

# Clinton approves spec fund transfer, pulls back signage bid

By Judith Brown  
Staff Writer

Clinton City Council honored one of the city's long-standing churches Monday night as council proclaimed this upcoming Sunday as Hebron Baptist Church Day in the City of Clinton.

The resolution was offered in celebration of the 135th anniversary for the church, which has had 15 different pastors over the years since its founding in a brush arbor in 1883 by Rev. G.W. Watson.

Bailey Manor's director, Rita Stanley, was also honored by council for her 10 years in service to the Bailey Manor Christian Retirement Community and to the Clinton community.

In other business, council agreed to City Manager Bill Ed Cannon's request to transfer \$312,199 from the city's economic development fund to the Clinton Economic Development Corporation's restricted speculative building fund.

"I think it should be pointed out that these funds are restricted and can only be used for this specific purpose," Mayor Bob

McLean explained, as council voted unanimously to approve the resolution which moves the funds toward repayment of a \$3,200,000 economic development loan by Santee Cooper.

Last month the city held a groundbreaking ceremony for the planned 60,000-square-foot spec building in its Clinton 26 Corporate Park just across the I-26 bridge on U.S. Highway 72.

When the building is purchased or leased, those funds will be repaid, but until that time Santee Cooper needed approval from the City of Clinton and its assurance that the loan will be repaid.

Each year council appropriates up to \$400,000 for the enhancement and development of marketable products to entice industry to the corporate park, according to the resolution passed by council. The spec building is being constructed on a pad which was built last year. Last September, council offered its support to the CEDC in its plan to secure the \$3 million loan from Santee Cooper in hopes of offering and selling another spec building.

The first spec building was leased last year by a General

Electric research program before construction was completed.

In other news, council was planning to consider the approval of funding for the construction of two city signs to mark the same I-26 highway entrance at Exit 54. Council chose instead, however, to pull back the project and put it out for bid again after the low bidder presented the need for a cost increase due to the newly instituted federal steel tariffs.

For some time council and the CEDC have talked about the need to use hospitality tax funds for signs to draw attention to the corporate park highway entrance, but meeting stringent SC Department of Transportation requirements and then approval by DOT engineers had delayed the project.

According to a report sent by CEDC director Marvin Moss, sign plans had been part of the initial landscaping project. The design had already been pared down, approved by the DOT and last month council chose the low bid of \$57,940 from Clinton-based sign company, #1 Sign Designs.

When the company owner checked process the day follow-

ing council's June 4 approval, steel and aluminum costs had already risen 10 percent since he compiled the bid, and materials had jumped 17 percent within a week and a half of council's June meeting.

"The rising cost of steel and aluminum has been validated by THS Constructors, who is building our spec building," Moss said in his report to council.

Moss explained the new steel tariffs were causing steel and aluminum costs to increase almost daily, and the sign company said he would need the bid price to be increased to \$68,194.

Cannon told council, however, that he was unfamiliar with the concept of bid increases and he suggested council pull back on the project in order to put them out for bids again.

"I have spent 25 years in the public as an engineer and I've never heard of this," Cannon said. "But it may be different for South Carolina."

Council agreed to Cannon's recommendation to step back and begin bid process again for the I-26 signage. The city's SCDOT Sign Permit expires this November.



Photo by Judith Brown

**HARD WORK HONORED** — Clinton Mayor Bob McLean presents a resolution during Monday night's Clinton City Council meeting to Rita Stanley, the director of Bailey Manor in Clinton, recognizing her extensive outreach work to the Clinton community for the past 10 years. The retirement community facility is under contract to be sold by the end of July.

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