



CITY OF COLUMBIA
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2006
6:00 P.M.
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1737 MAIN STREET

The City of Columbia City Council conducted an Evening Meeting on Wednesday, March 1, 2006 in the City Hall Council Chambers located at 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina.

Mayor Robert D. Coble called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The following members of City Council were present: The Honorable E. W. Cromartie, II, The Honorable Anne M. Sinclair, The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine and The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann. Also present were Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Salley, City Clerk.

**Mr. E. W. Cromartie, II, read a prepared statement explicitly outlining his discontent with reports that were written about him by Mr. Jeff Wilkerson, Military Reporter and Ms. Gina Davis, City of Columbia Reporter both of The State Newspaper. An article was released today eluding that he brought forth a contract with Municipal Partners, LLC because they are friends. He cited their many attempts to distort his character and demanded that Mr. Wilkerson and Ms. Smith be reprimanded for their reckless reporting. He thanked the Mayor and members of Council for allowing him to make that statement.

PRESENTATIONS

1. Special Presentation – The Honorable Mayor Robert D. Coble

Mayor Robert D. Coble and the members of City Council presented Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager with a certificate and pin in recognition of him becoming a Credentialed City Manager through the International City/County Management Association.

2. Columbia Writer's Alliance Update - Ms. Jerlean Noble, Columbia Writer's Alliance

Ms. Jerlean Noble Founder and President of the Columbia Writer's Alliance, a non-profit forum for constructive critiquing and a supportive atmosphere for writers of all ages. She thanked the members of Council for their in-kind and financial support. She provided a brief update on the activities of the Columbia Writer's Alliance.

3. Flashing Traffic Lights – Mr. Dave Brewer, Traffic Engineer

Mayor Robert D. Coble explained that the City received many complaints about the old traffic system and now that we have a modern traffic system there are still many complaints. He asked the citizens to present their concerns, comments or suggestions on the matter. Mayor Coble asked Dave Brewer, Traffic Engineer to provide a brief overview of the City's current system.

Mr. Dave Brewer, Traffic Engineer, explained that the downtown traffic system has been upgraded over the past five (5) years to a much more intelligent system with 110 signals on it. The same system will be expanded to the Rosewood Drive, Garners Ferry and Two Notch Road areas. He welcomed comments from the public.

Mr. John Baker stated that his firm owns many properties throughout the City of Columbia. He stated that the system needs improvements in the areas of Washington Street at Bull Street and Lady Street at Bull Street; Barnwell at Gervais and Henderson at Gervais. He said that citizens waste gas. He noted that Pickens at Gervais Street needs a traffic signal. He asked the City to continue to study the utilization of traffic monitoring cameras to catch drivers that run red lights and sped through the City Center.

Ms. Elmira Weston stated she drives all around town and the traffic lights on the main thoroughfares of Bull Street to Gervais Street and Beltline to Two Notch Road and change rapidly causing you to stop at each light. She cited traffic problems around the Wal-Mart on Garners Ferry Road with only nine cars going through a green light before turning red.

Mr. Temple Ligon of the Columbia Star stated that he respects expertise and encouraged the members of Council to allow the Traffic Engineers to handle this matter.

4. Update on the Hospitality Tax Fund and the Accommodations Tax Fund – Ms. Libby Gober, Ombudsman

Ms. Libby Gober, Ombudsman, provided an overview of the laws and processes for the use of Hospitality Tax Funds, Accommodations Tax Funds and Community Promotions Funds. She stated that the General Fund finances the Community Promotions Account that is available to non-profit and not-for-profit organizations. The Community Promotions Advisory Committee meets annually to make allocations while reserving a contingency balance. The Committee also meets monthly to review applications to be sponsored from that remaining balance. Funding can be used for operation expenses. The Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee meets once per year to review applications for Hospitality Tax Funding. She explained that this funding could be used for operation and maintenance expenses of eligible facilities under State Law. Organizations are required to submit legitimate copies of invoices and receipts for vendors they paid directly along with valid attendance figures. She suggested that they use the same guidelines for advancing funding to organizations from the Hospitality Tax Fund as they do with the Accommodations Tax Fund. She explained that groups are allowed to carry forward funds for one year only. Ms. Gober stated that by law a visitor is an individual that travels outside of his or her home environment other than commuting back and forth from work and City Council decided to count anyone outside of the existing zip code. The Tourism Expenditure Review Committee (TERC) conducts an annual review of the City's Accommodations Tax expenditures. TERC has said that they are reviewing economic impact versus heads on beds and that there is no specific distance a person has to travel. The Accommodations Tax must be used to attract and or provide for tourist, but advertising and promotions is the cleanest way is to use these funds and any expenditure outside of that is based on a percentage of people that are tourist for that event. She noted that funding could be advanced from this pot as well. She suggested that organizations be required to hire a Fire Marshall to ensure public safety. She asked for directions on how to handle the advancement of funding to organizations without receiving receipts and invoices at that time. This is the first year that TERC is allowing the funding of fireworks done by a professional company and it must be a civic event such as New Years Eve. TERC has now decided that organizations that fund charities can be funded if the event brings in tourists. She encouraged the organizations to learn the requirements prior to spending the money. She explained that TERC now says that a municipality can fund an organization outside its limits if the municipality will benefit from it. She discussed the concept of providing seed money only versus continued funding year after year. She stated that TERC allows the governing body to make that decision. Ms. Gober noted that organizations are not allowed to use the same back up materials to apply for multiple pots of funding. She explained that TERC would scrutinize decisions made by City Council in contrast to the committee's recommendation.

There was a consensus of Council to direct Ms. Libby Gober to compile the recommendations and suggestions made and to provide a report to Council for further clarification and consideration.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon motion by Ms. Devine, seconded by Ms. Sinclair, Council voted unanimously to approve on a single motion the **Consent Agenda Items 6.** through **14.** as presented.

CONSIDERATION OF BIDS AND AGREEMENTS

5. Council is asked to approve a Contract for Professional Services to Provide Relocation Assistance for the Busby Street Life Resource Center Project, as requested by the Empowerment Zone. Award to the TBE Group, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$10,500.00. This firm is located in Columbia, SC. *Funding Source: Empowerment Zone Funding allocated for the Busby Street Life Resource Project – This item was withdrawn from the agenda.*
6. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of a Dump Body Mounted Sand Spreader, as requested by the Street Division. Award to Warren Truck Equipment, the low bidder in the amount of \$11,485.48. This vendor is located in Columbia, SC. *Funding Source: GL-5513202-658500 - Approved*
7. Council is asked to approve the Installation of Backlit Signage in the New Offices at Washington Square, as requested by General Services. Award to Sign Tech, the low bidder, in the amount of \$16,068.00. This vendor is located in West Columbia, SC. *Funding Source: GL-5329999-636600 / JL-CP105902-63660 - Approved*
8. Council is asked to approve a Mass Select Detector (MSD) Upgrade, as requested by the Police Department's Drug Analysis Laboratory of the Crime Scene Investigation Division. Award to Aiglent Technologies, as a Sole Source Purchase, in the amount of \$23,467.34. This vendor is located in Wilmington, DE. *Funding Source: (Grant 2005-DN-BX-0072) 2659999-658600 / JL-9200000107 and 2659999-657600 / JL-9200000107 -Approved*
9. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of Six (6) Dispensing Trailers and Six (6) Coupler Locks, as requested by the Emergency Operations Center. Award to Custom Trailer Works, the low bidder, in the amount of \$41,256.05. This firm is located in Wrens, GA. *Funding Source: GL-2059999-658500 / JL-9601000205-658500 - Approved*
10. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of Seven (7) Trailers to Carry Equipment and Seven (7) Coupler Locks, as requested by the Emergency Operations Center. Award to Custom Trailer Works, Inc., the low bidder, in the amount of \$48,132.06. This vendor is located in Wrens, GA. *Funding Source: GL-2059999-658500 / JL-9601000104 - Approved*
11. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of 240 Pairs of Leather Firefighter Boots, as requested by the Fire Department. Award to Wally's Fire and Safety, the acceptable bidder, in the amount of \$50,371.20. This vendor is located in Mullins, SC. *Funding Source: 1012303-625900 (50%) and 2082306-625900 (50%) - Approved*
12. Council is asked to approve Annual Hardware Maintenance for the Main Frame at City Hall, as requested by the Information Technology Department. Award to Unisys, Inc., as a Sole Source Procurement, in the amount of \$63,540.55. This vendor is headquartered in Blue Bell, PA. *Funding Source: GL-1011120-638200 - Approved*

13. Council is asked for approval to Re-roof a Portion of the 1136 Washington Square Building, as requested by Support Services. Award to Heritage Roofing, the low bidder, in the amount of \$72,817.00. This firm is located in Lexington, SC. *Funding Source: GL-5329999-623200 / JL-CP105902-623200 - Approved*
14. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of a Reverse 911 System for the City, as requested by the Emergency Operations Center. Award to Sigma Communications in the amount of \$73,776.00. This vendor is located in Indianapolis, IN. *Funding Source: (Grant Funding) GL-2059999-658600 / JL-9601000104 - Approved*

CONSIDERATION OF BIDS, AGREEMENTS AND CHANGE ORDERS

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Ms. Sinclair, Council voted unanimously to approve on a single motion **Items 15.** through **18.** as presented.

15. Council is asked to approve Change Order #5 for the Charles R. Drew Wellness Center, as requested by the Construction and Facilities Management Department. Award to Loveless Contracting in the amount of \$32,902.39. This firm is located in Cayce, SC. *Funding Source: PK004301-6593 - Approved*
16. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of One (1) Rear Loader Garbage Truck, as requested by the Solid Waste Division. Award to Amick Equipment Company, the low bidder, in the amount of \$104,519.00. This vendor is located in Lexington, SC. *Funding Source: 6308972-658500 - Approved*
17. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of a Crane Truck, as requested by the Water Distribution Division. Award to Love Chevrolet, the low bidder, in the amount of \$129,356.00. This firm is located in Cayce, SC. *Funding Source: 5516203-658500 - Approved*
18. Council is asked to approve Supplemental Agreement Number 1 to the Two Notch Road Widening Project, as requested by Engineering Administration. Award to the SC Department of Transportation in the amount of \$174,289.18. *Funding Source: Water and Sewer CIP Fund - Approved*

ORDINANCES – FIRST READING

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Ms. Sinclair, Council voted unanimously to give first reading approval on a single motion to **Items 19.** through **23.** as presented.

19. Ordinance No.: 2005-068 – Granting encroachment to Governor’s Place, LLC at 1901 – 1931 Washington Street for installation and maintenance of landscaping, an irrigation system and walkways – *Approved on first reading.*
20. Ordinance No.: 2006-001 – Granting encroachment to First Citizens for installation and maintenance of a flag pole adjacent to its property in the 1200 block of Lady Street – *Approved on first reading.*
21. Ordinance No.: 2006-005 – Granting encroachment to Capitol Places, LLC for installation and maintenance of concrete footings at 1520 – 1526 Main Street – *Approved on first reading.*
22. Ordinance No.: 2006-010 – Granting encroachment to Shealy Development for installation and maintenance of landscaping adjacent to its building at 1735 Taylor Street and along the 1600 block of Barnwell Street - *First reading consideration of this item was deferred.*

23. Ordinance No.: 2006-013 - Authorizing transfer of a portion of the 1100 block of Wheat Street between Assembly Street and Main Street and an alleyway running through the block to the University of South Carolina – *Approved on first reading.*

RESOLUTIONS

24. Resolution No.: R-2006-009 - A Resolution to Encourage and Support the Use of Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technologies in the City of Columbia with the Intent of Achieving the Status of a Leader in the Emerging Technology - *Approved*

Upon motion by Ms. Sinclair, seconded by Mr. Cromartie, Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution No.: R-2006-009 - A Resolution to Encourage and Support the Use of Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technologies in the City of Columbia with the Intent of Achieving the Status of a Leader in the Emerging Technology.

APPEARANCE OF PUBLIC HAVING BUSINESS WITH CITY COUNCIL

Ms. Kathryn Bellfiled appeared before the members of Council to address the actions and statements by Councilwoman Anne M. Sinclair that offended her. She insisted that Ms. Sinclair referred to the partners of Municipal Partners, LLC as “those people” as reported in The State Newspaper. She demanded that Councilwoman Sinclair be reprimanded and ordered to reject her sentiments, she requested a public apology and asked the NAACP to investigate the matter.

- **Council adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m.**

COLUMBIA OPPORTUNITY RESOURCE GROUP

- I. Welcome – The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine and The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann

Councilman Daniel J. Rickenmann recognized the members of the Columbia Opportunity Resource (C.O.R.) Group that were present. He stated that they worked hard to make the group diverse. He said that they were invited to see what City Council does and to voice their opinions.

Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine explained that C.O.R. is a group of young professionals from the Columbia and Greater Midlands area who want to be invested in the City of Columbia, community involvement, local awareness and leadership development.

Mr. John Adams, Chairman of C.O.R.'s Political Awareness Committee, explained that they are an education committee that holds events to educate the public on the political processes. They have scheduled debates for all contested positions on March 16, 2006 at 5:30 p.m. at the Convention Center. He said that this would be a reoccurring event during local elections.

Ms. Karen Stone, C.O.R. Member, invited the members of Council to participate in the American Heart Walk scheduled for March 15, 2006. Ms. Brown is a Realtor and an active volunteer with Dreher High School.

Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine noted that C.O.R. does not impose an age limit on membership.

- **Council adjourned the Columbia Opportunity Resource Group Meeting at 7:17 p.m.**

Mr. Rusty DePass stated that cross streets need a longer increment of time to let vehicles clear, especially at Whitaker Drive and Trenholm Road. He said that a new light has been installed and it is no longer triggered when a car comes down the hill. He stated that we have not made the progress that we should have made.

- **Council adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Salley
City Clerk