



CITY OF COLUMBIA
WORK SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2015
CITY HALL – 1737 MAIN STREET
2nd FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

The Columbia City Council conducted a Work Session on Tuesday, June 16, 2015 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 1:20 p.m. The following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman, The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan and The Honorable Moe Baddourah. The Honorable Leona K. Plough was absent. Also present were Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Moore, City Clerk. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said the City Manager's Report is an update on the transition to 95-gallon roll carts.

Mr. Robert Anderson, Public Works Director reported that the recycling program began in 1991 and now it's time to replace the 18-gallon recycling bins with 95-gallon recycling roll carts. He sought input on a press conference on July 7 or 14, 2015 at City Hall. He noted that the direct mailer will be sent to citizens the day before the press conference. He reported that the first carts will be delivered on July 27, 2015 and 40,000 carts will be delivered within two weeks. He also noted that residents can keep their current bins, but should not place them on the curb for collection; only roll carts should be placed on the street. He noted that residents will be serviced the following week after receiving a cart and either the 1st and 3rd week or 2nd and 4th week of each month. He noted that the collection of garbage and yard waste will not change and the materials being collected will not change. He explained that the Solid Waste Division interchanges its garbage and recycling trucks; they may add interchangeable signs; and over time old compartmentalized fleet will be sold. He explained that recycling will continue to go to Sonoco. He projected that the City will save \$250,000 annually. He announced that Recollect, a free mobile app will be available on July 27, 2015 and collection reminders can also be sent to landlines and email accounts. He also announced that there will be an online Waste Wizard Tool. He suggested that each Council member deliver a recycling roll cart on July 27, 2015.

Councilor Davis asked if we sell the waste to Sonoco.

Mr. Robert Anderson, Public Works Director said we are in negotiations with Sonoco. He noted that the recycling market has fallen off dramatically; we received a rebate in June, but we are not scheduled to receive a rebate in July.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager noted that we will bring back our arrangements with Sonoco to City Council.

Councilor Runyan asked if we expect an increase in recycling volumes. He inquired about the experience of other municipalities.

Mr. Robert Anderson, Public Works Director confirmed that other municipalities have experienced an increase in collections and we have to engage our residents through education.

Councilor Runyan asked if we anticipate that our rebate from Sonoco will increase as well.

Mr. Robert Anderson, Public Works Director said that will depend on the market.

Councilor Devine suggested that the City increase interest by having a contest to name the wizard.

Ms. Samantha Yager, Recycling Coordinator for the Public Works Department said she would like to engage the schools through the Green Steps Program.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager sought clarification on Council's meeting schedule for the remainder of June and July to include the scheduling of committee meetings.

There was a consensus of Council to cancel the City Council Meeting scheduled for June 23, 2015; the next meeting will be held on July 21, 2015; the Economic and Community Development Committee will meet on June 23, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. and the Arts and Historic Preservation Committee will meet on June 23, 2015 at 11:00 a.m.

Councilor Devine reported that the Business License Ad Hoc Committee received a brief presentation from Chuck Beaman of Palmetto Health and in response to our questions the hospital has delivered additional information for Council's review.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Baddourah and seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to refer to the Arts and Historic Preservation Committee an update from One Columbia and a review of ways the City of Columbia can help to educate citizens on the tools that can be used to research historic homes and connecting that information to City records. Mr. Davis was not present for the vote.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

1. [Richland County Public Defender's Office Funding Allocation](#) – The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine

Councilor Devine recalled that Council received a request from the Richland County Public Defender's Office again this year. She said one-time funding is available in the amount of \$100,000 in the Legal Department's budget. She said that Council would need to discuss reoccurring funding requests. She said this is a legitimate expense as we talk about funding that will be dedicated towards public safety.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted unanimously to allocate \$100,000.00 as one-time funding from the Legal Department's budget to the Richland County Public Defender's Office.

2. [2015 Summer Youth Initiatives](#) – Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of Parks and Recreation introduced Mr. Seigfried Jones, Superintendent of Recreation; Mr. Carey Rich, Assistant Superintendent for Family and Youth Services; Ms. Lee Allison Thompson, Assistant Superintendent for Recreation; Mr. Randy Davis, Program Manager; Ms. Christina Smith Galloway, Family & Youth Services Coordinator; Dr. Germon Miller, Park Center Leader; and Ms. Wanda Austin, Community Recreation Resource Coordinator. He said this is the team that has been assembled to help to comprehensively address youth development issues. He said they are here today to share the summer programs and activities that have been planned. He noted that they've been very involved in the Urban League's summer youth initiative and with the Columbia Police Department. He said the plan is to work closer with the school district and other youth service providers to begin to provide positive alternatives for our youth to participate in. He hopes to see an impact on the types of negative juvenile behavior we've seen in the past.

Ms. Christina Smith-Galloway, Family & Youth Services Coordinator for the Parks and Recreation Department announced that the summer theme is Moving, Learning and Growing and the objectives for the summer youth initiatives are guided by the *40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents*. She noted that they want to do things that are fitting and purposeful for the youth being served. She outlined the eleven week program for youth ages six to twelve and the Teen Camp for youth ages thirteen to seventeen at the Katheryn M. Bellfield Cultural Arts Center. She said they are also working with the Columbia Urban League to employ fifty youth ages fourteen to nineteen for four weeks at various locations throughout the City of Columbia.

Ms. Lee Allison Thompson, Assistant Superintendent for Recreation for the Parks and Recreation Department said it is very important to give our youth the opportunity to have a variety of experiences. She reported that there are four specialty camps to include art, sports, golf and tennis. She noted that these activities are also provided at the recreation and community centers. She said that Prime Time in the Parks started on June 12, 2015 and will run through July 24, 2015 and transportation will be provided to the various locations. She announced that the Summer Movie Series will be held at Riverfront Park on Fridays at 7:00 p.m. and EdVenture will provide free movie activities.

Mr. Randy Davis, Program Manager for the Parks and Recreation Department announced that this is the sixth year of the Mayor's Drills and Skills and cheerleading and soccer are being added this year. The event will be held during the week of August 3-7, 2015. He reported that over 300 students registered in the past.

Councilor Davis asked how they will reach kids that are out of pocket.

Mr. Randy Davis, Program Manager for the Parks and Recreation Department said we are increasing transportation efforts to ensure that kids can make it to the various locations. He said flyers are also sent to previous program registrants and churches.

Ms. Christina Smith-Galloway, Family & Youth Services Coordinator for the Parks and Recreation Department said they are also meeting with Richland School District One social workers and they are meeting with neighborhood leaders.

Mayor Benjamin said it amazes him how many constituents don't know about the various services and programs being offered across the City. He noted that County Council members have a communications budget and that gives them the ability to directly communicate with constituents. He said there is still a digital divide and a communications budget could help us directly.

Ms. Lee Allison Thompson, Assistant Superintendent for Recreation for the Parks and Recreation Department added that they have expanded staffing and programming in order to reach more persons. She said that being able to connect with the school system through Ms. Galloway they can reach additional families and inform them about our programs. She said that Dr. Miller has done an outstanding job with the RICH Program. She thanked the Mayor for having the vision to allow every child to play youth sports throughout the City of Columbia. She said they've tried to expand on existing special events and activities. She said as we move forward, we have become part of SWELP; we have another bus and can transport more youth; we are looking to partner with the COMET system and Richland One to expand transportation efforts; we are seeking additional sponsors for Prime Time in the Parks; and we are seeking funding resources to sustain Drills and Skills.

Mayor Benjamin asked how many youth are participating in the sports programs.

Mr. Randy Davis, Program Manager for the Parks and Recreation Department said the registration in athletic programs is increasing. He said the expos on baseball increased excitement and parents are now more engaged with the youth sports.

Mayor Benjamin commended the Parks and Recreation Department on its efforts. He noted that this is a direct response to the resources being provided. He thanked the City Manager and her team for helping to assemble budgets that continue to invest. He thanked City Council for stepping up and investing in our young people. He said that a wonderful interaction experience with the Parks and Recreation Department can change the trajectory of a child's life and we're seeing the return on our investment.

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of Parks and Recreation said that the team has a lot of great assets and it is a cohesive process. He said this is made possible through Council's support and the focus on the current accreditation process through the National Recreation and Park Association, which provides us with a guidepost in many of these areas.

Councilor Devine asked for an update on SWELP applications.

Ms. Christina Smith-Galloway, Family & Youth Services Coordinator for the Parks and Recreation Department said the Columbia Urban League is still accepting applications and applications are available at Earlewood Park and the Columbia Police Department.

Councilor Devine asked if Richland County funded SWELP. She insisted that she stands behind the City's support of the program, but she has heard from residents that are concerned about using city taxpayer dollars; those citizens should call their Richland County representatives and we should work together to employ 2,000 youth next year.

Councilor Davis asked if we have provisions to engage youth with special needs.

Ms. Christina Smith-Galloway, Family & Youth Services Coordinator for the Parks and Recreation Department said some students with special needs were identified along with students from shelters.

Mr. Jeff Caton, Director of Parks and Recreation said we are working to offer programs for youth with special needs. He recalled the partnership with the Ray Tanner Foundation to construct a Miracle League field at Owens Field. He noted that staff is working with the Carolina Panthers on the Challenger Football Program. He said we are not currently positioned to have a day in and day out therapeutic recreational program.

Councilor Davis asked that we step up efforts to work with youth with special needs; they are segregated year-round; and it's important to show that we are inclusive. He said our programs are evaluated by that as well.

Councilor Devine said there are extraordinary things happening in our parks. She said that her children attend summer camp through the Parks and Recreation Department. She noted that it is the least expensive camp in the City and they are experiencing a lot. She recognized the food sharing program being led by Wanda Austin at the Kathryn M. Bellfield Center where fresh fruits and vegetables are provided for \$20.00 per box every other week; that's a huge service to our community. She said we are doing a lot with a little and the Parks and Recreation Department is a jewel that is oftentimes overlooked.

3. [General Fund Capital Improvement Projects](#) – Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said there will be a discussion related to the overall General Fund budget in addition to Council requested projects. She asked Council to let her know if any projects are missing from the list. She confirmed that Council will only meet once in July. She said projects are reviewed with the senior team to determine the projects that have a public health, liability or safety issue. She said they look at functionality and projects that enhance the quality of life and aesthetic value for our citizens and this feedback has been provided to Council.

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director recalled that at the last City Council work session staff was asked to bring back recommendations on the general capital projects. She recalled that funding isn't included in the 2015/2016 budget for general capital projects. She requested that funding for general capital projects be a priority at the close out of surplus funding from the current fiscal year. She said a total of \$36 million has been requested for capital projects in year one. She said the City Manager ranked the departmental requests according to priorities, how the departments ranked the requests, existing commitments and City priorities. She said projects with existing partial funding and time commitments were considered top priorities. She sought input from the members of Council on the list of general capital projects. She noted that General Services includes all city buildings. She said they would like to fund the same amount annually for updates and replacements. She recalled that City Council allocated \$600,000 for roof repairs in the current budget and that is reoccurring.

Mayor Benjamin inquired about the CNG station.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director said that Fleet Services has requested the Compressed Natural Gas project in hopes of converting some of the City's vehicles to natural gas.

Mayor Benjamin asked if we are using CNG now.

Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Operations said no.

Councilor Devine inquired about the renovations at 1632 Hampton Street.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director said its building repairs for the employee gym; the building is quite old.

Councilor Devine said we talked about selling it and converting it to something else. She asked if we have a plan right now.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said the building is utilized typically by our officers.

Mr. David Knoche, Director of General Services said we would like to move the Support Services Division into that building so they can have a warehouse and carpentry shop in addition to the employee gym. He said they would improve the facility to make it more usable.

Mayor Benjamin asked if the expansion of Fleet Services included more cars.

Mr. David Knoche, Director of General Services said years ago when the economy went south, we were ready to bid out the project to add another truck shop, which would make more space for cars. He said we are currently working from 7:00 a.m. until 1:00 a.m. outside independent of weather conditions; it's a critical need for the employees.

Mayor Benjamin asked if the asbestos removal from City Hall will remove the remaining asbestos in the building.

Mr. David Knoche, Director of General Services said yes; he wants to abate the basement and make it usable space. He said that General Services and Support Services are located at 1924 Calhoun Street next to the old Parks and Recreation building; all of that is being sold as a possible extension to Bull Street. He noted that the old Parks and Recreation building and the General Services building are in bad shape. He added that the Arts Center is still located in the old Parks and Recreation building.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said a design is being looked at a different location.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director continued to review the alphabetized listing of general capital projects. She explained that Finlay Park is the largest item on the list for the Parks and Recreation Department. She noted that another phase of the project isn't reflected in the 2015/2016 budget; the amount included is for overall repairs and major renovations to the park.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager noted that some projects that Council members are interested in haven't been dropped off the list, but some projects like Woodlands Park have been moved to future years.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director added that there was a request to add Woodlands Park, but there wasn't a discussion as to whether or not it's to renovate and restore the existing building or to build a new structure. She noted that the column for projected balances is for the amount in the budget as of March 31, 2015 for each project.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager noted that it's up to Council's discretion to reallocate funding for a particular project. She said Council could look at taking the funding that was approved for Southeast Park and use that funding to resurface the tennis courts.

Mayor Benjamin said if we found some other way to complete Finlay Park then \$4,255,000 takes care of the other capital projects for the Parks and Recreation Department.

Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Operations said there are several different items that are reoccurring such as funding for resurfacing tennis courts, fencing and lighting. She reviewed the general capital projects for Public Safety. She noted that the primary item is the Busby Street Resource and Community Policing Center in the amount of \$2.5 million for site improvements and other preliminary work. She reported that Council approved funding in the current fiscal year for partial replacement of the self-contained breathing apparatuses for the Fire Department; we were going to phase the replacement in over a couple of years. She noted that we are required to replace all self-contained breathing apparatuses in 2017 and the total cost will be split between the City and the County; the current amount reflects the City's portion.

Councilor Davis asked Police Chief Holbrook if an update is needed on the Busby Street project.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said an update is needed, because decisions need to be made about phasing the project in particularly with the April 2018 deadline looming. She recalled that she had asked the consultant to do more work.

Councilor Newman said there seems to be a funding commitment from Richland County for the Olympia Fire Station. He asked if Richland County has finalized their budget.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director said the County is still going through their budget requests as well. She continued to report that the Public Works capital projects include road resurfacing and sidewalk installations as reoccurring amounts. She said the street and sidewalk projects are based on assessments conducted by Public Works, but the specific projects will come back to City Council.

Councilor Runyan said the Senate shut down the proposal to use surplus money for roads. He asked how far this funding will get us.

Mr. Robert Anderson, Director of Public Works said every project varies in cost. He recalled that Columbiana Drive was \$2.6 million, but a small section of road with a 1.5” overlay may cost \$15,000 to \$20,000. He noted that C-Funds and CDBG funds are also being used on City streets.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director reiterated that reoccurring funding is needed.

Councilor Runyan asked how we are doing on road maintenance.

Mr. Robert Anderson, Public Works Director said our percentage points have increased to 89 or 91, which is significant.

Councilor Devine asked about funding for the new Public Works building.

Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Operations said that’s in the water and sewer capital improvement program, because it would be for housing a utilities function. She noted that Public Works would remain where it is at this point. She added that park buildings have also gone through an assessment process and David Knoche is working on general services, he has assessed the roofs and he’s working on HVAC and other areas.

Councilor Baddourah said out of the \$30 million for all of the requested general capital projects, almost \$20 million is for Finlay Park. He asked if the list can be minimized.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director said we were bringing the City Manager's recommendations back to City Council, but the final decision will be based on the availability of funding; we need to closeout 2014/2015 first to determine what surplus funding is available.

Mayor Benjamin clarified that \$15 million is needed for Finlay Park. He said the City Manger's recommendations are reflective of what she has heard from City Council. He said we want to get Finlay Park done and we've made it clear that it's a priority.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director began to review the projects requested by City Council. She said these are not capital projects and some of the requests have been longstanding, but there are no funds identified at this point.

Councilor Baddourah asked if any of these projects would qualify for a hospitality bond.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director said the Parks and Recreation projects would qualify.

Councilor Baddourah asked if resurfacing roads and sidewalks would qualify.

Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Operations said it depends on the location; the law says roads leading to recreation, tourism and historical places. She noted that the majority of the roads in the City are owned by the State or Richland County.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager asked the Mayor if would like to proceed with the projects requested by City Council.

Mayor Benjamin said he has some thoughts that he would like to share later in the meeting.

4. [Update on the Richland County Transportation Penny Program Potential Bikeway Improvements](#) – Mr. Anthony Lawrence, AIA, NCARB, Assistant Program Manager / Richland Penny Program

Mr. Anthony Lawrence, AIA, NCARB, Assistant Program Manager / Richland Penny Program explained that he and Mr. Sonny Timmerman, Assistant Program Manager are responsible for all greenways, bikeways and sidewalk projects associated with the Richland Penny Program. He reported that the sidewalk and bikeway projects were provided to County Council by a group of sixty-nine (69) citizens several years ago; that list was overlaid with County Council's criteria; and the Program Development Team (PDT) validated those projects. He noted that there are a total of fifty-six (56) sidewalk projects, but for fiscal year 2015/2016, they will look to complete fifteen (15) projects. He explained that the projects are being subdivided between the Richland County PDT and on-call engineering firms that will focus on sidewalks that require hydrology studies and extensive engineering. The Richland PDT will focus on the seven (7) projects that are ready to go. He said that a public meeting was held on last Monday for input from the

citizens in the project areas. He said the nature of the needs for sidewalks has changed and they will take this input to County Council for a final determination. For 2015/2016, \$3.2 million is allocated for sidewalk projects only. He noted that the president and vice president of the neighborhood association support the installation of sidewalks on the south side of Sunset Drive. He noted that the north side has a steeper embankment and the south side makes more design sense, because it ties into the Smith Branch Greenway that's being planned along the creek.

Councilor Baddourah asked who will maintain the new sidewalks.

Mr. Anthony Lawrence, AIA, NCARB, Assistant Program Manager / Richland Penny Program said sidewalks within the City's right of way will be maintained by the City. The PDT will coordinate discussions between the City and County to deal with areas that overlap. He reported that \$2.8 million is allocated for bikeway projects in 2015/2016 and they are focusing on twenty eight (28) projects out of the eighty seven (87) total projects with thirteen (13) of those being quick release projects; the remaining projects require coordination with other entities. He noted that quick release projects involve signage and markings and resurfacing. There are three (3) classes of bikeways: bike paths, bike lanes and share roads. Construction of the first round of bikeway projects will begin no later than October 2015.

Mayor Benjamin requested a color coded map of the projects. He said it's important to know where the money is going as we work on connectivity and complete streets.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager asked if the PDT would assist the City with public outreach on projects that impact City residents.

Mr. Anthony Lawrence, AIA, NCARB, Assistant Program Manager / Richland Penny Program agreed to coordinate the public meetings and to prepare project maps for district representatives. Additional information can be found online at www.richlandpenny.com.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager requested a public input session for the North Columbia reconstruction project and Gills Creek.

Ms. Dana Higgins, City Engineer said that SCDOT would need to be involved with the North Columbia project and she has already talked with Ms. Plough about Gills Creek.

Councilor Davis asked if money could be reallocated for another project in the same area. He said he would prefer to reach a compromise.

Mr. Anthony Lawrence, AIA, NCARB, Assistant Program Manager / Richland Penny Program said those requests will be offered up to Richland County Council for consideration.

Councilor Davis said Sunset has the most attractive tree canopy in this City. He suggested that the residents continue to dialog with the PDT. He asked the PDT to provide periodic updates on the plans for Sunset.

Mr. Anthony Lawrence, AIA, NCARB, Assistant Program Manager / Richland Penny Program said Mead and Hunt will be working on that project. He noted that this project will complement the greenway.

Mayor Benjamin acknowledged that County Council wants to maintain the original list of projects. He said invariably you will have some communities that don't want the proposed projects and a system is needed to determine how those funds are moved.

Mr. Anthony Lawrence, AIA, NCARB, Assistant Program Manager / Richland Penny Program reiterated his desire to brief Council later in the year and to coordinate public involvement assistance.

5. Local Preference Policy Recommendations – Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of the Office of Business Opportunities

Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of the Office of Business Opportunities provided an update on the Local Business Enterprise Program. She reported that we have 255 certified Local Business Enterprises with 85 LBEs located in the City of Columbia and 163 LBEs located in Richland County; 122 LBEs represent the construction industry and 94 LBEs offer professional services. She noted that forty-six businesses were certified in 2015 and over \$28 million was spent with LBE's in fiscal year 2013/2014. In order to increase participation, they suggested training all staff on how the program works; require staff to obtain at least one (1) quote from a LBE for purchases between \$5,000 and \$25,000; and implement an outreach campaign. She suggested updating the procurement policy thresholds and exclusions. She said LBEs should meet the minimum qualifications of the award and then receive a bonus in the overall scoring for being local. She added that the language has been amended to clarify that the compliance division is responsible for certifying and monitoring LBEs; price preference applies to cost only in a RFP; and clarified how price preference is applied in RFQs. She recalled that Ms. Plough asked staff to look at a tiered system. She suggested that there be a 5% LBE preference and a 7% preference for being in City limits, if it is the will of Council to implement a tiered system. She also suggested that the City maintain the lowest price match method and that the tiered system apply to procurements over \$5,000. She suggested July 1, 2016 as an implementation date. She said that a tiered system could possibly increase interest in City projects, but the process will be more complicated and require additional administrative review. She sought input on how Council wants to continue to define a local firm. Currently, businesses are required to be independently owned and operated versus having a local office. She provided a comparison of local requirements in other municipalities. She asked Council to approve the recommended policy changes; endorse the internal procedures; and make a decision on the development of a tiered system and the definition of a local business.

Councilor Devine explained that the economy was bad and the intent of the LBE program was to address a rising concern from our local companies that weren't getting the work, because it was being given to outside firms. The intent was to give a benefit to our businesses that invest here. She said we aren't currently meeting the goals that we hoped to meet and changing the definition wouldn't help.

Councilor Davis inquired about the tiered system. He said it sounds more restrictive.

Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of the Office of Business Opportunities said the tiered system is an additional benefit for businesses located in the corporate City limits.

Councilor Davis said a lot of the large construction companies aren't located in the corporate City limits due to the amount of land that's required to house them. He said he is happy with the LBE policy.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager noted that there have been unintended consequences for some businesses.

Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Operations added that our current definition of a local firm includes a seven (7) county region. She explained that the City was approached by a distribution company that provides water and sewer materials and they are set up to serve a certain region. She said there are five of these companies in our region; one company is located in West Columbia and was locally owned; one company is located in the City limits; and the other three companies are located in Richland County. She said the other four firms were never locally owned by our definition; they hired locally; they paid business license and property taxes, but they were owned by a parent company somewhere else. She said their contention was that a company in West Columbia that didn't pay property taxes or business license fees to the City 0received the benefit of reducing its pricing by 5% to win the bid. She noted that this issue has been resolved, because the company in West Columbia was bought out, but the issue probably exists in other industries as well.

Councilor Devine asked if these were small businesses. She said the intent was to grow our small businesses although it wasn't limited to small businesses. She agreed that we may need to look at the intent of the policy.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said there was another issue this week and Council needs to address the procurement thresholds, because the small businesses aren't currently required to register as a LBE due to the thresholds. She explained that out of state businesses are getting the work, because they don't have to go through the same process that the larger bids go through.

Councilor Davis said growing capacity was his major interest, but he's not sure if we can demonstrate if this has been achieved in the local businesses that have been getting the work. He continues to support local preference with the Legal Department continuing to guide Council.

Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of the Office of Business Opportunities recalled an instance where only one LBE qualified; we may run into giving a firm a monopoly.

Councilor Devine used Staples as an example of a large company that's locally owned.

Mayor Benjamin asked if the tiered system could give an incentive for businesses located in the City and pay business license fees and taxes in the City.

Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of the Office of Business Opportunities said that could be a way to implement the tiered system, but it shouldn't be based on City limits.

Councilor Davis said he wants to make a dent in building local capacity, especially for smaller businesses that can't develop relationships with larger local companies; they have to compete with the larger local companies and companies that aren't based here. He is concerned about the dollars that are spent locally and being able to demonstrate how we've increased the capacity of local businesses.

Ms. Tina Herbert, Executive Director of the Office of Business Opportunities said by requiring departments to receive a quote from one (1) LBE for purchases between \$5,000 and \$25,000 will make a big difference. She reiterated that a local business has to be independently owned and operated with its principal place of business and 50% of its employees being within the seven (7) county CSA.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Newman, Council voted unanimously to approve the recommended policy changes on thresholds, exclusions and applying the policy to Requests for Proposals and Requests for Qualifications; the definition of a local firm will remain the same; and the tiered system will not be adopted at this time. Ms. Devine was not present for the vote.

6. Proposed Local Hiring Policy – Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Operations

Ms. Jeanne Lisowski, Esq. explained that they were asked to look at the viability of enacting a local hiring policy. She said this is modeled on a federal grants program. The city would implement a local hiring policy on contractors that will be asked to meet a goal of hiring a certain percentage of local employees. This furthers some of the same goals as the LBE policy. She noted that cities that have attempted to enact this policy have run into problems. In 1986 Camden, New Jersey implemented a local hiring threshold whereby the construction companies that responded to bids had to either currently employ or promise to employ over time a certain threshold number of City residents. She said this was challenged by construction companies that couldn't conform to that policy. This was struck down by the US Supreme Court and case law has emerged that creates a significant burden for municipalities to enact any kind of local hiring policy unless the city can demonstrate with facts that non-residents were the cause of unemployment of city residents. She said the City would also have to demonstrate that the unemployment rate is greater than surrounding areas and it's caused by non-residents

taking jobs away from residents. She said we can look at census tracts, zip codes, city or county. She noted that most of the local hiring policies that have been challenged, have not survived constitutional scrutiny; a standard has to be met in order for us to impose this. There is no constitutional right to city funds for projects; there is a recognized constitutional protection for not having government interfere in you being hired or not and the Supreme Court is concerned about government interfering in a private contract between two parties that are not a part of the City.

Mayor Benjamin asked if New Jersey's policy was a requirement or an incentive. He acknowledged that he asked staff to look at this issue, because we are in the midst of the most significant building movements in this City's history and I was curious if there was a way that we can effectively leverage the dollars that we are spending to benefit the people who live in the City of Columbia.

Ms. Jeanne Lisowski, Esq., Assistant City Attorney said Camden, New Jersey had a city resident hiring preference.

Mayor Benjamin said he asked the City Manager and Assistant City Attorney to look specifically at certain census tracts with high unemployment, but he wouldn't advocate spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on another study. He asked if they've seen any other programs that would pass muster without the expense of tax payers' dollars.

Ms. Jeanne Lisowski, Esq., Assistant City Attorney suggested that it be done as an aspirational goal. She noted that the Neighborhood Stabilization Program is a good example, because the goals are aspirational, there are lots of alternatives and no penalties for non-compliance. She said most of the programs that don't survive court cases, don't have studies behind them. She said staff may be able to look at the numbers or an outside consultant may be required. She suggested that data may be available from other resources.

Councilor Devine asked if we could design a program similar to what the empowerment zone offered; tax credit incentives were offered to businesses for hiring residents from a certain area.

Mayor Benjamin asked that staff bring back recommendations on how best to move forward in a prudent manner.

Ms. Jeanne Lisowski, Esq., Assistant City Attorney noted that the Supreme Court is concerned about hiring and interfering with someone getting a job. She said the tax credits survived scrutiny quite well.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager announced that this was it for the regular work session agenda and the Mayor mentioned coming back to Item 3.

Mayor Benjamin suggested that Council take a quick break and then reconvene. He said he would love to talk about the budget some more either before or after Executive Session.

**Councilor Devine introduced her summer intern, Miss Shonda White, a sophomore at Virginia State who wants to be an attorney.

- **Council recessed at 3:54 p.m.**
- **Council reconvened at 4:29 p.m.**

Mayor Benjamin sought input on a listing of [immediate budget amendments](#) and prioritized surplus allocations. He recommended that Council no longer rollover their expense accounts while noting that the departments don't rollover expense accounts and County Council colleagues are prohibited from rolling over their expense accounts. He also suggested that Council not provide funding for a proposed court administrator. He said at some point we will have to train a court administrator, but we don't need that position now. He said we have to talk more about funding constituent communications, i.e. traditional mailings. He said several of us are involved in other organizations that require more travel. He said there are a few Council projects that have been built up over several years with more participation. He talked about expanding the Skills and Drills program in order to keep our youth positively engaged. He noted that youth violence prevention is consistent with those efforts. He said we will be able to cut \$66,000. He asked Council to review the list and discuss how to prioritize the items; this is a mix of things we have to do and several items were on the City Manager's list of identified priorities. He said if and when we have a surplus, the first priority is the city reserve fund and back filling the funds to the detention center contract for those arrested on municipal offenses. He recalled that the My Brother's Keeper multi-year commitment is \$30,000. He outlined other allocations as priorities to be funded from the surplus that is to be identified by October 2015. He said this prioritized list is funded until the funding is depleted. He said the items where funding is to be determined need to be discussed further. He said there is some value to sitting down with Pawmetto Lifeline with the collective goal of aggressively reducing the euthanasia rate. He said there is \$250,000 in Community Promotions funding; there are pending funding requests; and we discussed issuing a Notice of Funding Available (NOFA).

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager asked if Council wanted staff to craft the NOFA along with an application process for the Community Promotions funding.

Mayor Benjamin said it will be cumbersome, but it's the only fair way to get the word out.

Councilor Baddourah asked for allocations for each Council district from surplus funds. He requested a percentage or a specific amount of funding. He said we would like to get some things done in our districts.

Councilor Davis said funding for constituent communications makes sense. He said having designated funding for council districts also makes sense and he would like to commit to that. He supported having funding for certain economic development projects and start-up businesses. He said he wants to see citywide progress like the progress made in the Vista, Five Points and the City Center.

Councilor Devine said that the neighborhood plans can address Mr. Davis and Mr. Baddourah's concerns. She likes the fact that this list isn't specific to an area. She noted that funding for sidewalks and annexation services will impact all districts. She recalled that the City Manager wanted to allocate funding for districts, but we need to create a reoccurring source that can be utilized in that matter. She said we could commit to dividing the funding for sidewalk installations equally among the districts.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager noted that Hyatt Park remains on the priority list, but she needs direction from Council and she will consider safety and liability as well. She said the CIP included a priority from the districts. She noted that the Miracle Field has been a continuous effort. She stated that some of the items listed may already be in the proposed budget; \$75,000 is in the budget for the closing fund and annexations are funded at \$50,000 in the current budget.

Mayor Benjamin agreed to remove the closing fund and annexation services from the list.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said that Engenuity is funded at \$65,000.

Mayor Benjamin said he will keep Engenuity on the list, because they are concerned about getting back to where they were. He would like to see them do what they are doing at Lower Richland High School with Eau Claire, Johnson or Keenan.

Councilor Davis said there are things he would like to see Council do so that we don't have this discussion every year; these dollars won't make a dent in what we need to do in terms of focusing on areas in need of serious consideration for revitalization.

Mayor Benjamin said that a mini Tax Increment Financing could help facilitate Mr. Davis' vision. He said there are specific projects in Mr. Baddourah's district that need to be completed. We have to figure out how to get to that. He said hospitality tax bonding is another idea that could support parks and recreation.

Councilor Davis said the City of Columbia had a concerted commitment to make the Vista a showplace and that was successful.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said Council will give Administration a work plan at the retreat and we will know where the focus should be. We need to be getting there throughout the year and not having pop-ups that take away from the effort; that would be beneficial to staff.

Mayor Benjamin said we are talking about a defined economic development community revitalization strategy that we need a few different departments to have a laser focus on. He said we could move money from one park to another in order to complete a project as opposed to not completing either one; that takes give and take from a district representative and working together.

Councilor Baddourah asked about council projects and if leadership travel is for Council travel.

Mayor Benjamin said he serves as as president, chair and member of a number of organizations and other Council members are also involved with other organizations and the leadership travel is for this.

Councilor Devine noted that she had to turn down trips due to the lack of funding and this has been a conversation for a long time. She also noted that former council members either overspent their expense accounts or spent their personal money to travel. She said if you do ascend to a leadership position in a national organization, our expense account wouldn't allow you to travel and handle your constituent services.

There was a consensus of Council to vote on the immediate budget amendments and defer the vote on the surplus allocations with the understanding that funding the city reserve fund and the detention center are not negotiable.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager mentioned the idea of stopping the prisoner drop off at the transit center. She said that Richland County wants to issue a joint RFP for the taxi cabs that we would use to implement the service.

Ms. Jeanne Lisowski, Esq., Assistant City Attorney said we will do a parallel procurement process with identical terms. She noted that Richland County is preparing to send theirs out after July 1, 2015.

Mayor Benjamin asked if we can stop drop offs.

Ms. Jeanne Lisowski, Esq., Assistant City Attorney said they don't have to do the drop offs, but Richland County is concerned about their liability. She said the City of Columbia can't stop the drop offs.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said she foresees there being a need to fund the contract for taxi services. She announced that the County is implementing the 24/7 bond court and they are still interested in a joint program.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted five (5) to one (1) to approve the following budget amendments. Voting aye were Mr. Davis, Ms. Devine, Mr. Newman, Mr. Runyan and Mayor Benjamin. Mr. Baddourah voted nay.

Immediate Budget Amendments

	<u>Cut</u>	<u>Allocation</u>	
Council Expense Account Rollover	\$26,172		
Proposed Court Administrator	\$40,000		
Constituent Communications		\$14,000	\$2,000 per Council Member*
Leadership Travel		\$24,000	
Council Projects		\$23,400	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Domestic Violence Prevention Walk▪ Youth Violence Prevention▪ Red Dress
Total Amendments	\$66,172	\$61,400	

*Richland County currently allocates \$7,000 per Council Member for a total of \$77,000

There was a consensus of Council to review the list of surplus allocations and determine if they have anything to be added by July 21, 2015.

Mayor Benjamin said we need to complete one (1) or two (2) of the following parks projects: the Miracle Field at Owens Field, Hampton Park, Southeast Park and Hyatt Park. He sought clarification on the funding needed to complete these parks.

Councilor Baddourah asked if we can use remaining funds from the Hospitality Bond issuance for the baseball stadium.

Mr. Jeff Palen, Assistant City Manager for Financial and Economic Services said we only issued the bond for \$29 million for the stadium.

Councilor Devine said we need to discuss our ability to issue a hospitality bond for projects; we need to pull the list together and determine what's feasible. She expressed concerns about the work needed at Finlay Park.

Mayor Benjamin said we need to address the list at the next meeting. He said we need to distribute a Notice of Funding Available and get something back to Council for the next meeting. He suggested that Council discuss the potential for a hospitality tax bond at the next meeting.

Councilor Baddourah said the discussion is a good start, but it needs to continue.

**Mayor Benjamin said we expanded the residency requirement beyond city limits and the application was set to close today for the Columbia Police Department Citizens Advisory Committee. He suggested that Council extend the application period until June 30, 2015 and consider the appointments on July 21, 2015.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Baddourah, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 5:15 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 7** through **10** as outlined.

7. Discussion of the employment of an employee – *This item was deferred.*
8. Discussion of negotiations incident to the proposed purchase of property – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
9. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
10. Receipt of legal advice relating to matters covered by attorney-client privilege – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*

Respectfully submitted by,

Erika D. Moore
City Clerk