

**CITY OF COLUMBIA  
WORK SESSION MINUTES  
MARCH 1, 2011 – 3:00 P.M.  
CITY HALL - 1737 MAIN STREET**



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The Columbia City Council conducted a Work Session on Wednesday, March 1, 2011 in the Council Conference Room at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m. and the following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann, The Honorable Belinda F. Gergel, The Honorable Leona K. Plough and The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman. Also present were Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Salley, City Clerk.

**CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION**

1. Miss South Carolina Pageant Sponsorship Request

Upon a motion made by Mr. Newman and seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted unanimously to approve funding in the amount of \$25,000 to the Conventions and Visitors Bureau for the Miss South Carolina Pageant. *Funding Source: 2124313 -551000*

2. Navigating from Good to Great Foundation Update – Mr. Grant Jackson and Ms. Katherine Swartz / Members of the Good to Great Team

Mr. Grant Jackson, Community Development provided an update on branding and cluster development.

▪ **Ms. Devine joined the meeting at 3:17 p.m.**

Ms. Katherine Swartz, Leadership Development provided an update on the COR 2011 Program of Work, which includes a Chamber, Good to Great Foundation, Columbia Talent Magnet Project and Columbia Opportunity Resource (COR) update; and the regional effort to engage and connect young professionals.

3. Unified Services Report – Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager

Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager reported that he met with the Administrator for Richland County to discuss areas of consolidation. He strongly suggested that the City Council Committee meet with the County's Consolidation Committee. The County Administrator indicated that they have posted a job description for a Director of Economic Development. We presently have cooperative efforts in Animal Services, Unified Fire Services and E-911. Richland County is currently outsourcing various degrees of Solid Waste Collections and Fleet Management/Maintenance. I shared the litany of ideas we pulled together; we will meet on tomorrow; and he will provide feedback on our list. We are moving forward with a revised Unified Fire Services Agreement.

Councilor Devine suggested that they look at being more efficient with the things we are currently doing jointly, such as jail operations. We should be able to conduct bond court there for Lexington County defendants. There has been talk about working more closely with their judges and magistrates in terms of bond court.

Councilor Plough requested that the Mayor and the Chair of Richland County Council convene the meeting. I would hate for us to lose the opportunity to consolidate Economic Development; I would hope that it would be more than co-location. We set the following items as priorities for discussion with the County: Public Safety (Police, Fire, EMS, E-911 and the Detention Center), Economic Development, Public Relations and Business Licenses. The intent was to see where our priorities overlap and build a positive relationship from there.

Councilor Gergel would like to work together to find a better location for the release of inmates from the jail. She recalled that Administration was considering the possibility of having inmates dropped off at the City's Winter Shelter during the winter months. We should consider ways to work more closely with GIS and Public Relations, because City residents are upset that they can't view County information on cable television.

Councilor Newman suggested that it would be prudent for the City of Columbia to develop a list of alternative drop-off points for consideration by the County.

Councilor Davis agreed that the prisoner drop-off points needed to be dealt with along with other pending issues.

Councilor Rickenmann said that it is time for the Legislature to weigh in on this issue.

Mayor Benjamin directed Mr. Mike King, Assistant City Manager for Public Safety to provide a memo that was previously prepared on prisoner drop-off points; to reach out to the South Carolina Department of Corrections; and to research how this is handled by other jurisdictions.

#### 4. Municipal Court Judges – The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman

Councilor Newman reported that two (2) Substitute Judges recently vacated positions along with one (1) Regular Judge. The Public Safety Committee went through a series of questions to determine whether or not we needed to fill any vacancies; the timeframe of filling the vacancies; and the process for doing so. The consensus was to replace the fulltime position that is being vacated by Judge Benjamin and as needed, we would look at filling one position for a substitute judge. We wanted to defer to Judge Turner in terms of the need for additional judgeships.

Chief Administrative Judge Dana D. Turner reported that there are 1,600 court hearings per year, but we are considering reducing Jury Trials. We will complete our schedules around the vacancy for the remainder of the quarter. She asked that any new appointments be consistent with the current appointment schedule. We are losing diversity among our Judges. The Regular Judges work 30 days per quarter and that could increase to 34 days. The Substitute Judges fill in mostly at Bond Court. If you added more Substitute Judges, it would reduce the hours the current Substitute Judges work. Technically, there isn't a vacancy for Substitute Judges, because Council decided not to fill the vacancy created by Judge Finney's resignation.

- **Mr. Rickenmann left the meeting at 4:40 p.m.**

Upon a motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Newman, Council voted unanimously to open the application process for a two (2) week period starting on Monday, March 7, 2011 and ending Monday, March 21, 2011 for the selection of one (1) Regular Municipal Court Judge and at least two (2) Substitute Municipal Court Judges. This process should closely mirror the State's application and screening process for Judges.

5. City Manager's Evaluation – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken. The City Manager's Evaluation will resume on March 29, 2011.*

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Upon a motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 4:45 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 6.** through **9.** as outlined.

6. Receipt of legal advice, which relates to a pending, threatened or potential claim – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
7. 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.*
8. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements - *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
9. **\*\*Discussion of the Employment of an Employee - *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. Salley  
City Clerk