

**CITY OF COLUMBIA
WORK SESSION MINUTES
MAY 26, 2010 – 9:00 A.M.
CITY HALL - 1737 MAIN STREET
3rd Floor – COUNCIL CHAMBERS**



The Columbia City Council met for a Work Session on Wednesday, May 26, 2010 in the City Hall Council Chambers located at 1737 Main Street. The Honorable Sam Davis called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. and the following members of Council were present: The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann and The Honorable Belinda F. Gergel. The Honorable Mayor Robert D. Coble and The Honorable Mayor Pro-Tempore Kirkman Finlay III were absent. Also present were Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Salley, City Clerk.

APPOINTMENT

1. Council is asked to approve the appointment of The Honorable Belinda F. Gergel as Mayor Pro-Tempore for Fiscal Year 2010/2011.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Rickenmann and seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to approve the appointment of The Honorable Belinda F. Gergel as Mayor Pro-Tempore for Fiscal Year 2010/2011.

2. Council is asked to approve the appointment of Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager as Interim City Manager effective May 29, 2010.

Mr. Ken E. Gaines, City Attorney explained that Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager is currently enrolled in the Teachers and Employees Retiree Incentive (TERI) Program and his enrollment ends on May 29, 2010. Our understanding is that there has to be a period of separation with no guarantee of employment, after which you will be asked to reconsider hiring him as City Manager. A contract will be placed on Council's agenda for consideration. Mr. S. Allison Baker, as the Senior Assistant City Manager will be asked to serve as Interim City Manager.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted unanimously to approve the appointment of Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager as Interim City Manager effective May 29, 2010.

CONSIDERATION OF BIDS, AGREEMENTS and CHANGE ORDERS

3. Council is asked to approve the Purchase of Twenty-Two (22) Panasonic Toughbooks, as requested by the Police Department. Award to SDF Professional Computers, the lowest bidder in the amount of \$79,529.27. This vendor is located in Greenville, NC. *Funding Source: GL2609999/JL RA24110100-657600 - Approved*

Upon a motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted unanimously to approve the Purchase of Twenty-Two (22) Panasonic Toughbooks, as requested by the Police Department. Award to SDF Professional Computers, the lowest bidder in the amount of \$79,529.27. This vendor is located in Greenville, NC.

PRESENTATION

4. Update on the Columbia Canal Restoration Project – Mr. John Dooley, Jr., Director of the Utilities and Engineering Department

Mr. John Dooley, Jr., Director of the Utilities and Engineering Department reported that in 2007, SCE&G managed the Columbia Canal Restoration Project on behalf of the City of Columbia. There was a study to look at various seepages from the Canal to the River; construction documents were prepared; and bids were taken for a project which involved lining the inside of the west bank of the Canal. The bids came in considerably over budget and we had some concerns about the invasive-type clearing that would have occurred; therefore, we sought a second opinion, which determined that the dam could not be thoroughly inspected due to the amount of debris on the face of the Canal. The Council approved a contract for limited clearing in order to complete that inspection. Since then, the Utilities and Engineering Department has met with park users and environmental bodies and as a result of those meetings we've engaged an engineer to help with Chao and Associates, the principal consultant. We and the environmental group have come close to deciding on what to do. We've run into a minor stumbling block with FERC, because they want the clearing to be more than what we've decided to do. We have a meeting scheduled during the week of June 7, 2010 with representatives of DNR and FERC in hopes of reaching a resolution.

Mr. Joey Jaco, City Engineer reported that the main issue is removing the trees on the Canal side. The plan was to do a 5' path on all sides at the toe of the canal for the inspection and additional clearing would be done as needed to complete the inspection. We plan to remove trees 4" in diameter and less; FERC wants us to remove trees 6" in diameter or less; and we are trying to find the right compromise.

The following individuals appeared before the members of Council to comment on the Columbia Canal Restoration Project on behalf of the Park User / Environmental Group:

Ms. Ryan Nevius
Mr. Jimmy Knight

There was a consensus of Council to schedule a briefing from the Park User/Environmental Group after the meeting with FERC.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

5. Justice Assistance Grant – Interim Police Chief Carl Burke

Upon a motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted unanimously to endorse the Columbia Police Department's Justice Assistance Grant Application.

6. Assistance to Firefighters Grant – Interim Fire Chief Aubrey Jenkins

Upon a motion made by Mr. Rickenmann and seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to endorse the Columbia Fire Department's Assistant to Firefighters Grant Application.

BUDGET WORK SESSION

7. Review of the Comprehensive Plan for Community Development Block Grant Funds
– Mr. Tony Lawton, Director of Community Development

Mr. Tony Lawton, Director of Community Development explained that they contracted with the Training and Development Associates through a Request for Proposals process to facilitate the process for the Comprehensive Plan. From January to May, we held a series of public forums and public hearings for input on the plan, which was submitted to HUD on May 14, 2010. The Citizens Advisory Committee received the draft plan for review and comment; two meetings were scheduled; and on April 22, 2010, the board chair attended the public forum and approved the draft information. He said that the Consolidated Plan is a holistic approach utilizing HUD's three basic goals: providing decent housing; suitable living environment; and expanding economic opportunities. Last week, we met with HUD representatives and the City's Finance Department to address the revolving loan and program income issues that we have. As a result of the meeting, it was determined that we have commingled program income and revolving loan funds. The Community Development Department and the Finance Department will specifically identify those accounts; further breakdown the uses for HUD to easily identify; and we will provide a balance of program income separate from the revolving loan funds. We will amend the Consolidated Plan in July or August. This will require another public hearing and City Council approval.

This report was received as information. No action was taken.

******Councilor Devine recognized Ms. Loretta Coleman of the Parks and Recreation Department for being selected as the Business Associate of the Year.

8. Update on Homeless Services – Mr. Tony Lawton, Director of Community Development

Mr. Tony Lawton, Director of Community Development reported that a total of \$700,000 is budgeted for fiscal year 2010/2011 for homeless related services to include the Winter Shelter, overtime for Police Officers and support services for the maintenance of the facility. We included \$145,666.00 in the CDBG budget to go towards the Housing First Program and homeless services. We have \$522,731.00 in the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program to go towards homeless services. This program is similar to Housing First and we felt that it could replace the Housing First Program. We also have \$1.5 million in the Housing Opportunities for Persons With Aids (HOPWA) Program that covers a 6-county area. These funds serve homeless individuals with AIDS.

- Midlands Housing Alliance – Mr. Larry Arney, Executive Director

Ms. Cathy Novinger, Chair of the Midlands Housing Alliance announced that the name of their facility is Transitions and its logo is a butterfly, which symbolizes the transition from homelessness to self-reliance and permanent housing.

Mr. Larry Arney, Executive Director of the Midlands Housing Alliance reported that on a single day in January 2009, local providers identified 1,368 homeless individuals in the Midlands and it is estimated that the actual number is 2 to 3 times higher. The Midlands Housing Alliance will collaborate with over a dozen organizations to offer services that aren't presently being provided in the community. MHA adopted a good neighbor policy in March 2010 to provide the most secure and safe environment within the Center and the surrounding area. In 2011, we will have 3-months of start-up operations and 9-months of operations with an annual budget of \$1.63 million. In 2012, we will have 12-months of

operations, which are estimated at \$2.6 million. We have made an operating fund request to the City of Columbia in the amount of \$250,000 for fiscal year 2010/2011.

There was a consensus of Council to request that Mr. John Holmes be appointed to the MHA Board of Directors as a representative of the homeless community.

- **Council recessed at 11:25 a.m.**
- **Council reconvened at 11:32 a.m.**

The following downtown residents appeared before the members of Council to comment on the Midlands Housing Alliance Transition Center:

Ms. Mary Jo Roue, Vice President of Elmwood Park Neighborhood Association
Ms. Ellen Cooper, President of the Downtown Coalition of Neighborhoods
Ms. Patty Durkin, Downtown Resident and Business Owner
Ms. Elizabeth Marks, Presidents of the Robert Mills Historic District
Mr. Paul Bouknight, Immediate Past President of the Cottontown Neighborhood Association

- **Council closed the public comment period at 11:51 a.m.**

PRESENTATIONS

9. Organizations Funded by the Community Promotions Fund – Ms. Libby Gober, City Council Liaison

The following representatives appeared before the members of Council to request continued funding for fiscal year 2010/2011:

Mr. Preston Winkler, Executive Director / Greater Columbia Community Relations Council
Ms. Dee Albritton, Executive Director / Fast Forward
Mr. Mike Dawson, Executive Director / River Alliance
Mr. John McArthur, Board of Directors / River Alliance
Mr. J.T. McLawhorn, President / Columbia Urban League
Ms. Mary Kessler, Executive Director / Capital Senior Center
Ms. Fran Mullaney, Treasurer / KOBAN

There was a brief question and answer segment for each presentation. No action was taken.

10. Organizations Funded by the Economic Development Special Projects Account – Mr. Jim Gambrell, Executive Director for Economic Development

The following representatives appeared before the members of Council to request continued funding for fiscal year 2010/2011:

Ms. Kay Shaw, Midlands Education & Business Alliance
Mr. Neil Mclean, EngenuitySC and the Fuel Cell Collaborative
Mr. Darrin Thomas, Black Expo
Mr. Grant Jackson, Chamber of Commerce / Good to Great Foundation & Mr. Greg Hilton, Chair / Columbia Opportunity Resource (COR)
Mr. Ike McLeese, Chamber of Commerce / Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)

There was a brief question and answer segment for each presentation. No action was taken.

- **Council adjourned the meeting at 2:06 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Salley
City Clerk