

**HOSCHTON CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

December 7, 2009, 7:05 p.m.  
Hoschton Depot

**A. CALL TO ORDER:**

Councilman Shepherd called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**B. SWEARING IN OF NEW MAYOR AND COUNCIL**

**C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**D. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS**

Council members present	Sandie Romer, Post 1 Jim Higgenbottom, Post 2 Jim Cleveland, Post 3 Richard Shepherd, Post 4 Scott Butler, Post 5 Theresa Kenerly, Post 6
-------------------------	--

Acting City Clerk	Karen Butler
City Attorney	Thomas Mitchell
Mayor	Erma Denney

**E. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:**

November 2, 2009 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

**Motion made by Councilman Cleveland to approve the minutes from the November 2, 2009 council meeting, seconded by Councilman Higginbottom. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.**

**F. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

No changes to agenda at this time.

**G. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES:**

**1. Water, Waste, and Environmental Services**  
Nothing new from Thursday's work session.

## HOSCHTON CITY COUNCIL

December 7, 2009

Regular Council Meeting

Page 2 of 10

### **2. Fiscal Resources**

Councilman Butler reported that he has met several times at called meeting of existing members and new council and mayor. At this time we would request to go month to month on the budget for January, then come to the February meeting with an actual budget. Right now it looks going into 2010, we are about \$115,000 shy on the general budget, and in the water and sewer budget we are closer. The disturbing things in 2010 are that we have \$180,000 from Armentrout that is going to pay some bills, and there is \$47,500 from a one-time sale of a Pall Membrane from the old plant that is going to pay some bills. We will have to do some thing this year to make sure we can pay bills in 2011. We also have a law-suit that is potentially \$230,000 that we may have to pay at the end of next year or January 2011.

Richard Green, and the city engineer informed us, that the SCADA system might need to be replaced at a cost of \$150,000. He also informed us that we have some asbestos water pipes that may need to be replaced in the future. Doing quick research comes up with a price of \$1.00 to \$16.00 per inch to replace those.

Mayor Denney asks if Councilman Butler would be comfortable with showing the public what has been reviewed. Councilman Butler reports that income revenue comes from franchise fees and insurance taxes, which should stay the same. A big issue in general is in sales tax revenue. The 2009 budget shows \$207,000 in income. Based on what Jackson County is reporting with 24% reduction in sales tax revenue last month and a 16% decline this year, we decided that a 15% reduction for next year is realistic. That is a \$30,000 deduction in revenue for that. Also changed was cemetery lot sales with a \$5500 reduction, and in public safety they projected \$172,000 in fines and forfeitures, but historically 5 out of 7 years, the revenue came in between \$100-105,000, so we put it at \$105,000 which is \$65,000 out of income.

On the expense side of things, the mayor and council agreed not to take any income, so \$2500 was added back into the system. Another thing that was added back into the expense side was that we put money into the budget to replace cars or equipment at the end of their useful life. For instance, in Public safety, we added \$18,000 a year for money in the bank to buy new police cars when we need one, rather than needing a car and not having money for it. The same is for public works, we are paying \$5000 a year for a truck they are driving now, and one day that truck may need to be replaced, so we added \$4000 a year for that. We're \$115,628 to the red, so we're going to look at making some additional cuts to the general fund.

Kristen Mahan, 70 Butternut Walk, states she thought the goal was to decrease the expenses, and it sounds like you are increasing them.

HOSCHTON CITY COUNCIL

December 7, 2009

Regular Council Meeting

Page 3 of 10

Councilman Butler states that the goal was to live within our means, to realistically look at what our income is and then match our income to that. We think we have a real grip on what the income is going to be, and so now the goal is to match the expenses to that income.

Kristen Mahan asks if there were any other expenses that could be cut?

Councilman Butler replies that we can look at every department being cut, and people in departments being cut. That is what we will have to look at.

Daryl McFarland states that he does not believe there is any sense in purchasing the police cars, that he would rather see them auctioned off, even if it means taking a loss. He states that this is a little town, and we don't need all that upgraded electronic stuff.

Councilman Butler replies that this will be looked at.

Mayor Denney discusses the need for the next level of detail of the budget. She states that we are going to have to get some assistance with QuickBooks on how to pull those reports so that we can have accurate information to go forward. We are living off not a very high level summary, but it's not the category detail that any of us prefer when making decisions. It is still too vague. She explains the shortage at city hall and that we are working to remedy that. She would like to have an update in January and have conclusive decisions by the beginning of February.

Brian Boehmer asks if we know where we are at with paying the bills. Are we still in arrears?

Mayor Denney replies that she cannot honestly say that this has been remedied. Some data that we have might not be exactly right. We have no October or November P & L as of yet.

Councilman Butler reports that what we have implemented for January is that when a bill comes in, it will be identified by who the vendor is, what the amount is, and the date that it is due so that we can track how much we owe at the end of every month and how much we are paying and when its due. We are going to do that in December and January to get a real grip on what we are really incurring in expenses, and what we have to pay.

Councilman Higginbottom states that he understands that the past due bills have been paid.

Mayor Denney states there are a number of items we are going to seek input from via a little bit more formal RFP process to request assistance from qualified people within our community who will respond, and we are hoping the pay schedule will be such that Hoschton can't afford not to take them up on the offer. We are going to be putting out RFP's for a few items, one being vendor management, and also oversight. We want to

make sure that we are prepared for the end of the year.

**3. Public Works and Properties**

There is nothing for Public Works.

**4. Public Safety**

Councilman Shepherd reported that there was a Public Safety committee meeting and we reviewed stats thru October. There were a total of 306 total calls. This included 153 extra patrols where we visited homes and businesses throughout the month. They include 18 be on the look out, 15 domestic violence, 16 suspicious persons or vehicles, and 42 traffic stops. It has been as high as 533 per month, but averages around 400.

**5. Planning and Zoning**

Councilwoman Kenerly reports there was no meeting this month.

**6. Business, Commerce, and Economic Development**

There is nothing for Business, Commerce and Economic development.

**H. ACTIVITY AND ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:**

A summary should be available at Monday's meeting.

**I. UNFINISHED OR TABLED BUSINESS:**

**1. Georgia SAVE Program**

Thomas Mitchell briefly reviews the ordinance that was presented at Thursday's work session.

**Motion made by Councilman Cleveland to approve the SAVE ordinance, seconded by Councilwoman Kenerly. Motion carried with all voting in favor.**

**2. Final Charter Review**

Thomas Mitchell states that what is needed now is a resolution that authorizes the appropriate notices and advertising to be run and be transmitted back to the offices of the legislative council with whatever changes will be made. If we do this in the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of January, time wise we will be fine.

Councilman Butler would like to make a motion to table this due to the fact that he has not had enough time to review it, read it, and to feel comfortable with it.

**Motion made by Councilman Butler to table the Final Charter review until the next meeting, seconded by Councilwoman Romer. Motion carried with five of the council voting in favor. Councilman Shepherd voted against.**

Hoschton City Council members discuss having a meeting regarding the review of the charter. The meeting will be held at 6:00 pm on December 29<sup>th</sup> prior to the work session.

**J. NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. Hoschton Food & Liquid Libation Alcohol Application**

Councilman Shepherd presents the application for alcohol for Hoschton Food & Liquid Libation; formerly know as Poppi's Pub.  
Chief Howell states that all background checks are free and clear, as well as the distance analysis. Everything seems to be in good standing, as well as for Golden Jubilee.

**Motion made by Councilman Shepherd to approve the alcohol license for Hoschton Food & Liquid Libation, seconded by Councilman Cleveland. Motion carried with all voting in favor.**

**2. Golden Jubilee Beer & Wine Application**

Councilman Shepherd presents the application for Beer & Wine license for Golden Jubilee, which is formerly known as Zack's Too.  
Chief Howell states that the findings are the same as previously stated.

**Motion made by Councilman Shepherd to approve the beer & wine license for Golden Jubilee, seconded by Councilman Cleveland. Motion carried with all voting in favor.**

**3. Hoschton Election Certification**

Thomas Mitchell states approval of this resolution will certify the election.

**Motion made by Councilman Shepherd to approve the resolution for the certification of the results of the election held November 3, 2009, seconded by Councilwoman Kenerly. Motion carried with all voting in favor.**

**4. Adoption of 2010 Council Meeting Schedule**

Mayor Denney reviews the council meeting schedule for next year. As noted, the work session for the January meeting has been changed to December 29<sup>th</sup> and the January council meeting will be January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The September change for Labor Day is the work session will be on September 9, 2010 and the council meeting will be on September 13, 2010.

**Motion made by Councilwoman Romer to approve the 2010 Council Meeting Schedule, seconded by Councilman Higginbottom. Motion carried with all voting in favor.**

**5. Services for Citizens**

Mayor Denney speaks regarding services that are available to our citizens. She states that there are 2 local food banks in the West Jackson area. The one in Hoschton is the Mulberry Baptist Association located in the Industrial Park. It has been open for 2 yrs, it serves hundreds of families, they are state certified, and they are open every Tuesday. They accept monetary donations and donations of non-perishables in addition to supplying families with food. The other one in the area is Duds n Spuds of Zion Baptist Church in Braselton.

Also available is the clothes closet called By His Hands Ministries at New Community Church. Anyone can call for an appointment to come in. The number is 706-224-7900 (Dave Scheel). They are in need of clothing for middle and high school aged children. There are clothes available for adults re-entering the work force who are in need of business clothing.

The last item is the Jackson County Adult Learning Center located in Commerce. Their number is 706-335-9549. They have training to get your G.E.D., or classes available to get a certification that may assist in getting a new job. They also have tutors available.

In the future, the mayor would like to work with some people in our community to have a Hoschton community web site where we can have items like this to help one another. It would be maintained separately and independently on a volunteer type of situation so that we can have community type interests like this. If anyone has any suggestions, please let us know.

HOSCHTON CITY COUNCIL

December 7, 2009

Regular Council Meeting

Page 7 of 10

**K. ITEMS FOR MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL AND CITY STAFF**

Pam Tolbert, W. Jefferson Street, expresses concern about eliminating the police department. She explains about the problems that used to be in the city before Jeremy Howell was here, and how much concern he has for the citizens. She explains that with the police department that we have now, she guarantees that we will receive the best care and thorough investigations. Ms. Tolbert asks that if anyone is set against a tax, to consider it, if that is what we need to have this police department.

Jon Fisk of the Village of Hoschton expresses congratulations to all, and that the council has a big challenge ahead of them. That it will take teamwork, professionalism and hard work. He also hopes that when decisions are made to keep in mind to be fiscally responsible and make sure it is the best thing for the citizens.

Pam Butler of Deer Creek Farms has a question regarding the water quality issues. She wonders what the new council will do. Does this council have a different take on this from the old council?

Councilman Butler replies that the air in the water is from the well pumps that we have are drawing up more water than is in the pump, and it's getting air in it. It's harmless to drink, it can lead to leaks in your water lines, and it can lead to problems with your indoor plumbing. It is in our budget process. One of the things that we may have to do to correct that is that we're going to have to buy water from Jackson County Water & Sewer in order to keep the pipes full, so to speak, so air doesn't get into them. As a city, we may have to fund water purchase just to keep individuals from having to replace your water lines.

Doug Easter from Butternut Walk asks how does the water meters handle air? Does it cause it to count higher?

Councilman Cleveland replies that he has questioned that also, but no one has answered that question, but we will find that out.

Wistar Harmon states that he would be a little amazed that the presence of air in the water would raise the bill, but it is certainly possible.

HOSCHTON CITY COUNCIL

December 7, 2009

Regular Council Meeting

Page 8 of 10

Ron Martin, 448 White Street, expresses his concern about a problem he has with rainwater from Highway 53. It runs beside the old plant directly into White Street. Half of it goes one direction, and half goes the other. There is a drain line under the street at the lowest point on White Street, and it goes thru his yard, between his house and his neighbor's house, and the line is stopped up. Water is boiling up out of his yard. It is making a river between his house and his neighbor's house. It is within 10' of the house when it rains. Mr. Martin states that he has been put on the back burner for almost 3 months. He would like to have something done. He feels the drain pipe needs to be replaced, and would like the drainage problem from Highway 53 to White street fixed.

The pipe has been probed and they were able to hit all sides. The fire department blew out the line with water from the hydrant. It broke loose for a moment, but then stopped immediately. Mr. Martin feels part of the problem is partially burned debris on the ditch that is stopping it up.

Mayor Denney states that they will work with Mr. Martin one on one regarding this.

David Poteet, the Village of Hoschton, asks if whoever looks at the bids for garbage collection, if they could use smaller trucks so that they can use the alleyways.

Councilman Butler states it is time for that now, and that is something that we will be asking.

Jon Fisk states that something is not right with the water. If we have to get an alternative source, he hopes that we can do that. The water is not appealing to drink.

Mayor Denney states that she and Councilman Butler had a conversation with Jackson County Water and Sewer. The council would like to get a second opinion on what is going on with the water.

Ben Stephens from the West Jackson Fire Department states that pumping more than our capacity can cause the air in the line. The city's water pressure went up about 30 psi in the last few years.

Mayor Denney states the 30 hp pump pulls at a faster rate at the White Street well. She also talks about committee assignments. Previously the mayor and council split up and divided into many committees. Traditionally, there was one

HOSCHTON CITY COUNCIL

December 7, 2009

Regular Council Meeting

Page 9 of 10

council member who ran the committee, and 2 on the committee. Most meetings were held during the day, and most people could not attend. It was discussed that we refrain from dividing up into committees. Many of the new council members feel they may not be comfortable voting if they were not involved with the planning of it. We would like to have a committee meeting with at night or on a Saturday. Most people could come to these meetings. We are not quite ready to split up. There should be a leader on the committee, but not just having 3 people make the decisions.

Councilman Cleveland requests Councilwoman Kenerly and Councilman Shepherd continue with what they are doing.

Councilman Shepherd reports that by going to the city web site, you can see when the meetings are.

Councilwoman Kenerly states there are two openings coming up on planning & zoning, and if anyone would like to apply for that, to please let us know.

Mayor Denney announces that they would like to start an internal committee consisting of Councilwoman Kenerly, Councilman Higginbottom and herself to begin the process of looking for a replacement clerk. It would consist of getting a job description, where to post it, when to do it, and what kind of requirements that we would want. We must be in the process of having a clerk become certified internally, or seeking an applicant. We want to take our time with this, and do what is right for the City of Hoschton.

Councilman Shepherd reports that there is a mandatory training meeting at the University of Georgia.

Mayor Denney replies that everyone is signed up.

**L. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**Motion made by Councilman Butler to go to executive session, seconded by Councilwoman Kenerly. Motion carried with all voting in favor to go to executive session at 8: 20.**

Return from executive session at 9:16 pm.

HOSCHTON CITY COUNCIL

December 7, 2009

Regular Council Meeting

Page 10 of 10

**M. ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion to adjourn made by Councilwoman Kenerly, second made by Councilman Cleveland. Motion carried with all approved. Meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Karen K. Butler

**Attachments in the Minute Book**

