

The Council of the City of Villa Rica met in a special called meeting/work session at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 22, 2005, at the Holt-Bishop Justice Center. Those present were Mayor Pro Tem Verland Best, Councilmembers Perry Amidon, Danny Carter and Woody Holland; City Manager Bob Zellner, City Clerk Jane Chastain and four city personnel. There were approximately four citizens in attendance.

Mayor Pro Tem Best called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. The invocation was given by Councilmember Holland. All recited the pledge of allegiance.

Best turned the floor over to Zellner who introduced Lamar Moody, now working in the capacity of consultant for the City. Moody has continued to be involved in water and sewer projects he began while in the position of city manager. Moody gave the Council an overview of the City's water and sewer progress beginning in October 2002 when, Moody said, he was charged by the Council to analyze and stabilize the City's position. Moody said he was also given the charge of reorganizing the City's functions and department, create a business-like environment within Villa Rica Government, implement quality customer service for the citizens and implement new business measures for planned growth.

Moody discussed the problems the City faced in 2002 concerning growth and expansion and the way in which the City would fund this. He discussed the condition of utility infrastructure and existing water contracts with Carroll and Douglas Counties. He also stressed the point that the City needed to have a professionally conducted Risk Analysis for the City on areas such as safety, personnel and overall operations of the City. Moody urged the Council to consider Quality of Life issues for the City such as developing a walking and biking trail or determining how to treat downtown traffic.

Moody discussed the steps which were taken to develop the current water and sewer agreements and infrastructure improvements. He also discussed the steps needed to proceed with infrastructure improvements such as the expansion of the North Plant. Moody said the Council will have to consider increases in tap fees or other sources of income to pay for such improvements. Holland asked if he understood Moody to say that the sewer fees the City is charging now are not covering O & M [operation and maintenance costs]. Moody said the monthly charges do not cover the expenses. Zellner presented a chart prepared by Hewitt Utility Economic Services, Inc [HUES]. This chart, using the City's water and sewer revenue and expense data, Holland pointed out, showed that the City was approximately one thousand dollars short of breaking even on a two million dollar operation if tap fees and SPLOST funds were not included. The chart showed that with the inclusion of tap fees and SPLOST money, the City had a million-dollar-plus net revenue on water and a half million dollar net revenue on sewer. Holland asked that the Water/Sewer Rate Analysis from HUES be placed on the next available agenda for Council's consideration on fee and rate increases. Carter brought up the City's policy of charging less per thousand gallons for higher water use and suggested that the Council consider changing that policy.

Considering figures provided by HUES on a Financial Report Statement of Condition, Council discussed the loss incurred by Solid Waste Removal provisions. They determined that funds would have to be appropriated from tax revenue or would have to come from garbage rate increases.

Zellner passed out a list of upcoming projects and their projected costs which the City will have to consider for the coming year. Council agreed that several of these projects were high priority, including the Contract with Douglasville-Douglas County Water and Sewer Authority [WSA], the North Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion, and the Inflow/Infiltration identification and rehab. Zellner said the City's SPLOST money collected by Douglas County would be divided between three Parks and Recreation projects: Spring Lake, Centerfield, and Pine Mountain.

Zellner reported on another item on the list, an EPD Consent Order for the West Wastewater Treatment Plant. Zellner informed the Council that the City has paid the \$13,000 fine called for in the Consent Order but will remain under the Consent Order until some of the problems are worked out. He said this ties in with the Short Term Master Plan and the Long Term Master Plan the City is preparing for both the west and north plants.

Also on the list was the traffic light for the Conner Road/Mirror Lake Boulevard intersection. Zellner said the traffic light is scheduled to be up and working by the end of June. Until then, the City will be using a generator powered utility light to illuminate the intersection and the police officers who will be directing traffic during the dawn and dusk heavier traffic times.

Zellner said the final item on the list, the downtown landscape/beautification project, is on hold pending the return of a signed lease by the railroad.

Zellner recapped the projects and informed the Council that with the budget shortfall for FY2005-2005 the Council needs to decide the direction in which they wish the City to move. Council concurred that the water and sewer projects were highest priority. They discussed possible means for funding these. Moody told Council that it would be two to four years before the West Plant would be at capacity but the north side needs attention now. Zellner said the contract with WSA will hopefully be signed this week. This would then go before Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District for final approval. Holland asked about a joint effort with Carroll County. Zellner said that is also being discussed. Moody stressed again the need for a Capital Improvement Plan. He said the model prepared for the City indicates the impending need for a new standing water tank on Highway 101. The Council discussed creating a list of the City's needs for submission to the City's representatives on a county-wide water committee.

Moody reported that the Comprehensive Plan, which is in process, suggests creating a separate district of the downtown area. That way lot line zoning and other such special requirements could be modified from the general requirements. Moody will put together a chart of numbers for Council and send them via Jane Chastain.

Best brought up the need to make a decision on where the City limits of Villa Rica should be or grow to. Moody said Planning Works has created something similar to that which the Council can use to make those decisions. Council viewed the Planning Works map and discussed possibilities.

Zellner passed out information on Phase I of the Spring Lake Project for Council to review later. He said progress on the budget is ongoing and will be ready for Council review soon. Council agreed to hold a work session at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 1, 2005 for budget review. Zellner discussed the time frame for holding a public hearing for the upcoming budget. Council discussed Occupation Tax fees and agreed to discuss this issue in more detail at a later date.

With no further business, Council adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Verland Best – Mayor Pro Tem

ATTEST:

Bob Zellner – City Manager