



CITY OF COLUMBIA
WORK SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2015
CITY HALL – 1737 MAIN STREET
2nd FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

The Columbia City Council conducted a Work Session on Tuesday, August 18, 2015 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 2:28 p.m. The following members of City Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Leona K. Plough, The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman, The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan and The Honorable Moe Baddourah. 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 COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager recognized Ms. Ginger “Dee Dee” Fanning, Executive Assistant for the City Council Office and Ms. Connie Lucius, Senior Staff Assistant for the City Council Office for ten (10) years of service with the City of Columbia. She said these ladies help all of us around this table with grace and a lot of patience on every day.

1. [Fiscal Year 2015/2016 Community Promotions Funding Recommendations](#) – Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council - *Approved*

Mayor Benjamin recalled that \$318,000 was available; a Notice of Funds Available (NOFA) was issued; the requests exceeded \$1 million; and staff made recommendations on how to allocate \$318,600.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Baddourah, Council voted unanimously to allocate \$318,600 from the Community Promotions Fund, as recommended by staff.

2. [Fiscal Year 2015/2016 Accommodations Tax and Hospitality Tax Funding Recommendations](#) – Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council

Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council asked Council to consider funding the events/activities and not the entity, because the fiscal agent may change. For example, One Columbia is now the fiscal agency for the Book Festival instead of the South Carolina Humanities Council.

Councilor Devine said the Yellow Shirts for the City Center and the Vista Guild aren’t reflected on the list, but funding needs to be addressed. She inquired about the unallocated available funding.

Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council added that the Vista Guild is asking for \$225,000 and the City Center Partnership needs an additional \$75,000.

Mayor Benjamin inquired about fund balance or additional funds available for allocation.

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director said based on anticipated allocations the available balance is \$25,000.

Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council urged requestors to look at where they were at this time last year in comparison to the committee recommendations. She noted that Council allocated funding throughout the year to organizations and to the committee. She insisted that organizations couldn't compare what they had at the end of the year to the committee recommendations.

Mayor Benjamin asked which events are supported by the Parks and Recreation Foundation.

Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council said the Summer Concert Series, Kids Day, WOW, Veterans Day Parade, MLK Parade; they do very well with the \$75,000.

Mayor Benjamin said the Concert Series was excellent this year. He asked why the high school basketball and football championships were not funded.

Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council said that was a three-year commitment of Council that has expired.

Mayor Benjamin inquired about the two requests from the State Museum.

Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council said the State Museum requested funding for general marketing and the request from the Foundation is for marketing, but it's not factored into any of this.

Mayor Benjamin said we previously made a \$75,000 multi-year commitment to the Renaissance Foundation to fund debt service if they secured a private loan. He said when and if they are prepared to move forward we can revisit that.

Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council said the \$75,000 from last year went back into fund balance.

Councilor Baddourah said the Palmetto Opera received \$22,500 last year and the committee recommended \$4,000 this year.

Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council clarified that at this time last year the Palmetto Opera received \$6,000.

Councilor Baddourah said the Palmetto Opera is part of our culture and he would appreciate Council allocating more money to the group. He noted that the Classical Ballet is asking for more funding.

Mayor Benjamin sought clarification on the available excess funding. He noted that he has a few recommendations, Mr. Davis has recommendations for the Eau Claire Community Council and the North Columbia Business Association and we have to make sure we fund the Yellow Shirts for the City Center Partnership and the Vista Guild. He told Richard Burts that we need to continue conversations about how we will do this in the future. He said folks don't like the idea of a BID, but it is essential to the discussion.

Councilor Devine said this might be the 19th year for the Black Expo. She noted that the committee is recommending the same amount of funding as they received last year. She said they need more funding in order to put on the event next year. She asked that staff work with the Black Expo on planning for the 20th year, because it will be significant.

Mayor Benjamin inquired about funding for the SIAC. He noted that Council funded it in addition to the committee last year. He said the committee's recommendation is \$5,000 less than last year.

Councilor Devine asked about POSSCON. She asked if it is the Economic Development budget.

Mr. John Whitehead, Past Chair of the Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee said the committee elected not to fund conferences, but did recommend that it be funded from the City's Economic Development.

Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council noted that the POSSCON conference will be done in conjunction with Indie Grits.

Councilor Davis said he would like for Council to have serious discussions with the Auntie Karen Foundation, because they are working on capital projects that will bring the arts village concept to the North Columbia area. He said their historic numbers are relatively low.

Councilor Devine noted that \$100,000 is available now.

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director explained that we ended 2014/2015 with \$841,000; we used \$240,000 to balance the 2015/2016 budget; and the approved carry forward amount is \$184,000.

Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council reported that \$184,000 was carried forward as follows: Benedict College \$20,000 for the SIAC; the Whaley Street Neighborhood \$10,000; Palmetto Aids Life Support \$1,226; the Vista Guild \$105,223, to pay for the Yellow Shirts after July 1st; Patrons and Friends of the Art Center at Ebenezer Lutheran Church \$2,400; the Blues Festival in Five Points carried forward \$22,500, because it was canceled; the Italian Festival carried forward \$2,100; and the Eau Claire Community Council carried forward \$20,795 due to their event delay. She noted that the committee funds a fraction of the Yellow Shirts and no other activities for the City Center Partnership since they are a Business Improvement District (BID).

Councilor Devine said Council needed to look at funding the Black Expo again this year.

Mayor Benjamin sought recommendations on how to meet the needs of the Yellow Shirts in the Vista.

Mr. Richard Burts, President of the Congaree Vista Guild suggested that if they could get a multi-year funding commitment from City Council, the \$105,000 isn't necessary. He said it is being used, because it is the only money available to pay for the Yellow Shirt service. He said if they get transparency on funding, the \$105,000 can go away.

Councilor Devine recommended that Council do that for some of the groups next year, because it is hard for them to plan. She said there is a huge benefit to having the Yellow Shirts in the Vista when we think about where we were with law enforcement hours; we committed to funding the Yellow Shirts and that's why they didn't submit an application.

Mayor Benjamin made a motion to send a letter to the Renaissance Foundation articulating that we are in full support of their project and when the financing comes back, we will revisit their efforts. He recommended that the \$75,000 go to the Eau Claire Community Council (\$35,000) and the North Columbia Business Association (\$40,000). He acknowledged his support for Our Story Matters, but supported moving \$75,000 from the Historic Columbia Foundation (Our Story Matters) to the City Center Partnership. He said \$25,000 is remaining.

Councilor Devine made an amended motion to allocate \$12,500 to the Palmetto Opera and \$12,500 to the Black Expo.

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director clarified that the \$25,000 is anticipated to be remaining at the end of this year.

Councilor Davis said he would like to take another look at the available funding and these recommendations later in the year.

Councilor Runyan asked to remove number 80 (South Carolina Pride Movement). He said there are folks here to speak on the matter.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Baddourah, Council voted six (6) to one (1) to allocate hospitality tax funding to the South Carolina Pride Movement in the amount of \$47,500, as recommended by the committee. Voting aye were Mr. Davis, Ms. Devine, Ms. Plaugh, Mr. Newman, Mr. Baddourah and Mayor Benjamin. Mr. Runyan voted nay.

Upon an amended motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Baddourah, Council voted unanimously to approve the committee recommendations for accommodations tax and hospitality tax funding, subject to the following amendments: reallocate \$75,000 from the Renaissance Foundation to the Eau Claire Community Council (\$35,000) and the North Columbia Business Association (\$40,000); reallocate \$75,000 from Historic Columbia Foundation Our Story Matters to the City Center Partnership; allocate \$12,500 for the Opera; and allocate \$12,500 for the Black Expo. Funding for the South Carolina Pride Festival was approved by a separate motion.

Councilor Devine asked to schedule a meeting with the City Manager to discuss funding for the Yellow Shirts prospectively.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said it is challenging; staff was asked to make cuts to their budgets. She said everybody has to sacrifice at times and she hopes that we have all of the information on the table at this meeting.

Councilor Baddourah acknowledged that Council mentioned organizations, but it wasn't because Council likes one more than the other. He said this year's budget is tight and if we have more funding in the future, we will be glad to discuss allocating more funds.

Councilor Davis agreed that this year has been more challenging, but he believes that staff took the extra step to keep everybody whole. He admitted that he is an advocate for the smaller groups that are trying to get their footing.

Mr. Mark Hendrick, Glenwood Road resident and the South Carolina Baptist Convention Director for the Office of Public Policy said as a citizen of good faith he doesn't think the allocation of funding to the SC Pride Day is a good allocation of revenue. He said it is very offensive to him and his family. He welcomes these people to Columbia to exercise their first amendment rights. He asked Council to reconsider.

Pastor Mike Gonzalez, Senior Pastor of the Columbia World Outreach Church and Executive Director for the South Carolina Pastors Alliance said we are very offended that you would allocate any money towards the gay pride march. He said we oppose taxpayer money going to these kinds of groups and we are working diligently to get this information out. He said they will communicate this to the churches across the state and the churches in and around our city.

3. [Veterans Employment Initiative](#) – Ms. Pamela Benjamin, Director of Human Resources

Ms. Pamela Benjamin, Director of Human Resources acknowledged that our veteran population represents a prime population for talent; they bring a wealth of knowledge to us as a City and to HR professionals. She outlined the top ten reasons for hiring Veterans as stated by the Department of Labor. She presented an overview for the City of Columbia Veterans Employment Initiative. She reported that the City of Columbia has veteran representation in every department, making up 10% of the workforce. She reviewed the City’s current recruitment and selection process and partnerships with other entities. She noted that for the past three years, applications from veterans are specially stamped with “Hire a Vet” before they are sent to departments. She said the City equates comparable experience for veterans and we offer alternatives to full-time employment. She reported that over three years, fourteen veterans have been placed into City employment and the military pays them while they gain work experience; we’ve made several successful hires as a result of this program. She introduced Mr. John Krampien as a City intern who is an Army Veteran working to earn his Masters in Public Administration at the University of South Carolina. She said the Army’s Civil Education Program pays for John to earn his masters and work in the City’s Budget and Program Management Office. She reported that one person has been placed through Fast Forward.

Councilor Devine asked how many veterans were hired in the last year.

Ms. Pamela Benjamin, Director of Human Resources said they didn’t retain that information in the past, but they are doing that now. She said we are implementing an automated application system that will also track veterans. She reported that 14 veterans were placed through the non-paid program. She said we have 200 veteran employees.

Mr. Bill Manley, Eau Claire Community resident said he has over 200 email contacts for veterans and he would like to share this presentation with his contacts at Fort Jackson.

Mayor Benjamin urged staff to work more closely with Fast Forward to employ our homeless citizens. He said all mayors and military communities are being asked to work together on efforts for veterans.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said a vendor that we are in discussions with is willing to work with the City to target veterans for temporary work; there are lots of opportunities out there with the larger companies we work with.

4. [Clean Water 2020 Program Update](#) – Mr. Joey Jaco, Director of the Utilities and Engineering Department

Mr. Joey Jaco, Director of the Utilities and Engineering Department provided an update on the status of the Consent Decree deliverables; the programs to be submitted in November 2015; and recent milestones along with upcoming goals. He reported that the Sewer Mapping Program was approved and the other programs are under review. He noted that these programs are the City's standard operating procedures that must be approved by the EPA and implemented by the City. He noted that six submittals are also due in November 2015 in addition to the quarterly and annual reports the City is required to submit. He distributed one-page summaries for five of those programs and noted that the Financial Analysis Program will be presented to City Council in October 2015. He reported that we are 100% on schedule with the Consent Decree. He provided an overview of the following programs: Wastewater Treatment Plant Operations Program, which is our standard operating procedures for maintaining our equipment in compliance with the NPDES Permit. The Contingency and Emergency Response Plan (CERP) outlines how we react to disasters or emergencies to include sanitary sewer overflows, line breaks, power outages at the plant, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes or a widespread power outage. This program requires public notice and the public has thirty days to provide input. He noted that a lot of these programs are in place, but we have to provide the EPA with detailed operating procedures.

Councilor Davis asked if we conduct drills.

Mr. Joey Jaco, Director of the Utilities and Engineering Department said we conduct tabletop exercises. He continued to explain that the Wastewater Collection and Transmission System Training Program outlines the procedures for training the staff on the collection system and the transmission system outside of the wastewater plant. The Information Management System Program is a guide for implementing and upgrading enhancements to the existing information system; it outlines how we handle data in the Utilities and Engineering Department and ultimately within the City. The Gravity Sewer System Operations and Maintenance Program (GSOMP) documents our standard operating procedures for the operation and maintenance of our gravity system. This program also requires a public hearing. He reported that over the past year, seven deliverables were submitted to the EPA on-time; there has been a 17% reduction in sanitary sewer overflows; we inspected 178 miles of pipe; and we cleaned 168 miles of pipe. He noted that we have approximately 1,100 miles of pipe and under the Consent Decree we have seven years to inspect the entire system. He continued to report that over the past year, 1,866 inspections were conducted under the Fats, Oil and Grease (FOG) Program; 842 work orders have been closed; and we conducted 3,007 force main and pump station asset management inspections. He outlined the recent program milestones, including but not limited to providing program management for fifty ongoing wastewater projects with the assistance of CDM; developing project standards; and improved tracking and management of budgets. He announced that the digester improvements at the Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant is a \$25 million project that will allow us to produce a sustainable product. He noted that the project was bid earlier this year and the

next step may be a Request for Proposals for handling our solids. Upcoming goals include the submittal of thirteen programs; releasing a public interface for the project dashboard with an interactive map; and improvements to the hydraulic model. In closing, he said we are trying to improve our system today, because the better mapping and hydraulics we have, the more intelligent decisions we can make about our system.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Runyan and seconded by Mr. Newman, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 4:16 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 5** through **8** as outlined and properly noticed under the Freedom of Information Act.

5. Discussion of employment of an employee
 - *Legal Department – This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*

6. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements
 - *Vertical Development Opportunities within City Parking Garages – This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken. Mr. Newman abstained from this discussion due to a potential conflict of interest.*
 - *Mutual Aid Agreement – This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
 - *Ni America – This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*

7. Receipt of legal advice on matters covered by attorney-client privilege
 - *Public Finance Authority Issuance of Revenue Bonds to Gable Oaks Affordable Housing, LLC – This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*

8. Discussion of negotiations incident to the proposed sale of property
 - *Potential sale of City real property – This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore
City Clerk