

OFFICIAL MINUTES
COMMISSION MEETING OF THE CITY OF BRUNSWICK, GEORGIA
RECESSED MEETING
5:00 P. M., August 20, 1992

PRESENT: His Honor, Mayor Homer L. Wilson, Commissioners Otis Herrington,
Roosevelt Lawrence, Doris A. Davis
and Rev. G. E. Darrisaw.

INVOCATION: The invocation was given by Commissioner G. E. Darrisaw.

Mayor Wilson announced that the meeting was being reconvene at 5:00 P. M. to give employees an opportunity to address the Commission and to discuss a personnel matter.

William Friend an employee of the City's Public Works Department appeared before the Commission to make a few comments and clarification to some of the points raised at the Commission meeting on August 19. Mr. Friend stated first, the City Manager said City employees received an increase in fiscal year 90-91, but he failed to mention the this increase was given in August of 1990 and not in 1991.

Next he questioned why when it comes to showing some consideration and sensitivity to City employees the condition for receiving the increase is personnel reduction. He questioned why wasn't a reduction considered when millions of tax dollars were spent on a Downtown Streetscape, Road Construction and improvements to L and Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd and other sewer projects. Mr. Friend pointed out that in September of last year a list of grievances were submitted along with suggestions for improvements, since the grievance procedure outlined in last night's meeting have already been discussed then he saw no reason to repeat it. Public Works is the backbone of the City and without the services of that Department there could be catastrophe. He recalled conditions created in other cities when workers went on strike, pointing out that it was not intended as a treat. Management was stated as another a concern with black employees, which have kept them out of management and administrative positions not only in Public Works but in other City Departments. According to a study done by the Florida Times Union there are 356 City employees, of 14 Department Heads, 1 Department Head is black and this reflects a serious problem. Mr. Friend asked the City to resume negotiations through an open line of communication.

Paul Woodard, City Public Works employee, stated that their fight was not with the governing body, but with the injustice that is continuing in the Public Works Department against minorities. Mr. Woodard stated that after the City Manager declared no more name calling in that Department a supervisor continued to make racial slurs. When this incident happened he stated it was reported, but no action was taken by the City Manager. Mr. Woodard stated that someone should represent the minority workers in that Department and problems could be resolved without having to come before the Commissioners. Mr. Woodard stated that Finance is just one issue that is very important to them. He next stated that he would like to see minorities promoted to directors, assistant directors, supervisors and assistant supervisors, and expressed his concern with the present promotion process within the Public Works Department. Equipment was another concern of Mr. Woodard. He stated that the old theme use it till it tears up, then we will fix it should be done away with. Mr. Woodard recalled near accidents that happened with the use of City equipment. Mr. Woodard expressed his concerns and asked the Commission to change conditions in Public Works starting with Finances, Management and Equipment.

Lawrence Williams stated the he was concerned about the uniform situation. He stated that he talked with the City Manager, and the problem still exists.

Joe Smith stated that he has been employed for two years and had not received his six months

salary increase.

Commissioner Herrington asked the Public Works employees who were present to explain where the City of Brunswick gets the funds to pay for the Streetscape, Water Tower and other projects that was mentioned. He stated that if the employees had a grievance it was no problem, because a lot of things that was brought out is probably true, he advised them to stick to the facts, and stop implying that the City of Brunswick spent millions of dollars on projects.

Commissioner Herrington explained that Administration was like a business and the City is operated like a business and the City is also a corporate government. He pointed out when the out go exceeds the income you will be in trouble. The Commissioner's job is to manage. The City of Brunswick did not have to pay for projects such as Streetscape, and the Water Tower because the City could not afford to. A percentage of money goes toward the projects, and the government is normally funded by the County, State or Federal Government or Revenue Sharing or some other way. He explained how equipment is purchased with City Funds, because Federal Grants, Revenue Sharing and money that has been channeled or being funnelled down through local governments is not available anymore. He stated that is one of the reasons why he asked if the employees had a complaint to stick to it, because they don't know where the money is coming from, but it's not as simple as it may seem. He described how he had a lack of misunderstanding before he got involved because he didn't understand a lot of things that happen in Government. He next explained mandates which are imposed by Federal Governments on Local Governments.

Reginald Tyson stated that he has been employed with the City for eleven years and spent four years at the old T Street dump. He stated that he noticed how old police cars, garbage trucks and all the City strap was piled up in that area. He asked where did the funds go when all the strap was sold, because he never read anything in the News about the items being sold.

Commissioner Herrington stated that for instance if the scrap did sell for \$50,000.00 that would not be enough to give employees a 5% increase and he was sure the money from the sale went into the General Fund at that particular time.

Dr. N. E. Armstrong stated that maybe the young men that is employed in Public Works might not be so well versed as the Commissioners are on the matter of Finances for the City, but there have been some promises made of raises to these gentlemen and he don't know whether they should be concerned about how they get it and where it comes from because that is a Commissioner's function. He explained that talking about bonds and composting is good and fine, but the only thing the employees see is that they have not seen an increase in their pay. What the employees are seeing is the City buying revenue bonds and yet they haven't received a raise. Dr. Armstrong next mentioned the \$500,000.00 mistake that was made in the budget last year and how the City used the surplus to cover the mistake. He pointed out the Public Works have a budget and the funds collected goes into the General Fund. He stated that there was money if the Commission wanted to give the employees a raise that was not insulting. The Public Works employees can not identify with composting and 4.7 million dollars, but they can identify with what is not being given to them such as raises, positions, promotions and these type of things. These things are what the employees are concerned about.

Commissioner Lawrence stated that he has heard this over and over and there are still employees present that still feels they want to say something. He stated that he would like to see employees air all the grievances today so they can get started in a new direction. The Commission has stated that there will be a raise so there should be no need to keep controverting on that anymore. He stated that the Commission should find some other direction to go in and everyone should go in it together.

Reginald Tyson stated that during his years of service to the City of Brunswick he watched

the Fire Department upgraded, the Police Department and the Water Department. He asked why is the Public Works Department always on the bottom. He stated that the Public Works Department is as important as everybody else.

Larry Walker, an employee of the Public Works Department, stated that he drives a pay loader and he drives it from one end of town to another everyday. He mentioned that he was performing a 40 hour job in one day. He explained that he applied for the job because he wanted it and he knows he is doing a good job, and he is dedicated to his job. He stressed that the pay is very low to support a family.

Michael Redding, an employee of the Public Works Department, stated that he also did 5 routes today. He expressed his concerns about allegations that were made about the Public Works employees being lazy and how the Commission wanted to fire all the employees.

Commissioner Herrington and Davis stated that the allegations that were printed were wrong. Mr. Reddings stated that he read the statements that were made in the Brunswick News. Commissioner Herrington pointed out that the Brunswick News is always wrong because they are always misprinting something.

Robert Branch, a reporter for the Brunswick News, was present and stated that he was not the center of the City Commission problems.

Mr. Redding stated whether Mr. Branch was wrong or the Commission was wrong the allegations were made. It was explained that whatever was printed in the Brunswick News was incorrect and hear say.

Paul Woodard stated that the Public Works Department has some serious problems and expressed in concerns about the Director recommending to lay off Sanitation workers when there are only 8 sanitation employees and 4 drivers. He pointed out the employees needed their jobs.

Rosalyn West, an employee of the Water Department, stated the Water Department has not been upgraded because Customer Service is short handed and she also stated that she too has not received a raise in two years. She pointed out that the Water Department is experiencing some of the same problems like the Public Works Department.

Donald Simmons, an employee of the Water Department, questioned when the equipment will be inspected. He stated that he attended a safety meeting and employees were instructed by the State Patrol that they will be held responsible for any equipment they are operating. He explained that supervisors in the Public Works Department are not concerned about how equipment leaves the shop.

Commissioner Herrington stated that the issue will be addressed.

Commissioner Lawrence stated that he has never heard the Commission say that Public Works was not important. The Commission knows that the Public Works Department has an important job not only to the Commission, but to the citizens of Brunswick. He stated that he personally felt that the Public Works job is one of the most important jobs in the City.

Mayor Wilson state he too has to agree with Commissioner Lawrence that Public Works is the important segment of the City government. He recalled his experience with the Public Works Department when was the Director. He stated that he never believed that City government was here to make money because that is not the purpose at all. Mayor Wilson stated that he is not worried about having to pay a little more taxes. He pointed out that the Police Department's budget takes more money than the total property taxes of the City of Brunswick to operate on. Mayor Wilson stated that he was concerned about how the Commission could keep the City solvent. Mayor Wilson added he was proud of Brunswick and the citizens and his desire is to keep the City of Brunswick solvent and make sure all of the citizens can live together in the community.

Commissioner Herrington explained he had problems with the press years ago. The Commission can not censor what the press says because they have the ability and desire to do what they want. He stated that in this society the English Language has more than one definition, and everything that you read is not always correct. He stated that no one bothered to straighten it out and he felt like it was a bit of animosity.

Dr. Armstrong stated that Commissioner Herrington was right and explained that the only way citizens get information other than coming to meetings is by radio, television and the news paper. He explained how the employees felt when they read something like that in the Newspaper. He pointed out that they felt like they were being picked on. Whenever the employees ask for raises they are advised that people will get laid off. Dr. Armstrong asked the Commission to do the right thing and mentioned that Election day comes around every three years.

Commissioner Herrington stated that he was elected by the people and he is doing a good job. He further stated that he would never worry about being re-elected.

Commissioner Darrisaw asked the Public Works employees if their 3 concerns were (1) Finance (2) Management and (3) Equipment. He stated that he was committed to the three areas and he did not believe in a lot of conferences and meetings. He explained the grievance procedure to the employees and advised them to submit all grievances in writing to their supervisor. He assured the employees that if they followed the procedure for filing a grievance correctly something will happen. He stated that employees will receive a raise and as a Commissioner he can make a difference. Commissioner Darrisaw next explained the Budget process to employees and added that the Budget will be balanced.

Many questions were raised from employees about the raises. Commissioner Darrisaw stated that he could not be accountable for raises that were promised in the past, but the City would give the best raise it can and employees will be treated as fair as possible.

Alvin Williams, a Public Works employee, asked if the negotiations progress would be open.

Commissioner Darrisaw stated that the Commission is past negotiation they need to get something done. He pointed out that he looked at the staffing process and directions have been given to restructure it. The employees present asked if they would have input in restructuring the management of the Public Works Department. Commissioner Darrisaw explained that once the process is reviewed the employees would have some input.

Mayor Wilson stated that the Commission is determined to get the budget completed. He asked the employees to select responsible people in their Department to address the Commission and he felt like 25 or 30 people were too many to accomplish anything.

Commissioner Darrisaw moved that a progress report on Finance, Management and Better Equipment be given. Motion died for lack of a second.

EXECUTE DOCUMENTS FOR FARMER'S MARKET

Commissioner Darrisaw made a motion that the portion of the minutes of the meeting of July 15, 1992 concerning the closing of Monck Street and execution of documents for the sale of City property to Georgia Ports Authority be amended to read as follows:

"The City Attorney stated that documents have been prepared for closing the sale of property in the Bay Street Urban Renewal Area to Georgia Ports Authority. He recommended that the Commission adopt a resolution closing Monck Street and a motion approving the agreement for sale to the Georgia Ports Authority and an agreement to indemnify Lawyers Title Insurance Company against a deed to secure debt that was not satisfied of record when the City acquired the property and

authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to execute those agreements in addition to an appropriate deed and the other closing documents.

Commissioner Lawrence moved that the following resolution be adopted: "Whereas, the Commission has determined that the section of Monck Street lying on the west side of Bay Street has ceased to be used by the public to the extent that no substantial public purpose is served by it, it is hereby resolved and certified that said section of Monck Street, shown on the attached copy of plat, is hereby declared to be abandoned, closed, and vacated. It is further resolved that said section of Monck Street shall be sold and conveyed to Georgia Ports Authority provided that title to that section of Monck Street will revert to the City in the event that Georgia Ports Authority ceases at any time to operate a port-related facility on the property." Motion was seconded by Commissioner Darrisaw. On call for the question, motion carried by vote of 4 to 1, Commissioner Herrington voting No.

"Commissioner Lawrence made a motion that the Commission approve the agreement for sale to the Georgia Ports Authority and agreement to indemnify Lawyers Title Insurance Company and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute those agreements and an appropriate deed and other closing documents. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Darrisaw. On call for the question, motion carried by vote of 4 to 1, Commissioner Herrington voting No."

Commissioner Lawrence seconded the motion to amend the minutes of the meeting of July 15, 1992. On call for the question the motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Herrington moved to hold an Executive Session to discuss a Personnel matter. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Darrisaw and was unanimously carried.

MEETING ADJOURNED.

Mayor

Attest _____
City Clerk