



CITY OF COLUMBIA  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 2014  
CITY HALL – 1737 MAIN STREET  
CONFERENCE ROOM

The Columbia City Council conducted a Work Session on Tuesday, June 17, 2014 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 2:08 p.m. The following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Leona K. Plough, The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman, The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan and The Honorable Moe Baddourah. 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.

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

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

Ms. Libby Gober, City Council Assistant recognized the Accommodations Tax and Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee members. She reported that the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding only the Conventions and Visitor's Bureau and Capital City Lake Murray Country and all other groups will be funded from the Hospitality Tax Fund. She said the Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee used all of its funding allotment. She noted that the committees work very hard.

Mr. John Whitehead, Chair of the Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee acknowledged that the funding is investment and reinvestment dollars. He noted that many more applications were received this year. He recalled that City Council allocated an additional \$200,000 to the committee last year and that funding was used to provide extra funding to applicants. He requested \$325,000 as an additional allocation to help the groups whose funding was cut; groups whose funding needs to be maintained; and groups who need funding. He noted that they maintain diversity in the funding allocations.

Ms. Libby Gober, City Council Assistant noted that allocations were not made for line items, because those are considered by Council. She further noted that One Columbia's funding must be decided upon by Council and that the Historic Columbia Foundation requested an additional \$230,000.

Councilor Devine requested a listing of the line item organizations. She asked if there are additional requests that haven't gone through the committee. She also asked for a list of requirements that were passed by City Council. She asked if any of the external requests qualify for hospitality tax funding.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said it would be the same list of external organizations that were previously discussed along with one additional request that was submitted.

Ms. Libby Gober, City Council Assistant announced that sustainability training sessions have been scheduled for July

Councilor Baddourah inquired about the hospitality tax reserve fund balance and remaining funding from organizations that haven't requested their full allocations.

Ms. Libby Gober, City Council Assistant said \$85,000.

Mayor Benjamin asked if the committee has a recommendation on adding line item organizations.

Mr. John Whitehead, Chair of the Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee said that being a line item gives any non-profit a basis from which to budget. He said that organizations might get more money by submitting an annual application.

Councilor Davis asked if organizations that received additional funding submitted an application for additional funding.

Ms. Libby Gober, City Council Assistant said the figures encompass what the organizations received.

Mr. John Whitehead, Chair of the Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee explained that the committee recommended that the SC Philharmonic receive \$50,000; when the committee received additional funding, the SC Philharmonic was awarded an additional \$25,000

Ms. Lee Lumpkin noted organizations already had applications on file when the additional funding was allocated.

Councilor Davis said a number of organizations had the very same challenges, but did not receive additional funding.

Mr. John Whitehead, Chair of the Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee said they would like to see everyone go through the established committee process.

Councilor Devine asked if the committee has an explanation for the recommendations.

Ms. Libby Gober, City Council Assistant said one-liners were included with the information previously provided to Council.

Councilor Devine asked to review the requests alongside the City's strategic plan. She said that would be helpful with prioritizing the requests.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said it would be helpful to reconcile the external requests, as well.

Ms. Libby Gober, City Council Assistant said they did ask additional questions this year regarding sustainability and recycling. She agreed to align the requests with the strategic plan.

Mayor Benjamin asked if the committee has predetermined the disbursement of additional funding.

Mr. John Whitehead, Chair of the Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee said they would bring organizations back to last year's funding level and then review the applications again to determine how to further allocate the dollars.

Councilor Runyan asked how many years it has been since the committee held funding for another funding round.

Mr. John Whitehead, Chair of the Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee said three (3) years.

Councilor Runyan asked if that process worked well.

Ms. Libby Gober, City Council Assistant said yes; it worked very well, but organizations will always bring requests to Council.

Councilor Plough said the \$325,000 would have to come out of the City Council allocation along with line item funding.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director agreed, noting that some of that has already been spent.

Ms. Libby Gober, City Council Assistant clarified that \$325,000 will make the committee recommendations whole, but not the organizations Council funded directly.

Councilor Baddourah asked if the committee is ready to meet.

Mr. John Whitehead, Chair of the Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee said yes.

Ms. Libby Gober, City Council Assistant noted that some requests from last year may not be a request for this year and that must be factored in also. She recalled that the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee recommends funding Capital City Lake Murray Country and the Conventions and Visitors Bureau and that any surplus funds collected should be prorated between the two organizations.

Mayor Benjamin suggested that the recommendations be taken under advisement.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Upon a motion made by Mr. Baddourah and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 2:45 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 2** through **5**. Mr. Baddourah was not present for the vote.

2. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangement – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
  3. Discussion of negotiations incident to the proposed sale of property – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
  4. 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.*
  5. Discussion of negotiations incident to the settlement of legal claims – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
- **Council adjourned the Executive Session at 6:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore  
City Clerk