

***Mayor Robert E. Bruchey, II was administered the oath of office on Wednesday, March 1, 2006.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – March 7, 2006

On a motion duly made by Councilmember L. C. Metzner and seconded by Councilmember A. Parson-McBean, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote to meet in closed session at 3:30 p.m. to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto, #3. No formal action was taken at the session. The meeting was held in the Mayor's Office, 2nd floor at the City Hall. The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

WORK SESSION – March 7, 2006

Mayor Robert E. Bruchey, II called this Work Session and Executive Session of the Mayor and City Council to order at 4:04 p.m., Tuesday, March 7, 2006 in the Council Chambers at the City Hall. Present with the Mayor were City Council Members K. B. Aleshire, K. S. Cromer, L. C. Metzner, P. M. Nigh and A. Parson-McBean, City Administrator Bruce Zimmerman, and City Clerk D. K. Spickler.

Residential Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program and Conversion of Multi-Family to Single-Family Residences Tax Credit Program

Deborah Everhart, Economic Development Director, and John Schnebly, Chair of the Economic Development Commission Intergovernmental Committee, were present to discuss two tax credit programs.

Both issues were discussed during the Mayor and City Council meeting on November 1, 2005 and the County Commissioners on December 6, 2005. At that time, several issues were discussed concerning the administration of the program. In general, however, the Mayor and Council supported the proposed programs. Staff believes that the questions raised have been addressed.

The Residential Tax Credit Program will provide incentives to property owners who improve their properties for higher resale value and enhance the neighborhood. In addition, the program will reward property owners who attract responsible tenants to their rental units. The program provides relief from increased property taxes which result from repair and rehabilitation of the buildings. For single-family residences, the property owner must spend at least \$ 20,000.00 on the improvements. For multi-family residences, the property owner must spend at least \$ 20,000.00/unit for the total number of units in the building on the improvements. Ms. Everhart stated the \$ 20,000.00 requirement may seem low, but the property value increases with the improvements.

The Conversion of Multi-Family to Single-Family Residences Program will provide incentives to property owners who remove rental units from residential buildings and create owner-occupied dwellings.

The County would administer the program, with assistance from the City's Planning and Engineering Departments.

Councilmember Aleshire suggested expanding the eligibility area beyond the Community Legacy area. Mr. Schnebly stated the County Commissioners were looking at the program as an initiative to help revitalize some of the more dilapidated buildings in the downtown core and were not looking at a larger area.

Councilmember Nigh stated nothing that is offered seems to be enough to attract rehabilitation. Mr. Schnebly stated there is no guaranteed success. There has been modernization of some nice architecture. Mayor Bruchey indicated any program to spur rehabilitation is good.

Councilmember Aleshire asked if the core system would be defined before the program is put in place. Ms. Everhart stated it would be and the Permits and Inspections staff would be consulted.

Councilmember Aleshire asked that the benefits of owners adding residential units to their buildings for some additional credit be explored. He asked if an owner can have an action plan and be working on the project before receiving the tax credit. Ms. Everhart indicated the tax credit will not be implemented until July 1 of the year the property value increases.

Mr. Schnebly stated they did not talk through every practical situation. He welcomed comments and suggestions from the Mayor and Council. He stated they are trying to give encouragement to someone who is making a comprehensive modernization to the structure.

Councilmember Aleshire stated he supports the project and the programs. He has some concerns for the smaller structures.

Washington Gardens Update from Rodger Brown

Rodger Brown of Preservation of Affordable Housing was present to provide an update of the rehabilitation at Washington Gardens Apartment. Councilmember Parson-McBean had asked that Mr. Brown attend a meeting. He thanked the Mayor and City Council for their support.

Construction began in early January. To date, 44 of the 100 units have rehabilitated, including new windows, HVAC systems and interior improvements. All major construction will be completed by the end of August. The apartment complex will be a WIFI location. Due to mild weather, construction is 4 months ahead of schedule.

Councilmember Parson-McBean stated Councilmember Nigh had asked what happens if there is money left over after construction is completed. Mr. Brown stated the overall

project cost is over \$ 2,000,000.00. He anticipates that in January, 2007, they will be in a position to pay off the short term bond issue.

Councilmember Nigh asked how much the project has cost so far. Councilmember Cromer asked if government money was going to pay for the WIFI benefit. Mr. Brown stated it is not included in the loan.

Councilmember Cromer asked when the lighting and camera system would be started. Mr. Brown stated the lighting should be started within eight weeks and the camera work should be completed by August.

Councilmember Aleshire stated one of the biggest impacts in this neighborhood is the appearance. He asked what type of landscaping is being planned. Mr. Brown stated brush is being cleared now and there will be additional plantings and sidewalk improvements.

The Mayor and City Council thanked Mr. Brown for coming to the meeting.

Compensation Study Results

Donna Messina, Human Resources Director, stated in order for the City of Hagerstown to provide top level municipal services and government operations into the future, the City needs to improve its ability to attract and retain qualified employees in a very competitive employment market. The City has found itself serving as the “training ground”, investing in developing people to perform at a high level, only to lose them to agencies offering higher compensation. In September 2005, the Council approved an external study, conducted by Springsted, Inc. of Richmond, Virginia for the project. The firm was recommended unanimously by the City Coordinating Committee based on their experience and staff dedicated to the project.

Springsted representatives and the Coordinating Committee presented the findings of the study. Wage and benefit information was received from 12 external agencies to compare the City’s levels of compensation, in order to establish salary ranges for each position at a fair market bases for the duties of the position. It was anticipated that it would be a challenge to implement the recommendations in one year. Therefore, the committee understood that staff would need to develop a plan to phase in the implementation in a responsible and fair way across the board.

Ms. Messina stated this report has been long awaited. The Council room and the hallway is full. This body has taken steps to address the issues that have alleviated some of the under compensation. Many Blue Ribbon Committees have been formed that have resulted in reduced premiums for Worker’s Compensation and Health Care Insurance. The Health Committee is taking steps to make recommendations to the Mayor and Council to offset the impact of the retirement benefits that the City will be facing. The employees are the core of the city. They provide services to the citizens and do it very well.

John Anzivino, Vice President of Springsted Incorporated, and Ann Antonsen, Vice President of Springsted Incorporated, then presented the results of the Compensation Study to the Mayor and City Council. The Study represents a thorough and comprehensive review of all aspects of the City's classification and compensation system. The recommendations offered in this Study will increase the market competitiveness of the City's compensation program within the regional marketplace and provide increased internal equity among City positions. Implementation of these recommendations will help the City attract new employees and retain current employees needed to meet the City's service demands.

The major findings of the Study can be summarized as follows:

1. Salaries paid to City of Hagerstown employees are, for the most part significantly lower than the average salary rates paid in comparable regional organizations. Because salaries are below average market rates, the City experiences difficulty hiring and retaining employees. The City also experiences a high level of turnover in many positions that are paid at a higher rate by comparable organizations with which the City competes for employees. Based on the recommended salary schedule developed as part of this Study, they found that 12 percent of the City's workforce was paid at a rate below the minimum salary rate of their newly assigned pay grade.
2. Wage compression has also become a significant problem for the City. The City has had difficulty filling first line supervisory positions. This difficulty is the result of the lack of a significant wage differential between the supervisory employee and the line employees resulting in line employees being compensated at a higher rate of pay than their supervisors, when overtime compensation is included.
3. Internal pay relationship inequities exist within the City. Positions that require similar minimum qualifications and have comparable responsibilities should be compensated at comparable levels. They reviewed and updated all general City job classes and then evaluated each job class against standard criteria. In some cases, job classes were consolidated, particularly in the administrative support area. Each job class was assigned to a pay grade that reflected its internal relationship to other City positions thereby ensuring equitable pay relationships.
4. The Study offers a recommended 2006-07 salary schedule and an implementation schedule which would be effective on July 1, 2006. This schedule provides a strategy that ensures that all

employees are paid at least at the minimum of their assigned pay grade and that employees are placed in their new salary range based on years in their current position.

The study was completed by conducting meetings at City Hall, Public Works, the Light Department and the Water/Sewer Department. The majority of employees filled out the questionnaires and they should be commended for their response. Class descriptions were developed and preliminary class assignments were made. In some cases, the consultant recommended consolidating certain positions that performed similar duties and required similar skills. Simultaneously, Springsted solicited salary information from twelve public agencies and five private organizations identified in consultation with the City to determine the market for certain benchmark positions. Utilizing the salary data supplied by comparable organizations and the results of the Systematic Analysis and Factor Evaluation (SAFE) job evaluation system, each class was assigned to an appropriate salary grade in the City's compensation plan.

The Coordinating Committee members are: Tommy Kline, John Renner, Caroline Twigg, Todd Grimes, Wayne Hose and Donna Messina. The Coordinating Committee, with the approval of the Mayor and Council, worked with the firm selected to conduct a total compensation study from the beginning to the end of the process. This is the first city-wide study ever completed for the City of Hagerstown.

The Committee was not shocked to learn that City-wide, employees have been under compensated by roughly 18% of the regional fair market value. This fact has contributed to an inability to attract and retain highly qualified employees at every level of the organization.

Full implementation for the recommended salary ranges would be approximately 18% above the current rates. Although continuing loyal employees should see this disparity corrected immediately, in one step, the Committee recognizes that to do so would create a huge burden to present a balanced budget to the Mayor and Council.

Therefore, the committee recommends the changes to the salary scales be phased in over a three year period of time. This recommendation reduces the cost city-wide from \$4.7 million to \$2.1 million.

Tommy Kline, AFSCME 1540, welcomed Mayor Bruchey back to office. The thanked the Council for this opportunity to speak. He stated this study is not just about the unions, it is about all employees. The City needs to provide services with quality employees. He stated they are sometimes asked to do more technical jobs, which they don't mind. Jobs sometimes require certificates and licenses, which is not a problem. There is a problem because governments very close to Hagerstown offer up to \$ 10,000 more in compensation for the same job. He stated he thinks the recommendation is reasonable and he is willing to do what it takes to implement the plan. He stated communication has greatly improved within the City in the last few years. He stated employees are trying to work together and with the Mayor and City Council.

Caroline Twigg, Non Union Representative, stated the Non-union group usually doesn't have a voice but it was nice to be included in the process. She stated they worked as a group throughout the process. She is pleased with the volume of employee involvement and attendance here today.

John Renner, IBEW, stated they have lost two employees in the past year for higher paying jobs. He stated IBEW members are concerned with the amount of wages that are being paid in other organizations.

Todd Grimes, IAFF, thanked the Mayor and City Council and Bruce Zimmerman for putting employees in charge of this committee so they would have input on the findings. He thinks the study will help from a business point of view and a budgetary point of view. He stated they agreed, as a group, they would try to stay with these numbers as contracts are negotiated.

Wayne Hose, AFSCME 3373, thanked the Mayor and City Council for the opportunity to participate in the study. He stated it was clear from the beginning that this committee was determined to follow the process through. If you have committed people, you can move mountains. The doors of cooperation have been opened thanks to the Mayor and City Council. The Committee members are willing to work with the Mayor and City Council to see this through to the final stage.

Mr. Anzivino stated the City is not facing an unusual circumstance. He stated the Mayor and City Council need to recognize that these numbers get stale almost immediately. The City needs to keep moving forward with keeping the compensation rates current.

Mayor Bruchey thanked everyone for attending the meeting and making this presentation.

Councilmember Aleshire asked if the consultants would return to answer questions. Mayor Bruchey indicated he hopes the consultants would return and provide updates on a continual basis. Mr. Anzivino stated the elected officials need time to review the report.

Councilmember Metzner stated he made his decision when the RFP was accepted. He didn't question if the results would be accepted, only how the results would be implemented. He reiterated to City employees that he has said from the first day that this Council will be bound by the study. He stated he supports implementing the recommendations in the next three years. The relationship between employees and the governing body has changed dramatically in the last 18 months. He stated the Council said they would accept and implement this study.

Councilmember Nigh stated wages should have been raised earlier and she supports implementing the increases at this time.

Councilmember Parson-McBean echoed this sentiment. She stated it is important to look at the relationships that have been forged here. She stated it is easy for her to see it is necessary for this to be implemented. She stated they will do what they need to do for implementation.

Councilmember Cromer stated the employees know she supports the study. It should have been done a long time ago. The next step is finding the money so it can be implemented and pay employees what they deserve.

Councilmember Aleshire stated he will have numerous questions and would like to talk to the consultants again. It appears there are numerous approaches to look at the study. He asked if it includes cost of living adjustments or market rate wages.

Ms. Antonsen stated the information that was gathered included minimum, mid and maximum salary ranges for comparable positions. The mid-range salaries were compared to what wages were paid to employees in February, 2006.

Mr. Zimmerman stated he is sure the Committee and the consultants would be happy to answer questions from the Mayor and City Council. He stated they will be working from this recommendation in order to present a budget by the end of March. He stated the recommendation will be reflected in the proposed budget, along with the impact it will have on the budget.

A ten minute break was taken.

Hagerstown Fire Department Manpower Study

Fire Chief Gary Hawbaker was present to discuss the results of a manpower study for the fire department.

A Staffing Committee was appointed in 2000. The members are: Battalion Chief Kinglsey Poole/Randy Myers, FAO Frank Ridenour and FAO Richard Gilbert. Short Term Goals of the study included the following:

1. Dispatch second ladder truck on working incidents
2. Downgrade automatic alarm assignments
3. Increase incentives for volunteers
4. Staff Utility 3 with minimum of two firefighters 24/7
5. Develop an alphanumeric paging system for alerting
6. Research funding sources to pay for Mid Term Goals

Mid Term Goals included:

1. January 1, 2003 hire five firefighters, July 1, 2003 hire seven firefighters and July 1, 2004 hire seven firefighters
2. Hire additional personnel to attempt to meet MOSH mandates and NFPA recommendations

There are six volunteer stations in the department. The Fire Department headquarters are housed in the Market House. Total staff of the Department is 64. During the period between 1985 – 2005, Hagerstown has increased in the number of square miles by 22.8%. During the same time, the population increased by 11.5%. There has been an increase of 60% in incident responses since 1985. Ninety percent of incidents are emergencies. Total staffing has decreased from a total of 132 in 1985.

Hagerstown Fire Department had 50 volunteers 15 years ago, and now has 14 active volunteers. This is a 72% decrease. Some of the reasons for the decrease in volunteers could be changes in society, such as: longer commutes, two-income household, year-round youth sports and businesses that won't release workers at midday to jump on a fire truck. New people in town may just assume their taxes pay for needed services. There are now mandated stricter training requirements. Another issue could be personal issues, such as: career vs. volunteer or internal company politics. Or it could be something as simple as the question, Why should I risk my life and time for nothing?

Fire related training is 367 hours. For EMS/Rescue training, the requirement is 240 hours. National Standards and recommendations impact firefighter staffing levels also. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has a total requirement of 16 firefighters for an average structure fire.

In August of each year, Firehouse Magazine publishes a list of pay scales and staffing levels of departments across the country. They list how many firefighters there are on each engine and ladder truck. Out of 244 departments that responded to the survey, Hagerstown was the only department with one firefighter per engine.

The recommendations of the study are:

1. Create eighteen (18) new firefighter positions. This will add six (6) firefighters per shift and allow the department to have at least two (2) firefighters per engine. This will provide for a safe and more efficient incident scene, thus allowing the City to provide a higher level of service to customers. The salary and benefit cost per firefighter \$ 46,763 and other starting cost of \$ 1,770. The total first year cost for 18 firefighters would be \$ 873,594. According to Chief Hawbaker, this would be equal to 3.5 pennies on the real estate tax rate.
2. Create a training/safety officer position. (Salary and benefit cost \$ 71,434). This will create continuity between the three shifts and volunteers. Annual hours of required training for a firefighter/EMT is a total of 164 hours.

Additional benefits of 18 firefighters include:

1. Assist Community Rescue Service: provide driver for third unit, take over squad/rescue work, respond and assist on more EMS related incidents, and will allow CRS to meet NFPA 1710 that requires the arrival of first responder within four minutes 90% of the time.
2. Other Non-Fireground benefits: assist Fire Marshall Office with inspections. Inspections have increased 105% since 2003 and the time to complete them has gone from same day to at least 72 hours, reduce the amount of equipment responding to incidents and non-emergency tasks, perform and continually update preplan inspections of high risk properties, and reduce response times due to more apparatus being in the stations.

In summary, these requested positions have been needed for at least five years and if rapid growth continues, more will be requested. These firefighter positions cannot solve all the EMS problems but it will provide the opportunity to save CRS money if they accept some of the offers and more importantly, it will improve service to customers. Annexation has expanded the response area and with that, response times have increased to beyond the four and eight minute guidelines in NFPA 1710. It is believed that six stations are sufficient but there is a growing need to better serve customers to the west and north. Chief Hawbaker stated they would like to come back at a later date and make recommendations on how to address this issue. Some of the dedicated volunteers fear that with the addition of more career firefighters their role and responsibility will be diminished. Chief Hawbaker stated, as long as he is Chief, volunteers will be treated as the important asset they are to the department and to customers. These manning requests have nothing to do with career verses volunteer, they have to do with common sense, safety for all firefighters and a service level the customers deserve.

The requested number doesn't meet all recommendations as written but it does provide the department with what they need the most ... more firefighters on incidents. It needs to be understood that this number is the MINIMUM that is needed and that many items listed as benefits won't be realized until all 18 firefighters are hired.

Mr. Zimmerman stated Staff is hoping to share this information in order to start talking about a plan for implementation during the budget process. He asked how the Mayor and City Council preferred to move forward.

Councilmember Metzner thanked Chief Hawbaker for a good presentation. He would like to see this implemented as soon as possible. The Fire Department needs to be assured this request will be implemented. He stated one firefighter in an engine is unacceptable, more unacceptable than a 3.5 cent increase in the tax rate. He would rather take complaints from the public than not adding the additional firefighters.

Councilmember Parson-McBean commended the Fire Department for what they do and for being able to do it short handed. She stated they have to do what is necessary to make sure there is more than one person in an engine. She asked if Federal funding is available for more firefighters.

Chief Hawbaker stated the department has received money from FEMA during the last three years. This money was granted under the SAFE Act. He understands the President has recommended that this program not be funded this year.

Councilmember Parson-McBean stated she would like to see more than 19 firefighters hired.

Councilmember Cromer asked if firefighters are also trained as EMS providers. Chief Hawbaker stated the department assists CRS. If they had to, they could drive the ambulance.

Councilmember Aleshire asked if the numbers presented for incidents reflect the number of times the department goes outside the City limits. Chief Hawbaker stated the closest fire station is always called out for an incident. Councilmember Aleshire stated he sees three things as priorities for the department. They are: #1 efficient location; #2 minimum of two firefighters per engine and #3 adequate cross training.

Chief Hawbaker stated the idea of the Fire Department taking over EMS services completely would require a different study.

Mr. Zimmerman indicated Staff would work with the first two options and try to incorporate one of them into the budget. The proposed budget will reflect additional firefighters.

Mowing Services Bid and Dumpster Services Bids

Junior Mason, Parks Superintendent, presented mowing services and dumpster services bids to the Mayor and City Council for their review. All in One Lawn Service submitted a bid of \$ 17,999.00 for mowing and trimming in various parks. Mr. Mason stated Staff is recommending awarding the mowing & trimming services to All In One Lawn Service. Although the mowing season generally doesn't begin until April, he stated they are requesting the Council's verbal approval to proceed with awarding of the contract and anticipate formal approval on March 28, 2006. Mr. Mason stated there has been a contract for mowing at Fairgrounds Park for many years. However, since the equipment is at the Park, it would be more feasible for City employees to mow at Fairgrounds Park and contract out the smaller lots. The Parks Department employees will still take care of the core parks.

Allied Waste Services submitted a bid of \$ 3,714.69 for service at various locations. As in past years, the Hagerstown Suns have requested that a dumpster be placed at the Municipal Stadium beginning in mid March. Based on the bids received, Staff

recommends awarding the dumpster service contract to Allied Waste Services who has the current contract and has handled the trash pickup for many years. Although the new rates do not become effective until July 1, dumpsters need to be placed in the outer parks beginning in April.

Councilmember Nigh asked who did the mowing work in the past. Mr. Mason stated there was a crew that completed the mowing. Councilmember Nigh asked what the cost would be for a seasonal employee to do the mowing at the smaller parks. Mr. Mason stated the City would have to purchase equipment and gas and there would not be a significant cost benefit for City employees to mow.

Councilmember Parson-McBean asked when the backboards at Wheaton Park would be updated. Mr. Mason indicated the new boards have arrived and will be installed. Councilmember Parson-McBean wants to stay up to date with the upkeep at Wheaton Park.

Mr. Zimmerman stated these bids were being discussed at this meeting because the dumpsters need to be ordered.

It was the general consensus of the Mayor and City Council to approve awarding both the mowing services and dumpster services bids as presented.

2006 Hagerstown Cycling Challenge

Susie Salvagni, Events/Program Specialist, Joseph Jefferson, Team Director/Race Promoter, and Tim Lung were present to discuss the 2006 Hagerstown Cycling Challenge. The City of Hagerstown has partnered with the Antietam Velo Club for a number of years to host the Hagerstown Cycling Challenge. City staff has worked with the representatives of the Antietam Velo Club on the plans for the event for 2006.

For a number of reasons, the Antietam Velo Club is requesting early approval of the underwriting of City Services for their 2006 event slated for July 8, 2006. Obtaining early budget approval will allow the organization much more lead time to communicate with the local residents, in an effort to create an even more festive event. The sooner the budget is approved, the sooner potential sponsors can be contacted. There is also the issue of the logistics that are associated with promoting such an event. City staff has placed this in the department's request for the 2006/2007 Public Functions Budget and has estimated the cost at \$ 2,800.00.

It was the general consensus of the Mayor and City Council to grant early approval for this budget item.

Washington County Museum of Fine Arts – 75th Anniversary

Karen Giffin, Director of Community Affairs, Susie Salvagni, Events/Program Specialist, and Joe Ruzicka, Director of the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, were present to discuss the plans for the 75th Anniversary of the Museum.

As part of the celebration, the Museum has scheduled an artisan festival in City Park on September 16, 2006.

The Washington County Museum of Fine Arts is asking the City to partner with them in this event by underwriting the in-kind City services which will be out of the 2006/2007 fiscal year budget. The total of the services would be \$ 770.00. This amount includes city services of \$ 400.00 for Police and \$ 370.00 for Parks and Recreation. The City staff has placed this amount, plus \$ 630.00 for possible coordinated activities at the Hager House for a total of \$ 1,400.00, in the department's request for the 2006/2007 Public Functions Budget.

Mr. Ruzicka stated the Museum will host a community-oriented Festival for the Arts. There will be food, booths where artists and craftspeople may sell their creations, art-making activities for children, dance and drama productions by children and adults, music and special guided tours of the Museum's collection.

It was the general consensus of the Mayor and City Council to approve the requested amount.

US 40 at Edgewood Drive Reconstruction Project Overview

Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, provided an overview of the US 40 at Edgewood Drive Reconstruction Project. This is in anticipation of the joint meeting with the Board of County Commissioners on March 14, 2006, when the State Highway Administration (SHA) will make a presentation on the project.

The main topics that will be discussed at the March 14, 2006 meeting are the scope of the project, the cost and the schedule.

The intersection and most of the project is located within the City of Hagerstown. The project limits on Edgewood drive are completely within the City of Hagerstown's jurisdiction. The intersection currently has failing movements into the intersection. This project will address that failing movement as well as other intersection movements that are near failing.

Revised cost estimates will be presented by the SHA broken down with Edgewood Drive separate from US 40. Edgewood Drive has significant right-of-way acquisition costs that will make the Edgewood Drive portion of the project more expensive than the US 40 portion. Mr. Tissue stated he expects the total project cost to be approximately \$ 12 million.

Points for the City to consider include:

1. An important consideration is the cost of this project assuming that the State Highway and the County were not a part of this project. How does the cost of improving Edgewood Drive compare to the share that the City is being asked to participate in under this partnership?
2. City taxpayers already financially support State and County contributions to the project. Should the City commit to funding the final third of the project with City tax funds too? In other words, City taxpayers would be paying toward all three funding components of addressing a regional transportation project.
3. The City should consider an assessment district in the area to help fund any commitment that the City would make towards this project. There is a significant potential for development in the area that could fund the City's share.
4. An important consideration is that this project will provide capacity for this intersection for the next 20 years or so. However, there is a point where the capacity will again be reached and additional improvements may be needed.

After review of the project at the March 14, 2006 meeting, Staff suggests that Council review this issue at an early April workshop where a decision could be made about the City's participation in the project. A decision needs to be made quickly to allow the project design to continue and not delay the construction.

"Safe Haven Site" Signs

Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, stated Staff is seeking Mayor and City Council approval to proceed with installation of "Safe Haven Site" signs, as supplied by the Washington County Social Services Department. These signs would be located below existing blue "Hospital" directional signs at various locations in the City of Hagerstown, and at the Hagerstown Police Building.

A Statewide Bill in October 2002 established the "Safe Haven" program, and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2005 by the Health Department, Washington County Hospital, Social Services Department, Washington County Hospital, Social Services Department and various police agencies to begin this program in Washington County.

Under this program anyone will be able to drop off an unwanted baby at either the Washington County Hospital or the Hagerstown Police Department or the Hagerstown Police Department. These signs will direct the public to these locations. The intent of the program is to save the lives of infants who might otherwise be abandoned.

It was the general consensus of the Mayor and City Council to approve installation of the signs.

City Administrator's Comments

Bruce Zimmerman, City Administrator, thanked the Mayor and City Council for their willingness to address some difficult issues and their willingness to take steps to strengthen the organization and move forward in a positive direction.

Mayor and City Council Comments

Councilmember A. Parson-McBean apologized for not attending the State of the City address this morning. Her father is very ill and is in the hospital. This meeting has been very informative and enlightening. It gives her hope when she sees departments coming together and working toward many things. She stated Hagerstown can only become a better city when the Mayor and Council start empowering Staff to do things.

Councilmember K. B. Aleshire mentioned the House Keys 4 Employees program. This is a good program for government employees. He stated the City needs to address its policies as they relate to water and sewer as soon as possible after the report is filed from the Water Task Force. He mentioned the list of 2006 Building Community meeting dates. Councilmember Parson-McBean mentioned these dates are not to be publicized. He stated he had a meeting with Demcore Development, at their request, to discuss a program similar to the tax credit program discussed earlier in this meeting. He hopes the program can be finalized before the budget process begins. He noted the Herald Mail published an article about the State of the City address that was held this morning. However, the article was not very positive. The presentation was positive and highlighted the good things that are happening in Hagerstown.

Councilmember K. S. Cromer attended the State of the City address. She thanked Mayor Bruchey for making the presentation. She feels the Council picked the right person for the Mayor's position. She would like to pursue moving the Citizen Comments portion of the regular session to the beginning of the meeting, before the voting portion of the meeting. It was the general consensus of the Mayor and City Council to revise the Rules of Procedure to make this change. She presented a summary from the most recent 2 + 2 Committee meeting. She asked that copies be provided to the Washington County Commissioners. She stated she will not open mail that has no return address on it. She is cautious because of the hate mail she received. She noted the Civil War Heritage Area grant deadline is approaching. She asked if the City will be submitting an application. Mr. Zimmerman indicated Kathleen Maher, Planning Director, and County Staff have been working on this project. An update will be presented.

Councilmember L. C. Metzner commended the Council members for their wisdom in selecting the Mayor. It is a pleasure to attend meetings that run smoothly.

Councilmember P. M. Nigh thanked Bruce Zimmerman and Kathleen Maher for attending the hearings in Annapolis to testify against the annexation bill. She also thanked the Mayor for taking her with him to the hearings. She thanked Councilmember Cromer for the 2 + 2 Committee information. She asked how many grants are applied for by the City. Councilmember Parson-McBean will research this. She also attended the State of the City address. She stated she understands more people are needed in many departments, but Public Safety is a significant issue that needs to be addressed.

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II thanked the Council for the opportunity to serve as Mayor again. He thanked the Chamber of Commerce for sponsoring the State of the City address. He feels they have moved forward in the city during the last four years and eight months. He vowed to keep moving forward.

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and City Council, on a motion duly made by Councilmember L. C. Metzner and seconded by Councilmember K. S. Cromer, the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna K. Spickler, City Clerk

Approved: _____