



---

The Columbia City Council conducted a Special Called Meeting on Thursday, December 27, 2012 at the Eau Claire Print Building located at 3907 Ensor Avenue, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m. and the following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Leona K. Plaugh, The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman, The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan and The Honorable Moe Baddourah. Also present were Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Moore, City Clerk. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

### **CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION**

1. [Resolution No.: R-2012-112](#) - Authorizing the City Manager to execute and ratifying the execution of a Joint Use Agreement between Garrison Columbia, LLC, Main Street Associates and the City of Columbia - *Approved*

Mr. Kenneth E. Gaines, Esq., City Attorney explained that a Joint Use Agreement was entered into when the hotel and SCE&G were built and over the years it has been amended due to changes in ownership. The city has to execute the 7<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Joint Use Agreement, which allows the use of the office building as a private dormitory and prohibits it from being used as a hotel. He noted that there are no financial obligations of the city in the two documents. He stated that Council is also asked to ratify the 6<sup>th</sup> amendment, which was never executed. The 6<sup>th</sup> amendment contains language about how the janitorial needs and other matters will be handled between the office building and the hotel. He said that Mr. Gantt has already executed the document, because it was needed for the closing and today you are authorizing him to sign it and ratifying his signature to the document so that it will all be in the proper form. This also states that any future amendments to the Joint Use Agreement will be recorded with the Richland County Register of Deeds.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Newman, Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution No.: R-2012-112 - Authorizing the City Manager to execute and ratifying the execution of a Joint Use Agreement between Garrison Columbia, LLC, Main Street Associates and the City of Columbia.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Baddourah, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 12:08 p.m. for the discussion of the employment of an employee and for the receipt of legal advice, which relates to a matter covered by attorney-client privilege.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the Executive Session discussions and to reconvene the Special Called Meeting at 1:26 p.m.

2. Discussion of the employment of an employee – City Manager

Mr. Davis made a motion to extend a conditional offer of employment of City Manager to Ms. Teresa Wilson, contingent upon the entry of a mutually agreeable contract of employment. Mr. Runyan offered a second to the motion.

Councilor Plough said that this is probably the most important hiring decision the Council will make during their terms in office and the people of this city have entrusted us not just to make a decision, but to make the right, ethical and moral decision. I believe all of us are doing that today to the very best of our ability. We are seeking a candidate that has strong leadership and management skills at the executive level; the highest level of our city and that reflects an excellent history according to the job description of evaluating, recruiting, developing and empowering employees; a manager with expertise and experience to advise this Council, City staff and citizens on critical financials, public safety and water and sewer matters; the person must have already demonstrated an ability to oversee our 2,100 employees and guide the development of policies and procedures set by this City Council. She said that the candidate before us is indeed a bright, articulate, gifted and talented individual, but is inexperienced in many of those areas. Therefore, my concern is that she is not the most qualified candidate among those that we have interviewed. Therefore, when this matter is voted upon, I regrettably will need to vote no. While I have an awful lot of faith in Ms. Wilson and her abilities, I also think that right now she is inexperienced in many of the areas that we need leadership.

Mayor Benjamin stated that it is important to note that Ms. Wilson, in addition to being a honors graduate from the University of South Carolina Honors College, she has a law degree and is doing a fantastic job as Assistant City Manager over the areas that I find to be the most important to me as a mayor, which are economic development, community development, government and intergovernmental relations, and she has exceptional relationships with the business community and the universities. She has done a fantastic job transforming a struggling Community Development Department to a national model organization winning the 2012 John A. Sasso National Community Development Week Award; reducing the default rate in the Commercial Revolving Loan Fund from 29% to 4%; doing a fantastic job leading the rebirth of downtown as we execute the façade loan program; twenty two (22) new businesses moving downtown since June 2011; leveraging the façade grant program with \$425,000 in CDBG funds to create over \$6 million in private downtown investment; overseeing the grants department, we've seen over \$16 million in grant dollars come into the city supplementing vital services like public safety. I believe she is uniquely qualified; she understands not only the city, but understands the vision of this Council. It is so important that as we move forward, she enjoys the full and active support of this Council to be the Chief Administrative Officer directed by the policy makers. As Council, we will have to make the tough decisions and continue trying to make Columbia the most talented, educated

and entrepreneurial city in the country; a world class city. She enjoys my full and unconditional support. This is a move I believe that will be applauded; it is a strong move in the right direction.

Councilor Devine stated that we had some very outstanding candidates and any of them would be able to jump into the role and manage the day to day operations of this city, but I also think that this city is at a crossroads. We have a dynamic staff in all departments and we have budding leaders throughout the city. Getting the work of the city done is not a concern for me, because I know that we have extraordinary staff that can do their jobs and do their jobs well. Mr. Gantt inherited a lot of stuff that isn't anything that you can learn in the city; it's not doing water and sewer or managing a particular department. Mr. Gantt had to stable a ship and give credibility back to the city and I think he has done an excellent job at that. Now that he is departing, we are at a point where we need someone who can inspire the leaders that we have throughout the city to do their best, all the time; to think outside of the box; and to take and make our city the world class city that this Council has talked about. I have seen that leadership in Ms. Wilson over the past several years; she has managed and inspired the staff to do their very best and that's something that you can't teach. I am very comfortable and confident in her ability to work together with our staff to make sure that we get to the next level. I would encourage everyone to think about those attributes, the things that we have been through and where we need to go. Certainly, we can get there with Ms. Wilson's leadership.

Mayor Benjamin explained for the edification of the press that a total of twenty seven (27) candidates applied for the position; they narrowed it down to five (5) candidates; Ms. Wilson emerged as the candidate with the significant and majority support of Council. Over the next several days she will be extended an offer. Should she choose to accept it, we will execute a contract of employment that Council will ratify at the first meeting in the calendar year. To everyone's great satisfaction, Mr. Gantt will be with us for at least 6 more months to acclimate the new City Manager to her position.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted five (5) to two (2) to extend a conditional offer of employment to Ms. Teresa Wilson for the position of City Manager, contingent upon the entry of a mutually agreeable contract of employment. Voting aye were Mr. Davis, Ms. Devine, Mr. Newman, Mr. Runyan and Mayor Benjamin. Voting nay were Ms. Plough and Mr. Baddourah.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore  
City Clerk