

**CITY OF COLUMBIA  
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 11, 2007 – 10:00 AM  
CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
1737 MAIN STREET – 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR**

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The Columbia City Council conducted a Special Called Meeting on Thursday, October 11, 2007 in the City Hall Council Chambers located at 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. Mayor Robert D. Coble called the meeting to order at 10:06 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 Daniel J. Rickenmann and The Honorable Kirkman Finlay III. The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine was absent. Also present were Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Salley, City Clerk.

**CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION**

1. Tax Increment Financing Arbitration with Richland County

Mayor Robert D. Coble explained that the City of Columbia has received a request from Richland County for all documents relating to the Vista Tax Increment Financing Agreement. He expressed concerns about how the city would fill the request without delaying other requirements and the audit. He requested a legal briefing so they could better understand how to deal with this request, mechanically.

Councilor Finlay stated that we should give them everything they ask for. As a resident of Richland County as well, he would like to know what they intend to do with the documents and how much will they spend on legal fees to have the documents reviewed. He said that it would be interesting to understand the magnitude of the money both Councils are about to spend. He asked if anyone was here from Richland County.

Mr. Sidney Evering, Esquire / Parker, Poe, Adams and Bernstein, LLP, appeared on behalf of Richland County stating that he is not at liberty to discuss what the legal fees would be even if he knew. He stated that he honestly did not know.

Councilor Finlay asked if he worked for a law firm within the City of Columbia that would not disclose its fees. He asked if Mr. Evering would forward the information to the City Manager.

Mr. Sidney Evering, Esquire / Parker, Poe, Adams and Bernstein, LLP, replied yes.

Mayor Robert D. Coble said that we have a number of legal issues to ask in terms of the scope of this request and what type of manpower and resources are required to complete this request.

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager stated that there have been some discussions about this and they can't think of any reason that would delay our work toward completing the audit. The audit is a priority and anything else would be considered additional work. They may consider utilizing temporary employees. We understand that the fiscal year 2005/2006 audit must be completed within the prescribed timeframe and we are on track for the timeframe that was set.

Councilor Sinclair stated that the scope is far beyond the Finance Department and that it crosses into several departments. The request is for all sorts of records, some are relevant to the issue and some are not.

Mr. Charles P. Austin, Sr., City Manager stated that the audit crosses departmental boundaries as well and nothing needs to get in the way. He is confident that we are still on task. He noted that any fees associated with the hiring of temporary employees should be factored into the cost.

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 10:14 a.m. for the *receipt of legal advice which relates to a pending, threatened or potential claim.*

- **Council adjourned the Executive Session discussion at 10:59 a.m. to reconvene the Special Called Meeting.**

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Ms. Sinclair, Council voted unanimously to authorize the City Manager to spend up to \$50,000.00 for temporary staff and research to respond to Richland County's first request for the production of documents and report to the Council at the next meeting on October 17, 2007 if additional funding is needed.

- **Council adjourned the meeting at 11:01 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Salley  
City Clerk