



CITY OF COLUMBIA  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2014  
CITY HALL – 1737 MAIN STREET  
2<sup>nd</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

The Columbia City Council conducted a Work Session on Tuesday, August 19, 2014 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 2:26 p.m. and the following members of City Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman, The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan and The Honorable Moe Baddourah. The Honorable Leona K. Plough was absent. Also present were Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Moore, City Clerk. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

Councilor Devine announced that Councilwoman Plough is at home recuperating. She asked that we all continue to keep Ms. Plough in our thoughts and prayers.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager distributed bound copies of the City of Columbia's Report to the Community to the members of City Council.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

1. [Update from the American Red Cross](#) – Mr. Bill Cronin, Executive Director and Ms. Rachel Hodges, Board Member for the American Red Cross Central SC Chapter

Mr. Bill Cronin, Executive Director for the American Red Cross Central SC Chapter said the mission of the Red Cross is to alleviate human suffering through disaster relief, biomedical services, emergency preparedness and safety services, international assistance and services to the Armed Forces. He said the Palmetto SC Region consists of thirty-five counties and serves 3.3 million people. He reported that there is a disaster every 6.5 hours in our region and 470 clients were served in the City of Columbia during fiscal year 2014. He further reported that over the last three years, the American Red Cross has provided disaster assistance to 1,292 individuals in the City of Columbia at a cost of over \$250,000. He reported that there are 3,500 fulltime soldiers at Fort Jackson and the Red Cross serves as a gateway to a network of comprehensive assistance and emergency communication for the military. He explained that ten (10) years ago, the Red Cross' funding from the United Way was \$500,000 annually. He said the funding was decreased every year after the United Way started a new community impact model. He further explained that the Red Cross' mission no longer aligns with the United Way of the Midlands' community impact model and by accepting the diminished funding the Red Cross would have to comply with a fund raising restriction. He said the American Red Cross Board of Directors made a business decision to no longer accept the United Way of the Midlands funding so we could raise the dollars needed to fulfill our longstanding mission and commitment to the community. He noted that the American Red Cross is not funded by the government.

Fire Chief Aubrey Jenkins, Columbia Fire Department said it is comforting to work with the Red Cross to assist families that are in need; we really appreciate the partnership.

Ms. Rachel Hodges, Board Member for the American Red Cross Central SC Chapter said when you give dollars in your community, it keeps your community strong and that thread carries all around the world. She said it is important for us to have a very strong Red Cross in our community and our state and we are now taking control of our own financial future.

Mayor Benjamin said the relationship we have with the American Red Cross is essential and we are very thankful for it. He expressed support of their decision to not accept funding from the United Way of the Midlands.

Councilor Davis inquired about the Red Cross office structure.

Ms. Rachel Hodges, Board Member for the American Red Cross Central SC Chapter explained that there are other Executive Directors in Rock Hill, Aiken, Myrtle Beach and Charleston who all report to Louise Welch, who then reports to a Director for the Mid-Atlantic States.

Mr. Bill Cronin, Executive Director for the American Red Cross Central SC Chapter added that donations stay local and ninety-one cents of every dollar goes towards humanitarian aid.

2. [Live Well Columbia Project: 29203 Survey Results](#) – Ms. Tiffany Sullivan, MPH, Director of Palmetto Health Office of Community Health

Councilor Devine said these results that will be presented are specific to the 29203 zip code and they are indicative of how we must continue to have a city with infrastructure and services that meet the needs of our community. She said the results let us know our hindrances and we needed to know that prior to our retreat and planning to move forward.

Mr. Vince Ford Palmetto Health Office of Community Health said the 29203 zip code is one of the largest hot spots for healthcare with one of the highest rates of pregnancies, diabetes, amputations and blindness.

Ms. Tiffany Sullivan, MPH, Director of the Office of Community Health for Palmetto Health said they conducted data collection and analysis from February through December 2013; strategic partnerships were formed; outreach and communication began in August 2014; and community relations efforts will begin during October. She noted that 29203 is a historic community with dedicated residents and community leaders. She said they looked at patients that were diagnosed with obesity, hypertension, anxiety, arthritis, sickle cell, asthma, diabetes and high cholesterol between March 1, 2012 and February 28, 2013. She reported that 1,542 surveys were collected through door to door contact, email, direct mail and health fairs/community events. She said that 81% of the respondents were females; 19% were males; 88% were over the age of 40; and 85% were African-American. She noted that 39% of those surveyed thought the community was

somewhat healthy. She reported that some of the main reasons people reported not being active were because there aren't enough places to be active; not enough sidewalks; crime; and stray dogs. She said that a Community Health Council has been developed for 29203 and the first meeting will be held on August 28, 2014. She said they will conduct screenings, education sessions and embed themselves in the schools, neighborhood associations, church meetings and partner agencies and organizations.

Councilor Baddourah asked if they could compare these statistics with data from ten (10) years ago and what are the goals ten (10) years from now.

Ms. Tiffany Sullivan, MPH, Director of the Office of Community Health for Palmetto Health said this was the first time this survey was conducted in 29203. She said they would like to see an engaged and healthier community.

Mr. Vince Ford, Chief Community Health Services Officer for Palmetto Health predicted that childhood obesity is one of the biggest health issues facing our communities.

Councilor Newman asked if there are future plans for assessments in other areas. He recalled that Providence Hospital conducted an assessment two (2) years ago.

Mr. Vince Ford, Chief Community Health Services Officer for Palmetto Health and Providence conducted a community needs assessment and dental and access to care was major issues in the City and County. He agreed to provide those results.

Councilor Devine said she was shocked by the reasons the community identified for being inactive. She said in terms of facilities, we aren't getting the information out to the communities or we are not engaging them. She expressed concerns about stray animals. She said these are concerns we must address in an effort to encourage citizens to become more active. She noted that communities want more access to healthy foods and as we plan strategically, we need to recognize those impediments.

Councilor Davis said these results will affect how others look at job creation in this area. He said employers want a healthy workforce; it's all relative and it's an opportunity for us to look at how this ties into our initiatives across the city.

Councilor Runyan said 24% choose not to exercise and we need to work with our community partners to educate citizens on the importance of exercise.

Ms. Tiffany Sullivan, MPH, Director of the Office of Community Health for Palmetto Health said we also have to determine why those 24% aren't exercising; it could be health related.

Mr. Vince Ford, Chief Community Health Services Officer for Palmetto Health recalled Mission 2011 that was held at the Coliseum where people waited for 24 hours to receive healthcare. He said there are still a lot of unhealthy people and our goal is to create a healthier community. He expressed a willingness to take Palmetto Health's services to the community.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said affordability is an issue. She offered to get Jada Hubbard the Director of the Wellness Center involved in looking at the healthcare challenges along with a trainer at the Wellness Center that wants to work with children and adults. She said this data impacts our employees.

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

3. Confirmation of Hospitality Tax Funding for Fiscal Year 2014/2015 – Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council

Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council sought clarification on motions made by City Council on July 15, 2014. She explained that the Columbia Museum of Art was previously funded \$20,857 for a total of \$716,107; the Columbia Music Festival Association, EdVenture and Historic Columbia remained the same; the Historic Columbia Foundation was funded an additional \$220,000 for the Our Story Matters project and \$15,000 for State House security. She further explained that since that time, Historic Columbia asked that only \$85,000 be given to them and we are asking you to reallocate \$135,000 to a department at the University of South Carolina. She asked Council to confirm that the Famously Hot New Year event was funded at a total of \$130,000; the SC Philharmonic was funded at a total of \$100,000; and the SC State Museum was funded at total of \$100,000. She reported that on July 29, 2014, the SC Contemporary Dance Company asked that \$4,000 be reinstated.

Councilor Davis asked how much funding is left, because there are groups that made applications and didn't get anything.

Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council said the monies went back into the fund balance and City Council has used most of it.

Mayor Benjamin said Council meant to increase the Columbia Museum of Art's line item allocation and that is meant to be a permanent item. He clarified that the program management piece for the archaeological digs as part of the Our Story Matters project will shift to the University of South Carolina Archeological Department in the amount of \$135,000. He confirmed that \$85,000 will go to the Historic Columbia Foundation for Our Story Matters. He said the intention was to allocate \$75,000 to the City Center Partnership.

Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council reported that the committee added \$25,000 for the City Center Partnership. She asked if the Mayor wanted to add another \$25,000.

Mayor Benjamin suggested that Council add another \$50,000 for the City Center Partnership. He said we are seeing exponential residential growth on Main Street and making sure we have funds for the clean and safe program is such an important piece to the puzzle. He clarified that instead of \$25,000 that will be \$75,000 with the understanding that we will probably take out the \$25,000 being allocated by the committee.

Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council asked if that will be for a total of \$300,000.

Mayor Benjamin said yes.

Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council said she is very supportive of the SC Contemporary Dance Company, but the deadline was May 30, 2014 and the dollars have been available since July 1, 2013, it's difficult for me to recommend that you all reinstate the dollars.

Upon a motion made by Mayor Benjamin and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted unanimously to approve an allocation of \$135,000 to the University of South Carolina Archeological Department for the Our Story Matters archaeological digs and an additional \$50,000 to the City Center Partnership.

Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council clarified that \$130,000 was allocated for the Famously Hot New Year's Event from the Hospitality Tax Fund. She then asked John Whitehead as the Chair of the Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee to present the committee's recommendations on the additional \$325,000.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Baddourah and seconded by Mayor Benjamin, Council voted unanimously to reinstate \$4,000 previously allocated to the South Carolina Contemporary Dance Company upon the submission of qualified reimbursable expenses.

4. [Additional Hospitality Tax and Accommodations Tax Funding Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2014/2015](#) – Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council

Mr. John Whitehead, Chairman of the Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee presented the additional funding recommendations for fiscal year 2014/2015. He said they reviewed all existing and new requests for funding. He recognized nine (9) of the eleven (11) committee members that were in attendance. He said the committee decisions were unanimous.

Councilor Newman asked if any funds were remaining.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Director of the Budget and Program Management Office projected a fund balance of \$450,000 through June 30, 2015, if all revenues and expenditures come in as projected.

Mr. John Whitehead, Chairman of the Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee reported that Dr. John Dozier met with him, Will Green and Terrance Garrett to review the twenty-one (21) organizations that he identified as being minority managed. He said they offered to bring Dr. Dozier's proposal and the corrected proposal back to the committee. He said he reviewed all applications to look at ethnic, gender and orientation minorities; 31% of that was women; and 36% were ethnic minorities.

Councilor Devine asked how the funding was allocated.

Mr. John Whitehead, Chairman of the Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee said some organizations were brought back to previous funding levels and all applications were judged on outreach and return on investment.

Ms. Terry Davis, Member of the Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee explained that all requests were evaluated on their individual merits.

Councilor Davis asked if there were any takeaways from the discussion with Dr. Dozier. He asked if we will continue to look at the minority managed organizations in an effort to increase their funding. He viewed this as an opportunity to look at organizations that weren't funded.

Mr. John Whitehead, Chairman of the Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee suggested that the Strength and Unity Workshop is an opportunity for these organizations to receive expertise on the application process. He used the Hip Hop Family Day as an example of an organization that took advantage of the forum.

Councilor Devine said this process is unfair to the committee, because they spend days working to bring forth unbiased recommendations, but then they are criticized. She said there is a balance, because we have larger and smaller groups that we want funded. She said we didn't ask them to look at new groups exclusively. She suggested that Council consider whether or not they want to continue the committee process next year or create a separate pot.

Mayor Benjamin said we approved 90% or more of the committee's recommendations; the reality is that this is a healthy tension and disbanding the committee process would be a huge mistake. He said there will always be some significant event, discussion or action that will cause Council to get involved.

Councilor Devine said there are certain groups that we feel strongly about, but the committee doesn't feel the same. She suggested that there be a hybrid process where Council has funding to allocate outside of the process.

Councilor Newman doesn't want his comments to be perceived as a shot at the committee; ultimately, we need to implement Mr. Whitehead's recommendations on approving line items. He suggested that staff estimate the amount of funding needed for smaller groups.

Councilor Davis said he respects what the committee goes through and he never challenges their decisions. He hopes the entire process gives consideration to those groups that need more help.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said there is such a large mix of groups. She suggested that money be set aside for groups that demonstrate an ability to manage the funding.

Ms. Libby Gober, Assistant to City Council said the committee looks at eligible expenditures. She said the sustainability workshop held with the University of South Carolina was very beneficial. She suggested that larger groups be required to mentor smaller groups.

Councilor Newman recommended allocating \$37,000 to the Palmetto Capital City Classic for security purposes, in addition to the committee recommendation. He said we all want to make sure this event is safe for Two Notch Road and that it is successful.

Councilor Devine said the Black Expo can't continue with \$25,000 and she would like to see them funded at the \$75,000 they received last year. She asked if it could be split between funds. She further suggested that we establish a contractual arrangement with benchmarks and that they be funded as a line item.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said the Black Expo has been funded as a line item in her budget as well for the last two years for the Black Pages and associated ads. She said there are entities that are established to fulfill a certain purpose in our community; that's what Black Pages/Black Expo does. She said there may not be another entity in Columbia that markets to that demographic for that type of annual event and brings in that type of hospitality dollars. She asked at what level the Black Pages needed to be funded.

Councilor Davis said it is a hybrid. He said they give us feedback and tell us exactly what happened; we see the impact. He supports increasing the committee's funding recommendation.

Councilor Baddourah recalled his previous request to fund the ballets equally. He requested additional funding for the Columbia Ballet. He asked for an explanation on the organizations that didn't receive funding.

Councilor Devine suggested increased funding for the Carolina Marathon Association formerly known as the Governor's Cup, because it brings in runners from across the southeast.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Baddourah, Council voted five (5) to one (1) to approve the additional Hospitality Tax and Accommodations Tax funding recommendations for fiscal year 2014/2015 along with the following additional allocations and staff will review collections after the second quarter in order for Council to consider allocating funding for other groups. Voting aye were Mr. Baddourah, Mr. Newman, Ms. Devine, Mr. Davis and Mayor Benjamin. Mr. Runyan voted nay.

- \$2,500 to the Carolina Marathon Association
- \$37,000 to the Palmetto Capital City Classic for security
- \$25,000 to the Black Male Initiative
- \$25,000 to the Black Expo

5. Devine Street Improvements – Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E. Assistant City Manager for Operations

Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Operations said they were asked to look at Devine Street in comparison to the work done on East Gervais Street over five (5) years ago. She explained that they performed work on the landscaped medians and made other significant enhancements to East Gervais Street. She asked Robert Anderson, Public Works Director to outline the potential opportunities on Devine Street.

Mr. Robert Anderson, Public Works Director said they've looked at Devine Street from Adger Road to Crosshill Road. He said Devine Street is maintained by SCDOT and we will have to go through an encroachment process with SCDOT before any work is done. He said the residents are concerned with increased vehicular traffic, pedestrian safety and maintaining the integrity of the neighborhood. He reported that staff studied the feasibility of installing medians, which will restrict turns onto neighborhood streets. The first option is to rebuild the existing medians, which will cost \$70,000. He noted that the medians would not be wide; would not have a lot of plantings; and they would not restrict turns onto the neighborhood streets. He said if they redesigned Devine Street and added medians and plantings, it would cost over \$1 million. He noted that this would address the neighborhood's concerns and increase maintenance costs for the Forestry and Beautification Division. He said the Walk Bike Plan may address some of these issues.

Councilor Runyan asked how much the East Gervais Street project cost.

Mr. Robert Anderson, Public Works Director said it was done with an enhancement grant and we provided in-kind services. He explained that in-kind services can't be used to match the transportation enhancement grant funding any longer.

Ms. Melissa Gentry, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Operations added that it's a 60/40 split and the match is \$140,000.

Councilor Baddourah asked why the two blocks can't be done.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Director of Planning and Development Services suggested that we stop ahead of Crosshill Road due to costs.

Councilor Baddourah supports the recommendation that would eliminate the traffic going into the neighborhood. He asked if we could do two (2) blocks until we are able to budget for more.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Director of Planning and Development Services said they were working to address a larger range of issues. She suggested that it is more feasible to raise or extend the medians.

Mr. Robert Anderson, Public Works Director said by blocking one or two streets you are loading up the traffic on to other streets.

Councilor Baddourah asked staff to contact the neighborhoods to work on a phased approach instead of doing the whole project at once.

Ms. Mary Baskins Waters, Co-President of the Historic Heathwood Neighborhood Association said they want to look at the median issue from Dreher High School to Crosshill. She said the neighborhood used to have an encompassed and closed in feel to it until Dreher and two (2) churches renovated their properties and demolished houses. She said there are concerns with people walking across the medians and increased neighborhood traffic. She said the medians will provide a buffer. She said it's about the community's health and being able to walk safely across the street; we need some order and help from the City.

Councilor Runyan asked Ms. Wilson to bring back ideas for the crossing component. He said that public safety is first and foremost.

Mr. Sam Waters, Co-President of the Historic Heathwood Neighborhood Association said Devine Street used to be a commercial corridor, but that activity has moved to Forest Drive. He reiterated the concerns with pedestrian traffic and children being able to safely cross the street. He supports having a bike lane. He said cars travel at a speed of 55 mph. He said the medians on Gervais Street have made a difference.

6. Water and Wastewater Update ([Automatic Meter Reading](#)) – Mr. Joey Jaco, Director of the Utilities and Engineering Department

Mr. Joey Jaco, Director of the Utilities and Engineering Department reported that the City has 140,000 water accounts, which are mostly single meters, but we also have accounts with combination meters and multiple meters. He noted that we have twenty-seven (27) meter readers that read five hundred eighty four (584) routes each billing period. He acknowledged that there are serious challenges to include fuel and manpower and estimated readings. He explained that the current meters require us to physically look at the meters and enter the number into a data logger that is connected to a computer that feeds into our billing system. He said the Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) process would require us to be close enough for the device to read the meter. He said that Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) is in constant connection with that meter and it's more expensive, because we are required to have a fixed network that can reach every meter in our system. He said that smaller water systems have complete AMR or AMI systems; Spartanburg has 58,000 meters; Greenville has 170,000 meters; and Charleston has 56,000 meters. He reported that a pilot was conducted using eight hundred fifty (850) automatic devices on three (3) meter reading routes at a cost of \$350,000. He noted that AMI devices were installed at the prison on Broad River Road and AMR devices were installed at the two (2) residential routes near the prison system. He said during the next phase, we will install AMR devices within each Council District at a cost of \$16 million for 56,000 meters. He noted that unless we move forward with the same vendor, we will need to issue a Request for Proposals for the next phase or a Request for Expression of Interest, because there are groups that will provide and install meters with an agreement to pay them back. He said we currently have one (1) route with AMR devices and it would cost \$100,000 to \$150,000 to purchase the equipment to read the meters system-

wide. He recommended that we replace meters inside the city limits with AMR devices and use the existing meters outside city limits. He noted that the AMR devices cost three (3) times the amount of the existing meters. He agreed to bring back an implementation plan next year. He sought permission to move forward with the bid to purchase meters this year and then determine how to purchase and install AMR devices going forward.

Councilor Devine asked that staff come back with a recommendation in January 2015.

Councilor Davis questioned the accuracy of the AMR/AMI devices.

Mr. Joey Jaco, Director of the Utilities and Engineering Department said the transmission of data is more accurate.

Councilor Baddourah suggested that AMR devices be installed for new construction projects.

Mr. Joey Jaco, Director of the Utilities and Engineering Department said he would like to do more research before selecting a vendor and a device, because it can be more competitive.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 5:20 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 7 through 10**.

7. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
8. Receipt of legal advice which relates to a threatened, pending or potential claim – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
9. Discussion of negotiations incident to the proposed purchase of property – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
10. Receipt of legal advice which relates to matters covered by attorney-client privilege – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*

- **Council adjourned the Executive Session at 6:15 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore  
City Clerk