were conflicts when Public Works employees were not available, but sometimes the streets crew needed help from the Stormwater crew, and the City reimbursed the utility. Salvatore said there was enough staffing to get the work done. The employees were shifted based on the priority of the work. McMullen said staffed budgeted numbers of hours in Public Works for Stormwater and SPLOST projects.

Kedron Field House & Aquatic Center – Outsourcing

Leisure Services Director Randy Gaddo noted that revenue at Kedron was trending upward and gave examples of what was being done. Haddix said he liked what staff was doing at Kedron, but he felt Council was not doing its due diligence by not sending out an RFP. Any commercial company would have to make a profit, and they probably would not be able to do that and offer the same activities, which was why he felt staff was in the best position to maintain the balance, raise revenue, keep expenses down, and maintain the facility as a public service. An RFP would be very time consuming for staff.

Beth Pullias said anyone who used Kedron on a regular basis appreciated its value. She felt the City should give staff every opportunity to continue on the current path; there was no indication that outsourcing was needed at this point. Outsourcing should be the last resort.

Lynda Wojcik said she did not use Kedron, but it added value to her home. She did not feel outsourcing it was in the best interest of the City and gave someone else the opportunity to make money using tax dollars.

Haddix said input was needed from Council, adding that it sounded like the argument for outsourcing the Tennis Center. He was only saying the RFP should go out, not that the City should outsource the facility.

Fleisch said she supported having staff continue on. She felt staff had been hindered by not having any direction, and an RFP would undermine their efforts.

Learnard said the reason Canongate had been successful at the Tennis Center was because they had numerous similar facilities. Kedron was unique, and she did not see the point for an RFP.

Imker said he liked having City employees meet the public. They would listen to ideas from citizens. He did not think that a contractor would listen to the public's ideas.

Sturbaum felt Kedron was moving in the right direction. He had spoken with Scott McCord, the Kedron manager, and he really liked the training agreement with AirTran, as well as having activities such as the jewelry show. He agreed with Haddix that Council should always do the research and look at other options, but the numbers were trending well.

Haddix said he would defer to the will of Council on the issue, adding that staff had done a tremendous job.

Kedron Field House & Aquatic Center – Options for Replacing Bubble
Gaddo pointed out that the bubble, or air-supported structure, had more than exceeded twice its life span, which was seven years, and was now 15 years old. It had to last at least two more years, and the bubble was the only thing that duct tape would not fix. He presented the options, adding that the old bubble could be cut up and sold as tarps. A replacement was programmed in the 2012 Public Improvement Program (PIP).

Haddix asked what the life span of a new bubble was. Gaddo said 15 years based on how it was taken care of. It could be much longer since a new bubble would be made of better material.

Learnard said the value of prolonging the life of the bubble had to diminish at some point. McMullen said this was the first year the bubble had significant tears that they were able to repair. Staff needed to know whether to plan for another bubble or a hard structure. The bubble would be evaluated every year. Its age was also becoming a safety issue. If power to the mechanical system was lost, there was a limited time to get everyone out of the pools.

Haddix noted the heavy use of the facility by the Board of Education and wanted to get some input from them.

Kedron Field House & Aquatic Center – Proposed Rental Fee and Open Gym Proposal
Gaddo said if Council agreed with the proposal, then staff would bring it to a regular meeting for approval. The goal was to increase revenue, but do it during low usage times by the public.

Imker asked why the fees for City residents and County residents were the same. Gaddo explained that the County gave the City $150,000 in funding each year so County residents would be able to use City facilities at the same fee. Imker clarified that the County would withdraw the funding if the City had a higher fee for County users. Gaddo said that was the policy. Imker said that policy should be renegotiated. McMullen added that the City had always wanted an increase in the County funding, but the County said that was all there would be. Without that funding, the City would have to increase the fees so much that much that it would not be economical for anyone but City residents to use City facilities. It would be a Council decision.

Gaddo said staff also wanted to add new rates for the multi-purpose rink and open gym fees, either by the day or a quarterly pass. Kedron Manager Scott McCord said that approximately 50-60% of usage was by City residents, while out-of-County users were about 5%.

Glenloch Tennis Court Maintenance

Gaddo said the City had been resurfacing the City's courts approximately every seven years, and the program had been working great until the recent economic problems. In 2009, an informal group of users had repaired the cracks at Glenloch. The cost to fill in the cracks and re-coat the courts was approximately $2,500, compared to $25,000 to completely re-do a court from the ground up, depending on the cost and availability of asphalt. Within a year, the cracks would come back. In a normal budget year, Glenloch's court would have been re-done this year.

Lou DeFranco spoke on behalf of the Glenloch users. He said the courts were very unsafe, and there had been more injuries recently than he had ever seen in 55 years of playing tennis. The cracks were major. He said there were 50 players in their group. The high schools also used the courts, as well as several others. He suggested public donations might help get the courts resurfaced.

Haddix asked if they had an association for tennis. DeFranco said they were disorganized, and that the serious tennis was at the Tennis Center.

Learnard asked what needed to be done to get the courts restored. DeFranco said rebuilding the courts would be ideal, but was out of the question. It could cost approximately $2,500 per court to refurbish them, or approximately $10,000 for the four courts.

Fleisch asked Gaddo whether he needed guidance to move forward. Gaddo said he had been asked to address the issue, and he was not sure what Council wanted him to do. It was not in the budget, and staff could come forward with a recommendation.

Haddix asked Tyler if she could put the information out to see if anyone was interested in donations or forming an association. Tyler said it could be done similar to the Adopt-a-Park and Adopt-a-Path programs. There would be a finance question on how the money should be handled. Learnard agreed and said there might be a way to have a matching fund program from the City. Gaddo said they had also discussed user fees for the courts.

Fleisch asked if the funds could be taken from Council Contingency. Haddix said Council had already turned down other sports groups for requests to match funds, such as the Peachtree City Little League building the concession stand at the Braelinn fields.

Gaddo said he understood why the users were so sensitive. They used the courts heavily. From the public's perspective, the courts were fine for mom and dad playing with the kids. They could patch the courts again, and DeFranco and the others would volunteer to help again. The crack repair had lasted through a season.

One of the players asked what the City's liability was for any falls that occurred due to the cracks. Meeker said that Georgia's Public Recreational Property Act protected the City in this instance.

Gaddo said they could patch the courts soon, and they would last through the summer. It took about a gallon per court. He added that they had used a quality product that had been recommended by the contractors that had worked on the courts in the past, but he would see if there was one that might be better. If the courts were sealed now, they would probably last through the season. He said he would get the materials on Monday.

Haddix asked if Council had any problem with Gaddo and Tyler pursuing a donation program. Council consensus was to move ahead.

Interaction with the Constituency

Learnard asked if the City sent out press releases. Tyler said fewer had gone out since the weekly ***Updates*** began. The City received more calls from the news media regarding the information in the weekly ***Updates***. She noted that not all press releases were published.

Haddix said it was difficult to answer multiple e-mails on the same subject. A forum situation would allow a Council Member to answer the question once. The Council Member would be responsible for the answer, not staff. He added that answering each e-mail devoured time. There also needed to be easy access to the forum from the City's website.

Systems Administrator Matt Robinson said staff was working on the website to make it easier to navigate. Administrative Services Director Nikki Vrana suggested adding a link on the "Mayor & Council" page under each Council Member photo to take people to the forum to find out what an individual Council Member had posted. The information could be put in the weekly ***Updates***, adding that Tyler also posted the information in the ***Updates*** on the online ***Citizen***.

Fleisch asked what staff wanted from Council. Vrana said staff had been asked to discuss the topic, which was not currently part of the City's marketing plan. Robinson said they would be able to use existing technology to help Council get their message out.

Juan Matute said the initial page of the City's website needed redesigning so the average person with no knowledge of City government could use it. If that was done, then people would take advantage of a forum.

Fleisch said that it would be better if the website was more user friendly, but blogging was not a wise use of staff time. McMullen said there was not any staff that could monitor blogs.

Haddix said what had been offered was a good alternative and satisfied all the needs. Vrana clarified that there were to be links to all the Council posts. McMullen said staff would put together an outline of how everything would work and send it to Council. Haddix suggested there should be a section from staff to clarify some items when needed. Tyler said staff would work on the plan and bring it back for approval. Imker said he would help.

State of the Fire Department

Fire Chief Ed Eiswerth said the City's ISO 3 had gone into effect February 1. He added that the ISO and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710 Standards for Level of Service would be merging, and that would be good for the City. The City had been selected as a beta test site for new Insurance Services Office (ISO) requirements, which meant the Department would be evaluated and rated on the new standards. Eiswerth said his budget requests for FY 2011 included reclassifying three firefighters to three lieutenants, a part-time staff assistant, one fire marshal officer (one lieutenant), one lieutenant for Emergency Medical Services training, and a replacement for Rescue 8. Eiswerth noted that his reserve engine was now being used full time in the front line per a recommendation from ISO, which led to the request for a new engine.

Eiswerth said the Department's plans included moving the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) from Leach Station to a new station (# 85) that would be located at the Baseball/Soccer Complex on SR 74 South. Haddix asked if a hardened EOC could be covered by a SPLOST. McMullen said SPLOST funds could be used for critical facilities and public safety vehicles. Eiswerth said staff had submitted a proposal for the new station for stimulus funding, but had not heard any comment yet.

Fire Sprinkler Systems – The Next Step

Fire Marshal John Dailey asked Council to consider adding sprinklers as a requirement for all construction, including single-family residential. He briefly went over the misconceptions surrounding residential sprinklers and the proposed changes to the ordinance.

Imker noted that House Bill (HB) 1196 in the Georgia Legislature would eliminate any local building requirements for sprinklers, asking what the motive was behind the bill. Dailey said the builders groups were pushing for the legislation. McMullen added that, if the ordinance amendment were brought to Council for approval, there would be opposition from the local builders. He said staff recommended the amendments, but asked whether Council wanted staff to bring it forward. Imker said he would support it.

Haddix said his concern was retrofitting older homes, and that many older homes were not "retrofit friendly." McMullen said the sprinkler systems would not be required on older/existing homes unless there was a 50% increase in the size of the home. Learnard asked whether the systems could be required for new residential construction. McMullen said the guidance staff needed was what Council was comfortable with requiring. Haddix said the ordinance needed to separate new construction from retrofits. Dailey said the ordinance was not intended to be intrusive, but it would not be difficult to add the system when a home's size was increased 50%

Sturbaum was concerned that homeowners would have to pay for the sprinkler system upgrade out of their pockets and that mortgage companies would not roll the cost over into the home loan.

Fleisch said anything the City did could be shot down if HB 1196 passed. Learnard asked how many cities had already added the requirement to their ordinances. Dailey said three or four, including Morrow and East Point.

Haddix asked if Council wanted to hold a workshop. Learnard asked if a workshop was really needed. Dailey said he could put the proposed amendment on the agenda and Council could hold a public hearing. Imker supported taking public comment at a Council meeting.

Matute said requiring sprinklers was one of the best safety propositions to come forward. He said there would have to be a lot of education, but the sprinkler systems would save lives and property. It would make the City a better place to live.

Fleisch felt that the new homes that would be built in the West Village would be a good place for the requirement due to the density.

Sturbaum said safety was paramount, and Council owed it to the citizens to look at the proposed amendments, especially for new homes. Dailey said the cost to install the systems in new construction was approximately $2,000 to $2,500. The cost would increase approximately 50% for retrofitting an older home.

Haddix said he wanted Council to understand there were multiple issues to be considered. Council consensus was to put the proposed change to the ordinance on an agenda.

Outdoor Burning Ordinance
Dailey went over how burn permits were obtained, noting that the City's policy was in line with what other Class B cities did.

Learnard asked what types of complaints were received. Dailey said it was usually for smoky air. He added that the Fire Department was not recommending any changes to the ordinance.

Imker said the complaints should be addressed, but he did not know how to do it. If the Fire Department received a complaint, the complaint was investigated. There had never been a problem asking someone to extinguish a fire.

Learnard said if the Fire Department did not recommend a change, then all was well. She noted that a compelling number of citizens that answered the recent survey felt things were fine the way they were. Haddix agreed, but said it was frustrating to open your windows on a nice day and have smoke coming in your home. McMullen said that would be a legitimate complaint.

Al Yougel said there was no legitimate reason for anyone to burn yard waste in the City with the Recycling Center and mulching.

Police Department Update
Police Chief H.C. "Skip" Clark addressed Council. He said the department was looking at the City's five districts to possibly tweak the areas for better coverage. Clark said he would request one civilian employee (evidence custodian) and six new officers for FY 2011. He said that, if the civilian employee position was approved, they could get by with five officers.

Haddix said the two most common comments from the citizens were more traffic direction at certain intersections and more police on the cart path.

Sturbaum felt the department's district program gave the police a greater presence in the City.

Learnard asked what vehicles were used on the paths. Clark said two all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), bikes, and some foot patrols were used on the path system.

Imker asked about the funding the City received from federal forfeiture money from narcotics arrests. Clark said a formula was used to determine everyone's share, and it took about a year to get the funds, adding that there were players on the federal, state, and local levels, as well as the court system.

Alarm Ordinance Proposal

Clark asked Council to consider an ordinance and fees regarding false alarms, adding that answering the alarms were a drain on manpower. In 2009, they responded to 2,750 alarms, and only three actual crimes were committed. Six hundred twenty-four alarms were cancelled after an officer was dispatched, but before they arrived. The total number of false alarms responded to by the department were 2,123. A total of 1,511 hours was spent responding to the false alarms in 2009. Imker said that 1,500 hours needed to be addressed in an ordinance. Clark said that, when alarm owners/operators were held to a higher level of accountability, there was usually a 40% - 60% reduction in the false alarms. The Council consensus was to move forward with an ordinance.

Lake Peachtree Siltation/Water Study

Borkowski gave an overview of the siltation/water study. He noted that the County considered the lake to be the area on the south side of SR 54, but not the lagoon on the north side of the highway. The lake was owned by the City, but operated by Fayette County.

Haddix asked if there were any schematics that showed the lake's boundaries when the City and County signed the agreement. Borkowski said that was what he was looking for, but had not found anything older than 2003 to this point.

Haddix said the Flat Creek banks were eroding through the Flat Creek golf course, and he was concerned that sediment was also making its way into the lake. The silt patterns changed after each heavy rain. Borkowski said the adjacent homeowners had also complained about it, but there was not much the City could do since the creek was located on private property. Learnard asked if the fact the creek was on private property made it okay for the sediment to go into the lake. Borkowski said the sediment could be coming from natural creek bank erosion. The golf course area was very flat, and it settled out. He did not feel anything was being done on purpose to cause the sedimentation. The City could have a study done to determine where the sediment was coming from. Learnard noted that she lived near an inlet on Lake Peachtree that would soon have plants growing in it. Borkowski had identified areas that were inlets that he felt should be included in the dredging, and he would discuss it with the County.

Imker asked how much it cost the last time the lake was dredged. Borkowski said it cost around $1.2 million in 2004. Imker noted the flooding problems at Tinsley Mill condominiums, which was located on the lagoon. He would like to discuss possibly having those residents contribute to the cost of the dredging when it was done since it could help with the flooding issues. McMullen said the biggest issue was the fact that it was private property. Imker said he understood, but there was no harm in talking and looking at potential opportunities.

Steve Thaxton asked about Lake Kedron, suggesting that the same contractual relations would be good. City Attorney Ted Meeker said the County owned Lake Kedron and the property that would be Lake McIntosh. The City owned and leased Lake Peachtree to the County. They did not have a vehicle to get the same arrangement.

The meeting adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

Saturday, March 13
Mayor Haddix called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Council Members present: Vanessa Fleisch, Eric Imker, Kimberly Learnard, and Doug Sturbaum.

PCTA 2010 Budget Update
Mary Camburn of the Peachtree City Tourism Association (PCTA) gave an overview of the PCTA budget, noting that the actuals for the hotel/motel tax were slightly above the projections.

Imker said the numbers were looking better.

Fleisch said she thought the $15,000 for the website came from a grant. Camburn said the state usually gave a techno-tourism grant annually, but that funding probably would not come this year due to state cutbacks.

Learnard asked what got posted monthly as far as minutes and financials. Camburn said the approved minutes were submitted to the Deputy City Clerk, who posted them on the website. They also submitted their annual financial statement to be posted on the City's website.

Peachtree City Airport Authority (PCAA)
Peachtree City Airport Authority Chairman Richard Whitely and Aviation Director John Crosby gave an overview of the PCAA operations and plans for Atlanta Regional Airport Falcon Field. Haddix asked that Council be sent copies of the PCAA budget, and Whiteley said they would as soon as it was ready, adding that PCAA Member Bill Flynn was working on it.

Crosby went over a schematic of Falcon Field, pointing out what was located where. He said there was a plan to increase the runway area to 6,000 feet for takeoffs and landings. Crosby and Whiteley went over the activities that were planned for 2010, including the Great Georgia Airshow, the Blue Knight Ride for fallen law enforcement officers, and World War II Heritage Days. In 2011, the American Cancer Society planned to hold its annual Relay for Life at Falcon Field. Whiteley continued the flight school had taken some planes to the Newnan Airport, but had indicated they wanted to move some back to Falcon Field and rent some new space. A regional developer wanted to move his planes from Newnan and Tara Field to Falcon Field, possibly building his own hangar. Plans were also moving forward by someone who wanted to open a restaurant at the airport.

Haddix asked if the airport was working proactively with the City on overlays for the airport area. Crosby said they were, noting there were areas in the ordinance that needed updating. The ordinance had been in place since 1991 and did protect the airport's services.

Learnard said that the airport brought in a lot to the community. She would like everyone to strive to quantify the fruits of that labor and help the City in making decisions. Sturbaum said the airport had an outstanding year in 2009 and could be a strong revenue generator.

Imker explained that by having the 6,000-foot runway pilots would be able to fuel their planes all the way, and fuel was a large revenue generator. He asked Crosby for the timeline of the extension. Crosby said the airport received a $1.8 million discretionary funding grant from the Federal Aviation Administration in 2009. The design for one area was underway and would go out for bid in April. They had to share the money with the ramp area. Very little fill would be required, and the project would take 90 – 120 days to complete, weather permitting. The next grant, which should be in FY 2011, would be used to complete the work. Everything should be complete in calendar year 2011.

Development Authority of Peachtree City (DAPC)
Chairman Mark Hollums gave an overview of DAPC activities. Fleisch referred to some companies that had recently relocated to Griffin and asked what the City was lacking to attract those companies. Hollums said some incentive had to be offered. The DAPC could do some things within reason, but usually the company needed an incentive such as a tax break. Sturbaum added that there was a tier system in the state, and Spalding County was in a different tier, one that received more incentives from the state to attract economic development. Fayette County was in Tier 4, which indicated a strong economic strength that did not need as much assistance from the state. Spalding County was in Tier 2. The County had appealed to the state to change the tier due to the loss of jobs in the Industrial Park. The request was to change the area in the Industrial Park to Tier 1, which would maximize tax incentives and credits. So far, the response had been favorable. If the appeal was approved in April, it would help the DAPC to revitalize the area. Hollums said they hoped that they would also be more eligible for grants and other programs.

Learnard asked if the DAPC and the PCTA could put together an information packet so the Council could be better ambassadors for the City, adding that she worked with companies looking at moving to Georgia, but she had nothing to give them. Administrative Services Director Nikki Vrana said the City did have relocation packets. Fleisch asked if the all the boards met quarterly, adding there should be one message coming from the City. Hollums agreed, adding that the group was new and had only met about four times.

Haddix said the DAPC had gone from doing nothing to where they were now. They were at the point where the DAPC funding had to go up so the City could move forward with economic development. The question was how much the funding should go up. The City's boards could all cooperate, but only the DAPC could spend money on development, which meant the money had to come from Council. Hollums said the County was funded at $300,000, but he did not feel that was adequate at their level. He felt that $150,000 – $200,000 was realistic and would include staff.

Juan Matute suggested tying the DAPC and Planning Commission together to determine what they would like in the City, then make it attractive to developers. Haddix said the DAPC and Community Development Division worked very well together. The legal funding was controlled by the state. The reason development authorities existed was to get politicians and city staff out of the picture.

Lynda Wojcik suggested getting a list of biotech conferences, try to attend one at least every quarter, and take money out of the contingency fund. Haddix said it could not be funded by the City budget. Wojcik suggested the DAPC pull together what was most economical and present it to Council. Hollums said they had to submit their budget to the City by the end of August, but they could look at that suggestion.

Al Yougel said the obvious question was who was marketing the City.

Haddix asked what guidance staff needed. McMullen said that, historically, the City had provided $35,000 to the DAPC. He said the DAPC needed to provide a detailed budget that needed to be considered along with the other priorities.

Library Commission
Library Commission Chairman John Waterhouse and Library Administrator Jill Prouty gave an overview of the Library Commission's activities.

Learnard said that the Library did a better job at volunteer coordination than anyone, which took a lot of work. They also did a better job of getting public input. She wanted to see emphasis on patrons doing things on their own and looked forward to the five-year plan.

Fleisch also complimented the volunteerism at the Library. She asked how many patrons were City residents. Prouty said 92% of the patrons were City residents, 3% were from Coweta County, and the rest were Fayette County residents.

Steve Thaxton asked if the County provided any funding for the Library. Salvatore said no. Salvatore said the budget was approximately $1 million, not including debt service.

Juan Matute said the Library reached everyone and urged the City to continue its financial support.

Peachtree City Tourism Association (PCTA)
Tourism Association Chairman Bill Bexley and Vice-Chairman Kai Wolter addressed Council.

Learnard referred to the Southern Living Idea House, which was located in Senoia and would be open from June to December, noting that a potential 40,000 visitors could be coming through the City. Wolter said that Historic Senoia and ***Southern Living*** would be directing people through Peachtree City to Senoia. Wolter said his hotel had a package for the visitors and the other hotels would probably have one too. Bexley added that Kim Westwood was the PCTA's representative to the project. Haddix said he and Sturbaum would also be meeting with the City of Senoia to discuss it. Wolter added that the City would also be participating in the Dogwood Festival in Atlanta in April.

Haddix asked if there was an estimate on occupancy rates. Wolter said that per the reported hotel/motel tax, the best guess was a 51% to 52% occupancy rate in 2009. The break even point was 55% to 56% occupancy.

Planning Commission
Planning Commission Chairman Patrick Staples gave an overview of the Planning Commission. There was a brief discussion on working with the County and neighboring jurisdictions on planning issues. Learnard said if the City ignored its relationship with the County, then the City got the short end of the stick. Staples agreed. Fleisch suggested having someone attend the County Commission and Planning Commission meetings to bring back information. She felt a joint workshop with the County on cell towers would be very helpful. Haddix felt economic studies were important to development quality.

Tim Lydell said this session had been very good, but history taught lessons. He noted that residents, specifically from Cardiff Park and Planterra Ridge, had worked with Capital City Development (CCD), the Planning Commission, and staff to come up with a plan for the development on SR 54 West. They met a number of times to come with a plan, and the Special Use Permit was approved with the 24 points worked out with the developer. The economy changed, and CCD had requested an amendment to the plan. Council had voted down the requested change. It was all done through great cooperation between all the parties. He did not want to see another such effort kicked to the curb, adding that things did not always follow an idealistic line.

Recreation Commission
Recreation Commission Chairman Mark Ballard and Leisure Services Director Randy Gaddo gave an overview of the board's activities, noting that recreation was especially important during hard economic times.

Haddix asked how the Recreation Commission cooperated with the DAPC and PCTA. Ballard said sports events brought revenue to the City. Having programs and parks for families was an important recruitment tool for the DAPC. Haddix asked if the cooperation could be better. Ballard said it could always be better. The Commission wanted to work with the other boards to assist them, as well as get assistance from the other boards, to make the City a place to locate and a place to stay.

Learnard noted that a lacrosse tournament planned that day had been cancelled due to the conditions of fields after all the rain. If the City had artificial turf fields, then the events would only be cancelled because of thunder and lightning. Ballard said they were looking at that, but the problem was funding.

Haddix asked if any problems were anticipated due to the large sports complex that would be built at the SR 74/I-85 interchange. Ballard said any proposal like that had advantages and disadvantages. They wanted to work with the owners to capitalize on the advantages and move forward. If the impact was negative, then they would work with it.

Learnard noted that sports programs were changing, specifically the increase in triathlon participation. Ballard said that lacrosse had become a forerunning event over the last few years, and triathlons were a new innovative area for recreation. Everyone was looking for a new activity. The City had lakes and paths, the opportunity for running and swimming. As time went on, more groups would want to participate and there would be more demand for space and facilities. There would also be more pressure from the next activity that bloomed. More money would be needed, and partnerships with business, churches, and schools should be explored.

Learnard asked if the City being named as a "Bike Friendly" community would have an impact. Ballard said it would. They were working with the City and the County to mark some trails. The newly-formed bike association and the BMX association were working hard.

Steve Thaxton said Recreation did a great job. He asked if there were any statistics on the users for the other facilities. Gaddo said that, overall, 85% to 87% of the users were City and County residents, mostly City residents. Thaxton said the City should continue to look at increasing the fees for non-City utilitization of the facilities. Haddix said the City was due to re-negotiate the recreation funding agreement with the County this year. Ballard said resources were limited, and the priority was to get City residents into programs first. Haddix asked for a usage breakdown in exacting detail. Gaddo said he would provide that.

Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA)
Water and Sewerage Authority Chairman Wade Williams and General Manager Stephen Hogan addressed Council. Hogan said WASA was in a good position to serve as needed, but the system was approaching 50 years of age. Imker said he anticipated another 2,200 connections, residential and commercial/industrial, to reach buildout. Hogan said 1,500 of those connections would be residential.

Peachtree City Inter-Agency Collaboration
Public Information Officer/City Clerk Betsy Tyler discussed the collaboration between the City's staff, commissions, authorities, and associations.

Fleisch asked when the last time was that everyone looked at the relocation packet and updated it. Tyler said that had never been done since the packet was primarily residential, but they did need to look at it. Tyler said the City needed some targeted pieces for business, noting the PCTA and DAPC had developed their own pieces. Vrana added that the collaboration on the City-wide marketing campaign began in August 2009. Everything was really new. There were several internal brochures. Matt Robinson had taken the DVD made for the recruitment of Atlanta Christian College and morphed it into a generic marketing DVD. Haddix said the big change was a unified Council that supported the effort.

Waterhouse asked if the Library was part of the process. Tyler said the Library Commission had come into the collaboration late in the process. The Library was a key component. An invitation had been sent for the last meeting, but no one had been able to attend.

Fleisch asked if a deadline could be set to review materials for a relocation packet. McMullen said something could be put together. He felt everyone understood what Council was looking for. He did not know how long it would take, but the process could begin.

Comprehensive Plan
Interim Community Development Director/City Planner David Rast said the Comprehensive Plan developed a unified vision for where the City wanted to be five – 20 years from now. Staples agreed that it would be helpful to have the Comprehensive Plan as the one document for everyone to go to, which was why it needed to be tightened up.

Learnard asked if the amount of impervious surface was a guide to growth. Rast said some cities had ordinances that limited the amount of impervious surface (buildings and parking lots) on a zoning lot. The City only had that requirement for General Commercial GC zoning, and the impervious surface was capped at 75%.

Rast noted that the full Comprehensive Plan update must be adopted by June 30, 2012. The tentative schedule included the following:

- Now through June 2010 – Updating the data and mapping specifications initially adopted in 2007, including population and demographic inventory, economic development assessment, housing assessment, natural and cultural resources assessment, community facility assessment – water and sewer, intergovernmental coordination assessment, and transportation assessment.
- July – December 2010 – Staff to conduct neighborhood meetings in each village to provide updated information and to gather input, including population and demographic inventory, economic development assessment, housing assessment, natural and cultural resources assessment, community facility assessment – water and sewer, intergovernmental coordination assessment, and transportation assessment.
- January – December 2011 – Staff and the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board would begin monthly meetings to analyze information and prepare recommendations for the Community Agenda, future development map, policies and implementation strategy, recommendations for character area/small plan study areas, develop policies to achieve the Community Agenda, prepare a draft of the Community Agenda, prepare the Service Delivery Strategy, prepare the Short Term Work Program, and prepare supplemental plans as necessary.
- January – February 2012 – Staff and Comprehensive Plan Advisory Board to conduct public meetings to present proposed update to Comprehensive Plan.
- March 2012 – Public hearing to transmit plan to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)/Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for review.

Amendments to Zoning and Land Use Maps

Rast said the City had over 13,000 individual parcels. Work had begun on changes in the zoning map. The Open Space (OS) designation had been separated into two categories – Open Space-Conservation (OSC) and Open Space-Public (OSP). There were thousands of parcels with OS zoning that had to be rezoned either OSC or OSP, and each parcel had to be rezoned separately. The zoning map would be a true parcel-based map that would be up-to-date. It would be a lengthy process. When that was done, Council would be asked to adopt the map as the official zoning map. The zoning map reinforced the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Learnard asked if that timeframe would coincide with the timeframe for the Comprehensive Plan. Rast said it would.

Rast said the Land Use Map also needed updating. The map was based on the Land Use Plan and was the guide to what type of development should occur in what areas. Zoning enforced the Land Use Plan. It also needed to be done in line with the Comprehensive Plan effort.

Haddix asked how many people were working on these projects. Rast said two people. McMullen said Council might see a request for a part-time person/intern to help with the research.

Growth Boundaries and Potential Annexations

Rast discussed areas along the City's border that could be considered for annexation and went over the pros and cons for each area.

Haddix said he was interested in annexing the Peachtree East Shopping Center on SR 54 East. Rast said there were concerns about the signage and complying with the City's ordinance, but he did not know if that was their only issue. Their attorney, Rick Lindsey, had told staff that there had been no further interest from the property owners. Sturbaum said there had been discussions about a future multi-use bridge in that area, and the location would be good, but he would rather it be located in the City.

The Bradshaw property (233 acres north of Kedron Hills) was earmarked for possible annexation for the proposed Northeast Collector that would run from Smokerise to SR 54. Haddix said he was struggling to see the need for that road.

Imker asked what would prevent the City from annexing the next area if those five areas were annexed. Rast said that was a policy decision. The eastern and western borders were predominantly the center lines of Line Creek and Camp Creek. Learnard said the question was what the City would gain from an annexation. A check sheet was needed to make sure a property met the City's litmus test for annexation. Sturbaum said that was why the Planning Commission needed information on the economic multipliers. Haddix said only Peachtree East was an economic gain.

McMullen said the consensus was that there was no compelling interest to expand the City boundary, which was the guidance staff needed.

Multi-use Path System Master Plan Review

Rast reviewed the goals and objectives for the multi-use path system master plan. Learnard asked about the SR 54 West multi-use bridge/gateway feature and path connections planned by Wynnmeade and whether a boardwalk path would cost less than an asphalt path due to the terrain features. Rast said they were exploring that. Staff felt the boardwalk would be less expensive due to the amount of fill that would be required for the project.

Learnard said there had been complaints from Smokerise and Smokerise Crossing that the path system in their area was not finished, and promises had not been kept. Rast said there were a couple of segments that staff had been made aware of, but it came down to funding. The concern was there were no streetlights on Sumner Road, and the area was very dark in the evening. Haddix said Carriage Lane also needed connections.

Economic Development Update

Planner/Economic Development Coordinator Tony Bernard gave an overview of economic development in the City.

Learnard said she would like to discuss human signs. She said people in gorilla suits, etc., advertising was counter to the spirit of the City. There had to be better alternatives. Haddix agreed. Meeker said he would bring back the research from what had been looked at by the previous Council.

There was a brief discussion on the state laws governing the film industry. Sturbaum wanted to ensure the City was in compliance. Bernard said staff would like to set usage fees for City properties, so if a production company wanted to film at the Library or Police Department there would be a policy and a fee in place. Fleisch asked if Bernard would be the point of contact for the film industry. Bernard suggested that he, Tyler, or the PCTA be the contact. Haddix did not want to see the City duplicate efforts of its boards, but wanted to see a cooperative effort between staff and the boards.

Enhancing the Village
Rast gave an overview of the neighborhood/village concept and its relation to the Comprehensive Plan. Haddix said that letting the shopping centers change their signage was fine as long as they stayed within the framework of the sign ordinance. He said the questions were where Council wanted to change to the future vision and where the historical nature should be preserved.

Juan Matute said the golf cart culture was not evident in each village. People had to go to either Huddleston Road or Dividend Drive to get their carts repaired or to look at new carts. He asked if it was viable for there to be a site in each village for people to visit for golf cart maintenance and accessory purchases, giving people easier access and encouraging them to visit their neighborhood centers. He wondered if the local golf cart dealers would support it. Hollums felt it was a good idea, but it would depend on the market economics. He would talk to them.

Robert Brown suggested adding a charging area at the Baseball Soccer Complex (BSC), noting that people going to the area from the north side of the City might have problems with getting home. Sturbaum said he supported path access to the BSC, as well as a traffic signal at the BSC on SR 74 South.

Tim Lydell said mixed use developments had been around for quite a while, and the City was the optimum of that, although it had strayed a bit. Wilksmoor did not quite fit the image. Maybe having certain uses in certain areas would be better. Having something unique and different from the other villages would draw people to see it.

Re-imaging the Village
Rast said re-branding/re-imaging the village was just for discussion. He showed renderings of a proposed street banner program along Crosstown Drive at Braelinn Village as well as possible way-finding signage for each village, adding they were looking at grants for the funding mechanism.

Learnard said she liked the idea; it was time for an update. Imker said the village identifications were nice, and he could people would buying the flags for their homes and golf carts. The Recreation Department could take the lead since they had many opportunities to meet people. Sturbaum said he would like to see some numbers on the street signage program and felt there needed to be some discussion on the historical concept versus the future concept in this area as well.

Haddix said he would like to see something that did not clash with the sign ordinance on SR 74 to let people know Braelinn Village was nearby. Hollums said the Braelinn shop owners and the center's owner would love to fund a banner program. They were interested in architectural lights and signage, maybe a monument sign on SR 74. They were willing to help write a check, at least for a significant portion of it. Rast said the upfront cost was for the poles. Revenue would be generated by the banners. Over time, it would become a self-supporting program.

Haddix said he supported the program, but he wanted citizen input. McMullen pointed out that, first, a traffic analysis needed to be done on Crosstown to see if widening was needed. He did not want to put the poles in, then remove them a few years later, to widen the road.

The consensus was to proceed.

Review of 2011 Tentative Budget Calendar and Budget Guidance from Council – 2010/2011
McMullen and Salvatore went over the proposed reductions to the FY 2010 budget, FY 2011 budget calendar, and asked for guidance from Council.

There were questions regarding Police Department staff since three officers were currently deployed. Haddix said he had concerns about reducing patrols. McMullen said there were options to consider when addressing those issues.

Imker did not want to lower the Fire Department threshold of 19 on-duty firefighters. He asked if furlough days had been considered. McMullen said the impact would be same if firefighters were furloughed and the positions were not made up by part-time or over-time firefighters. If every firefighter was furloughed one time there would be 57 days without a person on shift. The impact would be on full-time employees. Haddix said a furlough was also another pay cut.

Learnard said Council did not want to make any cuts. She was concerned about maintenance, pointing out that maintenance could be put off only so many times before it became an issue. She did not disagree with putting off maintenance, but it could not be done again and again.

Haddix said he did not like the proposed cuts in the Fire Department and only supported one of the proposed cuts in the Police Department. Sturbaum said there was enough unemployment. When people were not working, they were not spending. Cutting jobs was the last move Council should make. Learnard said they were using a very sharp scalpel approach on the FY 2010 budget, but that also led to a brand new set of decisions for FY 2011. Haddix said there had been a backlash to everything that had been done to this point. He asked if the City could afford not to have a reserve fire truck; that was talking about lives and more property loss. Sturbaum said there had been some good ideas to generate revenue, now and in the future. Everyone needed to continue to think outside the box. Council also needed to look at addressing the citizen concerns in the survey.

Imker said he would like to move forward with the City Manager's recommendations. Imker said cuts were difficult to accept. On the revenue side, the City lost revenue from proposed recreation fees that were not put into effect. There was the potential to put those fees into effect for a six-month period.

McMullen said the cuts were from the current budget, and they could not be equated to a timeframe. He suggested going forward with the projected employee vacancy plan. If revenues got better, the Police position could be filled.

Eisworth said the only cuts he had left were personnel. Haddix said he would not support any personnel cuts in the Fire or Police Departments. Sturbaum agreed, adding that the City's population had grown by 5,500 since 2001. The City's footprint had also changed; there were more commercial and industrial properties. Haddix said they were definitely talking a cut in service. Fleisch said that during bad economic climates, people did stupid things. She did not want to cut police. One bad incident could hurt the City. McMullen agreed, saying that the other departments had absorbed cuts to keep the Fire and Police Departments where they were. Now, the City was at the point where more across-the-board cuts were needed, at least this year.

Haddix asked Council where they stood on the proposed Fire Department cuts. Fleisch and Sturbaum said they did not support them. Learnard asked what a part-time firefighter meant. Eisworth said a part-time firefighter filled in when a full-time firefighter was sick or on vacation. They had to fill those spots with either part-time people or overtime. They could run out of money by the end of the fiscal year. After that, they would run with 18 per shift. Imker said he would support putting $20,000 back into the Fire budget. The consensus was unanimous that there would be no cuts in fire personnel.

Haddix said he did not want to see a reduction in patrol officers in the Police Department either. He wanted to hire one officer. Imker was against hiring another officer. He said they were doing an excellent job in a tight situation. McMullen said there was a current vacant position, with a savings of $54,210 from October 1. Clark said they were interviewing, but they did not fill a job just to fill it. They tried to get the best candidate. McMullen said hiring another officer would reduce the savings to $27,000, assuming the officer would start around April 1.

Sturbaum asked about the cost for the July 4th fireworks and parade. McMullen said the only hard number was the $26,000 for fireworks, plus the expenses for Fire, Police, and Public Works. He had asked Gaddo for an estimate on the total cost for the FY 2011 budget. Haddix said certain services could not be reduced to a dollar sign, such as Public Safety. Learnard asked where the savings would be if one officer was put back in the budget. Clark said $18,000 if the officer came in around June 1. Fleisch asked if they could transfer the cost of the fireworks to the PCTA. Imker said it might not be possible for FY 2010, but it would be for FY 2011.

McMullen summarized the direction from Council, which was to fund another Police position beginning June 1 and to put $20,000 back into the budget for the Fire Department for part-time salaries.

McMullen asked Council to let staff know of any conflicts with the proposed FY 2011 budget calendar. The first Council workshop was scheduled on June 1, with June 2 set aside if necessary. Alternate dates for the first workshop were June 9 and June 10. The second workshop was scheduled on June 14, with June 15 or June 16 as alternates. If needed, a final budget workshop would be held on July 8. The public hearing on the operating budget and the Public Improvement Program (PIP) was scheduled on July 15. The adoption of the budget and the millage rate were scheduled for a special called meeting on July 26. Salvatore noted that August 1 was the deadline to get the tax digest to the state.

Fleisch asked when the best time was for public comment. McMullen said it would be after the first workshop on June 1. Council would be aware of what was in the budget. The workshop on June 14 would be the best.

McMullen continued that no salary increases would be included in the FY 2011 budget. He had asked Vrana to do a salary survey, and the results would be reported during the budget process. He asked for guidance on what to do about the Mayor and Council salaries, noting that they were supposed to have increased from $9,000 (Mayor) and $6,000 (Council) to $18,000 and $12,000 in 2010.

Learnard said she preferred to keep the salaries where they were for now. Sturbaum and Imker supported an increase for the Mayor, but not for Council. Imker said the Mayor should be appropriately compensated, but he felt the increase at this time should be $12,000 to $15,000. He said Mayor Haddix, as well as the previous mayor, worked more than 40 hours a week. Haddix said he had always supported the raise for Mayor and Council, even during the election. The last pay increase had been in 1985. Learnard said serving on Council was a service. The pay increase was deserved, but there was no money. She would not support it. Fleisch agreed with Learnard, saying it was wrong to take anything more at this time. Haddix said he would support the decision made by Sturbaum and Imker. Sturbaum and Imker said they would meet to discuss the pay raise.

McMullen said he recommended that staff come forward with a budget of items that could be supported in an ongoing budget based on the projections for revenue. He was concerned, because there had not been a millage increase over the last several years to support the service increases, that the City was at the point where they had unsustainable budgets. Imker said he had a presentation, but wanted to hear what Salvatore had to say first. Vrana asked if state mandates should be identified in the budget. McMullen said they should.

Haddix said the City had depended on impact fees as it was growing. When the growth stopped, so did the impact fees, and the money had to come from somewhere. Eisworth said they had been planning the fire truck replacement for years, as much as 12 – 15 years out on some items. The problem was that the can had been kicked down the road every year. Imker said the issues could not be solved in one fiscal year; it would take some time to get to a real sustainable budget. Haddix asked for careful analysis of Imker's suggestions with a fair amount of discussion.

Salvatore went over the five-year model, which showed millage increases each year through FY 2014, adding that the need for the millage increases was not just due to the economic downturn. He also discussed what would happen without any millage increases.

Imker read the following statement:

This list has been under development since early last year when I entered the campaign for post 1. I emphasized fiscal responsibility which I believe had been lacking for many years. An itemized list of 103 items was presented at the January 30th meeting held right here in this chamber.

Let me clarify something here. We entered that meeting with an equivalent budget model then to budget model now comparison of a $600K shortfall then to a $1.2M shortfall now for FY2011. In a month and a half, as more data was obtained and analyzed with the help of Mr. Salvatore, the true actual shortfall has grown. Granted, there may be more both favorable and unfavorable news in the future about the budget status. We'll obtain even better information during the budget review process over the next 5 months.

After the January meeting the list grew to 169 items. Over the next several weeks it maxed out at 194 items. I have now reduced the list to 10 'big' ticket items that constitute a recommendation of potentially

$2M in expense and revenue changes to consider. It includes an additional list of 30 items, some of which are not actually budget changers but guidance nevertheless.

I understand no one in this room will agree with 100% of the items. Everyone will have at least 1 gripe and may use that 1 gripe to dismiss the entire list. All sorts of reasons and excuses will be given to say the list is a non-starter. I am of the mindset of trying to find ways to get things done, not find ways to not do something.

I carefully listened to all the department managers over the last 2 days and came away thinking what a wonderful job all the employees are doing. The police department is maintaining an incredible statistic of crimes per thousand people - better by far than every other nearby comparable city save one. This with an "understaffed" department. The fire/EMS department has recently obtained a favorable higher ISO rating, this with an understaffed department. I credit all department heads for trying to improve and not give ground to the constant challenges ahead. That's their job. They are the champion of their department and it is their responsibility to fight for every resource to continue to maintain and improve their service. They also acknowledge and recognize the economic situation this city is currently in.

We are in an economic time not seen in this country for many decades. Businesses are continuing to reduce their workforce. Employees are being asked to take pay cuts. We, the citizens, simply cannot continue to ride the "I've got it and will not give anything up" attitude. We had a tax increase in 2002 to add services. It was not enough. We had a tax increase in 2003 to add services. It was not enough. We had a tax increase in 2004 to add services. It was not enough. We had a tax increase in 2007 to add services. It was not enough. These increases resulted in a 70% tax increase during that span of time. Now some believe we need another tax increase to not only just maintain services but repair all the damage done by poor fiscal policy by previous city councils over the last several years. What happened? I'll tell you. As the city grew, along with the taxpaying population, the budget out grew out of proportion to its priority of securing adequate police, fire and infrastructure requirements.

I hate to say it, but many politicians tend to be overzealous in their desires to show the public all the good things they've done while not minding the bank account. I am interested in leaving this city with a sustainable budget that maintains our number one priority of citizen safety closely followed by infrastructure, land use, property values and recreation. We're not going to solve it in one fiscal year. But we have to start and start now.

I emphasis again, I do not expect 100% of these recommendations to be implemented. But we do have a $1.2M budget shortfall identified for FY2011. I present one possible solution that does not raise taxes or uses city reserves. Some may argue it includes cutting of services. I personally feel any perceived service cuts will be negligible.

I have the political will to begin the road to recovery. It's hard to argue with someone who is not going to be a career politician; whose goal is to return to my retirement when this current role is over. So here it goes. I present the list as a starting reference point for further discussion.

Imker then presented his recommendations to save $2 million in the FY 2011 budget, plus another 30 recommendations to cut costs. (A copy of Imker's statement and recommendation is included in the meeting file.) His recommendations included:

FY2011 Budget Guidance/Considerations 3/13/10

Potential	
$ 210,000	Reduction in force for potentially three full time positions (attrition desired)
$ 350,000	Furlough days in lieu of additional workforce reduction

$ 250,000	Department cost reductions to save 2.5% (dependent on reductions implemented in FY2010)
$ 200,000	Reduce department contingencies
$ 200,000	Implement new Hotel/Motel tax method
$ 200,000	Implement recreation department fee and other revenue recommendations
$ 200,000	Increase investment revenue for cash on hand
$ 180,000	Ask employees to choose between their defined benefit retirement plan or 401k retirement contribution percentage match
$ 100,000	Implement a utility audit to identify potential overpayments
$ 110,000	Consider measured salary reductions for top 10% of wage earners
$ 2,000,000	Total

1	Use Surplus / (Deficit) line in budget model to show entire magnitude of problem (do not use millage rate changes)
2	Use realistic/conservative revenue projections in budget model
3	Create a plan now for various levels of shortfalls at fiscal year midpoint (i.e. $100K, $250K, etc.)
4	Continue efforts, to include incentives where possible, to fill the empty industrial park and commercial areas
5	Reorder priority and reallocation of PTC SPLOST projects
6	Press county commissioners to reallocate county SPLOST just as PTC is going to do
7	Request county commissioners develop a new debt reduction SPLOST for the November ballot
8	Develop long term "escrow" plan for replacing major capital assets (i.e. city reserves over 20%)
9	Continue freeze on all new hire positions
10	Future employees go on a contribution based retirement plan instead of present defined benefit plan
11	Consider contracting out various operations
12	Initiate city court video to Fayette County jail to save on prisoner transport costs
13	Consider increased citations for non-licensed golf carts, littering and greenbelt violations
14	Consider increased impact fee for new development projects
15	Have 4th of July fireworks paid by businesses and tourism association ($35K)
16	Cancel all travel by city employees unless required by law (use video conferencing instead of travel)
17	Review city cell phone use - who has them & why? Reduce number people using them. Check usage.
18	Review city credit card use - what they are purchasing? Reduce number people using them. Check usage.
19	Consider pathways patrolled by private security firm instead of fully trained police officers
20	Consider reducing city vehicle fleet and types of vehicles
21	Consider recreation associations being responsible for maintaining fields
22	Consider home owner association incentives to maintain their own subdivision entrance ways to reduce contracted work
23	Consider a single person "Grant Writer" for PTC to include federal stimulus funds
24	Use city web side to provide more visibility into periodic city revenue and expenditure status
25	Simplify and unify* city web sites (* not sure if some departments have their own separate web site)
26	Simplify annual evaluation process
27	Eliminate rarely used "make work" statistic keeping
28	Consider different registration fee for type of golf cart

29	Consider unifying and simplifying various fee paying processes
30	Eliminate fees that simply increase workload (book keeping nightmare) on employees in budget dept and elsewhere

Eiswerth said it appeared the budget was being balanced on the backs of the employees. Imker said the entire country was letting people go or taking pay cuts. The five-year model showed millage increases and future pay raises. Imker said he understood, and it was a tough decision.

McMullen clarified that the budget had not been mismanaged. There were political decisions made to not pay for increased services. The employees had done a tremendous job of providing services with the resources provided. Imker said he had not intended to blame employees. The blame rested with decisions made by previous Councils. Haddix said he was not opposed to Imker's list, but some research was needed. The employees took a hit last year, and the citizens paid nothing. It was a constant hit for employees, and many were City residents.

Steve Thaxton disputed the comment that citizens had not borne any responsibility in making up the shortfall. He paid taxes, and he did not want a tax increase. The recent citizen survey said a majority of the respondents were in favor of a small millage increase, but it was not a representative survey. As a business owner in this economy, he had offered reductions in force or salaries. He gave unpaid holidays instead of furloughs. Haddix said the City was not a company with the option of getting rid of employees. The City had to man the services citizens demanded. Imker said there were 30 people willing to take any one position in the City. Sturbaum said every person in the City was valuable, and the employees were valuable. He took umbrage with Imker's remark. He moved to adjourn the meeting. Learnard seconded. The motion carried 4-1 (Imker).

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Pamela Dufresne

Pamela Dufresne, Deputy City Clerk

Don Haddix

Don Haddix, Mayor