**Regular Council Meeting**

**February 5, 2024**

Present: Mayor Brandon Johnson, Council members Zach Adams, Dan Leard, Richard Sheller, Mike MacNabb, Patrick Guarnella and Tray Hicks.

Others Present: City Manager Jon Herschell, City Attorney Robert Leverett, Zoning/Economic Development Director Jason Ford, Representatives of the Press and interested citizens.

The Regularly scheduled meeting of the Hartwell City Council was held Monday February 5, 2024 in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 456 E. Howell Street, Hartwell, Georgia.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Brandon Johnson.

Following the invocation given by Mayor Johnson, everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

Hearing no corrections or additions to the minutes of the January 2024 Regular Council Meeting, a motion was made by Councilman Leard to approve the minutes as recorded. Motion was seconded by Councilman McNabb and carried unanimously 6-0.

Mayor Johnson read a proclamation honoring Black History Month. Several members of the community were present and welcomed the public to participate in various celebrations throughout the month.

Mayor Johnson requested the council approve the request of for the Hartwell Service League for the Pre-4th Celebration being held on June 29th. Mayor Johnson explained that this event was an annual event is celebrated in Hartwell every year. A member of the Service League spoke about this year’s upcoming event and encouraged the community to participate this year. A motion was made and seconded. The motion passed 6-0.

The Hartwell Pilot Club and Southern Hart Brewery requested permission to hold its annual Depot Days/HartOber Festival. Councilman Hicks made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded, and the permit requested was approved 6-0.

Mayor Johnson requested the Council consider approval of the Lake Hartwell Music Festival at Hartwell Lakeside Park. The event would take place during Memorial Day Weekend and include music and family fun. Councilman Hicks recused himself. A motion was made and seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Johnson asked Stephanie Crump to present her request for Hartwell Makers Festival for April 27th. Mrs. Crump explained the event would close Carolina St. and feature local artist. The event will be family friendly and last until the afternoon. A motion was made by Councilman Hicks and Seconded by Councilman Guarnella. The motion passed 6-0.

Jessica Eppinger came before council to request street closure for a parade celebrating black history and culture. She explained that her organization wanted to put on the event and bring awareness. The event would take place in June. A motion was made and seconded and passed 6-0.

City Manager Jon Herschell requested the council consider the purchase of a new chipper for the street department. Herschell explained that the chipper was needed to continue the City’s leaf and limb chipper service. The item was budgeted for in the 2024 budget and below anticipated costs. Councilman McNabb made a motion and was seconded by Councilman Leard. The motion passed 6-0.

A new business, Hartwell Family Fun Center requested a beer and wine license. The owners explained their new business would be an arcade that would provide games for kids and also serve snacks. There were people in the audience that opposed the idea and debate was held among councilmembers, the public, and the business owner. After deliberations a motion was made by councilman Hicks, a Second was made by Councilman Leard. The motion carried 5-1 with Councilman Adams voting nay.

Mayor Johnson opened a public hearing to hear annexation and zoning case 2023-08. Zoning Administrator Jason Ford opened the hearing with the staff file and explained the merits of the case. Mayor Johnson asked the applicant Charlie Peirce to come speak on the petition to annex. Mr. Peirce explained his proposal and reasons for the petition for annexation and R-1 zoning. The council engaged Mr. Pierce and asked some questions regarding his proposals. Mayor Johnson requested any comments from citizens opposed to the annexation. None came up to the podium. Being the 1st reading no action was taken.

Mayor Johnson requested City Manager Herschell to explain the proposed Urban Camping Ordinance. Mr. Herschell explained there have a few requests for stronger policies regarding vagrants in and around the downtown area in public spaces. The ordinance would allow police to legally request them to relocate. Being the 1st reading no action was taken.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Herschell

City Manager