

**CITY OF COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MINUTES
JUNE 5, 2012 – 2:00 P.M.
CITY HALL - 1737 MAIN STREET
2nd FLOOR – COUNCIL CHAMBERS**



The Columbia City Council met for a Work Session on Tuesday, June 05, 2012 in the City Hall Conference Room located at 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 2:11 p.m. and the following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann, The Honorable Belinda F. Gergel and The Honorable Leona K. Plaugh. The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine arrived at 2:19 p.m. The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman arrived at 2:39 p.m. 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

Dr. Gergel inquired about an update on the Bull Street property.

Mr. Kenneth E. Gaines, City Attorney explained that they went to Beaufort to meet with Mr. Hughes and his attorney. Mr. Tedder is going to work on the process and they are going to work on the standards. Mr. Hughes stated that it would not be ready by today. We hope to have another meeting prior to June 26th. We should have the PUD and the first draft of the proposed development agreement that they used in Greenville. Mr. Tedder will look at those, as well.

Mayor Benjamin explained that they asked for a side-by-side comparison of the former plans and Mr. Hughes' proposal as it relates to historic preservation.

1. Making Benefits Count for the City of Columbia – Mr. Carey Adamson, Vice President, Vice President of Sales / Colonial Life

Mr. Carey Adamson, Vice President of Sales / Colonial Life stated that Colonial Life is headquartered in Columbia, SC with over 1,100 employees. We have worked with the City in a business relationship since 1953. Last year, we began having discussions with the US Conference of Mayors to work with cities on cost saving ideas and strategies for benefits. We generate our revenue by selling volunteer insurance policies in the workplace. Over 1,400 of the City's employees work with us and our policyholders at Colonial Life. We entered into a formal agreement with the US Conference of Mayors and for the next two years we will work with them around the country to bring these solutions to cities. During open enrollment, we meet with your employees to help educate and communicate on the core plan and the different types of benefits to include flexible spending accounts for medical and dependent care expenses.

- **Ms. Devine arrived at 2:19 p.m.**

Mr. Carey Adamson, Vice President of Sales / Colonial Life continued to report on the services that are available through Colonial Life including wellness benefits. At our annual debriefing, we met with your Human Resources Department to review the program, determine what worked; what can be improved upon; and the next steps. We also reviewed the value we have through the benefit communication, education and other services we are providing. Step two is reviewing other services we have available. We have the ability to do dependent verification at no cost for our customers during open enrollment each year. We are seeing a lot of plan design changes and we have solutions in that area as well. Having all employees sit with us increases participation and that is a direct driver of increased savings. In closing, we thank you for the relationship we've had with the City for over 55 years.

Councilor Rickenmann said that the City of Columbia is doing most of the employee benefit cost management strategies that are outlined in the packet.

2. Fiscal Year 2012 / 2013 Budget Update – Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director said that some matters still need to be finalized with regard to the budget. The first matter is the Cost of Living Adjustment.

Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager suggested that they discuss the compensation of employees in Executive Session. We have some alternatives for you.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director stated that the budget includes the recommendation for a 2% COLA across the board. Next are the general capital improvement projects. We included additional funding in the General Fund for capital projects. A list of the submitted projects for year one is in your packet. The City Manager recommended projects in the total amount of \$1.5 million to include the Police Department evidence facility, renovations to the Police Department Headquarters and renovations at various fire stations.

Councilor Plaugh inquired about funding for corridor studies.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director stated that \$1.7 million was set aside in the General Fund for general capital projects, of which Mr. Gantt recommended to reserve \$200,000 for additional requests.

Councilor Plaugh inquired about funding for implementing the Parks Master Plan.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director reviewed the departments that have supplemental funding requests over and above their initial departmental request out of the General Fund. She presented a list of those included in the General Fund. She noted that this is where the funding is identified for the rewriting of zoning and land development regulations.

Councilor Gergel asked if funding was added for the City Manager search process.

Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager said no, but there is a Special Emergency Reserve Fund in the amount of \$1,100,000.

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director presented funding requests from outside groups. Sources of funding have been identified from the General Fund, Accommodations Tax Fund for general purposes and Hospitality Tax Fund.

Councilor Rickenmann inquired about the Circular Committee.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, Assistant City Manager explained that they have been working with the University to launch a mid-day circular.

There was a consensus of Council to discuss the Cost of Living Adjustment in Executive Session. No action was taken.

3. Economic Development & Special Projects Funding – Mr. Jim Gambrell, Director of Economic Development

Mr. Jim Gambrell, Director of Economic Development explained that they fund nine (9) organizations that have helped the overall economic development strategy. This is their annual report and their requests for next year's funding. This money is available in our budget that you will consider shortly. This is to reaffirm your support and your expectations for them. A number of the organizations presented on April 10th and three more are here today. He clarified that the funding request for Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) is in the amount of \$53,500 for the consultant in Washington, DC. This is a \$5,000 increase from fiscal year 2011/2012.

Mayor Benjamin stated that the discussions on BRAC, as well as a larger discussion regarding automatic reductions to the federal budget that will kick in if we don't get something done by December 31st, will be devastating and cataclysmic for our community. He suggested that Council did not need to hear from Mr. McLeese on this matter.

▪ **Mr. Newman arrived at 2:39 p.m.**

Mr. Ike McLeese, Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce explained that Cassidy and Associates is spending more time to address the proposed budget cuts.

Mr. Jim Gambrell, Director of Economic Development explained that the City Center Partnership is in the Economic Development Department's budget.

Mr. Matt Kennell, Executive Director of the City Center Partnership reported that the City Center Partnership started operations in 2002. It was a gloomy time for Columbia and we've been working to turn that around. We have come a long way thanks to the Business Improvement District and the improvements that have been made in the amount of \$30 million. Over \$300 million has been invested in new taxable properties and area businesses. Thousands of jobs have been created and in the last three years, almost 100 jobs have been recovered since the relocation of SCANA. He reviewed their key services to include the Yellow Shirt Ambassadors; retail and office recruitment and retention; liaison to governments and organizations; and special events like the Urban Tour. We have evolved over ten (10) years; we are working with Mr. Gambrell daily to strategize projects for the City of Columbia; and we are working increasingly with the Central SC Alliance.

Mr. Mike Briggs, President of the Central SC Alliance explained that the Alliance was created in 1994 as a 501(c) (3) corporation. We allow folks to pool resources. On a daily basis, we represent almost one million people within nine (9) counties. He outlined their core areas of operation and identified the major industries within the region. We market the region and this City all around the world. We are harvesting our Lead Generation Program to bring businesses into Columbia. We are in the process of developing an accurate amount of annual water and sewer revenue generated by projects we have worked with. Since 2000, we have worked with projects in Richland County that have announced over \$1.5 billion and produced over 13,900 jobs. He presented regional economic data, noting that 2011 was a record year. We are asking for continued funding support and we will continue to be good stewards of that money.

Councilor Rickenmann asked Mr. Briggs if the questionnaires are showing that existing manufacturing companies are making their way to the southeast from the northeast.

Mr. Mike Briggs, President of the Central SC Alliance said absolutely. We are a very cost effective place to do business with a lot of capacity for growth.

Councilor Rickenmann asked if they continue to meet with site consultants.

Mr. Mike Briggs, President of the Central SC Alliance said that they continue to meet with all 300 on the list, although site consultant work with companies has slowed down over the last three years.

Councilor Davis inquired about the number of companies that have left Columbia and have been recruited to come back.

Mr. Mike Briggs, President of the Central SC Alliance stated that one was located two weeks ago. We will be keeping data on that.

Councilor Plough inquired about the number of new jobs created in Richland County.

Mr. Mike Briggs, President of the Central SC Alliance agreed to provide that information.

Councilor Devine inquired about the information given to prospects.

Mr. Mike Briggs, President of the Central SC Alliance explained that by the time they talk with a prospect, they know ten times as much about us, because they have asked for a lot of materials. They also go to our website and we are constantly updating and improving it.

Mayor Benjamin said that he appreciates the fact that the Alliance is working together along with everyone else to include the relationship with the City Center Partnership; not just to attract retailers, but businesses that will have a catalyst effect on downtown.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, Assistant City Manager recalled that all groups have made presentations to Council and the funding levels have remained flat, except for BRAC. Neil McLean may need to come back on June 26th to request additional funding for the Fuel Cell Collaborative.

We have folded the organizations into the budgets and it isn't necessary for Council to do a formal motion.

4. Gills Creek Parkway Reconstruction Update – Mr. Robert Anderson, Director of Public Works

Mr. Robert Anderson, Director of Public Works provided an update on the Gills Creek Parkway Reconstruction Project from Rosewood Extension to Pelham Drive. The condition of the Parkway has continued to deteriorate over the last several years. We have been working with groups to develop a design for the Gills Creek Parkway, which included bike pads and bio-swells. There have been many changes to the plans. With the condition of the road, we have decided to move forward with the roadway reconstruction through the soil and cement stabilization. We will design the bike path and/or bio-swells after the fact. After the road is reconstructed, we will not be able to put heavy trucks on it for a couple of weeks while the cement cures. We will have the drawing back this week and it should go out for bid in the next few weeks. Richland County is considering acquiring a portion of property if we will put a bike/walk lane in and maybe construct a wooden bridge into Gills Creek for fishing. I will discuss this with the Gills Creek Watershed tomorrow.

Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager said that they will know how much money will be left over to complete the ancillary projects.

5. University of South Carolina (USC) Athletics Traffic Control – Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager

Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager explained that for the last two years, the University has gone through the Hospitality Tax Committee for funding to pay Columbia Police Officers to assist with traffic control during USC home games. I met with the University and it doesn't make sense for them to go back to the committee when we require this. We have intersections that must be covered in order to keep traffic moving. They spend \$140,000 annually with our Police and Fire personnel. We will fund them \$73,000 annually and their Police Department will pay our employees.

Councilor-Elect Baddourah asked if this exception would be made for other organizations. They should go through the committee.

Councilor Devine agreed with the recommendation, because it's a major public safety issue. Also, the USC games generate a lot of the Hospitality Tax. I am torn, because I am big on the committee process; however, this is a different scenario.

Councilor Newman concurred with Ms. Devine, noting that her reasoning helps to draw the connection between what is and what isn't generating hospitality taxes. I support us doing it this way, but we need to have that open dialog and talk about the way the Committee is doing things. We haven't provided that guidance. We should deal with this and also discuss other ways in which we use this funding.

Councilor-Elect Runyan inquired about the economic impact of the football games.

Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager stated that it may be approximately 25%. This funding is not for parking.

Councilor Plough asked if they received the same level of funding in the past.

Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager stated that they requested \$120,000 in the past and the committee recommended \$60,000.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, Assistant City Manager explained that the number reflects the amount needed solely for traffic control; costs for parking and game day management was removed from the request. The original request was \$120,000. They do not know the schedule yet and they do not know which games will be televised.

Councilor Davis asked if there is a policy for what constitutes the privilege of being added to the budget. If not, we need to have a discussion and set preliminary guidelines.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, Assistant City Manager stated that another difference with this request is that there is an issue with public safety. We met with the USC Chief of Police and our Police Chief. This is a historical problem.

Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager added that three years ago we paid for all of the Police Officers and our overtime became so significant that we had to make changes. We required them to do this without providing a funding source.

Mayor Benjamin said that in the interest of full disclosure, there will be a separate Hospitality Tax funding request from the Historic Columbia Foundation that he solicited to celebrate a number of milestones in 2013. It is approximately \$90,000 for the first two (2) years and the amount will decrease thereafter. The project will also include marketing, the erection of historic markers and archeological excavations.

Councilor Devine asked if they qualified for money from the Liquor Rebate Fund.

Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager explained that the Liquor Rebate Fund has been committed for \$1 million to pay the City back over three years for the money allocated to the Foundation for needed repairs at the historic buildings.

Upon a motion made by Mayor Benjamin and seconded by Mr. Newman, Council voted unanimously to approve the annual allocation in the amount of \$73,000 from the Hospitality Tax Fund to the University of South Carolina Police Department for payments to the Columbia Police Department for traffic control during home football games. The University of South Carolina is no longer required to submit an application for consideration by the Hospitality Tax Advisory Committee.

Councilor Plough asked if they could work on a policy to address requests from organizations to be line items.

Dr. Gergel noted that the Arts and Historic Preservation Committee had one discussion on this and will meet tomorrow to continue discussions.

Councilor Devine stated that there's a misperception that the Arts are the recipient of the Hospitality tax. She suggested that the policy be created by the Arts and Historic Preservation Committee and sent to the Administrative Policy Committee for review.

Councilor Newman said that the committee has discussed this, but it needs to be a Work Session discussion as well.

6. Winter Shelter – Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager

Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager stated that six years ago we provided an emergency shelter for our homeless and housing is provided by a lot of other not for profits. Over time, we have gone from being an emergency, last resort shelter to being primary housing for homeless folks from November to March. We are spending an excessive amount of money doing that. We have to change the way we do business for the homeless. We issued a Request for Proposals and received one response that was way over budget. Subsequently, we've had conversations with USC and we are waiting on a proposal from them. We also considered running the shelter in-house with current City employees that would be paid additional dollars for their involvement. People register the 1st of November and they stay with us until April 1st. We've become a hotel. I would propose that we look at how other shelters operate. At the Oliver Gospel Mission you can stay two (2) weeks in a row, and then you have to find another place. The cleaning of the facility needs to be done by the patrons. We need to do warrants on everyone who comes through the door. If they appear to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, we should do a breathalyzer. We need to decide what our plans are and advertise our plans for shelter operations for this upcoming year. We are spending up to \$80,000 on transportation. There has to be a cheaper way. We are presently providing security services at Ebenezer Lutheran Church during feeding times. The Salvation Army is preparing the food at Transitions and we are paying for security at Transitions. It seems that there could be an early feeding and a late feeding at one location. I would recommend that we notify The Salvation Army, Ebenezer Lutheran and anyone else that we will no longer pay for security at Ebenezer after June 30, 2012. We need specific guidelines on whether or not we will continue to be the primary location for housing the homeless or will we go back to being the emergency shelter when everything else is full.

Councilor Rickenmann said that we don't need to get back into this. The University can run this more efficiently. We should talk to the new Colonel at Transitions. Ebenezer has truly been a partner by giving what they have. A tougher policy is needed.

Councilor Gergel said that she was not pleased with what happened when we ran it. She requested a report from Transitions. We don't have the expertise to run the shelter. I would urge you to continue discussions with the University.

Councilor Davis said that he would like to see us continue to do something with Housing First as a separate unit. At a minimum, we should partner with them, because their results are good. They have a nationwide model that works and several funding options. I totally agree with your other recommendations. There are things they can do to earn a hot meal and a cot.

Councilor Plough suggested that Council act on the City Manager's recommendation or defer the matter to a committee for further consideration of all options.

Councilor Rickenmann said that a policy needed to be set by August.

Councilor Devine asked Mr. Gantt to clarify what the City does.

Mayor Benjamin said that we have to be more creative, thoughtful and aggressive on this matter.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Plough and seconded by Mayor Benjamin, Council voted unanimously to refer the matter of the City's emergency winter shelter to the Public Safety Committee for consideration of the alternatives presented by the City Manager. Mr. Gantt will contact Ebenezer Lutheran, the Salvation Army and Transitions to discuss feedings and security.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Rickenmann and seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 4:02 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 7** through **11** as outlined. Mr. Newman was not present for the vote.

7. Receipt of legal advice which relates to a matter covered by the attorney-client privilege – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
8. Receipt of legal advice which relates to a pending, threatened or potential claim – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
9. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
10. Discussion of compensation of an employee – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*
11. ****Discussion of employment of an employee – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.***

▪ **Council adjourned the Work Session at 6:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore
City Clerk