

**CITY OF COLUMBIA
BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES
AUGUST 29, 2007 – 9:00 AM
CAPITAL SENIOR CENTER
1650 PARK CIRCLE**



The Columbia City Council conducted a Budget Workshop on Wednesday, August 29, 2007 at the Capital Senior Center located at 1650 Park Circle, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Robert D. Coble called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.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 Daniel J. Rickenmann and The Honorable Kirkman Finlay III. The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine arrived at 9:13 a.m. Also present were Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Salley, City Clerk.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

1. Welcome / Opening Remarks – Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager, welcomed everyone to the first of a series of budget workshops, as committed to earlier this year in hopes of meeting and discussing issues with Council along the way. He intends to prepare the fiscal year 2008-09 budget documentation early and to advertise the public hearings in April 2008.

2. Proposed Operational Strategic Plan - Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager stated that the proposed Operational Strategic Plan is for Council's review and feedback. It represents staff's effort to develop a plan to achieve the four (4) broad goals presented by City Council last year.

- **Councilor Devine arrived at 9:13 a.m.**

Each Team Captain presented their team's strategic issue, objectives and strategies to the members of Council. The strategic issues were as follows:

- Maximizing revenue opportunities
- Providing resources to improve and maintain infrastructure
- Providing quality customer service
- Building stronger City Council and staff relations
- Securing adequate tools and resources to support our employees in performing their duties
- Improving internal and external communications

The members of Council asked very specific questions related to the proposed plan and made suggestions on how to attain the four (4) goals developed by the Council.

3. Fiscal Year 2008/2009 Budget Preparation Calendar – Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director, reviewed the budget preparation calendar for fiscal year 2008/2009, which began with today's presentation of the Strategic Plan.

There was a consensus of Council to conduct a Retreat on November 2-3, 2007.

4. Fiscal Year 2008/2009 City Council Operational Budget Priorities - Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager, asked City Council to share their budget priorities with staff.

Councilor Devine said that there are unfinished budget priorities from last year. She asked that we consider allocating funds to the Development Corporations from the Land Acquisition Fund.

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager, respectfully asked that staff be allowed to report back on the matter next Wednesday.

Mayor Coble said that Police and Fire retention is a priority, along with funding for security cameras. The Climate Protection Action Committee and hydrogen fuel cell efforts will involve staff looking at different purchases. He said that the City should work with Richland School District One in an effort to build a better community that focuses on a number of things, but in particular the A+ schools.

Councilor Rickenmann said that public safety and infrastructure are priorities. He suggested that City Council determine which groups are our partners, why they are our partners and then determine a level of funding that remains consistent. He said that by state law we are required to fund the Columbia Music Festival Association. He suggested that we prioritize and use line items in hospitality tax and community promotions to fund these groups. He recommended that we look at the water department as a whole and see if we are maximizing the dollars spent within that department, is the system growing, are we covering all deferred maintenance to grow the system. He said that we should highlight the quality of our water just as New York made a promotion out of it through marketing. He stated that we should market the great quality of life in the City of Columbia.

Councilor Davis said that we need to take a budgetary look at departments that will play a major role in dress rehearsals for certain areas in the city that need attention, what dollars need to be spent on the front end to get to what we want to see happen and the economics of the budget in terms of City Council looking at where we need to fill the gap. He said that infrastructure is first and foremost for us. We know we have to repair and make whole what we have underground now and at the same time stretch and build upon that going into the unincorporated areas of the city. Look at the Accommodations Tax Fund and the Community Promotions Fund to see how that can be spread around a little more, because some entities that we have helped for a while are standing a little better now and new applicants are knocking at the door.

Councilor Rickenmann urged that we get online services to make it easier for people to navigate through our system and to allow people to pay bills online.

Councilor Cromartie agreed that security cameras and the school partnerships are priorities. He said that gang activity in neighborhoods is a direct correlation between the problems in the school and problems in the community. He suggested that the City work with the Columbia Housing Authority and the schools. He is supportive of providing parenting classes, because a lot of young people don't understand the process of parenting. He supports long-range development in downtown to ensure diversity, by providing a mechanism for low and moderate income where possible. Businesses must have an opportunity to grow and develop in the city and we must have schools that provide an excellent education.

Councilor Sinclair is supportive of the public safety issue, but cautioned how we measure if we are fully doing what we need to be doing. She stated that it's not just the number of employees. The security cameras are tools to strengthen how the police do their job. She stated that the operational audit and performance based budgeting are important. She suggested that we determine if we are utilizing people correctly, do we have the right tools for people to do their jobs. We need to do what we can to fully utilize the recommendations provided by the gang assessment. We need to help all of the children in our city and play a leadership role on how services play out for the homeless. She urged her peers to decide on how much is going to the committees by year-end so we are not so wrapped up in that during the spring.

Councilor Devine suggested that we look at how we are expending our resources, because we don't always need manpower. Look at how we can increase our revenue sources and businesses. She suggested that we look at spending more money for the loan pool to get more people to move downtown, long-term growth for infrastructure and our ability to leverage the funding pools. She asked Libby Gober and Teresa Wilson Florence to work together to see if legislation allows us to add onto that and capitalize funding for groups. She said that we should look at ways to grow the funding pots and lessen the burden on the taxpayer.

Councilor Finlay said that we projected a 5% revenue increase, with the police having a one percent increase and fire a two percent growth. He urged the Chief of Police and the Fire Chief to make sure the money is spent well. He asked the police to look at overtime and retention and the fire department to use the equipment we purchase. He said that the City needed to be less dependent on making transfers from the water and sewer fund. He urged his peers to be proactive with budget liabilities by getting in front of our planning in the city. We need to look at the funding for the Historic Columbia Foundation, Columbia Museum of Art and Adventure, because those organizations should expect less funding from us over time. We need to focus on how we treat the unallocated surplus, on all tools that we will use to generate revenues, and ask everybody to squeeze small cuts out.

APPOINTMENTS

5. First Tee Columbia Advisory Committee / James E. Clyburn Golf Center Scholarship Advisory Committee

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Mr. Cromartie, Council voted unanimously and on a single motion to approve the appointment of the following nineteen (19) individuals to the First Tee Columbia Advisory Committee; two (2) individuals as Ex-Officio members to the First Tee Columbia Advisory Committee; and three (3) members to the James E. Clyburn Golf Center Scholarship Advisory Committee:

First Tee Columbia Advisory Committee

Robin All	Brooke Bailey	Kristi Coggins	Anthony Cooper
Timothy Davis	William Dillon	Hank Fisher	Ollie Johnson
Peggy Langdon	Janice Marshall	Chris Miller	Erik Simensen
Ronald Staley, Jr.	Xavier Starkes	Ruges Stockton	Terry Watson
Joseph Werner	Robert Wilson		

Ex-Officio

Congressman James E. Clyburn
Councilman E.W. Cromartie, II

James E. Clyburn Golf Center Scholarship Advisory Committee

Katheryn M. Bellfield
Elise L. Martin
Quincy M. Richardson

6. Columbia Tree and Appearance Commission

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted unanimously to approve on a single motion the appointment of Andrew Gray Howard and Robertson Kibler to fill two (2) At-large vacancies on the Columbia Tree and Appearance Commission for a three-year term to expire September 1, 2010 **and** the reappointment of Howard Duvall, Chairman of the Columbia Tree and Appearance Commission for a second and final term expiring February 1, 2010.

7. Board of Zoning Appeals

The consideration of this matter was deferred.

RESOLUTIONS

8. **Resolution No.: R-2007-052 - Approving execution of a Conflict Waiver with the McNair Law Firm for representation in the TIF Dispute with Richland County

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Ms. Sinclair, Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution No.: R-2007-052 - Approving execution of a Conflict Waiver with the McNair Law Firm for representation in the TIF Dispute with Richland County.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Mr. Finlay, Council voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 11:58 a.m. for the discussion of **Items 9.** through **12.** as amended.

9. **Receipt of legal advice, which relates to a matter covered by attorney-client privilege
Items were discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.

10. **Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements
Items were discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.

11. **Discussion of the employment of an employee
This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.

12. Discussion of the appointment of a person to a public body
This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

- **Council adjourned the meeting at 2:45 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Salley
City Clerk