

**CITY OF COLUMBIA
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
MARCH 1, 2006
4:00 PM – CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1737 MAIN STREET**



The City of Columbia City Council met for a Work Session on Wednesday, March 1, 2006. The Honorable Mayor Robert D. Coble called the meeting to order at 4:04 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.

PRESENTATIONS

- A. Disparity Study Results – Mr. Stephen F. Humphrey, Jr., Senior Partner of MGT of America and Ms. Joan Gardenhire, Senior Consultant of MGT of America - *The presentation of this item was deferred.*
- B. Procurement Code Recommendations – Mr. Frank Knapp, Chairman of the Columbia Small Business Regulatory Review Committee and Ms. April Heyward, Vice Chair of the Columbia Small Business Regulatory Review Committee

Mr. Frank Knapp, Chair of the Columbia Small Business Regulatory Review Committee, explained that this procurement code review process began with a public hearing in May 2005. He said that a procurement code should be easy to understand and read; it should leave tax dollars in the area; it should be efficient and difficult to manipulate towards favoritism; and give all vendors the opportunity to participate in the bid process.

Ms. April Heyward, Co-Chair of the Columbia Small Business Regulatory Review Committee, stated that their first concern is that vendor opportunity is insufficient due to the City not having a centralized vendor list. She said that not all vendors are aware of opportunities to do business with the City of Columbia. She stated that the Procurement Code should be amended to reflect the following: require all city Request For Proposals and Request For Business over \$10,000 to be advertised in three local newspapers including the newspaper with the largest subscription base; require all city Request For Proposals and Request For Bids over \$10,000 to be submitted to a national subscriber based procurement service for vendors; and require all city Request For Proposals and Request For Bids over \$1,500 and all Request For Qualifications to be posted on the city's website.

Councilman Daniel Rickenmann asked if the committee had researched the cost of advertising in three newspapers as outlined in the first recommendation? Should the threshold amount be higher, because the advertisement would be expensive?

Mr. Frank Knapp, Chair of the Columbia Small Business Regulatory Review Committee, stated that the city advertises most of the time, but not all of the time and it is not required by Ordinance. He suggested that they formalize the process and require that this be done. He noted that there is not a hard and fast rule.

Ms. April Heyward, Co-Chair of the Columbia Small Business Regulatory Review Committee, further suggested that the city develop an e-mail notification service for all Request For Proposals, Request For Bids and Request For Qualifications posted on the city website so that all appropriate vendors located in Richland and Lexington Counties, as identified by their zip code, will be automatically notified of what is available.

Mr. Frank Knapp, Chair of the Columbia Small Business Regulatory Review Committee, stated that the procurement code is both inefficient for the City and easily manipulated to favor particular businesses. This inefficiency is related to the dollar amounts of the purchase that trigger the various procurement procedures. He recommended that the threshold amounts be increased to reflect inflation and the increased cost of goods and services.

Councilman E. W. Cromartie, II, suggested that the City utilize a rotation system for small bids, by compiling a list of small businesses that perform that particular type of work and then rotate the projects. He recommended that incentives be built into the process along with performance measures.

Mr. Frank Knapp, Chair of the Columbia Small Business Regulatory Review Committee, stated that the key to a fair competitive bid process is a professional procurement officer who is both autonomous from the department utilizing the goods and services, makes every effort to provide an opportunity to all qualified vendors to bid on projects and who can be held accountable for the integrity of the procurement process. The City's Procurement Office meets those needs except for the procurement contracts for water and sewer projects and vehicle repairs and parts. Mr. Knapp discussed the need for a provision in the code to encourage the utilization of local vendors for goods and services.

Councilman E. W. Cromartie, II, requested that the committee review the local preference policies of other cities?

Mr. Frank Knapp, Chair of the Columbia Small Business Regulatory Review Committee, he further recommended that the Procurement Officer perform best value analysis to determine the economic impact of each bid to the area. He said that this process would create a more competitive process.

Ms. April Heyward, Co-Chair of the Columbia Small Business Regulatory Review Committee, explained that the procurement code is neither user friendly nor process friendly and it is difficult to understand. She said that there has to be a better process of interpreting the code. She recommended that it be organized to be more user friendly; all codes should be under the policies and procedures; remove codes from the appendices; and all employees should be directed to forward procurement inquiries to the Purchasing Division.

Mayor Robert D. Coble suggested that staff take a month to review the committee's recommendations and then provide a report to the members of Council comparing those recommendations with staff comments. He requested that they receive the City Attorney's recommendations in an Executive Session briefing and that the committee be briefed as well.

Councilman E.W. Cromartie, II reiterated that the procurement process would not be effective if it is not in line with what we are trying to achieve with the disparity study. He said that the disparity study wouldn't have any teeth if the procurement code doesn't provide for it.

Councilman Sam Davis said that they should also review the technological aspect of this so that we can become more efficient. He said that the committee held meetings that allowed community input and that the recommendations reflect that.

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Mr. Cromartie, Council voted unanimously to direct staff to review the Columbia Small Business Regulatory Review Committee's recommendations on the City's Procurement Code and then compile a report outlining staff recommendations, the City Attorney's recommendations and the committee's recommendations.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

C. Municipal Partners, LLC – Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manger

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager recommended that we adhere to the procurement process by allowing staff to continue to work on this matter by gathering additional information and having an open dialogue with the Fort Jackson Community and various elected officials. Once this has taken place, staff will report back to Council during the preparation of a Request for Proposals.

There was a consensus of Council to direct Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager to contact Senator Lindsey Graham, Congressman James Clyburn, Representative John Spratt and the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce to engage them in these discussions.

C1. **City Council Meeting Schedule

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to cancel the Work Session and Council Meeting scheduled for March 15, 2006. A Work Session will be conducted on March 22, 2006.

D. IndyMac Bank Proposal – Ms. Dana D. Turner, Assistant City Manager for Commerce and Development - *Consideration of this item was deferred.*

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Ms. Sinclair, Council voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 4:52 p.m. for the discussion of **Items E.** though **I.** as amended.

- E. Receipt of legal advice, which relates to pending, threatened or potential claims
This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.
- F. Discussion of discipline of an employee
This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.
- G. **Receipt of legal advice, which relates to a matter covered by attorney-client privilege
This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.
- H. **Discussion of compensation of an employee
This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.
- I. **Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements
- Five Points Parking
This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.
- **Council adjourned the Executive Session discussion at 5:45 p.m. to break prior to convening the Evening Meeting.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Salley
City Clerk