



CITY OF COLUMBIA
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2008
9:00 A.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 3RD FLOOR
1737 MAIN STREET

The Columbia City Council conducted a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, November 5, 2008 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Robert D. Coble called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. The following members of Council were present: The Honorable E.W. Cromartie, II, The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann and The Honorable Belinda F. Gergel. The Honorable Kirkman Finlay III arrived at 9:55 a.m. Also present were Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Salley, City Clerk.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Minutes of June 11 and 18, 2008

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of June 11 and 18, 2008 on a single motion and as presented.

PRESENTATIONS

2. Introduction of the October 2008 Employee of the Month (*Ms. Christina Dunn, Administrative Secretary, Columbia Police Department's Fiscal Management Division*) – Captain Rick Hines, Columbia Police Department

Mr. Tandy Carter, Chief of Police stated that having Ms. Christina Dunn as an employee makes his job more exciting. He said that her job description doesn't do her a lot of justice, because she does everything. Her motto is "Nothing is impossible and there is no problem that can beat me". I am very proud and excited to recognize Ms. Dunn as the October 2008 Employee of the Month.

Mayor Coble presented Ms. Christina Dunn with a plaque for being selected as the October 2008 Employee of the Month.

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager presented Ms. Dunn with a token of appreciation.

3. October 2008 Monthly Business Spotlight Program Honoree (*Eric's San Jose*) – Mr. Angelo McBride, Administrator of Office of Business Opportunities

Mr. Angelo McBride, Administrator of the Office of Business Opportunities introduced Eric's San Jose as the October 2008 Monthly Business Spotlight Honoree. Eric's San Jose is a restaurant that has specialized in delicious Mexican food since 1994. The restaurant continues to grow and to give back to the community in many ways. Eric's San Jose was voted best Mexican restaurant by the Columbia Metropolitan Magazine for seven (7) consecutive years.

4. Presentation of Awards – Mr. Fred Delk, Executive Director of the Columbia Development Corporation and Ms. Eva Nance, Chair of the Columbia Development Corporation Board of Directors

Mr. Fred Delk, Executive Director of the Columbia Development Corporation introduced Ms. Eva Nance as the Chair of the Columbia Development Corporation Board of Directors. Mr. Delk stated that eleven (11) years ago under the leadership of Mr. Jim Daniel, the Columbia Development Corporation targeted the Arsenal Hill neighborhood for revitalization. First, we purchased an eight unit, rundown, drug infested property one block from the Governor's Mansion. We spent \$150,000 on it and tore it down the next day. Nine (9) years later two (2) local developers came together and crafted a unique public private partnership that has now created ten (10) residential units for low to moderate income people. The units are fully occupied and they are helping to raise the standard of living and build wealth for those purchasers. Mr. Delk announced that the Columbia Development Corporation recently received the Diversity Award for the Townhomes at Arsenal Hill project from the International Downtown Association in Calgary Alberta, Canada. This week the Columbia Development Corporation received the Woodrow Wilson Award from the Historic Columbia Foundation for an organization that takes meaningful action to further the cause of historic preservation.

5. Community Promotions Monthly Funding Recommendations – The Honorable Judge Mildred McDuffie, Chair of the Community Promotions Advisory Committee

Judge Mildred McDuffie, Chair of the Community Promotions Advisory Committee stated that Council has a copy of the recommendations for the Alston Wilkes Society whereby they are asking for \$8,000. At this time, the committee has less than \$20,000 left and we have some of our young people who are engaged in activities that represent the city. Judge McDuffie asked Council to approve the recommendation to allocate \$4,000 to the Alston Wilkes Society.

Upon motion by Mr. Rickenmann, seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to approve the committee's recommendation to allocate \$4,000 to the Alston Wilkes Society from the Community Promotions Fund. *(Please see below.)*

Community Promotions Monthly Funding 2008-2009

Organization	Project Name	Request	Amount Funded
October			
Alston Wilkes Society	Outreach/Case Management for Former Offenders	8,000	4,000
Totals		8,000	4,000

6. Update on the Spay / Neuter Program in the Midlands – Mr. Jim “Soni” Sonefeld, President of the Board of Directors for the Animal Mission

Mr. Jim Sonefeld, President of the Board of Directors for the Animal Mission provided an update on the activities of the program of the Animal Mission, which is a fundraising group that helps to support and enhance the conditions of the City of Columbia Animal Shelter. For the last three years, they specifically earmarked money to help get as many cats and dogs spayed and neutered. They raised over \$100,000 which helped fund free spaying and neutering. The City of Columbia Animal Shelter receives about 13,000 cats and dogs annually. The first year they earmarked \$25,000 and sent out vouchers to people who have cats and dogs, but didn't have the money to get them spayed or neutered. In essence, we removed 10,000 procreating cats and dogs from the system and in six (6) to ten (10) years that will have a huge and direct impact on the numbers that we see at the city's shelter.

7. Farm-City Program – Ms. Mary Jane Henderson, Education Coordinator for the Richland Conservation District

Ms. Mary Jane Henderson, Education Coordinator for the Richland Conservation District introduced the Farm-City Celebration Program, which began in 1955. Over 15,000 communities across the United States celebrate this event each year. It's the week leading up to and including Thanksgiving. There is a Richland County Farm-City Week Committee that educates students so they won't think that all food comes from the grocery stores. They have been honored statewide and nationally for the program here in Richland County and they would love to have the city participate by appointing someone to serve on the committee.

Master Jamie Lanham, the son of a Richland County Farmer said that his family owns a farm in Richland County and they grow corn, wheat and soy beans. Jamie stated that he would like to be a farmer when he grows up.

Upon motion by Mr. Rickenmann, seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to appoint Mr. Kirkman Finlay III to the Farm-City Committee as a city representative.

8. USC Columbia Technology Incubator Program – Mr. Joel Stevenson, Executive Director of the Incubator

Mr. Joel Stevenson, Executive Director of the USC Columbia Technology Incubator Program gave Council an update on how they are doing at 1225 Laurel Street. He proudly announced that six hundred five (605) jobs have been created since they started the program; one hundred seventy four (174) of those jobs are minority jobs; twenty (20) companies have graduated to date; on December 1, 2008, three (3) additional companies will graduate; there are currently forty two (42) companies in the Incubator; the average salary for companies in the Incubator is \$47,000; the average salary for companies that have graduated from the Incubator is \$63,000; they partnered with the Columbia International Business Center; there are three (3) foreign companies in the program today; and the occupancy rate is 65%. The National Business of Incubator Association did not nominate them for Incubator of the Year, but they came in 5th place out of 1,900 nominees. Last year, the Department of Commerce started using them as a model. They are the largest incubator in the State of South Carolina and they will help anybody who wants to get started in the incubator business. Lastly, there is a young man who was voted number four by Business Week of the top twenty-five entrepreneurs under twenty-five years of age. His name is Joshua Hackler and he owns a company called Spanish Vines, a Spanish food and wine importing business.

- 8a. **Remarks from the Coalition of Downtown Neighborhoods – Ms. Ellen Cooper, President

Ms. Ellen Cooper, President of the Coalition of Downtown Neighborhoods thanked the Council for their support of the downtown neighborhoods and stated that they are excited to be a part of the City of Columbia. Ms. Cooper referenced an article in the newspaper that said for any city to be a success its downtown has to be vibrant including retail and its neighborhoods; someone has to use the retail shops. Ms. Cooper said that they are working to do their part as supportive neighborhoods. Ms. Cooper stated that during the press conference for the Council of Neighborhoods that was held last week, they took a formal position to oppose the location of a homeless service center at the entrance to our vibrant city.

Mr. Paul Bouknight, President of the Cottontown Neighborhood Association thanked the Council for the opportunity to travel to Miami, Florida last month to visit their homeless service center; for the City's commitment to their neighborhood; for improving the quality of life for those who have chosen to live downtown; and the commitment to improve the conditions for homeless people who also live downtown. The city has demonstrated that they can successfully run shelters. We like what we are hearing from Mr. Tony Lawton and Ms. Ivy Chestnut and their plans for the comprehensive shelter; Cottontown wants to be a part of that.

Councilor Davis said that he appreciates the downtown coalition. He urged the news outlets to make note of the positions and thoughts of the neighborhoods that are impacted, because they speak from experience and they have a story to tell, but no one has sat down and talked with them.

▪ **Mr. Finlay joined the meeting at 9:55 a.m.**

Councilor Devine noted that "Not in My Backyard" doesn't exist in this community. She thanked the Coalition of Downtown Neighborhoods for working to make our city a better place.

Councilor Cromartie stated that for the last six (6) years they have been trying to develop a shopping center on the corner of Harden and Read Streets. On Friday November 14, 2008, the Cecilia Saxon Shopping Center will have its grand opening at 11:00 a.m. The Mayor, City Manager and the people of the City of Columbia are invited. Councilor Cromartie gave special thanks to the Empowerment Zone and Mr. Tony Lawton for providing \$80,000 for the project. He stated that jobs are going to be created for the community and training will be provided by the shopping center. The keynote speaker for the occasion will be The Honorable James Clyburn; All Star Credit Union will be there offering free checking accounts for residents in the area; and there are special types of finances and services that will be provided for the community. Councilor Cromartie congratulated staff and the Empowerment Zone, because they worked so diligently with the Columbia Housing Authority to make this a reality.

PUBLIC HEARING

9. Ordinance No.: 2006-067 – Amending 1998 Code of Ordinance of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, Chapter 22, Streets, Sidewalk and Other Public Places, Article III, Obstructions, to add Division 1, Generally, and Division 2, Publication Dispensing Devices in Downtown Business Improvement District - *This item was withdrawn from the agenda and will be considered at a later date.*

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

10. Approval of the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank (SCTIB) Request for Qualifications

Mayor Coble stated that if they decide that they want to move forward, then they would have to determine the funding source. From a Columbia standpoint, it would only make sense for it to be a funding source for North Main Street, Harden Street and Assembly Street. Mayor Coble asked the City Manager to determine the funding source and report back to them. Since there is no money in the State Infrastructure Bank we need to get an application in now and get in line.

Councilor Devine suggested that the City Manager identify a funding source for the \$50,000. If the qualifications come back and that's not what we set aside, then we would have to set aside additional funding or not go with the proposal.

Councilor Finlay thinks this is a long shot, but the other option may be to set a Request for Qualifications up so that we can budget for it in next year's budget. We need to do it, but we need a mechanism to fund it.

Mayor Coble said that if you look at the second stimulus package that's being offered, it seems like it would be an infrastructure type of loan. Whether it goes to the state or the city, it's critical. We have the North Main Street project that is midway and the Harden Street project that we want to have in the process.

Councilor Cromartie said that it's an opportunity for the City of Columbia to highlight the successes we have. One thing we know about our Congressional Delegation is that they will fund those cities and towns that have a proven record of success. Other cities and towns are positioning themselves to get funds as quick as they can. We need to be in a position to be present and let our Congressional Delegation and Senators know that we support them in what they are doing and we are in the process of moving forward.

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Mr. Cromartie, Council voted unanimously to proceed with the release of the Request for Qualifications to Consulting Engineering Firms experienced in seeking financial assistance from the South Carolina Transportation Infrastructure Bank. The Council directed the City Manager to identify a source of funding to include next year's budget.

11. Oakwood Court Neighborhood Four-Way Stop Request – Mr. Dave Brewer, Traffic Engineer

Upon motion by Dr. Gergel, seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted unanimously to approve the following traffic control changes, as requested by the Oakwood Court Neighborhood Association: **1)** Installation of a four-way stop sign at the intersection of Amherst Avenue and Greenwood Street; **2)** Replacement of the existing yield sign on Bellwood Avenue with a stop sign; and **3)** Installation of two speed humps on Sims Avenue.

12. Fairwold Acres Neighborhood Traffic and Speed Control Measures – Mr. Dave Brewer, Traffic Engineer

Upon motion by Ms. Devine, seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to approve the following speed control measures for Frye Road, Mayer Street, and Cody Street as requested by the Fairwold Acres Neighborhood: **1)** Reduction of the Speed Limit on Mayer Street from 35 mph to 25 mph; **2)** Reduction of the Speed Limit on Cody Street from 30 mph to 25 mph; **3)** Installation of speed humps on Frye Road (5), Mayer Street (4) and Cody Street (4) spaced at 600 feet.

13. Shady Lane Traffic Speed Bump Request – Mr. Dave Brewer, Traffic Engineer

Upon motion by Mr. Rickenmann, seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to approve the installation of one (1) speed hump within the 1300 block and two (2) speed humps within the 2400 block of Shady Lane, as requested by the residents of Shady Lane.

REPORTS AND UPDATES

14. City Manager's Report – Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager - *This item was moved. Please refer to Item W1.*

15. Staff Reports

- Unveiling of the New Website – Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology stated that twelve (12) months ago he was charged by the City Manager to re-evaluate, analyze, revise, rebuild and reorganize the structure for city services from an electronic perspective. The technology initiative that they started was to take on the approach of looking at all the different web services that the citizens see, so when we look at the website now, it's a conglomeration of twenty-two (22) externally hosted services from different departments and services within the city. They are spread over different vendors, different fields and different navigations. We looked at the overall expenses that we incur for web services. We want a consolidated site that is internally hosted to provide all the management tools that are necessary to keep it updated and innovative. We have talented staff, state-of-the-art infrastructure, equipment, applications and services, but it has not been used in the most efficient manner. By consolidating and reducing the external number of sources and bringing them altogether, we will save money in the end.

Councilor Gergel asked for an example of the twenty-two hosted services.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology stated that we have primary vendors that are licensed to host our site on their server and we have to maintain the site.

Councilor Gergel asked are we making good use of the money we have already spent.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology said that is not for him to decide. The problem is that the services were not consolidated in a consistent manner and we have a lot of redundancies. One of the other things we needed to approach was the new features. One of the new features is Bill Pay Online, which will be released on November 19, 2008. We have been charged with developing a way to pay with your credit cards online. There is a security risk with doing this on the internet, so it has to be done properly.

Councilor Rickenmann said that he is confused. They had a report that came out three (3) years ago from the Information Technology Assessment that said that our infrastructure is not state-of-the-art. A lot of our programs are proprietary programs that cause us to pay a lot of license fees that only certain people can fix. I'm hearing completely different things from you and I would rather have all the details on everything we have here, because we are getting conflicting stories.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology agreed that we need to make a huge investment in infrastructure, but it depends on how you determine the statement of state-of-the-art. When I hear state-of-the-art, it means we are using all the current technology and electronics that are out there. Do we have all the inter-connectivity that we need? He doesn't know, but we are using the current technology and current state-of-the-art infrastructural type pieces that we can continue to build on. It will be a multi-year process to get us to a point where we are independent of technology, but when we look at these things, they are very complex. There are things going on behind the scene that you don't see or think about and one of the things we have to protect the city from is somebody hacking into one of our systems. We have 124,000 personal pieces of information in our water billing system and that's the last thing we want is for someone to come in and take that and use those people's identities. That's where our bill pay services come into play. We will be releasing the ability to pay your water, solid waste and parking garage bills online. The initial request from the Council was to put the bill pay online for water bills. There is a multitude of other services that we will be adding as soon as we can integrate that. We have been asked to put our disparity studies online. We have also been asked to ensure that people are getting proper bids and quotes out there so that vendors can apply for bids online.

Councilor Rickenmann asked where we are with that.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology said that it will be released with the new website.

Councilor Davis stated that he is interested in the timeline.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology stated that today Council will get a preview of what he has been working on for the past year. The new website will be released to the public on November 19, 2008, as instructed. As of November 19, 2008, we anticipate that if we can get all the logistics done, we will have bill pay online. We are performing internal tests on that now so we can be sure that we can take credit cards online, do transfers, post payments and update bills. One of the things we were challenged with is real time updates to avoid unnecessary disconnections.

Councilor Davis asked what else we would be getting with the new website.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology said that the website will be released on November 19, 2008, to include Bill Pay Online and over 500 new web pages. They improved how it all navigates; it's easily accessible, consistent and all inclusive. We have a lot of new services that were not available before. The whole point of this is putting a base into place that allows us to build on it the future. Now we have a launching pad so that whenever a department such as the Wellness Center wants a website setup we have all the templates in place so we can give that to the Wellness Center, they take that and input their information very quickly at no cost. We are looking at cutting future expenditures that we will have due to going outside for all these things. We have a new service of freeware and a contact manager that will allow departments and divisions within the city to maintain their own web pages. We can put in a new expiration date so that we don't have information on our website that's two years old, because someone forgot to take it off. This is automating the process of maintaining the site to ensure that we are fresh, up-to-date and current in all standards.

Councilor Devine suggested that before we go live with the website that Mr. Franklin Lee should take a look at it, because we are spending a lot of money in consulting and now they are suggesting that we go with another company.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology said that the only thing they could not accomplish was an inter-jurisdiction linkage. In other words, as we add bidders into our system it automatically goes to the state, the county or other municipalities and until the other municipalities have their bidders' information online, we can't link to them. That's the only thing we are going to be missing as a primary requirement.

Councilor Gergel asked if we unveiled a new website six (6) weeks ago and if we plan to unveil another new website on November 19, 2008. She asked Mr. Simonowicz if he worked with the people who unveiled the current website.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology stated that he was not aware that that was going on, so he doesn't know how to address that. He added that the site was constantly under construction and improvements.

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager stated that it's an issue that he intends to deal with.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology said that they are working with Public Relations to consolidate all of their efforts from this point on.

Councilor Gergel asked if we have a contract for a website for Economic Development.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology stated that they are 20% into incorporating that into the site. Approximately \$40,000 was invested in building that and it's not like they are throwing anything away, it's just that they are incorporating and improving the maintenance of how they handle and address these things.

Councilor Rickenmann said that they did an assessment twelve (12) months ago and yet we are doing a new website and everybody is acting like there was no communication about it. A Request for Proposals was approved by Council and discarded without anyone knowing it.

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager disagreed with Mr. Rickenmann and insisted that the Request for Proposals was neither disregarded nor discarded. A Request for Proposals was developed; there was a discussion with Mr. Lee; and that discussion was if staff was able to produce the product in a timely manner and consistent with what he requested, then the Request for Proposals would not be necessary. Staff has done that and it was presented to Council.

Councilor Devine stated that Mr. Austin was correct and that discussion took place, but it was not done in a Council meeting. Mr. Lee's frustration is that he has been working with this Council for six (6) years to get that done and he has worked with Charlotte, North Carolina and other cities and they have been up and running for a long period of time and he started working with them after us. He was very concerned about the timeframe and the fact that we have not met the timeframe. Mr. Lee said he did not believe it could be done internally, cost effectively and accurately, but if it has been done, that will be okay with us. We need to hear from Mr. Lee that it has been done. She wants to make sure that we are not spending more money to do it internally then we would if we went with one of the companies Mr. Lee suggested.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology said that he met with Mr. Lee in August 2008. We were given a ninety (90) day window with twenty-nine (29) objectives and we were to determine what could be done within our current confines of our current system; we have done that. We have some logistical things to work out with the Office of Business Opportunities and the Purchasing Department to ensure that we have matched all of their criteria. We will be bringing Mr. Lee back for the final review.

Councilor Finlay asked Mr. Simonowicz if he had the numbers for what we have spent and how his numbers are going to change. If we are bringing this project in-house, there could be additional staffing problems.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology stated that he didn't have the numbers, but he could get them and they already have the staff in place to do this. They transferred one of the Geography Information Systems (GIS) Technicians to IT and promoted him to Web Designer.

Councilor Finlay said that his colleagues are on point on the criteria and if it's being fulfilled. His point is that he doesn't know if this is a cost savings or cost loser. What he knows is that banks which are much more secure institutions use several outside providers. He hears Mr. Simonowicz concerns about security. He argued from a liability point of view that having a third party provider with whom we can seek or address if there is a problem provides someone other than us to get hit with the bill. He needs to understand what this is costing us; how liability is going to shake out; and the total cost of this project.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology stated that one of the things you have to remember is the benefits from all of this. We were constantly asked to add new services and provide new features and interactions with our citizens. By having the power, instrumentation and knowledge in place, we can be more adaptive to the business needs of the community and Council. Everything we do outside takes money and time and we have to figure out how to tie in all of the pieces so that they look proficient and professional. We are looking for quality in services primarily.

Councilor Finlay said that he understands the magnitude of what Mr. Simonowicz is discussing, but he is not convinced that we should be building this from the inside. Just because you have people sitting behind desks doesn't mean they have the capacity to do it. We need to look at this long-term and understand what it's costing us and the cost benefits. He doesn't see the numbers showing that we are paying more to get more or paying less to get less.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology stated that he would give Council a matrix of the cost breakdown, which they are already leveraging. He understands their concerns regarding costs and that's one of the reasons they are taking this route. One of the things they want to ensure is that they have a launching platform for all the new citizen and government services while working towards our mobile computer solutions in which you should be able to do the functions of the city. You should have the same connectivity and services as you do in your offices. We want to have ease of navigation so that people can get to what they want quickly and efficiently. We want the citizens to have a way to communicate with us. Think of this as a work in progress. Over the next year, we will be adding new features and service monitors to address the things that you need, want or are necessary to represent the city.

Councilor Cromartie asked Mr. Simonowicz how they plan to handle the interaction between Public Information and his department as it relates to how they will move forward.

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager said that he accepts responsibility for the miscommunication; it's unacceptable and should not have happened. He will ensure that corrective actions are taken.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology insisted that web functions should be controlled by the Information Technology Department. We have consolidated this so that we have the ability to set the templates up for the content managers in all the departments and divisions to put the content out there in a consistent and timely manner. This will allow us to make sure that we are not having any delays in services and everything is working properly.

Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager said he will meet with Council and there will be some clarification as it relates to roles and responsibilities.

Councilor Devine stated that a couple of years ago with every department updating their own page it was and still is an issue, because it might not be someone in that department designated to do so. The Information Technology Department is responsible for the technical things, but the department we hold responsible for the information we want to see is Public Relations. We need to make sure that whatever linkage that needs to be there is not only there, but that you all understand that when something is wrong, she is not going to call Mr. Simonowicz, she is going to call Public Relations. There needs to be constant communication. If we have something we want to get out there, our go-to person would be Public Relations.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology stated that they have a new content management tool. Every department will have a content manager which somebody will actually maintain. We will have approvers and there will also be time tables where you can manage it properly. The only thing the Information Technology Department will be responsible for is making sure it continues to work and the templates and format are there for you.

Councilor Devine asked if they have started that yet.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology explained that as part of the rollout, we are going to be training the people who will be keeping up with everything. We have taken a very modernistic type of design for the page in which everything is at your fingertips from the standpoint of all the services we offer.

Councilor Cromartie asked if the coordination of all of this as it relates to what goes on the site and what the site will ultimately look like is going to be done by Public Information or Information Technology.

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager stated that it's going to be a joint effort. The Information Technology Department will take care of the technical aspect and the Public Relations Department will take care of the content.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology said that his department will make sure that the site works and that it gives you the tools to update the site easily, efficiently and in a timely manner.

Councilor Cromartie stated that the Information Technology Department will also make sure that they have a timeline built in.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology said that an e-mail will be sent to notify the content manager that a page is expiring or needs to be updated and give them reminders. If they still don't do it, then it will go to the person who is going to sign off on the page content. If it's still not done and the event passes, then the page will be taken off automatically. We won't have old information on the website.

Councilor Cromartie asked how would that work if Public Works has something they want to put on the website.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology said that Public Works would pick who they want to type it in and put it together and then someone in their department will look at it and make sure there are no mistakes and approve it.

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager stated that ultimately Public Relations will have sign off authority.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology said that Public Relations will have the main page only. No one else will touch the main page. Each department and division will have their own content manager for their page. If they want something on the main page they will have to contact Public Relations.

Mayor Coble said that putting the protocols in place is something that needs to be done as quickly as possible.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology said that everything that's on the home page is on the current site. There are over 500 pages pulled in and that will expand. There are other new features that will be added like the ability to put survey or feedback forms on the website. Parking tickets can be paid online as soon as they can figure out how to do the integration. Other features include the Geography Information System maps with a street view, traffic camera service and pet view which ties into animal services.

Councilor Cromartie asked how they will ensure that the website doesn't go down.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology stated that they have an image of the website so that if it does go down, it can be rebuilt quickly and they can secure the data.

Councilor Cromartie asked do we have back-up generators.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology said that we have a backup generator at 1401 Main Street, but not at 1136 Washington Street. We have two (2) data centers for disaster recovery, which is out of our primary data center in conjunction with the backup generator and an Uninterrupted Power Supply (UPS). We also have plans for adding a third site, but that requires additional money. We are taking into account all the disaster recovery issues. We have everything on tape for backup and stored off-site; if something happens we can take it to another site and reload it.

Councilor Devine asked if we have application services where people can submit information online.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology said that the objective is to have templates like a survey form online that can be used at any site. It will route to where you want it. We have set up a web server mailbox and each department can have their own web server mailbox.

Councilor Devine asked about the online employment application.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology said that employee online is the next rollout between January and July 2009.

Councilor Cromartie asked what is the timeline for the Centralized Bidder Registration system and making sure it's what we need.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology said the objective is to have everything ready to go on November 19, 2008.

Mayor Coble said that overall Mr. Lawton's department has done an excellent job on the Disparity Study. Also, get the content manager to check off on the content as quick as possible and make sure the content is up to date. To get this system up and running for the public would be very good.

Mr. Vincent Simonowicz, Director of Information Technology stated that all the content is the same as on our current site and when we go live we will make a final match-up and again, Public Relations manages all of that.

Councilor Devine said she wants to make sure that there is communication and that we provide the services we need in an objective and efficient manner.

- **Council recessed at 11:25 a.m.**
- **Council reconvened at 11:40 a.m.**

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager explained that **Item I.** shows the low bid as being \$239,102 and the back up documentation from the Volvo & GMC Truck Center in Charlotte, North Carolina shows the amount as \$236,558; therefore, we need to defer this one until I can get clarification.

Mayor Coble stated that we also want to hold and discuss **Items 24a.** and **G.** as they relate to the employee gift cards and toys.

Councilor Finlay asked why **Item 16.** is on the agenda since it falls within the City Manager's purview of approval.

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager said that **Item 16.** can be removed from the agenda since it is under \$10,000. He also asked that **Item K.** be removed from the agenda due to a bid protest. He would like to contact the protester prior to approving the matter.

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Mr. Finlay, Council voted unanimously to approve the **Consent Agenda Items 16.** through **24., 25.** through **F., H.** and **J.** on a single motion. **Items 24a., G., I. and K.** were withdrawn from the agenda.

CONSIDERATION OF BIDS, AGREEMENTS and CHANGE ORDERS

16. Council is asked to approve Project SS7078; Reimbursement for Off-Site Sanitary Sewer Construction to Serve the Willow Tree Subdivision, as requested by Engineering Department. Award to Ulmer Road Associates, LLC in the amount of \$9,989.00. *Funding Source: Sewer Improvement Fund - Approved*
17. Council is asked to approve Project WM4114; Water Main Relocation along Alpine Road in Conjunction with SC Department of Transportation Road Improvements, as requested by the Engineering Department. Award to Consolidated Pipe & Supply Company, Inc, the lowest bidder in the amount of \$11,593.00. This vendor is located in Columbia, SC. *Funding Source: Water Improvement Fund #WM411401851500 - Approved*
18. Council is asked to approve Project SS7056 (4); Repair of Goulds Vertical Turbine Pump at the Microscreen Room of the Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant, as requested by the Engineering Department. Award to Charles R. Underwood, Inc, as a sole source procurement in the amount of \$12,309.22. This vendor is located in Sanford, NC. *Funding Source: Sewer Improvement Fund 5529999-SS705604-851200 - Approved*
19. Council is asked to approve Project SD831502; U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S Geological Survey Joint Funding Agreement, as requested by the Engineering Department in the amount of \$12,540.00. *Funding Source: Capital Improvement Program Budget - Approved*
20. Council is asked to approve a Memorandum of Understanding between the South Carolina Minority Business Enterprise Center (SCMBEC) and the City of Columbia in the amount of \$15,000.00 for Services Provided in Coordination with the Office of Business Opportunities. *Funding Source: Office of Business Opportunities Budget - Approved*
21. Council is asked to approve a Memorandum of Understanding between the Alston Wilkes Society and the City of Columbia in the amount of \$15,150.00 for Services Provided in Coordination with the City's Winter Shelter. *Funding Source: Winter Shelter Operations Budget - Approved*
22. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of Christmas Lighting Supplies, as requested by the Traffic and Engineering Division. Award to Dekra-Lite Industries, Inc., the lowest bidder in the amount of \$15,829.60. This vendor is located in Santa Ana, CA. *Funding Source: 1013204-627100 - Approved*
23. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of Websense (Internet Access Filter), as requested by the Information Technology Department. Award to Dell using the SC State Contract in the amount of \$18,574.67. This vendor is located in Round Rock, TX. *Funding Source: 1011120-638200 - Approved*

24. Council is asked to approve Project SS7056 (6); Repair of Yeoman Primary Stand-By Pump of the Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant, as requested by the Engineering Department. Award to Charles R. Underwood, Inc in the amount of \$17,866.57. This vendor is located in Sanford, NC. *Funding Source: Sewer Improvement Fund 5529999-SS705606-851200 - Approved*
- 24a. ******Council is asked to approve the Purchase of One (1) Lot of Toys for the Employees' Holidays, as requested by the Employee's Special Activities Committee. Award to KB Toys of Myrtle Beach, SC in the amount of \$18,077.94. *Funding Source: 1011125-639900 – This item was withdrawn from the agenda.*
25. Council is asked to approve Project WM4148; Agreement between Chao and Associates, Inc. and the City of Columbia for providing Structural and Civil Engineering Design Plans in Connection with Water Line Replacement on the Whitehouse Road Bridge Over Gills Creek, Richland County, as requested by the Engineering Department in the amount of \$18,400.00. *Funding Source: Capital Improvement Program Budget - Approved*
26. Council is asked to approve Project Winton Avenue "Clearing and Grubbing", as requested by Utilities and Engineering. Award to L-J, Inc., the lowest bidder in the amount of \$21,300.00. This vendor is located in Columbia, SC. *Funding Source: CP900001-638700 - Approved*
27. Council is asked to approve Project SS7056 (7); Purchase of Goulds Vertical Turbine Pump (Flushing Water Pump) at the Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant, as requested by the Engineering Department. Award to Tencarva, the lowest bidder in the amount of \$22,363. This vendor is located in Lake Mary, FL. *Funding Source: Sewer Improvement Fund 5529999-SS705607-851200 - Approved*
28. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of One (1) Compact Hydraulic Excavator, as requested by Water Distribution. Award to Linder Industrial Machinery Co. using the SC State Contract in the amount of \$31,800.00. This vendor is located in West, Columbia, SC. *Funding Source: 5516203-658500 - Approved*
29. Council is asked to approve Project SS7056 (5); Repair of Yeoman 100 MFD Pump and Replacement of Impeller at the Primary Area at the Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant. Award to Charles R. Underwood in the amount of \$35,293.53. This vendor is located in Sanford, NC. *Funding Source: Sewer Improvement Fund 5529999-SS705605-851200- Approved*
30. Council is asked to approve Project SS7056 (3); Purchase of LGB-180 Wall-Mounted Upper Bearing and Associated Components for the Metro Wastewater Treatment Plant, as requested by the Engineering Department. Award to Spaans Babcock as a sole proprietor in the amount of \$35,510.09. This vendor is located in Richmond Hill, Ontario. *Funding Source: Sewer Improvement Fund 5529999-SS705603-851200 - Approved*
31. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of Two (2) 15-Passenger Transport Vans for the Homeless Shelter, as requested by the Community Development Department. Award to Benson Ford Mercury using the SC State Contract in the amount of \$42,762.00. This vendor is located in Easley, SC. *Funding Source: 2144501-658500 - Approved*

- A. Council is asked to approve Projects WM3873 and WM3964; Change Order #2 to Agreement with Kimley Horn and Associates, Inc. for Design and Construction of Two (2) Million Gallon Water Storage Tanks, as requested by the Engineering Department in the amount of \$49,400. This vendor is located in Raleigh, NC. *Funding Source: Capital Improvement Program Budget - Approved*
- B. Council is asked to approve Project WM4171; Emergency Columbia Canal Water Treatment Plant Spill Tank Containment Repairs, as requested by Utilities and Engineering. Award to M.B. Kahn Construction, the lowest bidder in the amount of \$52,900.00. This vendor is located in Columbia, SC. *Funding Source: WM417101-851000 - Approved*
- C. Council is asked to approve Project SS6786; Change Order #4; Manhole Rehabilitation Annual Maintenance Contract, as requested by the Engineering Department in the amount of \$71,127.00. *Funding Source: Sewer Improvement Fund - Approved*
- D. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of 4x4 Backhoe with a 4 in 1 Bucket, as requested by Water Distribution. Award to Interstate Equipment Co., the lowest bidder in the amount of \$72,629.00. This vendor is located in West, Columbia, SC. *Funding Source: 551-6203-658500 - Approved*
- E. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of Asphalt Services, as requested by the Street Division. Award to C.R. Jackson, Inc., the lowest bidder in the amount of \$82,095.75. This vendor is located in Columbia, SC. *Funding Source: 5529999-851500 – Approved*
- F. Council is asked to approve Project SD8322; Emergency Lake Murray Water Treatment Plant Erosion Remediation Repairs, as requested by Utilities and Engineering. Award to Shady Grove Construction, the lowest bidder in the amount of \$88,038.00. This vendor is located in Irmo, SC. *Funding Source: SD832201-656200 - Approved*
- G. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of 2,300 - \$50.00 Employee Holiday Gift Cards. Award to Piggly Wiggly in the amount of \$110,745.00. This vendor is located in Charleston, SC. *Funding Source: 1011125-624200 – This item was withdrawn from the agenda.*
- H. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of Watch Guard In-Car Video Systems and Accessories, as requested by the Police Department. Award to Watch Guard as a Sole Source in the amount of \$111,774.73. This vendor is located in Plano, TX. *Funding Source: (1012401-658400 \$101,076.48) & (1012402-627100 \$10,698.25) - Approved*
- I. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of a Side Loader Garbage Truck, as requested by Fleet Services. Award to Heil Environmental, the lowest bidder in the amount of \$239,102.00. This vendor is located in Chattanooga, TN. *Funding Source: 6308972-658500 – This item was moved. Please refer to item W2.*
- J. Council is asked to approve Project SS704402; Rehabilitation of Two (2) Grit Chambers and Associated Parts for the MWWTP, as requested by the Engineering Department. Award to WSG Solutions as a sole proprietor in the amount of \$508,106. This vendor is located in Montgomeryville, PA. *Funding Source: Sewer Improvement Fund 5529999-SS704402-851200 - Approved*
- K. Council is asked to approve Project SS6966; Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation Annual Contract, as requested by Utilities and Engineering. Award to Southeast Pipe Survey, the lowest bidder in the amount of \$2,141,352.50. This vendor is located in Patterson, GA. *Funding Source: SS696601-851600 – This item was withdrawn from the agenda.*

TEXT AMENDMENTS

- L. Amend Chapter 17, Article 3, Division 1, §17-55 and Division 8, §17-258 - Commercial Vehicle Parking in Residential Districts.

Ordinance No.: 2008-049 – (*Revised*) Amending the 1998 Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, Chapter 17, Planning, Land Development and Zoning, Article -III, Zoning, Division 1, Sec. 17-55, Definitions to add Commercial vehicle, and Division 9, Supplementary District Regulations, Sec. 17-317, Home occupations (3) – *Approved on first reading.- Approved on second reading.*

Ordinance No.: 2008-051 – Amending the 1998 Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, Chapter 17, Planning, Land Development and Zoning, Article III, Zoning, Division 8, District Descriptions; Use and Dimensional Regulations, Sec. 17-258, Table of permitted uses (3) – *Approved on first reading.*

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to give second reading approval to Ordinance No.: 2009-049 - Amending the 1998 Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, Chapter 17, Planning, Land Development and Zoning, Article -III, Zoning, Division 1, Sec. 17-55, Definitions to add Commercial vehicle, and Division 9, Supplementary District Regulations, Sec. 17-317, Home occupations (3) **and** first reading approval to Ordinance No.: 2008-051 – Amending the 1998 Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia, South Carolina, Chapter 17, Planning, Land Development and Zoning, Article III, Zoning, Division 8, District Descriptions; Use and Dimensional Regulations, Sec. 17-258, Table of permitted uses (3) with a single motion.

ORDINANCES – FIRST READING

- M. Ordinance No.: 2008-092 – Granting an encroachment to City Center Partnership for placement and maintenance of six (6) cigarette butt receptacles to be placed in front of 1301, 1320, 1333 and 1441 Main Street – *Approved on first reading*

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Mr. Finlay, Council voted unanimously to give first reading approval to Ordinance No.: 2008-092 – Granting an encroachment to City Center Partnership for placement and maintenance of six (6) cigarette butt receptacles to be placed in front of 1301, 1320, 1333 and 1441 Main Street.

- N. Ordinance 2008-095 - Annexing 5432 Farrow Road, Richland County TMS #11612-07-18 - District 1 – This item was withdrawn from the agenda. – *This item was withdrawn from the agenda.*
- O. Ordinance 2008-096 - Annexing 718 Dixie Avenue, Richland County TMS #09309-06-07 - District 1- Approved on first reading

Upon motion by Mr. Finlay, seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to give first reading approval to Ordinance 2008-096 - Annexing 718 Dixie Avenue, Richland County TMS #09309-06-07.

- P. Ordinance No.: 2008-097 – Granting an easement to South Carolina Electric & Gas Company (SCE&G) for the installation of Utilities along a portion of City Property for the Animal Shelter Expansion Project; Richland County TMS #13609-01-01 (Portion); CF #195-06C – *Approved on first reading.*

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted unanimously to give first reading approval to Ordinance No.: 2008-097 – Granting an easement to South Carolina Electric & Gas Company (SCE&G) for the installation of Utilities along a portion of City Property for the Animal Shelter Expansion Project; Richland County TMS #13609-01-01 (Portion); CF #195-06C.

RESOLUTIONS

- Q. Resolution R-2008-059 – Authorizing Condemnation to acquire Water Main Easements along Richland County TMS #15100-08-14, 15 & 16 and TMS #15109-01-01 for proposed Water Main Installation from I-77 to Rimer Pond Road; CIP Project #WM4020; CF #250-164 – *Approved.*

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution R-2008-059 – Authorizing Condemnation to acquire Water Main Easements along Richland County TMS #15100-08-14, 15 & 16 and TMS #15109-01-01 for proposed Water Main Installation from I-77 to Rimer Pond Road; CIP Project #WM4020; CF #250-164.

APPOINTMENTS

- R. Main Street Tree Selection Ad-Hoc Committee

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Dr. Gergel, Council voted unanimously to appoint four (4) individuals to the Main Street Tree Selection Ad-Hoc Committee. This committee will advise city staff on the selection of two (2) replacement trees on Main Street. Appointees should be referred by the Columbia Museum of Art and the City Center Partnership. It was noted that one (1) tree was blown down and the other was removed by the City. The committee will be provided four (4) to five (5) species of trees to choose from.

- S. Board of Zoning Appeals

Upon motion by Ms. Devine, seconded by Dr. Gergel, Council voted unanimously to approve the appointment of Mr. Pat Hubbard and Mr. Preston Young to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a five (5) year term. Staff is expected to expedite the training and orientation process for the new board members.

- T. Columbia Tree and Appearance Commission - *This item was withdrawn from the agenda and will be considered at a later date.*

- U. Design Development Review Commission - *This item was withdrawn from the agenda and will be considered at a later date.*

- V. Planning Commission - *This item was withdrawn from the agenda and will be considered at a later date.*

- W. Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority - *This item was withdrawn from the agenda and will be considered at a later date.*

REPORTS AND UPDATES

W1. **City Manager's Report – Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager thanked Council for their support in "Operation Taking Back Our City." Mr. Austin stated that they had a successful community meeting at the Colony Apartments and he is very pleased with the number of Department Heads and other city staff who came out to be a part of that. Special thanks to the Fire Department personnel for cooking hot dogs and hamburgers. This coming week, they will be out at District One for a similar community meeting at New Jerusalem Interdenominational Church. Again, we will have staff available, particularly those who are participating in Operation Taking Back Our City. I am thankful that our Department Heads have made a commitment to give their full attention and resources to this effort and that has been demonstrated by the method in which they have gone about communicating with one another. There is a good line of communication that does take place so that we can coordinate, communicate and collaborate with one another to address the overall quality of life issues that affect our city. We stress education, prevention, security and enforcement as those things that will best yield the kind of results we are looking for and another aspect of this operation will be the "Weekly Moments with the Manager" update that he will be doing and it will air on Channel 2. We did one segment last week and it should begin airing this week. That is for the purpose of ensuring that we are in constant communication with our citizens to provide them with regular updates as it relates to the operation. The Police Department has mobilized its special forces to include traffic, narcotic and gang units into what we have identified as the most distressed areas in the city; those areas that have a high volume of crime activity and currently we have that effort underway in the South Region. The next mobilization will take place in the Metro Region. You requested information regarding the Accommodations Tax Fund and I want to provide you with an update. The State Law requires us to pay 30% of the Accommodations Tax that we collect per year to an organization for the purpose of marketing and promotions. The organization that we pay our 30% to is the Conventions and Visitors Bureau (CVB). Using the figures that the Accounting Department provided for us for 2007/2008, it indicates that our revenue collected was \$1,493,490.52. State law allows us to transfer up to \$25,000 to the General Fund and we did that; we have to pay 30% to the CVB, which is \$440,547.15; we paid \$300,000.00 in 2007/2008; and we have a balance owed to the CVB of \$140,547.15. As it relates to Challenge Day, The Palmetto Project with Richland District One is on the way. The \$26,000 we have funded will be utilized to ensure six (6) days of "Challenge Day" events. The participating schools are Columbia High School, Dreher High School, Eau Claire High School, C.A. Johnson High School and at least one (1) event will be at each school with the possibility of two (2) occurring at an additional High School or Middle School. You have already acted on items 24a and G and I will be soliciting your feedback on the issues dealing with the gift cards and toys. Finally, I want to introduce Mr. Jeff Palen to you. Mr. Palen is our new city Treasurer. Mr. Palen has an MBA from the Moore School of Business at the University of South Carolina and he is also a Certified Governmental Finance Officer. Mr. Palen comes to us after having success in several positions to include Deputy Treasurer for Lexington County and Deputy Auditor in Lexington County. Mr. Palen's addition to the staff now gives us two (2) Certified Public Accountants and one (1) Certified Governmental Finance Officer. I want to commend Ms. Melisa Caughman for her continued efforts to not only bring about the improvements that have been expected but the manner in which she has gone about selecting competent qualified staff to be a part of that team.

CONSIDERATION OF BIDS, AGREEMENTS and CHANGE ORDERS

- W2. **Council is asked to approve the Purchase of a Side Loader Garbage Truck, as requested by Fleet Services. Award to Heil Environmental, the lowest bidder in the amount of \$239,102.00. This vendor is located in Chattanooga, TN. *Funding Source: 6308972-658500 – Approved*

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager clarified that the initial lowest bidder did not meet the specifications for a full eject body; therefore the bid goes to the second lowest bidder meeting specifications.

Upon motion by Mr. Rickenmann, seconded by Mr. Cromartie, Council voted unanimously to approve the Purchase of a Side Loader Garbage Truck, as requested by Fleet Services. Award to Heil Environmental, the lowest bidder meeting specifications in the amount of \$239,102.00. This vendor is located in Chattanooga, TN. Ms. Devine was not present for the vote.

APPEARANCE OF PUBLIC HAVING BUSINESS WITH CITY COUNCIL

No one appeared at this time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 12:28 p.m. to discuss Items X. through Z1. as amended.

- X. 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.*
- Y. Discussion of negotiations incident to the proposed sale of property - *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
- Z. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements
 - Hydrogen Fueling Station - *This item was discussed in Executive Session. Please refer to Item Z2.*
 - Verizon Wireless - *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
- Z1. **Discussion of the employment of an employee - *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*

- **Council adjourned the Executive Session at 1:30 p.m.**

- Z2. **Hydrogen Fueling Station

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Mr. Finlay, Council voted unanimously to authorize the City Manger to execute a Promissory Note with the State for the Hydrogen Fueling Station.

- **Council adjourned the meeting at 1:47 p.m.**

COUNCIL BRIEFING

- Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority Briefing – Ms. Mitzi Javers, Executive Director of the CMRTA

Ms. Mitzi Javers, Executive Director of the CMRTA provided a briefing on the issues related to the CMRTA budget to include revenues, funding sources, schedule reductions for routes; the possibility of increasing fares; and possible partnerships. *Please note that there was not a quorum of Council present for this briefing.*

- **The briefing ended at 2:44 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Salley
City Clerk