

**CITY OF COLUMBIA  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
OCTOBER 8, 2008 – 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM  
CITY HALL - 1737 MAIN STREET**

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The Columbia City Council met for a Work Session on Wednesday, October 8, 2008 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Robert D. Coble called the meeting to order at 9:10 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 Kirkman Finlay III and The Honorable Belinda F. Gergel. Mr. Rickenmann was absent due to his mother being ill. Also present were Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Salley, City Clerk.

**CONSIDERATION OF BIDS AND AGREEMENTS**

1. Council is asked to approve a Professional Services Contract for Lobbying Services, as requested by the Office of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations. Award to McLeod Butler Communications, LLC in the monthly amount of \$2,475.08 for a total amount of \$29,700.96. This firm is located in Columbia, SC. *Funding Source: 1011103-638300 Administration-City Manager-Special Projects - Approved*
2. Council is asked to approve a Professional Services Contract for Lobbying Services, as requested by the Office of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations. Award to The Grant Group in the monthly amount of \$2,475.08 for a total annual amount of \$29,700.96. This firm is located in Columbia, SC. *Funding Source: 1011103-638300 Administration-City Manager-Special Projects - Approved*
3. Council is asked to approve a Professional Services Contract for Lobbying Services, as requested by the Office of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations. Award to State Capitol Group, LLC in the monthly amount of \$4,950.16 for a total annual amount of \$59,401.92. This firm is located in Columbia, SC. *Funding Source: 1011103-638300 Administration-City Manager-Special Projects - Approved*
4. Council is asked to approve a Professional Services Contract for Lobbying Services, as requested by the Office of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations. Award to Barbara T. McCall, Inc. in the annual amount of \$64,000.00 plus reimbursable expenses not to exceed \$5,000.00. This firm is located in Washington, DC. *Funding Source: 1011103-638300 Administration-City Manager-Special Projects – Approved*

Mr. Cromartie made a motion to approve **Items 1.** through **4.**; it was seconded by Ms. Devine; and Council began to discuss the matter prior to the vote.

Councilor Finlay stated that he would like to understand from our lobbyists what we accomplished. We had some issues with SCE&G where we had money that we couldn't get back and as we go forward in this budget year, we need to understand if we are going to see any more problems like that. What's the potential for us to have any new revenue sources and how is that going to look. We are talking about several large issues that are going to involve legislative changes and our lobbyists should be involved while those potential changes are being enacted.

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager said that they are going to arrange a time for the lobbyists to come in, make presentations and address the issues.

Councilor Finlay stated that we are approving a large lobbying bill and he doesn't know if it's an unequivocal win for the City this year. We need to discuss that and how we are going to improve it next year. We are coming up on some tight financial times and we need some relief.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations stated that she gave Council the priorities as they were directed to do this time last year. They dealt with a lot more issues than those listed. She updated the status column that outlines what legislation was passed and those that didn't. It would be most prudent for us to have a Work Session. She added that Barbara McCall is available on November 19, 2008 and December 3, 2008.

Councilor Finlay would like to discuss the issues with state line franchises where we lose a dramatic amount of money and similar issues.

Councilor Gergel asked when Council received the report.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations said that it was before Dr. Gergel's time. It was the initial priorities that Council set for the lobbyists last November. She took those priorities and looked at where we are now and what happened with each one of those areas. For efficiency purposes as we work at the State House, the different lobbyists are named for sections that they were responsible for, but all of them worked on the issues together as a team.

Councilor Gergel has questions about the effectiveness and how they evaluate the performance of our lobbyists. Unless it is essential, she would prefer that they not vote until she has a chance to look over the spreadsheet.

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager stated that we have pre-filings that are going to take place and it's Council's purview to delay a vote, but while we are doing that, we are going to lose significant ground and time as it related to some of those hot issues. He strongly encouraged the Council to go into executive session to address the issues and see if they can't move this along.

Councilor Cromartie agreed that they should go into executive session so that Council can understand the issues and the urgency of the time they might lose.

Councilor Devine said that the Council did wait until late last year to finalize the lobbyist contracts and we were already behind the eight ball. We need to be cognizant of the timeframes. We get angry when things don't move, but we've basically handicapped them by waiting until the last minute.

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager stated that the lobbyists worked from July through that point without a contract. He noted that pre-filing takes place in November.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations added that the lobbyists do work year round and they've been working for the City even without the contract being in place. We welcome the opportunity to present to Council.

Mayor Coble said that we seriously want the hospitality statute to be amended so that half of it could be used for homeless services and/or transit. That will completely change the priorities, because it will be a difficult thing to do and this needs to be started on immediately.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations said that she did alert the lobbyist of the possibility, but they just need the directive from Council. We talked about building your relationship with certain lobbyists and using your input at the State House as appropriate. We will need both City Council and County Council's help with the transit issue.

Councilor Finlay said that our lobbyists must understand that we are going into a tough year for us and the State and the proof is going to be in the pudding. If we have more big losses, especially with revenue on things that we don't see coming then it's going to be very difficult for us to continue this. I am willing to vote today, if it's that important, but we do need a Work Session to very clearly delineate what our goals and expectations are. He said that Ms. Florence was the only one that involved him on issues. He asked if Ms. Florence is a lobbyist liaison for the Council.

Councilor Devine stated that the lobbyists work with the Council through Ms. Florence.

Councilor Finlay said that there are a lot of different parts moving around. He said that they spent a couple of hours at the State House one day, but he never saw the lobbyists.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations agreed that they needed to have candid discussions, because there are other relationship building issues with members of the delegation; she is concerned and would like to share those concerns with Council. There are hot button issues with transit and homelessness.

Councilor Devine suggested that they have an executive session discussion about this later today.

Councilor Gergel said that she doesn't have enough information. She said that she only received a summary from Jack West and his group. She requested more information about how we view their successes and failures and what the priorities are for next year.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations said that is the purpose of the Work Session, for the lobbyist to present and go through everything with Council, but again the contracts haven't been approved yet.

Councilor Davis stated that he spent an hour with one member of the delegation discussing where we came from this year; where we know we need to go; and some of the overtures that come our way. We have to rely on the lobbyists to spearhead some things for us. He is looking forward to a candid conversation. He doesn't particularly like the situation the State is in, but that doesn't mean that we as a City need to take a back seat on these issues.

Councilor Finlay stated that he is willing to vote or hold the vote until next week, but he wants to have a clear discussion of what the mission is and a clear discussion that we need to see some winners.

- **Mr. Cromartie left the meeting at 9:25 a.m.**

Councilor Devine respects Dr. Gergel's position on this, but we are at a point where we need to either go with the lobbyists or not.

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted four (4) to one (1) to approve **Items 1.** through **4.** as presented and to schedule a Work Session to the discuss the goals and expectations for the lobbyists. Mr. Cromartie was not present at the time of the vote. Voting aye were Mr. Finlay, Ms. Devine, Mr. Davis and Mayor Coble. Dr. Gergel voted nay.

Councilor Devine asked Ms. Florence to move forward with scheduling the Work Session with the lobbyists. She also asked Ms. Florence to move forward with scheduling a breakfast with the City's legislative delegation.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations explained that the Work Session would entail a briefing on what the lobbyist team has accomplished; what they have not accomplished; and where they need to go from here with clear directives from Council. It would also include the annexation briefing. She asked if they would prefer a lunch or dinner with the delegation.

Councilor Davis doesn't think that a breakfast would work.

Councilor Finlay said that they have already approved the lobbyist contracts and discussed our goals. What is the executive session part of it?

Councilor Devine stated that this is a Work Session and that an executive session is not needed.

Mayor Coble stated that if we are going to try to amend the hospitality legislation; we will be going up against the entire hospitality industry and we can't just tell our lobbyists what to amend; that won't work.

Councilor Finlay asked if everyone understands how painful this battle is going to be. We have a bus system that is collapsing and other commitments where we are going to have to do something. He understands that it's going to require a lot of political capital for us.

Councilor Gergel added that amending the hospitality ordinance is one of several possible actions that we might need to take, but what impact would that have on our cultural infrastructure here in Columbia.

Mayor Coble asked staff to find out how much money both the City and County receive from the Hospitality Tax.

#### **CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION**

##### 4a. \*\*City / County Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Ad-Hoc Committee Appointments

Mayor Coble, Mr. Cromartie and Mr. Finlay volunteered to serve on the City/County Regional Transit Authority Ad-Hoc Committee; that would be the three (3) representatives that the County suggested; and we will try to move as expeditiously as possible. The attorney for the RTA has prepared a memo in terms of what funding sources are available under the existing law and what you have to do to make them available. He asked Mr. Ken Gaines, City Attorney to get the memo from Ms. Francenia Heizer, Esquire. We need to go into the first meeting saying here are the options under State law and here are the ones that would require amending.

Councilor Devine asked that they all receive a copy of the memo.

Councilor Finlay stated that there is a lack of information flowing from the RTA to Council. He has been here for two (2) years and has seen one (1) informational presentation from them. A little information would go a long way to keeping them abreast.

Mayor Coble said that we clearly need to do a better job with that. He admitted that when he attends the meetings he doesn't always remember to brief everyone. He explained that three (3) members of City Council and four (4) members of County Council serve on the RTA board and from their perspective they probably assume that everybody briefs everybody. He noted that the RTA will provide voluminous information about what they are doing.

Councilor Davis suggested that they receive the meeting materials in advance with the agenda.

Councilor Devine suggested that staff attend the meetings as well and then prepare memos for the Council. It might not need to be on an Assistant City Manager level, but a staff person could serve as the liaison to help with some of that. We can get an electronic version of the minutes and send them out to Council so that everyone is aware of what is happening. She will do that as the liaison with Engenuity, EdVenture and the Columbia Museum of Art. We need to establish a way of getting the minutes through the City's liaisons for all these organizations; perhaps they could submit them to the City Clerk.

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager said that they are working on a mechanism to have that information transmitted through Governmental Affairs and redirected to Council.

Mayor Coble stated that if the County does not extend the Mass Transit Fee, then half of the RTA's funding goes away in June and the yearly payment from SCANA goes away next October. Unless we have some kind of dedicated fee that replaces that, it can't be made up out of City revenue.

Councilor Finlay asked if the cost is \$12 million to include \$1.5 million from rider contributions.

Mayor Coble stated that's the total budget; SCANA provides \$3 million; and \$6 million comes from the Mass Transit Fee.

Councilor Gergel stated that before we do anything to indicate a commitment from the Hospitality Tax, she would like to hear from our cultural organizations and get some idea of the impact of that move on our cultural infrastructure in the City.

Councilor Finlay said we can't commit, because the State legislature doesn't allow it. Everybody needs to understand that we are passing ideas around, but it needs to be clear from this Council that we can't see how we can come up with \$9 million by October of next year.

Mayor Coble added that if the Hospitality amendment doesn't go through, the City would have the opportunity to impose a Vehicle Registration Fee if the legislative delegation approves it. It would be the same amount; the same people would be paying it; and it would be paid in the same way as the Mass Transit Fee is. Unless the County Council is committed to a referendum at some point, there really isn't an interim financing solution. There is no plan B. If the referendum fails, it fails. We should do what Charleston did; the people spoke; they cut back the bus system; and then the Charleston people saw the impact of a bus system; went back; and the referendum passed overwhelming.

Councilor Finlay stated that we need to make a clear statement that this system costs \$12 dollars with 35% utilization. We need to look at an interim step; not the \$3 million system, but a \$6 or \$7 million system that gets close to 70% utilization.

Mayor Coble asked when you say 35% what do you mean.

Councilor Finlay said that's the number that he continuously hears and it's of the seats that are  
*\*\*Amendment to the Agenda*

available to be used; they are running the buses at 35% capacity. Mayor Coble stated that the RTA Services and Standards Committee have a list based on national standards on when to cut routes and when they are not conducive. Even the best routes have different levels of occupancy during the day. We measured the routes versus national standards and we have set up the criteria. Based on the criteria, we are asking the County to cut two (2) routes now. It's complicated in terms of utilization. The more information we get, the better off we will be.

Councilor Finlay reiterated that a system of \$12 million with a stated utilization of 35% has a lot of unused capacity. We are paying for a lot of unused capacity. If we can't have a \$12 million bus system, what's the most capacity utilization we can get for \$6, \$7 or \$8 million?

Councilor Davis stated that he needs County Council's explanation as to why the referendum failed. The commission put in a lot of work and they thought that the recommendations were fair. Going forward, I don't know if they would be adamantly opposed to focusing on buses and roads. What would it really take to move them forward? As we look at utilization, right now it may be that the overall scheme of things in terms of countywide planning is impacting the utilization. The buses don't tend to go where the people who are essentially targeted or those that seem to need the buses are.

Councilor Gergel said that she doesn't have the information from the RTA about how our system operates, what the capacity is and how we figure out routes. Maybe I need to go individually and talk with the RTA. The Council may want a briefing, because she has a lot of questions.

Mayor Coble suggested that they go to the RTA scheduled meetings.

Councilor Devine offered Dr. Gergel her position on the RTA board, because the meetings do not suit her schedule.

Councilor Gergel accepted the appointment.

Councilor Davis stated that the contract of overall operations should be on the table. He doesn't know if we can have a viable bus system when the roads and safety are still factors when it comes to intersections in this City. Those two things should be priorities no matter what pot of money we go after and it seems as though both entities are in agreement on primary focuses. He added that buses do cause wear and tear on roads and he knows of an intersection right now that is a problem.

Councilor Finlay stated that the other problem that he heard the County ran into uniformly is that a huge percentage of the fees could be spent on in-town districts that don't appear to have either road or busing issues. We will have to figure that out with the County, because some County Council members said that areas that don't have roads and aren't served by the bus aren't going to get anything and in-town rich districts are going to get enormous quantities of money. We have to politely exercise some judgment on this issue or the referendum will hit the same problem as it did before.

Upon motion by Ms. Devine, seconded by Mayor Coble, Council voted unanimously to approve the appointment of Dr. Belinda Gergel to the Central Midlands Regional Transit Authority Board as a replacement for Ms. Tameka Isaac Devine.

Mayor Coble urged the appointees to attend the scheduled meetings as often as possible. He suggested that Dr. Gergel also serve on the Services and Standards Committee.

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to approve the appointment of Mayor Robert D. Coble, Mr. E.W. Cromartie, II and Mr. Kirkman Finlay III to the City/County Regional Transit Authority Ad-Hoc Committee and to schedule a committee meeting as soon as possible.

4b. \*\*City / County Detention Center Ad-Hoc Committee Appointments

Mayor Coble reminded the Council that they decided to have a similar committee to address the issues with the Detention Center. He suggested that Mr. Tom Pioreschi be appointed as a business person, because he has a passion for this.

Councilor Devine suggested that Mr. Tony Lawton serve, because of the homeless shelter.

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager suggested that the Chief of Police and the Director of Homeland Security serve on the committee as well.

Councilor Davis asked that the committee discuss the prisoner drop-off points from the Detention Center, because it has a rippling effect.

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Dr. Gergel, Council voted unanimously to approve the appointment of Councilor Tameika Isaac Devine; Mr. Tom Pioreschi, Downtown Residential Developer; Mr. Tony Lawton, Director of Community Development; Police Chief Tandy Carter; and Mr. Harold Reaves, Director of Homeland Security to the City / County Detention Center Ad-Hoc Committee.

4c. \*\*Implementation of the Gang Assessment Recommendations – Mr. S. Allison Baker, Assistant City Manager for Public Services

Mr. Allison Baker, Assistant City Manager for Public Services stated that City Council commissioned the University of South Carolina and Benedict College to do an extensive assessment of youth and gang violence in the City of Columbia and Richland County. They presented the assessment to us in February 2008. Stakeholders throughout the community were interviewed and their concerns included but were not limited to the lack of parental supervision; the lack of coordinated community involvement, which means neighborhood associations, churches, schools and the business community; the lack of social opportunities, which can be provided by a number of organizations to include the Parks and Recreation Department programs for youth to become involved in; and the increased presence of law enforcement. He believes that it would be difficult to move forward as recommended by the research group. As the research group recommended, it does involve a number of agencies and organizations that City Council may have influence over, but not control and that will be key when it gets down to doing work and making things happen. From a staff perspective, we recommend a different approach to get us started with implementing many of the recommendations. We believe that the Department of Parks and Recreation and the new proposed Youth Commission are uniquely positioned; strategically placed; experienced in youth programs; and best suited to address the issue of youth and family violence. The steering committee is in place and was instrumental in commissioning the study. We are proposing a new Youth/Adult Commission, which would in effect be the implementation team, but would be appointed by the steering committee and possibly confirmed by City Council. They would be tasked with providing resources, support and strategic direction for the staff and the implementation team. There is still a necessity to have the research group involved. We believe that the way they are structured now is not the direction in which they should go. There should be a new group appointed by the steering committee that may include members of the existing youth commission, but it should have a new face and a new charge. In terms of

resources, we have to work with what we have. There are a number of staff members in the Department of Parks and Recreation and in other city departments to include the Police Department that are making a lot of progress with our young people and our youth problems. They should be gathered together under one Youth/Adult Commission and one staff leader. That staff leader has not been determined. We do have an existing Deputy Director position for the Youth Commission and we need to staff that position using existing resources. It is very important that we have a Youth Advisory Commission that will have access to staff and to the Youth/Adult Commission. It's important that we know where the children are; what they are thinking; and what challenges they have. A number of things that need to take place are mentoring and parental involvement. We need young people involved in an implementation strategy and carrying that strategy out. The key to success is collaboration and making sure that the churches, schools, business community and state agencies are able to work with them to pull together with one common mission and one common direction. He added that outreach is important. We need to leave the walls of our buildings and go out into the community and get to know the people. We need to have a focused mentoring program as we move forward. There has to be intervention when children are already in trouble, but the prevention portion is where we have to make our biggest impact. We have to stop the growth of youth and gang violence and that happens through a good preventive effort. The Department of Parks and Recreation is already working in partnership with the Columbia Police Department on the "PALS in Parks" program. Their activities at Hyatt Park have been very successful. As we pair policemen with recreation staff and they spend time mentoring and working with the children, it gives a sense of security at our location. The statistics suggest that youth and gang violence is most prevalent around our A+ schools. As we move from our recreation centers we need to look at the resources we already have such as the school district facilities. We can work with the school district facilities, their programs and their staff. People feel safer when we use our recreation facilities as we have been doing with Hyatt Park. There are other programs that the city is responsible for that need to be directed by one staff person.

Councilor Finlay asked is there going to be a component of this that reaches out to some of the groups like Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts. Some of the programs would love to be involved if we could provide a quiet haven for two (2) hours once a week, with no cost or resources from us.

Mr. Terry Dozier, Parks and Recreation Specialist/Program Supervisor stated that he met with Mr. Marc Cox, Chairman of the Board for Regions Bank and they have an on-going discussion and plan to have cub scouts and other programs involved with Parks and Recreation. The perception in the City is that we are not doing anything when we really are.

Councilor Finlay said that he would love to be involved with that program. We don't have to develop all the programs if we can provide the space. The State provides a structured environment for some of these other groups to work. We could provide an enormous program that can help us, at very little cost.

Councilor Gergel asked Mr. Baker how he would describe our capacity to expand the program. What is it going to take?

Mr. Allison Baker, Assistant City Manager for Public Services said that it would take the City Manager's and Council's approval to pull those groups together that we already have. It's important to have a board, youth commission and an implementation team to do some strategic planning. There is some significant amount of staffing already in place that was tasked with doing different things that are very similar and they need to come together.

Mayor Coble stated that Mr. Baker has taken national models and tailored them to what we can implement while using existing resources. This plan includes collaborative efforts and we have to make sure we collaborate with Sheriff Leon Lott.

Mr. Allison Baker, Assistant City Manager for Public Services said that he met with Sheriff Lott and they talked point by point. Sheriff Lott seemed excited and agreed that was the direction they should go. Mr. Baker said as soon as he receives direction from Council he is going to put the structure in writing and send it to Sheriff Lott.

Mayor Coble said to make sure Sheriff Lott has an opportunity to make any suggestions and it might be good to discuss this at the Richland One Retreat.

Mr. Allison Baker, Assistant City Manager asked Mr. Dozier what they are doing with PALS in the Park at Hyatt Park School.

Mr. Terry Dozier, Parks and Recreation Specialist/Program Supervisor stated he visited the after-school program. They are looking at the issue of children who have been expelled from school and utilizing the program as an alternative to expulsion. They implemented the study hall tutorial program as well as collaborations with other organizations on the life skills portion, because young people need a sense of responsibility and self awareness.

Mr. Allison Baker, Assistant City Manager for Public Services stated that he met with the Principal at Hyatt Park Elementary School and laid out the parameters for channeling children with academic troubles to this program. They call it the study hall as opposed to tutoring, because the Principal believed that's what it needed to be in order for her to endorse sending her children to that after-school program.

Councilor Davis asked what we are doing to take advantage of some of the facilities within the schools. Some of the children may not make it to the parks and schools are more of an anchor in some of the neighborhoods than the parks. When children are expelled from school, they tend to hang around the school. A lot of children who get expelled have some issues and some talent and you don't want to stigmatize them but he has always been interested in how we can best utilize the facilities at schools. It didn't make sense that the children could not go on the school premises and use some of the equipment they have when it's in their neighborhoods; they have to go to the park to do that. Some children need to be under the eyes and ears of the people who know them.

Mr. Allison Baker, Assistant City Manager for Public Services stated that they want to be cognitive of the A+ plus school cluster. In the last few years, they were able to use school facilities at C.A. Johnson for mentoring. The recreation centers should have a service area, an area that is reasonable for children to get from home to the recreation center without crossing barriers that are dangerous. We need to use the A+ school cluster system along with our recreation programs to create those service areas so that we can provide a variety of programs. We started developing Southeast Park and one of the groups we invited was Boy Scouts. We wanted to see what we could do at Southeast Park to make that park usable for them. Southeast Park is the only location that we allow overnight camping and it was for the purpose of Boys and Girl Scouts and other groups that may want to do similar activities.

Councilor Gergel added that she has always seen our parks as a way to extend the education of our young people and it's a critical role that our program should have. It is essential that we involve Mr. Baker in Together We Can. I think the continuous meetings with the Together We Can initiative are appropriate.

Mr. Terry Dozier, Parks and Recreation Specialist/Program Supervisor stated that they are making a lot of effort to get in front of the neighborhood leaders as well as the educational system to let them know that we are partners in the efforts to make a difference in the community. We are aware that many of District One schools have gone to the after-school

programs and have implemented study hall programs for their athletes as well as other children; however, the ones that they are missing are the ones that do not make the teams because of poor academic performance or the ones that have some social issues or behavior problems that get pushed out and our parks and recreation centers tend to be the place where they hang out when they are pushed off of school grounds. We are really trying to partner with them without duplicating services while meeting the needs of those who tend to be our trouble spots.

Mr. Allison Baker, Assistant City Manager for Public Services said that he struggles with if he should say that the Department of Parks and Recreation is strategically place because for him, it's not a Parks and Recreation issue, it's a city issue.

Councilor Finlay agreed that they should go to Sheriff Lott and ask him if he has some input on a pertinent level before we roll it out.

Mr. Allison Baker, Assistant City Manager for Public Services said that the Sheriff asked him to reduce his presentation to writing so that he would have it on paper to react to.

There was a consensus of Council to direct staff to submit a letter outlining the recommendations presented today to Sheriff Leon Lott for endorsement.

5. Together We Can Initiatives – Ms. Teresa Wilson Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations presented a report to the Council that was done as a follow-up to her discussion with Dr. Percy Mack, Superintendent of Richland School District One on September 26, 2008. Sometimes there is urgency or momentum around certain issues and it appears to her that is what's happening now. Many of our initiatives seem to be complimenting each other at the right time. She has attempted to reduce to writing what they had discussed in the meeting. Dr. Mack has seen the report and gave her his blessing on speaking for him, because he could not be here. He asked that you take anything that's in the report as suggestions on his part. He wants you all to know that he is here to collaborate. As it relates to the strategic planning for Together We Can, there has been a data study that has been taking place with Dr. Les Sternberg, Dean of University of South Carolina College of Education and the preliminary draft of the report is ready.

Mayor Coble noted that one of the first things Mobile, Alabama did was started with the data collection.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations said that Dr. Sternberg has also been working with Midlands Technical College and Columbia College. They have done the data study and focus group; gathered information and data from the State Board and pulled all of that together. Dr. Sternberg asked that Dr. Mack and the school board chairman have the first right of review of the document just as a courtesy, because it is information about Richland School District One. He said that he want to take direction from the coordinating council on Together We Can on how that document should be received. There has to be dedicated personnel and day to day emphasis on all of that can be accomplished through Together We Can. Dr. Mack indicated that there needed to be a dynamic individual like the Executive Director in Mobile, Alabama. He asked that rather engage in strategic planning, he wanted to get the data study back and have time to digest it, because the District needs to have some candid discussions about the direction of their foundation.

Councilor Gergel asked Ms. Florence is it the Director of the Together We Can foundation that she is referring to?

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations said she was referring to the Director for Together We Can Foundation in Mobile, Alabama.

Councilor Gergel asked if we have a Together We Can Foundation yet.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations stated that we don't have a Together We Can Foundation yet, but the School District has the Partners in Education Foundation.

Mayor Coble said that they have a "Partners in Education" organization that plays a limited but active role. If that's going to be the entity, they need to make some internal changes but the Together We Can would be a similar non-profit 501(c) 3 not just a governmental entity.

Councilor Gergel asked did our group look at the Greenville Alliance for Quality Education.

Mayor Coble answered no, he doesn't believe they did.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director for Governmental Affairs and Community Relations said that Dr. Mack stresses parental involvement as well as involvement by the business community. This is mirroring many of the things Mr. Baker indicated. Dr. Mack said a lot of the things we are going to talk about are not rocket science but it's the little things like using resources that are already in the community and to be able to pull these willing folks to the table with some type of structure and put them to work. It may not cost us any more money to do those types of things, but he also said perhaps the right asks were not made at the right time strategically by the right people. There has been a lack of business support to the school district and they would like to see your help in that regard. He emphasized the importance of early childhood education, focused literacy and reading programs and the prevention of truancy. As we wait for the completion of the data study, he asked that you consider some strategic initiatives such as book campaigns for children to encourage reading; something that City Council or the Mayor can spearhead as an incentive for young people to read.

Mayor Coble stated that we have the Literacy Council on Devine Street and that might be the perfect group to help with that.

Councilor Gergel added that one of the exciting programs nationally that people are aware of is the One Book, One City program. It's designed for an entire city. This might be something we could use at a younger adult level and have everyone encourage all of our children to be reading the same book at different levels and sponsor a variety of activities throughout the year that incorporate that book. It is a dynamic program and it would be something that can engage the entire community.

Councilor Devine said another thing she thought about is the official Columbia book "Charlie's Columbia Backyard". We have local authors that have written books and it might be a neat idea to get them; donate them to the school; and Council members can go into the schools and read the books. It could be a huge campaign promoting the city, books and reading.

Councilor Davis stated that a police officer who responded to calls of domestic violence told him that there were always children in the house but no books. She started an effort in the city where everybody would bring books to her and she spent time in the schools reading to children. A lot of the children now have more interaction with law enforcement. He said that law enforcement needs to be at the table.

Councilor Gergel said that research indicated that if you can get a child reading at grade level by the third grade, you are going to hold onto them. You must get them reading by third grade or they will fall further behind. They also have an ambassador program where as when a child finishes reading a book; they go around and get an official designation by City Council.

Councilor Devine stated that we have three (3) or four (4) local authors who have written children's books. If we do a survey, we would probably find more.

Ms Teresa Florence, Director for Governmental Affairs and Community Relations stated that an ordinance to address truancy would include a collaboration of the Family Court Judges and the Police Department.

Mayor Coble asked if truancy is a State law and added that we may want to see what we are doing now.

Councilor Devine said that it's coming up at every community meeting. She knows we had a Truancy Officer, but she doesn't know if we have one now.

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager stated that it works well when we have a concentrated effort particularly when the officers in the various regions know the children and know where they were; who missed school; and where to find them.

Councilor Davis stated that the average adult that lives in the neighborhood on the streets where there are children walking around at 11:00 a.m. in the day, never stop and ask them why. It appears that nobody is concerned. People from the school are not coming around and in some cases, Police Officers just drive by them or if they stop them, it's for the wrong reason so there is no real commitment. If he sees a child walking the streets in any neighbor at 10:00am, something is wrong. Somebody should be concerned about why that child is not in school.

Councilor Finlay stated that we can't expect that we are going to be able to continue to add requests, requirements and desires to the Police Department with the level of force we have today. If we are going to put them in parks and community policing then we are going to have to make a dramatic commitment beyond twenty-five (25) more officers to fix this problem. What we keep saying is safety; safe corridors to schools, safe corridors to after-school activities, and people not walking the streets. To make any of these projects work, safety is going to have to be our goal because if it isn't, we are just kidding ourselves.

Councilor Devine agreed and she wouldn't tell the Police Chief how to look at priorities, but she went to an Arsenal Hill meeting on Monday night and their big thing was break-ins and car robberies during the day, which they were contributing to the homeless. The Police have to look at their structure and figure out where people are needed, but if a lot of the problems we have are gang related and youth violence then it makes sense to have dedicated officers to be in prevention mode instead of locking kids up. Would you rather build jails or schools? I would rather spend money building schools.

Councilor Davis stated that we have to look at some alternative funding and that law enforcement and safety are key issues in these discussions. We have to look at other resources such as grants. Some of this trickled down from under the Homeland Security umbrella. He wants to see how creative we can be and get some money from that as well as see what dollars can come from Department of Justice in terms of gang prevention.

Councilor Devine asked the City Manager if there is a potential to use the Community Safety Officers. Would they like to get trained as Truancy Officers?

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager stated that another option is to utilize the school Resources Officers and the Community Police Officers.

Councilor Devine asked how long we have not had a Truancy Officer.

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager said that the former Truancy Officer left about a year ago. He noted that this can be done by using a combination of personnel.

Councilor Davis asked the City Manager if Truancy Officers were always placed under the municipality or the school district.

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager stated that earlier they were under the school district, but as a part of community policing, the Police Officers were able to bring parents to the table, because if you had a parent who didn't cooperate, the officer was able to access the courts.

▪ **Mr. Cromartie returned to the meeting at 10:58 a.m.**

Councilor Davis stated that we needed to look at the Department of Education for funding.

Councilor Cromartie said one of the things we were trying to deal with is the students who don't go to school everyday. We have a lot of young people throughout the City of Columbia that need help. If we can take those young people off the streets who are of school age, the effect of that would be (1) they would not be out there breaking the law and (2) it would raise the number of student attendance, especially at our A+ schools and the amount of federal funding they receive would increase. It would be a win-win situation for the community and schools. We are trying to get a partnership with Richland School District One and the City of Columbia and see how we can keep these you kids in school.

Councilor Gergel asked who handles truancy.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations stated that the school districts handle truancy.

Councilor Gergel asked if there is anything in place right now to get parents to take pro-active steps and what do we need to do to address our end of it.

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager said that the idea of cross training Community Safety Officers and the use of School Resources Officers and Police Officers is a good first step.

Councilor Cromartie asked how we go from discussion to implementation of the relationship. It may not help this year, but it can help the next school year.

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager stated that it can help this year. We can direct staff to get with Chief Carter so that they can cross train Community Safety Officers and employ the Columbia Police Officers to resume their efforts with truancy.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations stated that another one of Dr. Mack's initiatives is building a culture for our parents. We should require parents to show a copy of their child's report card or verify their attendance at a parent/teacher conference before they can pay their rent.

Councilor Devine asked could you refuse someone's rent just because they don't have the information.

Councilor Cromartie stated that they would do it.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations thinks that they are trying to build a certain culture of accountability with parents.

Councilor Devine added that if you are a Housing Authority resident then they already have things in place that require participation, but where you find the gap is with Section 8 and other low income housing that does not fall under the Housing Authority.

Councilor Gergel said that she heard a fabulous program on South Carolina Educational Radio about an experimental program that had been running in Harlem to work with parents of kids that had been marginal in their performance. It was working with parents who were young themselves to help create a culture that's reinforcing the importance of learning and reading.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations stated that Dr. Mack would like more feedback from the Mayor on any of these things that we might implement.

Mayor Coble suggested that they draft a memo from City Council and he would present it.

Councilor Cromartie stated he has been active in Richland School District One for a long time. He went to all the schools on the A+ list. The city has invested in the neighborhoods spending millions of dollars. It is a travesty that once we build the homes, people don't want to go to the schools and we have to change that.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations said that a list of the A+ and priority schools is attached. The business partnership is where everyone would like to see the city involved. They have identified the schools they feel are in the most need right now for a business partnership (C.A. Johnson, Gibbs, Alcorn, and Columbia High). You would probably caption Columbia High and C. A. Johnson with the Challenge Day concept.

Mayor Coble asked if they have a program in place now.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations stated yes and what they are doing now is identifying the schools they feel are in the most need.

Mayor Coble stated that the last thing they will do is meet with all the people they do business with and when Dr. Mack and the School District review the data study, we will look at a strategic structure and plan for Together We Can. All the things that they have listed and gone over from reading to truancy, put that in the memo and say we are moving forward on this.

Councilor Cromartie stated that fifteen (15) years ago when he started a partnership with W. A. Perry Middle School and B. P. Barber Engineering. It came out of an unusual sort of way. They had a gang attacked in the community where homes were shot up. At that time B. P. Barber had been getting engineering contracts from the city for many years. He asked them if they would be willing to start a program in the community where they would bring in and teach young students the world of engineering. They did and they start at W. A. Perry, Sander Middle, Gibbs and they have been doing that now for the past fifteen (15) years. There is a direct relationship with what happens in the community and what happens at school. When there is a problem in the community, there is a problem in the schools. If we can assess the problems in the community, we can make it better for the schools.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations stated that she will continue to work on identifying and partnering strategically with the right businesses.

Councilor Devine said that there is a difference in business partnerships like AT&T which is a big business and they can do different things. She talked with Sheila at Logan and she mentioned that Publix used to be their business partner which they are no longer doing it, but what they did was provided food for the PTO meetings. Now that they don't have food at the PTO meetings, parents don't come. So, maybe we can get some restaurants to provide food.

Councilor Finlay stated that there is a fundamental issue that we have to address. If food brings parents to PTO meeting, he doesn't know if we can fix that problem. That's beyond what we can legislate or entice.

Councilor Devine said she disagreed because you have to look at each person and where they are.

Councilor Finlay added that he is willing to help participate, but there is a limit beyond which we aren't going to be able to push.

Councilor Gergel said that she would love to see us go ahead and decide that they will take putting together business partnerships with each one of the A+ schools this year and get to work on that immediately.

Councilor Cromartie stated that he agrees but when you consider the diversity of the City of Columbia, different communities have different ways of getting things done. What we really want to do is get the proper results. Carver Elementary School is in the same area but they are not on the A+ list. They have gotten many awards and were able to have spaghetti dinners to get people there and it works. The bottom line is when it's all said and done and you gotten parents engage and you are able to make a difference in students that's the results we are trying to achieve.

Councilor Davis said that you still have to go back to where kids live and who have an influence on them or who for some reason have no relationship with them. He gives Bill Manley credit for doing this in the Eau Claire area; that is forging the relationships between the people in the community and the schools. If we get those people who may not be working during the day to walk down the streets and around the corners; to go into the schools and volunteer; and to strike up a relationship with the kids, that works too. Again, the people immediately around that school would benefit in the beginning. If parents are not working, how can they participate during the day to get some communication going with that school?

Mayor Coble suggested that Council work on the reading program and the business partnership program. He asked what the best way to organize the businesses is. He asked staff to work on that.

Councilor Cromartie stated that for his annual Christmas party they had given out books to young people in the Colony Apartments and in the Booker Washington Heights area. He asked if there was a way to have 500 books donated for these youth.

Councilor Devine suggested that they look internally at their resources. If the City adopted one of the A+ schools and did something like mentoring, then we can show when we go out to businesses that we are already a business partner for one of the A+ schools.

Councilor Cromartie added that that they can provide some help to all the A+ schools and all of

them are in need. Any involvement with any of those schools would be beneficial.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations stated that the Community Volunteer Coordinator for Richland One works from a spreadsheet and she should be able to tell them what partners are left and who to ask.

Councilor Devine stated that Junior Achievement has a class called City Government. Council could volunteer to teach the class in one of the schools.

Councilor Cromartie stated that he may not be able to teach a class but he could get guest speakers.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations reminded the Council about the payment for the Richland One Coliseum and for the data study.

Councilor Cromartie asked how much is it for the data study.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations said that the cost for the data study is \$26,000 and the cost for Challenge Day is \$26,000.

Councilor Devine recalled that we asked Palmetto Project to look at what it would cost to do all A+ schools. The \$26,000 only covered two schools and they already have a commitment to do Columbia High and Dreher High Schools.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations said that Dr. Mack and Mr. Ernest Dupree want to do C.A. Johnson and Eau Claire High Schools.

Councilor Devine stated that if they have made a commitment to the other two schools, she doesn't know if they have enough funding for that.

Ms. Teresa Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs and Community Relations said she missed Scott's presentation and don't know what he indicated

There was a consensus of Council to direct staff to prepare a memorandum outlining the Council members' responses made today in relation to the "Together We Can" update and the input provided by Dr. Percy A. Mack, Superintendent of Schools for Richland School District One. We should concentrate our efforts on book campaigns to encourage children to read and building business partnerships. It is the Mayor's intent to present these responses during the Richland School District One Strategic Planning Retreat.

6. Responses to the Employee Benefits Plan Design Consulting Services Request for Qualifications – Ms. Melisa Caughman, Interim Finance Director

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Interim Finance Director stated that in August, Towers Perrin presented healthcare options that we could consider in terms of revising the City's healthcare benefits. They then drafted an RFQ to select a consultant to come in and assist in developing healthcare alternatives. Through an RFQ process, they are recommending Towers Perrin and asking for permission to negotiate a contract with them.

Councilor Finlay said that he had been approached by Regions Bank, a local bank about doing a GASB 45 presentation. In full disclosure, they gave me \$300 when I ran for Council. Will that prohibit other people from presenting to us?

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Interim Finance Director stated that Towers Perrin will look at strategies and the financial impact of Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) as it relates to GASB 45. Anything we do with our healthcare plan will affect that. Councilor Finlay asked if Towers Perrin will be helping us to design a plan or will they become implementation sources.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Interim Finance Director stated that Towers Perrin is to help us implement a healthcare plan that would also impact our retiree coverage and GASB 45.

Councilor Finlay asked would they be a provider of those services.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Interim Finance Director said no; they are helping design the plan.

Mr. Bill Ellis, Deputy Finance Director stated that Regions Bank would be interested in funding mechanisms for GASB 45 through the irrevocable trust.

Councilor Cromartie asked Ms. Caughman why she felt that Towers Perrin was the best one.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Interim Finance Director stated that it was based on their experience in this industry.

Councilor Cromartie asked what their experience is.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Interim Finance Director stated that it's with management and employee benefits and they are willing to meet our timeline.

Councilor Cromartie asked what the timeline is.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Interim Finance Director reported that the timeline is to be able to have a plan in place by July 1, 2009.

Councilor Devine stated that sometimes people question when you have a presentation by a group then you do an RFQ and that group is selected, it doesn't look right even though they were the most qualified. We need to understand that there are certain circumstances where we will receive the message, but we don't have an RFQ. If we have worked with somebody and we feel comfortable with them, then it's better to do that than the RFQ because that would make people not trust that we have an open process.

Councilor Finlay asked if we have the presentation, how long it takes Towers Perrin to work on their ideas on the process. Ninety (90) days?

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Interim Finance Director said they are asking to have a preliminary plan by December 1, 2008.

Councilor Finlay stated that in essence we are going to need to be making a decision on healthcare within the next ninety (90) days so that it can be written and then taken to our third party provider to see if they can implement it.

Councilor Davis asked if the timeline is tied to an annual enrollment.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Interim Finance Director stated that it's annual enrollment and the budget.

Councilor Devine said we need to make sure that our employees are educated.

Councilor Davis asked do we have an internal benefits communications network. Do we get a benefit newsletter?

- **Dr. Gergel left the meeting at 11:42 a.m.**

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager added that we do send out information when it becomes available, but when we bring on board a fulltime benefits administrator that is one of the expectations we will have on an on-going basis.

Councilor Davis stated that the more employees know up front, the more they can take advantage of.

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager added that we have a Benefits Specialist but we are talking about bringing on board a Benefits Administrator; someone who will be in charge of overseeing and ensuring that they work on a daily basis with our third party administrator.

Councilor Cromartie said that the direction we are now moving in as a City is tremendously different from what all the employees who have been working for the City have been accustomed to in the last twenty (20) years. We didn't have the greatest pay rate, but we gave great benefits. We now have some of the best salaries in the State of South Carolina compared to twenty (20) years ago. As we move through the process of change it would be beneficial to have people from our benefits section to come and hear the conversation.

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager said that he has a committee set up to review benefits packages and Ms. Gladys Brown is heading that up.

Councilor Finlay stated that we have to be truthful. From 2002-2007, medical benefits went up on our payroll from about 12% to 18%. Healthcare grew about 4% of the total budget in five (5) years. What we are trying to do is reduce that growth. We cannot run from this.

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Mr. Finlay, Council voted unanimously to authorize the City Manager to enter into contractual negotiations with Towers Perrin for the City's Employee Benefits Plan Design Consulting Services.

Councilor Davis directed the City Manager to hold Towers Perrin to the timeframes as discussed.

7. Ordinance No.: 2008-074 – Amending Ordinance 2006-042 to adopt the Budget for The City of Columbia, South Carolina, for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2007 – *First reading approval was given on October 1, 2008. – Approved on second reading.*

Upon motion by Ms. Devine, seconded by Mr. Finlay, Council voted unanimously to give second reading approval to Ordinance No.: 2008-074 – Amending Ordinance 2006-042 to Adopt the Budget for The City of Columbia, South Carolina, for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2007.

- **Council recessed at 12:04 p.m.**
- **Mr. Finlay left the meeting during the break.**
- **Council reconvened the Work Session at 12:28 p.m.**

Upon motion by Ms. Devine, seconded by Mr. Cromartie, Council voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 12:28 p.m. for the discussion of the employment of an employee and a contractual matter all relating to **Item 4c**. No action was taken.

▪ **Council adjourned the Executive Session at 1:44 p.m. to reconvene the Work Session.**

8. Homelessness in the City of Columbia - Mr. Tony Lawton, Director of Community Development

Mr. Tony Lawton, Director of Community Development reported that the Winter Shelter will open on November 1, 2008. Staff is meeting with various social service agencies and service providers on Friday, October 10, 2008 to discuss the concept of a Day Service Center. The Community Development Department is working with the Homeland Security Department to address the concerns related to the “walk-up” policy and other security issues.

Councilor Cromartie asked how are we going to handle walk-ins.

Councilor Gergel stated that Ms. Dee Albritton with Fast Forward is ready to move computers over to keep people actively engaged in significant and meaningful opportunities.

Councilor Davis asked what happens between mornings and 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Tony Lawton, Director of Community Development stated that he has a meeting with Mr. Reaves on Thursday to work through some of that.

Councilor Cromartie said that whatever happens in November and going forward will make a tremendous difference in terms of how we are perceived.

Mr. Harold Reaves, Director of Homeland Security suggested that the City go back to the security plan that was in place two (2) years ago. This encompasses weekly community meetings; the use of Allied Barton for interior security; the City of Columbia Community Safety Officers and the Police Department will secure the exterior of the site; and background checks will be conducted on patrons of the Winter Shelter to ensure the safety of all involved.

Councilor Cromartie asked if they were going to hire a security company and how many officers are in the interior.

Mr. Harold Reaves, Director of Homeland Security said that there were four (4) last year, but the main thing is to ensure that they alleviate the loitering outside the area.

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager stated that they still have some logistics to work out.

Councilor Cromartie said that he specifically asked Homestead about warrants when they were there before. They did not do that, instead the only thing they were concerned about were people who were sexual predators.

Councilor Devine said the Police Chief needs to understand the gravity of what we have dealt with in the past. One of the things they talked about at Arsenal Hill was that we have ordinances already in place and the fact that we will be looking at some other ordinances and hopefully getting some passed by November 1, 2008. We have great ordinances, but they are not enforcing them so how would more ordinances help us. She thinks it's encumbered upon them to show that they are enforcing the current ordinances. If we can show that we know how to run winter shelters then people will have more confidence and not be worried about where the shelter is as much as who is providing the services we need to make the surrounding

neighborhoods safe.

Mr. Harold Reaves, Director of Homeland Security stated that the City Manager has made it very clear to Chief Carter about what the expectations are.

Councilor Devine suggested that they create a fact sheet with the different Ordinances and who to call if you see somebody sleeping in the park.

Councilor Cromartie said that Homestead had a 1-800 homeless number. If you found someone sleeping in your yard, you call that number and somebody would be there to escort that homeless person away.

Councilor Gergel added that understanding what happens during the day is very important. What she is hearing is that we will have a comprehensive day program.

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager stated that they will not have a comprehensive program. The service providers will set up some level of services, but not to the degree that she is describing.

Councilor Davis added that those that are not at the Oliver Gospel Mission or the Salvation Army are somewhere else. The expectations are that they should be seeking employment.

Councilor Gergel said to ensure that when the homeless wake up in the morning they know where they can go to get employment or counseling.

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager added that two (2) years ago they provided transportation from the various colonies to dental care, medical care or job services. They made sure they would get to where they needed to be.

Councilor Devine stated that she would like for Council to look at their on-going services. In order for us to get away from feeling like we are just the emergency shelter and get these people in some kind of service, we need to look at keeping some of the programs we are going to put in place past March. One of the comments called out in Arsenal Hill was that during the summer they see a lot more people sleeping in the parks and people asking to use their phones, because there is no emergency shelter. We have a year round homeless issue in the city.

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager stated that Mr. Tony Lawton, Mr. Allison Baker and Mr. Harold Reaves have made significant progress talking with service providers. We will have a collaborative effort in place that will provide for services offsite and limited services, but he does not want to give a false sense of hope about the magnitude of those services.

Councilor Cromartie stated that he understands we don't have the resources now and he is not looking for the magnitude of that, but he realizes that as a city which direction we need to move in, and as we are in the process of putting in place what we are doing now, we can start looking at how we are going to move in that direction or working through that process. How does Housing First interact with the University of South Carolina?

Mayor Coble said that Housing First would take the person off the street. We have a pilot program with twenty (25) individuals scattered throughout the city.

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager said that another thing we need to explore is what FEMA did with the Katrina cottages that they will be replacing in New Orleans.

Councilor Davis commented that the concept of Housing First made people invisible, but when you start bringing cottages into neighborhoods that's going to open up a can of worms.

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager said what he is suggesting now is the fact that the cottages are there. If we are going to continue to deal with Housing First, then we have a couple of issues: (1) do we want to pursue that as an opportunity (2) if we do, then we need to determine what are feasible and suitable locations where we can place them. With all of the discussions we have had about spreading the wealth, it would seem to him that if you are going to bring in the Katrina cottages you look across the City and find where there might be pockets of land available.

Mayor Coble stated that the reason the Miami model did not have an impact on the neighborhood in the sense of a traditional emergency shelter is because it was not an emergency shelter. He thinks we should look very carefully at the Miami model. We should not be combining with the emergency shelter because that changes that model. You are going to need an overflow, but you only need an overflow when the Miami type shelter is filled. You don't need an overflow where you have two competing places where people can go. The notion that he originally had was that it all be together, but he questioned if it all needs to be together and whether or not you will have some need for an overflow.

Councilor Davis asked how many people participated in the Miami model that still needed emergency shelter in the winter.

Councilor Cromartie said that the shelters don't work for everybody. They have an exit rate of 70% per month. That means that people are going out finding a job, getting into a house and being in a position to not come back.

Councilor Davis said the Miami model is fine, but there is no guarantee that everything is transportable to Columbia in terms of that model. What if a person does not leave in sixty (60) days? They keep them there. You have a certain percentage of permanency and that's a realistic expectation.

Councilor Devine stated that it would be good if they briefed the delegation on this issue, on our short-term plans for the homeless shelter and if it's a long-term arrangement, we brief them on that. She asked Mr. Ken Gaines, City Attorney, where are we with putting some Ordinances in place.

Mr. Ken Gaines, City Attorney stated that Council has a memo in their box today on what we can and cannot do. There are no tough love Ordinances, actually there are polices on different shelters.

Councilor Gergel stated that she needs to know what we now have to address some of the issues with our homeless operation; that would be helpful. In regards to the activity during the day, last year or the year before we required people to leave at a certain hour in the morning. She hopes that is not going to be the case this year.

Mr. Charles Austin, Sr., City Manager stated that they did require people to leave but some of them stayed to help clean the facility; others were carried to the location where they were picked up; some had to go to day labor or were transported to doctor appointments. This year, his hope is that we will have a core of basic services that even if they have to leave the facility there will be specific places in which they will go.

Councilor Davis said that one of the challenges will be to get the service providers and the advocates to cooperate.

Mr. Ken Gaines, City Attorney stated that the Richland County Bar is recruiting Lawyers to help assist the homeless with their paperwork. A lot of the homeless individuals do not have documentation to get their birth certificates or drivers license. They also discussed the services that these lawyers will be providing to help them with outstanding legal issues such as warrants, social security and family court matters.

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 2:26 p.m. for the receipt of legal advice which relates to a matter covered by attorney-client privilege.

- **Council adjourned the Executive Session discussion and the meeting at 2:36 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Salley  
City Clerk