

**CITY OF COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MINUTES **REVISED**
MAY 7, 2013 – 2:00 P.M.
EAU CLAIRE TOWN HALL
3905 ENSOR AVENUE**



The Columbia City Council met for a Work Session on Tuesday, May 7, 2013 at the Eau Claire Town Hall located at 3905 Ensor Avenue, Columbia South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m. The following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Leona K. Plaugh, The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman, The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan and The Honorable Moe Baddourah. The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine arrived at 4:09 p.m. Also present were Ms. Teresa B. Wilson, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Moore, City Clerk. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Runyan and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 2:17 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 1 and 2** as outlined.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements - *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
2. 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.*

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the Executive Session and to convene the Work Session at 3:57 p.m. Mr. Newman was not present at this time.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

3. Council is asked to approve the allocation of \$25,000 from the Fiscal Year 2012/2013 City Council Contingency Fund to the River Alliance. - *Approved*

Councilor Plaugh said the Contingency Fund was set aside for an external auditor to look at aspects of city government and we need to have some oversight in order to be good stewards.

Mayor Benjamin said we are right there with developing the Three Rivers Greenway and the River Alliance has done a great job helping shepherd this plan; we need to keep moving forward with this. With prospective contributions, he asked the City Manager to ensure that we continue with the accountability measures for all partners.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Plaugh and seconded by Mr. Baddourah, Council voted unanimously to approve an allocation of \$25,000 from the Fiscal Year 2012/2013 City Council Contingency Fund to the River Alliance and to use the balance of funds to hire an external auditor to provide an internal audit function.

Mr. Jeff Palen, Chief Financial Officer noted that less than \$30,000 would be left in the fund.

Mayor Benjamin asked Council to provide specific questions to the City Manager so that it is included in discussions with the prospective consultant.

Councilor Plaugh asked that staff come back with something for Council to consider.

▪ **Mr. Davis left the meeting at 4:04 p.m.**

4. Update on City Hall Renovations – Mr. David Knoche, Director of General Services

Mr. David Knoche, Director of General Services reported that there are several projects underway at City Hall; the biggest project is Council Chambers, which will be complete towards the end of August. He explained that the original change order in the amount of \$378,875.00 was to open the ceiling up and remove both drop ceilings; the second change order in the amount of \$14,675.00 was to open up the round windows on both sides and it required the installation of glass as recommended by the Design Development Review Commission; it cost \$29,180.00 to remove and repair the skylight; the specialized lighting was more expensive at a cost of \$23,204.00; and television production lighting was added at the request of the Public Relations Department for an additional \$15,627.00. He noted that the original project was set up for \$986,000 and we anticipate coming in under budget.

▪ **Ms. Devine arrived at 4:09 p.m.**

Councilor Plaugh inquired about Fund 403 from various sources.

Mr. David Knoche, Director of General Services explained that there were several projects with leftover funding from past years and former City Manager Steven Gantt allowed staff to pull those funds together.

Councilor Devine confirmed that there were street scaping projects that former City Manager Steven Gantt zeroed out and put that money into a fund.

Councilor Plaugh asked about the asbestos abatement.

Mr. David Knoche, Director of General Services said it was a capital improvement project last year to remove asbestos from City Hall; it will be an ongoing CIP.

Councilor Plaugh said that a nice article was written about the restoration work at City Hall. She said the article referred to \$1 million and she did not recall Council ever approving that. She said it would be helpful to have a budget tracking sheet on projects going forward.

5. [Fiscal Year 2013 / 2014 Proposed Budget](#) – Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director

- Follow Up Items

- River Alliance

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager reported that she communicated to Mike Dawson that Council is willing to continue with the funding request; however it must be based upon an annual agreement and not the 1995 agreement they reference. She added that the annual agreement will be based on present day deliverables to be managed by Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager. She acknowledged that there are an abundance of opportunities with the Greenway and there shouldn't be a problem establishing the right deliverables for the agreement for fiscal year 2013/2014. She noted that she has not received a response from Mr. Dawson.

- Security Cameras; Police & 911 Increases; and External Requests

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director said this is the third budget workshop and they needed to follow up on items from last week's meeting. She stated that the installation and annual maintenance of security cameras total \$700,000; the balance of the River Alliance funding request is \$25,000; the 3.33% mid-year salary increase for Police and 911 staff effective January 2014 is \$400,000; and they are recommending a \$100,000 contingency/funding for external requests for a total amount of \$1,225,000. She presented the recommended funding options to include the use of emergency reserves in the amount of \$750,000; seizure funds in the amount of \$25,000; hospitality funds in the amount of \$100,000; eliminating the fuel and electricity reserve in the amount of \$100,000; reducing the Detention Center line item by \$50,000; and reducing the allocation for general capital projects by \$200,000.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager explained that the total funding request for the River Alliance is \$50,000 for fiscal year 2013/2014 and the recommendation is to fund \$25,000 from the Hospitality Tax Fund and \$25,000 from the General Fund. She noted that there may be a potential to offset funds from the reserves.

Mr. Jeff Palen, Chief Financial Officer reported that the savings from the parking bond refunding could help pay for the cameras as a one-time cost.

Councilor Baddourah inquired about the 3.33 % mid-year increase for Police and 911. He thought they approved increases for Fire, Police and 911 at the same time.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director said it would be for half of a year beginning January 2014 and \$800,000 would need to be budgeted for fiscal year 2014/2015. She said the Fire Department has been addressed and it is included in their proposed budget.

Councilor Plough requested a list of all reserve funds in this budget, from all funds.

- **Mr. Newman returned to the meeting at 4:32 p.m.**

Councilor Devine inquired about the per diem paid to the Richland County Detention Center. She recalled asking that it be reduced. She wants to make sure that staff is comfortable with the reduction.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director said they looked at last year's actuals and they felt comfortable with the \$450,000. She noted that \$250,000 would be left in the emergency reserve fund if the \$750,000 is used.

Councilor Plough said she is thankful for all dedicated emergency service personnel, but we shouldn't proceed to make adjustments without a compensation and classification study so that we know we are appropriately adjusting salaries; it's not right to single out a group of our very valuable city employees to the exclusion of others that are equally valuable.

Councilor Baddourah insisted that the discussion was to make sure the Police Department's increase was equal to the Fire Department and starting at the same time; you are discriminating between the departments.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager explained that she was directed to look at a 6.67% increase to the Fire Department based on a previous study. As she worked with the Fire Department, it became apparent that it's not just about salaries; there are also concerns with health and wellness; infrastructure; and upward mobility and career advancement. She said the Fire Department identified funding in the current year's budget that will also be used for a city wide compensation and classification study for the benefit of all departments. She noted that the discussion came up about Police and she suggested that they also look at 911. She said Council voted to move forward with the Fire increases and what was doable in next year's budget for Police and 911.

Mayor Benjamin said this is being done in the confines of the budget as advertised.

Councilor Plough requested the minutes of action taken and plans approved by a previous Council.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director said it was the Public Safety Recruitment and Retention Plan.

Councilor Devine recalled that Council approved annual increases for Police and Fire; it was implemented one year; and the next year there were issues with GASB45 and other finances; therefore, the rest was never implemented. She is comfortable with moving forward with staff recommendations.

Councilor Baddourah reiterated his concerns of discrimination between the Fire Department and the Police Department.

Councilor Plough asked that Council look at the priorities of the strategic plan as we deal with external funds.

Upon a motion made by Mayor Benjamin and seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted ~~five (5)~~ **four (4)** to ~~one (1)~~ **two (2)** to endorse staffs plan to fully fund the proposed installation of security cameras and annual maintenance in the amount of \$700,000; the River Alliance at \$25,000; the 3.33% mid-year increase for Police/911 at \$400,000; and a \$100,000 contingency/funding for external requests for a total amount of \$1,225,000. Voting aye were ~~Mr. Davis~~, Ms. Devine, Mr. Newman, Mr. Runyan, ~~Mr. Baddourah~~ and Mayor Benjamin. **Voting nay were Ms. Plough and Mr. Baddourah. Mr. Davis was not present for the vote.**

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager suggested that staff bring back all external requests for Council's consideration.

Mayor Benjamin suggested that staff articulate to the usual requestors that their official request must be submitted to the City Manager for consideration by a date certain.

A motion made by Mayor Benjamin and seconded by Mr. Runyan to approve the funding requests for The Children's Garden, Good to Great, Reality Check, the Lourie Center and Alston Wilkes, was withdrawn.

A motion made by Mayor Benjamin and seconded by Mr. Baddourah to approve funding in the amount of \$25,000 for the Lourie Center and \$5,000 to Alston Wilkes, was withdrawn.

Upon a motion made by Mayor Benjamin and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted unanimously to meet on July 9, 2013 and the cancel meetings scheduled for July 2 and 16, 2013.

- Proposed Hospitality Tax Bond

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director recalled that City Council expressed an interest in leveraging Hospitality Tax bonds for several projects that are not yet complete or finalized. She explained that for every \$1 million of bond proceeds, the annual debt service is approximately \$70,000 and issuance costs are approximately \$400,000. The following projects have been discussed: White Water Center, Busted Plug, a catalyst recreation project in North Columbia and annual operations and maintenance costs.

Councilor Runyan said that the Arts and Historic Preservation Committee discussed this last week and will continue discussing the metrics for judging a legacy project and quantifying the return on investment. He explained that the White Water Project would make use of the asset of the Canal and its stored water elevated above the river. He said the committee will look at comparable projects done in other cities along with the cost and benefit of such projects.

Councilor Newman said we can't make the determination on the projects, because this is in the early stages; we hope to have a recommendation to the full Council next month.

Councilor Devine asked about the definition of a legacy project.

Councilor Runyan said they will discuss this at the next meeting.

Mayor Benjamin said they are looking for economic multipliers and each project has to measure up on its own individual merits. He said we made a commitment to the numerous groups that rely on our hospitality tax competitive funding process and we hope to significantly grow the pot; we will have further discussions about the reserves. He anticipates that the larger projects would have regional cooperation.

Councilor Plaugh asked that the strategic plan be discussed; it is important to look at the big picture and connectivity.

Mayor Benjamin said there is \$7 million in the penny for the downtown portion of the Greenway; we have two pieces left. He suggested that some of the costs for a White Water Center could be funded by a portion of the penny. He reminded the Council that they needed to move forward with the Busted Plug.

Councilor Baddourah asked if the debt service is it interest only for the first year or does it balances out.

Councilor Runyan said it is important to cut the debt service in half; it's a generational opportunity to make a power return on investments.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director suggested that they discuss the Hospitality Tax allocation with the Arts and Historic Preservation Committee.

Mayor Benjamin asked about the gross anticipated for this year.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director said the gross of the budget alone is \$600,000; we are projecting \$9 million in collections. In closing, she outlined the upcoming budget schedule with a Public Hearing on May 21st.

- **Mr. Davis returned to the meeting at 5:19 p.m.**
 - Build Columbia: Strategic Program Assessment and Visioning

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said that it is important to look to the future as we plan. She presented the Build Columbia – Phase 1 Program Assessment and Visioning. She said that you can only begin to do better and accomplish what we plan to over the next 3 to 5 years, if we begin to look at budgeting differently. She said that we must understand the impact to our resources and our costs and this is the direction I would like to work with staff on. She noted that with the many budgetary constraints, we can't grow and transform unless we look at how we are doing things differently.

Councilor Plaugh said this is transformative and it takes us in the right direction; this looks like it took a lot of work and a lot of people along with your vision to move us through this; and you used the strategic plan for this road map. She said we are still missing community input.

Councilor Davis concurred with Ms. Plough, noting that this includes approaches for efficiency and connectivity across departments and more communication; it is a very good start in that there is a neighborhood component and I can see where it's going; that makes a more wholesome city. He said the economic engine originates in the city core and there must be a partnership around the neighborhood as we look at the quality of life process.

Councilor Newman concurred also. He thanked the City Manager for her work. He said that Ms. Wilson mentioned this before to Council and she did mention different ways of discussing this with the citizens. He encouraged the City Manager to expand on this. He said it serves us well to have residents look at this and it can be beneficial to everybody.

Mayor Benjamin said it is very well done and visionary. He said that several of the resource documents had citizen input, but moving forward we need to make sure that continues to be the trend. He asked that parking be added as part of the downtown transformation. He asked if we want funding for transforming the city at more than 10%.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said yes, we want to have that dialog with Council, but we also want the data to support the numbers.

Mayor Benjamin said we've been good at chasing federal dollars over the years, but we haven't been as aggressive in tracking down philanthropic dollars; I would love to chase more philanthropic dollars.

Councilor Davis said that the Bloomberg Foundation has been great at funding.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said we look forward to providing a budgetary document on May 21st. She noted that our staff does a lot with little; we have to learn to utilize each other and the resources that we do have to get to where we need to be.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Newman and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 5:51 p.m.

- **Council adjourned the Executive Session at 6:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore
City Clerk