

CITY OF HARTSVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA  
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
DECEMBER 17, 2009

Present: Mayor Pennington IV  
Mayor Pro-Tem Andrews  
Councilmember Braddock  
Councilmember Graham  
Councilmember James  
Councilmember Shirley  
Councilmember Wilson  
City Attorney Driggers

Staff: City Manager Pennington  
City Clerk/Admin Services Director Skipper  
Deputy Clerk DuBose

Press

PURSUANT TO FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT SC CODE 30-4-80: WRITTEN NOTICE WAS DELIVERED TO THE PRESS BY EMAIL ON DECEMBER 14, 2009 AND DULY POSTED IN CITY HALL. PURSUANT TO CITY CODE SECTION 2-36 AND 2-47 UPON MOTION(S) MADE TO WAIVE THE READING OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS IN THEIR ENTIRETY; THEY ARE READ BY TITLE ONLY. APPROVED ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS ARE FILED WITH ORIGINAL MINUTES AND NOT REPRINTED HEREIN.

Mayor Pennington called the meeting to order and asked Councilmember Braddock lead in the invocation and pledge.

**COUNCIL DISCUSSION**

Mayor Pennington in the announcement today of the awards for the first round of grants almost all grants awarded were public/private partnerships or public and most were for fiber to the home. A small town in New Hampshire, comparable to Hartsville, was awarded a grant. There is no guarantee and it will be hard work but this is a great opportunity for Hartsville and our citizens.

City Manager Pennington has spoken with clients of the two bidders and they provided the following feedback:

CTC is theoretical and political based company. They will provide a high quality feasibility study. The company is very good at communicating with their client.

Uptown is a hands on, in the ditches company. They will also provide a high quality feasibility study and do a very good job of communicating with their clients. Dave Stockton is very good to work with but clients have found the other partner a little more difficult as they have had to sit him down and firmly tell him no on issues.

All who we spoke with stated the need to keep in mind that the City is the "boss" and not to let the company push us into more than we can handle. Both companies are known for being strait forward and will tell us if the project is not feasible. Reference cities have all invited Council to visit and view their systems. One person told us to keep in mind that people sometimes stick with the same old thing so it takes good marketing and time. Both companies are able to do the study. A third bidder withdrew their bid as they don't believe they'll be able to feasibly complete the project, as they are new in this area of technology.

Mayor Pennington Council has an offer from a corporate partner for Council to visit the other locations. The City of Wilson has also offered us the blueprints to their system. In talking with the local delegation, it was mentioned that Lamar does not have internet service; this could be an opportunity for us. On bids, the decision this morning makes him feel more at ease with the political side and he feels good about Uptown Services.

Mayor Pro-Tem Andrews wondered which option is better. Has CTC provided this service anywhere close to us?

Mayor Pennington no, they work mostly in the north and west. Uptown was more definitive with their stance and they have so much knowledge. Both companies must have a template to plug the numbers into but both are capable.

Mayor Pro-Tem Andrews did either company have a grant awarded today?

Mayor Pennington doesn't know. Dave Stockton has said fiber to the home from day one while CTC was pushing middle mile. Fiber to the home is future looking and can support technology for the next 20 years.

Mayor Pro-Tem Andrews asked if middle mile alleviates the SC legislative restrictions.

Mayor Pennington no, it is just a little different fight. The ball is rolling downhill in our favor. Today's announcement will push federal legislature to come out with legislation to go all the way down to the states.

Mayor Pro-Tem Andrews if we are awarded the grant funds and then have to fight a legal battle do we have to use the money within a certain time? Or if we lose the legal battle what happens with the money?

Mayor Pennington I don't think there is a time restriction. If we lay the network, we don't have to comply with SC regulations until we hook up to a home.

Councilmember James the feasibility study will help us and tell us a lot.

Councilmember Braddock asked if the feasibility study would give line-by-line detailed information.

City Manager Pennington the study will give us a detailed business plan.

Councilmember Braddock asked the City Manager if he talked to references of CTC.

City Manager Pennington yes, we were told it was a long process but they will work you through it. In checking the company's references, he realized he knew the person in Wilson, NC who told him Uptown Services would be very thorough and make sure everything is done right.

Councilmember Wilson didn't CTC say even if we go with Uptown Services they will still work with us.

Mayor Pennington yes, on the policy and lobbying side of things, guiding us on allies, etc.

Councilmember Wilson how long does it take to complete the study?

Mayor Pennington the study takes approximately three months.

City Manager Pennington this is a good proposal, the best he's seen in a long time.

Councilmember Braddock asked why the third company withdrew.

City Manager Pennington they are new and don't have the ability to do it.

Mayor Pennington they have a regional office in Charlotte and are a wholesale provider so there is still the opportunity for a future partnership.

City Manager Pennington either company can do the study and if approved we can contract with either company or someone else to implement the network.

**RES 55-09: APPROVAL OF BID AWARD FOR BROADBAND FEASIBILITY STUDY – APPROVED.**

**Motion: Andrews; Second: James; Carried: All ayes.**

City Manager Pennington staff will contact Dave Stockton tomorrow to get the contract process started.

**ADJOURN**

**Adjournment at 6:00pm.**

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**Carl M. (Mel) Pennington IV**  
**Mayor**

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Sherron L. Skipper, CMC**  
**City Clerk**