



CITY OF COLUMBIA  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2013  
CITY HALL – 1737 MAIN STREET  
CONFERENCE ROOM

The Columbia City Council met in Executive Session and conducted a Work Session on Tuesday, February 18, 2014 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Pro-Tempore Brian DeQuincey Newman called the meeting to order at 12:28 p.m. and the following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, and The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan. The Honorable Leona K. Plough and The Honorable Moe Baddourah arrived at 12:35 p.m. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin arrived at 12:40 p.m. Also present were Ms. Teresa B. Wilson, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Moore, City Clerk. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Upon a motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 12:28 p.m.

1. Discussion of employment of an employee – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
2. Receipt of legal advice which relates to matters covered by attorney-client privilege – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
3. Discussion of matters relating to proposed location or expansion of services to encourage location or expansion of industries or other businesses – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
4. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the Executive Session at 2:19 p.m. Mr. Newman was not present for the vote.

- **Mr. Newman returned to the meeting at 2:20 p.m.**

### **CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION**

5. Police Chief Search Update – Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager provided an update on the police chief search process. She reported that the candidates are in town today and they began a process with the Police Department and a focus group representing a cross-section of the department while

visiting each command region with a captain. She added that the Community Stakeholders' Panel will meet tomorrow morning with each candidate rotating between each group; during tomorrow afternoon, they will meet with the Police Chief Search Committee; and then meet with City Council before having a public forum tomorrow evening. She noted that she will meet with the candidates on Wednesday morning along with Senior Assistant City Manager S. Allison Baker to get their perspectives. She acknowledged that she has a big decision to make, but she will take her time. She was adamant that they initiated a transparent process on November 12, 2013 and she stands behind that process. She stated that the citizens feel very strongly about public safety and so does she. She insisted that she takes any inference to any lack of integrity towards this process personal, but she knows that this is for the benefit of the public. She asked the public to recognize that as the manager, she has a lens that is greater than anyone else's and she has to take all of that into account when making a decision. She said she tried to get a cross-section of our community in the stakeholders group and they all come from varying aspects of the issue. She acknowledged that Robert Bolchoz the Search Committee Chair is in attendance. She said that questions about the process should be referred to the Human Resources Director Pam Benjamin.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee addressed allegations regarding a confrontation he had with Larry Sypolt on February 6, 2014. He prefaced it by saying that the letter with the names of the five (5) candidates that invited for interviews was sent to the City on January 30, 2014. He explained that he was at dinner with his wife on Thursday, February 6, 2014, when Larry Sypolt approached them and inquired about the police chief search. He said he told Mr. Sypolt that he sent the five (5) names to the City. He said that Mr. Sypolt then asked who those folks were. He said he didn't tell him who they were. He said Mr. Sypolt then asked if Chief Santiago was on the list. He got the impression that Mr. Sypolt may have known already so he told him that he was not. He reported that Mr. Sypolt advised him that he felt like it was a matter of politics, Santiago hadn't been given a chance, and the process was all political. He said Mr. Sypolt then alleged that I was a political hack and other allegations were made about the committee as a whole. Mr. Bolchoz admitted that he took exception to that and that he may have responded harshly to Mr. Sypolt. He said the committee has put dozens of hours into this process and he is very comfortable with the names that were sent by the committee and the way in which they were chosen. He noted for the record that he was not drunk and he did not tell Mr. Sypolt that he had picked the police chief or that the committee was a sham. He said when he was apprised of the anonymous email that went out Sunday night, he responded to it and later in that same week, he sent another email answering further questions. He said this theory that one person could commandeer this process to select the police chief, is completely unfounded. He spoke highly of the committee. He stated that the theory that he could coerce them into doing something is ridiculous and unfair to them. He acknowledged that he sent a text message apologizing to Mr. Sypolt the next morning. He reiterated that he sent the names over seven (7) days prior to that incident; they had all been chosen; and the information would have been subject to a Freedom of Information request in the following weeks.

Councilor Davis said there has always been a process for hiring a police chief. He said when people ask him about it, he tells them that there is a process in place and when there is a recommendation, the City Manager will bring it forward. He is baffled by the fact that there was an extended conversation in public about the committee, the process, who's in, who's out. He asked why that would happen. He takes this sacredly, because he and his colleagues will be held accountable. He is having problems and is uncomfortable at this point. He said it was suggested that he should talk with Mr. Bolchoz one on one, but because of perceptions, he didn't want to do that; he didn't want anybody to think he was trying to sway the decision one way or another. He doesn't have the feeling that the confidentiality of this process was taken seriously.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee continued to report that there was an initial meeting wherein the committee discussed the kind of process that would be used and how it would go, but first, all committee members were provided with all of the applications. He noted that by virtue of the backgrounds, some amount of the applications were not qualified on the bright-line measures that were put in place.

Councilor Runyan asked what some of those bright-line measures would have been.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said the master's degree and the command experience; it was all in the job posting. He believes the City Manager also addressed this at her initial press conference. He continued to report that the committee narrowed the applications down to twenty-five (25).

Councilor Runyan asked if having a master's degree was a bright-line.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said it was preferred.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said someone without a master's degree could be interviewed for the job. He continued to report that by repeatedly evaluating the applications, the committee ultimately narrowed it down to twelve (12) people that would be interviewed by the Search Committee. He noted that one (1) of those twelve (12) people withdrew from consideration. He reported that on January 10, 2014, the Search Committee interviewed the eleven (11) candidates for at least thirty (30) minutes; the committee met afterwards to consider them; and the stakeholder meetings were held. He noted that the determination of which twelve (12) people to interview out of the twenty-five (25) was done by an anonymous ballot amongst the five (5) committee members. He said after the interviews and the stakeholder's meetings, the five (5) committee members then voted on the eleven (11) that were left and each committee member had five (5) votes. He reported that of the five (5) names he received back, four (4) of the applicants had five (5) votes each and one (1) candidate had four (4) votes. He noted that anyone who didn't get four (4) votes wasn't included on the list of five (5) candidates. He said those are the names that I put in the letter; those were the folks that we recommended for further consideration; I sent that letter to the City on January 30, 2014. He stated that there would be no way for a person to get on that list of twelve (12) without receiving the necessary votes from amongst the committee and there was no way to be in the final five (5) without receiving more than

four (4) votes of the committee; there was no way that one (1) person could put somebody on that list or keep somebody from getting on the list; not one (1) or two (2) committee members would have that ability.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager stated that Interim Chief Santiago was interviewed in the group of eleven (11).

Mayor Benjamin asked if the committee used some sort of matrix, objective criteria or certain qualities you were looking for in candidates and weighed those appropriately or was it primarily based on an individual committee member's general assessment of the individual candidate.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said we left that to each committee member to evaluate on their terms; we all bring different backgrounds; and we decided to let folks use their own body of experience to make a determination.

Councilor Devine asked if there was a discussion among the group regarding things or did you just do the secret ballots as part of the process.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee didn't recall a lot of in-depth discussion; we were in the room for fourteen (14) hours on the day of the interviews and we had observations about the candidates, but from a standpoint of timeliness and to get a baseline of where we stood, I asked each candidate to give me their ideas as to who their top five (5) were.

Councilor Devine asked if the search committee did references.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said no.

Councilor Devine clarified that the committee went through all of the applications, interviewed or spoke with all of the people and then four (4) finalists received a vote of every person on the committee.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said that's correct.

Councilor Newman said he has questions based on concerns he received from the community. He said he doesn't have a problem with the process. He said one concern that was lingering is that there was a consensus to not truly consider anybody from the Columbia Police Department. He said the rubric that was used and anonymous voting doesn't prohibit sidebar conversations. He asked if there were any conversations about not considering anybody from the Columbia Police Department for whatever reason. He said it was relayed to him that comments were made and emails were sent early on. He noted that those emails were not from the City Manager. He requested a response to that.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee reiterated that they interviewed Chief Santiago.

Councilor Newman said people have asked him specifically about Santiago, but this isn't just about Santiago; I want the best person; I don't know who else applied from the Columbia Police Department.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said they did not have a predetermined decision to not consider Columbia Police Officers; the greatest amount of conversation about the candidates occurred before we cut the list to twelve (12) and there was no predetermined rule that we were going to cut out any of those people working for the department.

Ms. Pamela Benjamin, Human Resources Director said we only had two (2) internal candidates that applied and the other one (1) was not qualified, because he did not have commander rank experience.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said all of the committee members would certify that, if asked.

Councilor Runyan said part of his concern is that this Council and management received an email with explicit allegations in it and he sent an email to the City Manager and the City Attorney asking if the allegations in that email are true or false. He said no one has provided a yes or no answer to that.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said he was clear that those allegations were false; I think I answered that in my previous email; I think the process I just described would preclude those allegations from being true.

Councilor Runyan said your previous email didn't address the allegations at all.

Councilor Devine said that's not true. She insisted that this is a process; he has answered those questions; we must have a certain amount of respect and decorum for everyone who comes in front of us; and when we ask citizens to participate, we have to give them that respect; he may not have provided the answer you wanted, but he has answered it several times.

Councilor Runyan asked Mr. Bolchoz if it took five (5) affirmative votes to move forward in the next round; would a single person voting against a candidate remove them from the final mix.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee clarified that if you didn't get at least four (4) votes from the five (5) committee members, you would not have made it.

Councilor Runyan asked if every vote carried a lot of weight.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said yes.

Councilor Runyan asked if Ruben Santiago was always considered a potential hire for the final group of five (5) for Mr. Bolchoz personally.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said yes; I took this every seriously; everybody who applied received my utmost consideration; I spent countless hours reading every application.

Councilor Runyan asked Mr. Bolchoz if the fact that the Chief was an employee of the Columbia Police Department didn't preclude him from consideration as a finalist.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said correct.

Councilor Runyan offered to read a document for the record.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said his answer remains the same. He admitted that he expressed a list of concerns he had months ago to the Mayor. He said in that list he felt like we needed to consider the fact that we didn't need a police chief from within the Columbia Police Department and that we needed to revisit whether or not we should have the Sheriff run the entire public safety operation for the county. He said the answer to that is yes, but when asked to serve on this committee, I gave everyone the same consideration, because a lot of time had passed. He insisted that he could not have kept a single candidate from being on that final list of five (5) or twelve (12).

Councilor Runyan quoted Mr. Bolchoz as saying on August 8, 2013, "*The chief's position should not be open to any current or former member of the Columbia Police Department. Chief Santiago has done an admirable job of trying to right the ship at the CPD under very difficult circumstances. There are many excellent officers in the department truly dedicated to public service and safety, but they are hamstrung by the turmoil and allegations of serious misdeeds at the top. The current organization is dysfunctional to a point that requires radical change at the highest level.*" He said so you are telling me that you were not predisposed against Interim Chief Santiago.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said I could not control that process and I was not predisposed against him. He said there are people on the committee that will certify that after the interviews I spoke up and said lets revisit this.

Councilor Runyan asked if those were Mr. Bolchoz's words.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said yes, those are my words.

Councilor Baddourah asked at what stage in the process the public provided input.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said it was before we picked the five (5) finalists.

Councilor Baddourah asked if they considered the public's input before they selected the five (5) finalists.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said yes.

Councilor Baddourah said a lot of people think's this is personal between the committee and Chief Santiago, but I never saw it that way; I thought it was a well put together committee to pick the best man for the job.

Councilor Devine asked Ms. Benjamin if she was present at all of the meetings and a witness to what was said and done. She asked if Ms. Benjamin had any concerns about what she witnessed.

Ms. Pamela Benjamin, Human Resources Director said yes; there was nothing improper or unethical about the process; I presented all fifty (50) applications for consideration. She noted that the committee members also vetted some of the candidates through their own contacts.

Mayor Benjamin asked why an objective matrix or scoring criteria wasn't used in this process to rate the candidates. He asked if background checks have been ran.

Ms. Pamela Benjamin, Human Resources Director said there are lots of ways to interview and assess applicants; they used the position posting and the criteria outlined on that in order to determine the first level of evaluation. She said they were looking for people with a bachelor's or a master's degree and at least eight (8) years of progressive leadership experience in their law enforcement career.

Mayor Benjamin clarified that he was asking about rating candidates as to whom the top five (5) are; oftentimes, a scoring matrix is used.

Ms. Pamela Benjamin, Human Resources Director said they did not use a specific scoring sheet and reference checks were done prior to announcing the five (5) candidates.

Mayor Benjamin asked if the three (3) of them were pleased that all five (5) crossed that threshold as it relates to background checks; did they all remain viable candidates.

Ms. Pamela Benjamin, Human Resources Director said yes.

Councilor Plough reminded her colleagues that the City Manager sent them a job description to review and she recalled making comments on it before it was posted. She said her colleagues are also trying to do the right thing for constituents and she would like to hear from the people who came here to speak.

Councilor Newman asked Mr. Bolchoz to talk about the public forums that were held, because he heard that some folks were not allowed to speak and some were.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said the stakeholders' panel consists of twenty-one (21) people and we were concerned about making sure we gave each one a reasonable amount of time to present their key concerns while getting this done in a couple of hours. He said there were some folks who were interested in giving us their input and we heard from other folks. He noted that the allegation that he shouted some people down is false. He said we heard from some who wanted to speak on behalf

of Chief Santiago, but we didn't want to spend the whole evening hearing from folks, because the committee had a meeting afterwards. He stated that it was and still is his view that it wasn't fair to other candidates to have this effort going on. He didn't know who organized it and he made the decision to cut that off.

Mayor Benjamin said he understands Mr. Bolchoz's rationale, but it would be ill-advised; we try to make sure that we hear out the public regardless of what the content might be or where it might be coming from.

Mr. Robert Bolchoz, Chair of the Police Search Committee said he has learned a lot as a volunteer and his cutting off the remarks had very little to do with him not wanting to hear them; the intent was to be home before midnight.

Councilor Plough said she sat through the meeting; the opportunity for the public to speak wasn't on the agenda; and we did hear from supporters of Chief Santiago, but we didn't let it expand into echoes.

Mayor Benjamin noted that individual voices, opinions held by two (2) different people from different sides of town are not an echo, they are individual opinions. He said it is important to allow citizens to be heard.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said the meeting was noticed for the community stakeholders panel only and public input was not part of the agenda.

Mr. Walter Marks, 1605 Heyward Street / member of the Stakeholder Committee said the City Manager and the Chairman were being very gracious. He said when they allowed these folks to speak, he became uncomfortable, because he didn't know if they were planted there; everybody came and said the same thing. He knew this was going to be an emotional hire just like the strong mayor proposition and the baseball stadium. He said they developed a very detailed list of questions from the citizens committee. He said one of the strongest points was that the City of Columbia doesn't do enough research to find a leader that can do all phases of this job.

Councilor Davis said he has learned to take what people say very seriously and to allow them to talk. He said you have a responsibility and a duty to do things right; this is a sacred process.

Councilor Runyan said the only questions raised were regarding a single member of the committee and as elected officials we have an ethical duty to ask questions when we receive information like that; we also have a job to do.

Mr. Walter Marks, 1605 Heyward Street / member of the Stakeholder Committee said the paper shed this in a different light and I am glad that I stood behind the process and the City Manager.

Mr. Billy Shuler said he has been volunteering for six (6) years with the Sheriff's Department and there are a whole lot of things that haven't come out about Santiago such as him training officers in Afghanistan. He said Santiago is all over the place; he doesn't send representatives and he did the same thing in the Sheriff's Office when he created the CAT Team. He said we are grassroots, we hear things and it ticks me off that they tackled this without feeling the pulse of the committee.

Rev. Darwin Miller asked that the recommendation be rescinded, because it is biased. He said the chairman came here with intent in mind; they had secret ballots; and this man could have rigged everything. He hopes we can get this thing straightened out before a police chief is hired. He said that Santiago has been a great force in the community; he is working on his master's degree in the field of criminal justice; and he deserves a fair chance like everybody else. He insisted that the chairman should have stepped down long ago.

Mayor Benjamin clarified that it is legitimate and it's important for citizens to question a process and to be outspoken on behalf of candidates, but we need to keep it within those bounds. He said when we go to character issues, we cross the line. He asked that we all stay within those lines; civility is key.

An unidentified male commended the City Manager and the committee's efforts to say they want a national top flight police chief for this City. He said the citizens do, too; we've had seven (7) chiefs in the last eight (8) years. He said what better way to interview for a job than having done it for a year and performed in an unprecedented way; bringing violent crime down 25% and property crimes down 12%. He said if there was something wrong with Chief Santiago that prevents him from being considered as our Chief of Police, why has he been named as our interim chief and why is he still in the seat. He said this man has the best training the nation has to offer and he has performed with the national elite. He asked why he isn't being considered in the top five (5) candidates. He presented a letter requesting Santiago's appointment as police chief.

Mr. Larry Sypolt described the conversation with Mr. Bolchoz as civil, but at the end of that conversation, it was clear that Ruben Santiago was not a choice for Mr. Bolchoz and the City Manager; Mr. Bolchoz had indeed selected somebody that he thought would be the best person for the job out of that top five (5); and he wanted to make a wager on this individual being the police chief for more than two (2) years. He said if you are going to be in charge of a process, you can't have a predisposed notion. He said Council needs to appoint individuals from outside the city or they will have an opinion. He noted that if he was the chairman of the committee, he would have picked Ruben Santiago.

Mr. Tommy Burkett said he has known Chief Santiago for over five (5) years and anything he has done with the City or County has been positive. He said that Chief Santiago has everyone's respect. He noted that in the last twelve months, Chief Santiago has served as the Assistant Chief of Police and he did a great deal of work, crime is down and he is a truthful person that represents the City of Columbia.

Ms. Katheryn Fenner, 700 Pendleton Street said everybody thinks Ruben Santiago is doing a wonderful job and anybody else you bring in will truly be behind the curve. She said if more weight would've been given to the knowledge of the committee this might have been somewhat different.

Mr. Carl Fredrick commended the City Manager for exhibiting the character needed during difficult times. He advised the City Manager that she has a lot of support throughout the community. He said this process for selecting a chief is widely used in many searches. He said not everyone could make the cut. He said the applicants were unduly criticized and this is an all-time low for the City of Columbia. He asked if the officers of the department were considered throughout this process. He said officers continue to leave the department and it could be that they are not satisfied with the current leadership.

Ms. Yvonne McBride expressed concerns about the validity of the process. She questioned the amount of human resource experience that was present and how much training was given to the committee. She expressed concerns about the selection process and not having a matrix to help provide guidelines in terms of scoring. She recommended in the future that we look at the best possible practices to include using a matrix and consider using an outside person to recruit applicants.

Mr. Jon Sears, Five Points business owner said it has been a sheer pleasure dealing with Ruben. He recalled being able to contact Ruben during the early morning hours and he has taken care of the problem. His biggest gripe is having somebody come in from another state. He said Ruben is the best man for the job here; why are we looking for somebody else.

Mr. Tim Smith, Owner of Papa Jazz said he is concerned that we get the best possible candidate. He said members of the community feel that we put out a help wanted sign, but we didn't actually do a lot of recruiting.

Councilor Baddourah asked what's next in the process with the four (4) candidates.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said they will start tomorrow morning with the community stakeholders group and individual interviews with the stakeholders group; they will have a meet and greet session with City Council; they will attend a public input session tomorrow evening; on Thursday, we will meet with the candidates; and I will take the collective information from the assessment period and begin the rest of the process.

- **Council recessed at 3:52 p.m.**
- **Council reconvened at 4:24 p.m.**

6. [Update from our Economic Development Partners](#) – Mr. Wayne Gregory, Director of Economic Development

Mr. Wayne Gregory, Director of Economic Development said we've invited the partners that we fund to speak about job creation and how their organizations tie into our citywide strategic plan for economic development.

- [Central SC Alliance](#) – Mr. Mike Briggs, President and CEO

Mr. Mike Briggs, President and CEO of Central SC Alliance said they are a 501(c) 3 not for-profit corporation that was incorporated in 1994 in Columbia and the City of Columbia is a founding member. He said the corporation represents ten (10) counties in the center of South Carolina, the City of Columbia and the University of South Carolina in their economic development efforts. He said the corporation is the oldest and largest full service alliance in the state and is celebrating 20 years in working with companies that have committed to invest \$10.2 billion and to create 62,000 jobs. He said over \$200 million of those dollars have been announced in the City of Columbia along with 33,000 jobs. As he looks forward to the next twenty (20) years, he said that the economy is quite robust from an economic development standpoint and there is a lot of pent up demand. He reported that Columbia is being put in the same category with cities such as Charlotte and Atlanta. He explained that we are located in the center of an aeronautic cluster; we have a port proximate to our region; we have a flagship university in the center of the City; we are a capital City; and we have amenities that differentiate us from other similarly situated areas in the United States. He expressed concerns with the continuation of creating private places to put people. He said we need to be mindful that we must have locations for people to go to or they won't come and we must continually push up the workforce skill level. He said we are on a roll and we need to continue to be vigilant about doing what needs to be done to move forward.

- [City Center Partnership](#) – Mr. Matt Kennell, President and CEO

Mr. Matt Kennell, President and CEO of the City Center Partnership reported that it has been a record year with many new businesses opening their doors or currently under construction. He said the new Soda City Market has been a huge success; the downtown vacancy rate is at 8.7%, the lowest it has been in the last several years; the Marriot finished its \$12 million refresh project; and BB&T has relocated its state headquarters and added more employees to downtown. He reported that they worked with the City on the bike corrals. He distributed copies of newly published maps for downtown businesses. He said we are doing what the City wants us to do and we support services provided by the City for the benefit of all.

Councilor Plaugh asked about the total number of jobs.

Mr. Matt Kennell, President and CEO said around 1,000 jobs were added over twelve (12) months.

- [Columbia World Affairs Council](#) – Mr. Fred Monk, Managing Director

Mr. Fred Monk, Managing Director of the Columbia World Affairs Council distributed the program from the Global Vision Award Dinner held on October 29, 2013 and a list of activities for the organization. He announced that the Lord Mayor Dr. Klaus Weichel of Kaiserslautern visited Columbia in April and again in October along with an insurance information technology company. He said that the World Affairs Council was able to bring that insurance information technology company back in September with ITology. He said we've had a ten (10) year relationship with Kaiserslautern and good things will happen in the future with IT and research. He reported that in the past two (2) weeks with the support of the Central SC Alliance, a luncheon was held with the Consulate General of Japan to help underscore the Columbia Museum of Art's Japan and Jazz Age Program. He said they worked with the Columbia Museum of Art to help them identify Japanese companies in the state and the region and to coordinate with others to include the Japan America Association. He recalled that they did a business mission to our newest sister-city Accra Ghana and they have been working with the Honorary Ambassador to Ghana and West Africa, Cherrod Webber who is now in the USC Incubator Center. He announced that on February 28, 2013, there will be a group representing four (4) countries led by the head of the Argentine Expert Chamber and in April 2014 the Ambassador for the Ivory Coast will be a speaker. He stated that the World Affairs Council raises the visibility of international activities and serves as a connecting point. He announced that the Columbia World Affairs Council is working with W.A. Perry Middle School to organize the shipment of books to Ghana.

- [EngenuitySC](#) and The Fuel Cell Collaborative – Mr. George Hutton, Executive Director

Mr. George Hutton, Executive Director of EngenuitySC said they are a unique partner in the economic development industry to include the areas of educational programming, workforce development programs, cluster management and regional promotions. He said they help to create an environment where existing businesses can grow faster and ultimately higher more of our citizens. He reported that EngenuitySC served as project manager for the Coursepower Initiative, which brings together four (4) institutions of higher learning to create a curriculum around applied computing; this will put a dent in the information technology positions locally. He reported that the Lower Richland Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Program includes student discovery days, soft skills and entrepreneurial training, teacher discovery days and immersion programs, and parent university sessions. He said this program will be expanded to other schools within Richland County. He said that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual *Ignite!* Celebration was sponsored by over forty (40) companies and they awarded \$5,000 to Brandon Gantt, a Richland One school teacher who founded MyLearningBlock.com, which is a digital educational startup company. He reported that the Science Café was attended by over 700 people during the past year and a new partnership was formed with the S.C. Smart State Program. He reported that they planned and implemented the Midlands Reality Check on behalf of the Urban Land Institute of South Carolina during which over 400 leaders came together to create a roadmap for how we want our region to grow. He announced that South Carolina was listed by Fuel Cells 2000 as a top five (5) fuel cell state. He noted

that the Fuel Cell Collaborative has awarded over \$75,000 to USC student teams through the Fuel Cell Challenge. He reported that Trulite has consolidated their offices in Columbia, SC and NuHub has an exclusive partnership with Holtec International to bring investments in small modular reactor (SMR) technology.

Mayor Benjamin inquired about SMR opportunities.

Mr. George Hutton, Executive Director said the Department of Energy's federal funding opportunity was \$452 million; our consortium didn't win it; nevertheless, Holtec International has expressed interest in continuing to pursue that technology locally. He explained that small modular reactor technology is a prepackaged small nuclear plant that you can build in a factory, put it on a rail car and ship it anywhere in the world,

- [IT-oLogy \(POSSCON\)](#) – Mr. Lonnie Emard, President and Mr. Todd Lewis, Executive Director

Mr. Todd Lewis, Executive Director said three out of the four presenters mentioned IT, which is an acknowledgement that technology is imperative to our community moving forward. He said IT drives it all. He said they focus on K-12 to drive curriculum development. He said they also focus on higher education; regardless of your major in college, you should minor in applied computing. He said economic development is the most important thing they do and companies reach out to them for help. He said so many people are astounded that we have this in Columbia and it enhances the brand of Columbia.

Mayor Benjamin asked Todd Lewis to create a video of what they do. He said he makes it a point to bring people to IT-ology and the most exciting part is Cyber Saturdays. He agrees with the funding levels for the organizations, except for what we do for IT-ology; our support should be exponentially higher. He asked the City Manager and the Director of Economic Development to provide directions on a more meaningful contribution to IT-ology and POSSCON.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager noted that the funding listed is not what's being recommended for the next budget year.

Mr. Todd Lewis, Executive Director added that they led 173 events and were in front of 27,500 students and parents.

Mr. Lonnie Emard, President said all eyes are on Columbia; we are being recognized for the things we've done over the past five (5) years.

Councilor Davis said he doesn't have a problem supporting this concept; it shows that we are training or kids early; and we are marketing the skills that are already here.

- [USC Columbia Technology Incubator](#) – Mr. Bill Kirkland, Executive Director

Mr. Bill Kirkland, Executive Director of the USC/Columbia Technology Incubator Center said they have twenty (20) new companies; there are forty-six (46) active affiliate companies in the incubator; four (4) companies graduated last year; and seven (7) companies are slated to graduate this summer representing up to thirty (30) jobs. He announced that they have an accelerator program with six (6) brand new companies with support from the Jobs Economic Development Authority, the Department of Commerce and the University of South Carolina. He said the USC/Columbia Technology Incubator is the model and we are working with USC Upstate and the College of Charleston to start their incubators.

Ms. Laura Corder, Director of Operations/Communications Manager for the USC/Columbia Technology Incubator Center announced that the Showcase Incubator Event will be held on February 27, 2014 at 6 p.m. with seventeen (17) companies.

Mr. Bill Kirkland, Executive Director for the USC/Columbia Technology Incubator Center announced that they received an EDA grant for a new incubator and will work with the USC Foundation to fund it. He said they will choose a location near USC.

Councilor Plough asked about the windows at 1225 Laurel Street. She clarified that it is the City's building and that's why we are interested in properly maintaining it.

Mr. Bill Kirkland, Executive Director for the USC/Columbia Technology Incubator Center said the windows in the building need to be replaced.

Ms. Laura Corder, Director of Operations/Communications Manager for the USC/Columbia Technology Incubator Center said the water cooling towers are crumbling.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said we replaced the boiler and we are aware of the cooling towers.

Councilor Plough said we have other economic development partners and asked when they will be scheduled for presentations, noting that job creation is an important aspect.

7. [Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2013](#) – Mr. Bud Addison, Audit Senior Manager for Webster Rogers, LLP

Mr. Bud Addison, Audit Senior Manager for Webster Rogers, LLP referenced page 31 (*the income statement for the governmental funds*), noting that the General Fund generated a \$9.3 million surplus for the year ending June 30, 2013 with an ending fund balance of approximately \$25 million, which is 25% of the city's expenditures. He noted that this is as healthy as the City has been in a long time. He reported that there is a deficiency of \$7.1 million in the other governmental funds due to the winding down of the franchise fees with SCE&G and the funding of capital projects. He noted that most of

the special revenue funds broke even for the year and it was a positive year for the City. He referenced page 35 (*business-type activities*), noting that they all reported a positive change in fund balance; the Water and Sewer Fund had almost a \$25 million excess; the Parking Fund finished in the black this year with almost \$500,000; and the continued economic development will also help out with the parking situation. He referenced page 36 (*cash flow statement*), noting that the Water and Sewer Fund generated almost \$48 million in operations; the Parking Fund generated a \$2.7 million cash flow balance; the remaining funds had \$4 million; and the Internal Service Fund had a \$2.4 million deficit that was covered by transfers in from other funds.

Councilor Plough said the Budget Committee talked about setting up percentages for the amount of unassigned funds we would keep in the General Fund. She asked if the excessive funds in the Water and Sewer Fund are because we raised rates too high.

Mr. Bud Addison, Audit Senior Manager for Webster Rogers, LLP said sometimes that is a necessity for a healthy system. He said it is difficult to determine the cost of deferred maintenance and it is easier to pay a little bit each year.

Mayor Benjamin said it is important as we look to build, rebuild and expand our system to continue to decrease the water and sewer transfer to zero at some point. He said there has to be some accountability for deferred maintenance costs; a lot of these investments should've been made years ago; you can transfer funds from the account or not raise rates, but you can't do both and keep a strong, vibrant system.

Councilor Plough said she is trying to see how much money we spent on improving the system, not operating it.

Mr. Bud Addison, Audit Senior Manager for Webster Rogers, LLP referred to page 36. He explained that the cash flow statement shows that almost \$63 million was spent on the purchase of capital assets, which includes a lot of the capital projects and vehicle purchases; it is cash that was spent on items that are not reflected on page 35, which are the revenue and expense items.

Councilor Plough asked for the number spent on the system during this accounting period.

Mr. Jeff Palen, Chief Financial Officer referred to page 35 (*Water and Sewer Facilities Fund*). He said \$26,031,571 was spent on other services and charges; \$22 million of that are the other items you are talking about.

Councilor Plough said she asked those questions, because we wanted to spend \$100 million a year and this says we came close to it.

Mr. Bud Addison, Audit Senior Manager for Webster Rogers, LLP reported on GASB 68 and the retirement plan. He announced that effective 2015, the retirement system is going to devise a method for the allocation of the annual unfunded liability among the various plan participants and the City would be required to recognize a portion of that liability in their financial statements. He said this is similar to the healthcare plan, except this Council can make changes to the retiree health plan, but Council cannot change the retirement system. He said the liability could increase or decrease depending upon the contribution rate and the performance of the investments. He said this might not have much of an impact on the City. He referred to page 27 (*liability for compensated absences*), which is \$9 million. He said the City only has to pay that out if every employee retires on the same day or if the City goes out of business.

Mayor Benjamin asked if complying with GASB 68 in 2015 gives plan participants any additional leverage with state pension.

Mr. Bud Addison, Audit Senior Manager for Webster Rogers, LLP said the actuaries will provide the numbers and they have to come up with an allocation among the participants; the city will then allocate it to the various departments.

Councilor Plough said GASB 68 doesn't have an initial cash payment. She asked if it's more of a footnote in the financials. She asked if GASB 45 started that way.

Mr. Bud Addison, Audit Senior Manager for Webster Rogers, LLP said that is what he is thinking. He said GASB 45 is not required to be funded and the City doesn't have a legally funded plan; you are setting money aside; it's not an irrevocable trust. He noted that the City has done a lot more than a lot of municipalities.

8. Update on the Miracle League Program – Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department and Ms. Stephanie Davis, National Program Director for the Miracle League

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department said as we move forward in our community to get our children more involved in youth sports and other activities, we have been working with the Miracle League to provide opportunities for our disabled population, those who are often overlooked.

Ms. Stephanie Davis, National Program Director for the Miracle League said they have been working with the City's Parks and Recreation Department for a year and they would like to bring the Miracle League to this community. She said the Miracle League is changing the lives of families with special needs through baseball. She presented a short video. She said they met with the Ray Tanner Foundation and have been working to build a field in this community.

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department announced that the Ray Tanner Foundation has raised \$250,000 towards this project. He said Pacific Park is being considered. He said one of the stipulations with the Miracle League is to put the field in close proximity to other able-bodied children participating in the same activity.

He said they also provide able-bodied buddies to work with the kids involved in the Miracle League Program.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager acknowledged that Owens Field is also being considered, but we need to talk with the School District.

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department said we need to meet the expected budget for the field; there are other elements that most Miracle League communities provide; and we are \$125,000 short of the budget to put the field in place.

Councilor Davis said he has worked with special needs his whole life and he has always endorsed the principle of inclusion. He also believes that everybody has a role to play and a contribution to make so that kids aren't separated in parks. He said we have other partners like the County that can help with costs.

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department said inclusivity is fundamental to the Miracle League's program.

Councilor Baddourah asked if the money is for maintenance and if the School District and County are interested in sharing the costs. He expressed his support for the Miracle League.

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department said the money is for construction and we haven't approached other partners.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said we are always mindful about keeping the School District and the County informed, because we have a lease arrangement.

9. [Scope of Services for the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan and Bike Share Feasibility Study](#) – Ms. Natalie Cappuccio Britt, Chairperson of Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee/Executive Director of Palmetto Conservation Foundation, Ms. Dana Higgins, P.E., City Engineer, Mr. Reginald Simmons, Deputy Executive Director/Transportation Director/Central Midlands Council of Governments and Mr. John Fellows, Planning Administrator – *Presentation of this item was deferred.*
10. [Update on the South Assembly Street Development Plan](#) – Ms. Krista Hampton, Director of Planning and Development Services – *Presentation of this item was deferred.*
11. [Commercial Revolving Loan Fund Semi-Annual Report](#) – Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of the Office of Business Opportunities

Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of the Office of Business Opportunities provided a semi-annual report on the Commercial Revolving Loan Fund. She highlighted the changes that were made to the Commercial Revolving Loan Fund. She announced that the suspension has been lifted on the EDA fund. She reported that they have a 50% loan

approval rate; 50% of loans went to minority borrowers; and 50% went to female borrowers. She recalled that the goal was to fund 40% to minorities and 35% to women. She said in 2013, four (4) loans were modified; four (4) loans were sent to the Legal Department; one (1) loan was written-off; and five (5) loans were paid off. She reported that they have 70% performing (*current*) loans; 20% are delinquent (*31-90 days late*); and 10% are in default. She reported that \$219,683.11 was generated in program income during 2013 and there is \$1.5 million available for loans. She said they issued a Request for Proposals to service all OBO loans; the Main Street Retail Study is being updated by ERA; we are launching the Main Street Lending Program; and we are working to determine if there is a desire to have a target area for the EDA funds.

12. Hospitality Tax Funding Request for the [Famously Hot New Year's Eve Event](#) – The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman

Councilor Newman said the Famously Hot New Year's Event had a \$1 million economic impact. He said the committee has requested a \$50,000 hospitality tax allocation to begin planning the next event. He made a motion to approve the allocation.

Mayor Benjamin clarified that we are covering a shortfall from the previous event and also planning for the next year. He said we expect to grow this event and putting it on at no expense to citizens is essential.

Councilor Plough said she asked for a breakout of the budget, expenditures and the shortfall for the event. She said she hasn't received the information needed to consider this request. She said she doesn't have a problem with funding for the event, because it is a fabulous event.

Councilor Baddourah asked if it is a common practice to fund shortfalls for groups.

Councilor Devine said yes, we've done this for St. Pat's and others.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Newman and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted to six (6) to one (1) to allocate funding for the Famously Hot New Year's Eve Event in the amount of \$50,000 from the Hospitality Tax Fund to cover a shortfall from the previous year and planning for the upcoming year. Voting aye were Mr. Baddourah, Mr. Runyan, Mr. Newman, Ms. Devine, Mr. Davis and Mayor Benjamin. Ms. Plough voted nay.

- **Council adjourned the Work Session at 6:02 p.m. to convene the regular meeting.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore  
City Clerk