



CITY OF COLUMBIA
WORK SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2015
CITY HALL – 1737 MAIN STREET
2nd FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

The Columbia City Council conducted a Work Session on Tuesday, September 15, 2015 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 2:16 p.m. and the following members of City Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman, and The Honorable Moe Baddourah. The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan arrived at 2:27 p.m. The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine and The Honorable Leona K. Plough were 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.

FINANCIAL REPORT

1. [July 2015 Financial Report](#) – Ms. Jan Alonso, Finance Director

Mr. Jeff Palen, Assistant City Manager for Finance and Economic Services and Chief Financial Officer presented the financial statement for the first month of the fiscal year. He reported that during July, West Columbia made a payment in the amount of \$8,606,000 and that is reflected in the Water and Sewer Fund. He presented a summary of expenditures for the Bull Street development; \$1 million has been spent from the Storm Water Fund, \$15,000 from the Water Fund and \$15,000 from the Sewer Fund. He presented the costs for the baseball stadium, noting that expenditures and encumbrances may exceed the City's obligation of \$29 million; however, the Venue Development Agreement obligates Hardball Capital to pay up to \$7 million towards the project.

Mayor Benjamin asked if the stadium is on time and on budget.

Mr. Gregory Tucker, Special Projects Administrator said yes.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ACTION

2. [Public Space / Public Life Study](#) – Ms. JoAnn Turnquist, President & CEO of the Central Carolina Community Foundation, Ms. Ewa Westermark, Director of Gehl Studio-Copenhagen and Mr. Geoff Dyck, Urban Designer for Gehl Studio-New York

Mayor Benjamin said this is an excellent opportunity; this commitment is tantamount to what the Knight Foundation is doing in other places and in a very big way.

Ms. JoAnn Turnquist, President and CEO of the Central Carolina Community Foundation said we are one of twenty six Knight Foundation cities in the country and they have invested \$26 million in our City. She announced that the Knight Foundation is investing another \$135,000. She noted that Gehl has completed similar projects in Charlotte, NC, Lexington, KY and Columbus, GA.

Ms. Ewa Westermark, Director of Gehl Studio-Copenhagen, Sweden said they are embarking on a journey to explore the City of Columbia. She said the firm has worked in many cities around the world and their knowledge is based on forty years of research on how city spaces affect people's behavior. She said you cannot tell people to change their behavior; the environment compels you to do so. She acknowledged that cities are very different. She said there are three components to a successful project: building on the local assets; using what you have; and collaboration. She presented photographs of projects they've completed. She reported that they walked around the Vista and Main Street today and they were amazed with all of the great assets that can be used to a larger extent by connecting them and leveraging the different goals together. She said they will complete an evidence based design. She explained that they are coming back in October to study public life and space, they will identify key quadrant areas to use as best practice examples, and they will come back to discuss the findings.

▪ **Mr. Runyan joined the meeting at 2:27 p.m.**

3. Funding Request for the Palmetto Capital City Classic - The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager reported that funding is available in the Accommodations Tax Fund; \$75,000 is available in the Council Contingency Fund; and \$75,000 is available in the Economic Development Contingency Fund.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget and Program Management Director noted that \$32,000 is available in the Accommodations Tax Fund. She also noted that these funds are usually allocated by the committee and the 5% has already been allocated.

Mayor Benjamin said the overall request is for \$25,000.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted unanimously to allocate funding from the Accommodations Tax Fund for the Palmetto Capital City Classic in an amount not to exceed \$25,000 based on eligible expenses.

4. Council Expense Accounts – The Honorable Moe Baddourah

Councilor Baddourah asked what happens with the expense accounts for Council members since we changed the election from April to November. He recalled that the old election cycle ran with the budget year, but now we are midway into the budget year. He suggested that the \$8,000 expense account be divided into two: \$4,000 the first six months and \$4,000 the second six months.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said staff discussed this and we wouldn't allow a new councilmember go without resources for constituency engagement. She noted that there is a Council Contingency Fund. She agreed to bring back recommendations for consideration.

Councilor Newman suggested that funding run with the calendar year.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager recalled that Council discussed not carrying forward expense account funds; there's not a lot that will carry forward from the last fiscal year, but we can look at that number for Council's consideration.

Councilor Baddourah reiterated his suggestion to fund expense accounts at \$4,000 for every six months during an election year. He said it isn't fair for the taxpayer to come up with another amount of money for the new councilperson.

Councilor Davis supports the ability to carry over the expense account balances.

Mayor Benjamin suggested that staff look at how other municipalities handle this.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager reported that there is \$5,000 of unaudited carry forward funds from last year, but this is subject to change.

****Mayor Benjamin said he received a question from a constituent that he could not answer. He noted that Ms. Devine is in D.C. today accepting an award on behalf of the City from the NLC and Ms. Plough isn't with us today. We do not have an ordinance that explicitly allows councilmembers to communicate electronically or telephonically. He said he would support an ordinance to that effect, but until we have an ordinance saying that we can do it, we are operating outside the bounds of the. We can have the ordinance on the next agenda to specifically authorize it. He suggested that we see how others do this as well. Until we have it on your books, we need to cease the practice. He said this has been more of a courtesy as opposed to an authorized practice. We are adjusting to our new public information laws and the new way that our agendas develop. He asked if his colleagues would support an ordinance to that effect.**

Councilor Davis said I am okay.

Councilor Baddourah asked if the Mayor is saying that an ordinance is needed to support or allow sky cam or whatever we do.

Mayor Benjamin said yes, if it's going to be the policy of the City, then we need to explicitly state that and not just do it. He asked the City Attorney if it will require an ordinance.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager recalled that as a directive from the Administrative Policy Committee and this Council, they have been working with the Municipal Association on a collective policy/procedure draft for Council to look at.

Councilor Baddourah said it would be good to follow the process of sending it to the committee.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Baddourah and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to refer a policy on councilmembers communicating electronically and telephonically during meetings to the Administrative Policy Committee.

Mayor Benjamin stated that until we have a policy, we will cease that practice. He said Ms. Devine wanted to participate today too, but she can't.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mayor Benjamin and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 2:46 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 6** through **9** as outlined.

5. Discussion of employment of an employee
 - *Legal Department – This item was withdrawn from the agenda.*

6. Receipt of legal advice on matters covered by attorney-client privilege – *These items was discussed. No action was taken.*
 - *Naming of Facilities*
 - *Woodhill Crest Road*
 - *Mega Bus and Prisoner Drop Off*
 - *Audit Engagement*
 - *Economic Development Incentives*
 - *Hospitality/Accommodations Tax Funding*

7. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements
 - *Lady Street Garage – This item was withdrawn from the agenda.*
 - *Pacolet Milliken formerly known as Ni America – This item was discussed. No action was taken.*

8. Discussion of negotiations incident to the proposed purchase of property
 - *Saluda Avenue – This item was discussed. No action was taken.*

9. Receipt of legal advice which relates to pending, threatened or potential claim - *These items was discussed. No action was taken.*
 - *Johnnie Clark, et al. v. City of Columbia*
 - *Azar v. City of Columbia*

- **Council adjourned the meeting at 4:16 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore
City Clerk