

CITY OF COLUMBIA
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
MAY 3, 2006
9:00 AM – CITY HALL– 3RD FLOOR
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS



The City of Columbia City Council conducted a Work Session on Wednesday, May 3, 2006 in the Council Chambers located at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Robert D. Coble called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. The following members of Council were present: The Honorable E. W. Cromartie, II, The Honorable Anne M. Sinclair, The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine and The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann. Also present were Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Salley, City Clerk.

Mayor Coble requested that Council amend the agenda to add a discussion of the relocation of the Veterans Administration Building as **Item B1**.

PUBLIC HEARING

- A. Proposed Community Development Block Grant Amendments for Fiscal Year 2006 / 2007 – Mr. Rick Semon, Community Development Director

• **Council opened the Public Hearing at 9:04 a.m.**

Mr. Rick Semon, Community Development Director explained that this is the first Public Hearing being conducted in accord with the City's Citizen Participation Plan for receiving federal funds. A Community Forum was conducted on April 25, 2006 and the next forum is scheduled for May 10, 2006. He introduced Ms. Laura Easley as the Chairperson of the Citizens Advisory Committee.

Ms. Laura Easley, Chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), presented the CAC budget recommendations for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Housing Opportunities for People With Aids (HOPWA). She explained that the CAC is an advisory board appointed by the Columbia City Council to develop recommendations for the use of CDBG funding for the benefit of the general public. She recognized the members that were in attendance. The average amount of funding available in CDBG funding for fiscal year 2006/2007 will be \$1,350,639, an \$117,373 reduction from this current year and a \$74,988 reduction from fiscal year 2004/2005. Approximately \$88,000 in carry forward funds will be used in conjunction with the remaining funds for a total \$468,468 to assist City Council approved projects that are CDBG eligible. In turn, the City would provide an equal amount of unrestricted general city funds to the Housing Division for second mortgages to moderate and low-income households. The Summer Intern Program has access to \$20,169.33 and the Mini Grant Program has access to \$46,727.00 from carry forward funds to operate in the upcoming year. The major areas of priority and neighborhood concern are physical development and brick and mortar projects. The specific recommendations for fiscal year 2006/2007 are as follows: Housing 35%; Economic Development 2%; Public Services and Neighborhoods 13%; City based CDBG eligible projects 28%; and Administration 22% totaling \$1,350,639 plus the carryover amount. The HOPWA Fund entitlement for fiscal year 2006/2007 will be \$1.04 million, an 11% decrease from this year. This program budget includes Richland, Lexington, Calhoun, Saluda, Kershaw and Fairfield Counties. The recommendations for fiscal year 2006/2007 are as follows: permanent housing through the development of new housing units and tenant based rental assistance 27%; prevention of homelessness through emergency financial assistance 25%; quality supportive services to help clients achieve and maintain housing 45%; and Administration 3%.

No one appeared in support of or in opposition to the recommendations.

- **Council adjourned the Public Hearing at 9:17 p.m.**

APPOINTMENTS

B. Affordable Housing Taskforce

There was a consensus of Council to compose a listing of the proposed appointments to the Affordable Housing Taskforce to include: the appointment of seven (7) City Employees, seven (7) Council appointees and seven (7) At-Large appointees. Staff was directed to contact the proposed City Council nominees to determine their interest in being appointed. These appointments will be finalized on Wednesday, May 10, 2006. Staff was directed to develop categories so that there is a balance.

There was a consensus of Council to offer the following nominations:

E.W. Cromartie, II	Dr. Babi Simama	Community Development Director
Anne M. Sinclair	Ms. Betsy Watson	Auditor / Neighborhood Leader
Sam Davis	Ms. Emily Cooper	Affordable Housing Advocate
Daniel Rickenmann	Jamie Devine	Affordable Housing Developer
Tameika Isaac Devine	Karen Stone	Real Estate Professional
At-Large	Sue Berkowitz	Attorney
Mayor Robert D. Coble	Tandrem Ingram	Financial Community Representative
Kirkman Finlay, III	Brian Boyer	Real Estate Developer
At-Large	Mark Cox	Banker

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

B1. **Relocation of Veterans Administration – The Honorable Mayor Robert D. Coble

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Ms. Sinclair, Council voted unanimously to declare their support of Veterans Administration remaining within the Central Business District; to direct staff to schedule a meeting with the Mayor, City Council, staff and the appropriate Veterans Administration representatives; and to direct staff to develop recommendations on how the City of Columbia could assist Veterans Administration with this process through incentives or other options.

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Mr. Cromartie, Council voted unanimously to recognize that both SCANA and South Carolina Electric and Gas are outstanding corporate citizens and the City's desire for them to continue to maintain their presence with the Central Business District. Staff was directed to coordinate a meeting with the Mayor, City Council and the appropriate SCANA representatives.

C. Fiscal Year 2006 / 2007 Water and Sewer Operating Fund and Capital Improvement Program – Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Administrator

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Administrator, presented the fiscal year 2006/2007 Water and Sewer Operating Fund and Capital Improvements Program proposed budgets. She noted that the budget did not include the recommended Water and Sewer rate increase. There are a total of \$63 million in proposed Capital Improvements Program projects for fiscal year 2006/2007 and \$300 million over the next five years.

Councilor Sam Davis suggested that they find another way of addressing the matter without raising taxes. He said that he is not in favor of a rate increase.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Administrator, explained that an option would be to reduce the Water and Sewer Operating budget. She further explained that the condition of the system also affects the City's bond ratings.

Councilor Daniel J. Rickenmann stated that he would like to reserve the right to revisit this matter and develop suggestions on how this can be done without increasing the rate. He said that future policies needed to be established and that drastic decisions needed to be made now.

Councilor E.W. Cromartie, II explained that they were told years ago that Council needed to maintain a 2:1 coverage in the water system to allow for the best bond rating. He said that it increase should be done in an incremental fashion.

Councilor-Elect Kirkman Finlay, III, suggested that Council publicly state a commitment to decrease and end indirect and direct transfers to and from the Water and Sewer Fund. He said that over the past ten to fifteen years the City has moved \$100 million from this fund. He said that money generated in that system should be put behind a firewall until we exceed a 2:1 debt service coverage ratio and until our capital needs are met.

Councilor Anne M. Sinclair suggested that a set of policy statements be drafted. These statements will guide staff on budget preparation over the years. She said that it would be a challenge to make major changes to the water and sewer fund.

- **Council adjourned the meeting at 10:03 a.m. to break prior to convening the Council Meeting.**
- **Council reconvened the Work Session at 12:10 p.m.**
- C. Fiscal Year 2006 / 2007 Water and Sewer Operating Fund and Capital Improvement Program – Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Administrator

Councilor Tameika Isaac Devine requested a list of the contractual obligations within the Economic Development fund.

There was a consensus of Council to conclude this discussion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion by Ms. Devine, seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted to go into Executive Session at 12:12 p.m. to discuss **Items D.** and **E.** as outlined.

- D. Receipt of legal advice, which relates to pending, threatened or potential claim
Items were discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.
- E. Discussion of the Employment of an Employee
Items were discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.

Council adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Salley
City Clerk