

**CITY OF COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MINUTES
JULY 17, 2012 – 2:00 P.M.
EAU CLAIRE TOWN HALL
3905 ENSOR AVENUE**



The Columbia City Council met for a Work Session on Tuesday, July 17, 2012 at the Eau Claire Print Building, 3907 Ensor Avenue, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Steven K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 2:13 p.m. The following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine, The Honorable Leona K. Plaugh and The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan. The Honorable Moe Baddourah arrived at 2:17 p.m. The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman was absent. 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. Christ Central Ministries [Winter Shelter Proposal](#) – The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan

Councilor Runyan explained that he approached Christ Central Ministries, particularly Rev. Jimmy Jones, who has a very active ministry in Columbia serving hundreds of homeless individuals and helping to put them back on the path to self-sufficiency. He asked Rev. Jones how do we help the homeless; how do we end visible homelessness in downtown Columbia; and how do we get the city out the winter shelter business over the course of five years. He said that it is an enormous drain on our financial resources and we need to get out of it. These are the three goals that I set before him and they want to share their thoughts with you. He introduced Mr. Stu Rodman, Beaufort County Councilman and Pastor Jones.

Mr. Stu Rodman, Chairman of the Christ Central Ministries Board of Directors said that he has looked forward to this project for a long time and a partnership with Christ Central would make a lot of sense. If you do go forward with Christ Central, it is important that it is perceived that we are working together, because over time the relationship has been strained. It is very important that people know that the city is asking Christ Central if they would consider doing this.

Mayor Benjamin clarified that Mr. Runyan has been dialoging with Christ Central.

Mr. Stu Rodman, Chairman of the Christ Central Ministries Board of Directors sought to clarify that Christ Central is not pursuing the city. The only reservation I have is that our approach would be to abandon the current winter shelter and give that back to the city a year after this winter. I have reservations as to whether or not it makes sense for Christ Central to manage it this year. We may to consider allowing the city to manage it one more year and we focus on the long-term.

Pastor James Jones, CEO of Christ Central Ministries explained that they researched the impact area, which is from the Capital Building, through the Cottontown and Elmwood Park Neighborhoods to the north, to the river and over to Bull Street. The first goal is the creation of winter shelter facilities and necessary minimums for homeless and poverty services and the transition paths capable of leading us past the current city owned and funded facilities. The second goal is the removal of high visibility homelessness and poverty and their effects in the downtown business district and the surrounding neighborhoods. He presented a drawing of a new entranceway to the business district on the property owned by Christ Center and in the median. He showed the existing Winter Shelter facility that has been provided through best efforts. He stated that Christ Central received a Request for Proposals (RFP) for winter shelter management for 2012-2015. He proposed that a type of triage and evaluation center is needed for an individual path forward. It would be a location where individuals are researched prior to being sent to the Winter Shelter. Christ Central has 90 facilities in 38 locations throughout South Carolina. We must research and facilitate the process needed to remove the high visibility of the distressed and poor from City streets through triage and disbursement to existing service providers. The futuristic goals for comprehensive services or provisions must be identified, planned and established. We agreed to reduce our bid from \$587,000 to \$493,550 to operate the winter shelter as-is or \$558,400 to operate the winter shelter with triage. The greater news is we can target the five year step down program and remove the City from being the sole supporter of Winter Shelter funding.

Councilor Runyan asked Pastor Jones to provide more information on the triage concept, how that works and why it's important.

Pastor James Jones, CEO of Christ Central Ministries explained that triage simply means priority cases and priority provisions and specialists are on hand. The existing winter shelter groups all individuals together regardless of the diagnosis, circumstances or problem. We propose to take all of the individuals and determine the provisions needed prior to sending them to the winter shelter.

Councilor Runyan inquired about the overall homeless population.

Pastor James Jones, CEO of Christ Central Ministries stated that summers are especially bad, because the homeless are there for 24-hours. During the winter, they are there during the daytime hours of 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. The hope of triaging is to move the humanity to other service providers beyond the downtown core.

Councilor Davis said that he is trying to understand the fullness of it. Where do you propose to provide your services? Where would the base location be? Are you proposing Main at Elmwood?

Pastor James Jones, CEO of Christ Central Ministries said that they allowed the city to make that decision. We are proposing that triage is needed prior to sending everybody to the winter shelter. We are at Hope Plaza and triage would be located wherever this group determined the triage center would need to be.

Councilor Davis asked how the referral process is different from what Transitions is doing now.

Pastor James Jones, CEO of Christ Central Ministries said that Transitions is doing awesome things and they are doing as much as they can to triage those coming through their doors. You have a whole population that's highly visible that they don't have the capacity to serve.

Councilor Devine asked where the leadership of Transitions is with this discussion. She recalled that they discussed Transitions running the winter shelter and incorporating the triage as part of that. They couldn't take it on at the initial setup, but now we're two years in. Are they part of this discussion, because this was always part of the plan?

Pastor James Jones, CEO of Christ Central Ministries said that Transitions is triaging all that they have the capacity to handle and they are getting help from other service providers that are located there. You need one location for a triage center, which will incorporate all services available in the City.

Councilor Devine suggested that Transitions be a part of the discussion since the original plan was for them to get a few years under their belt. That was part of the promise to everybody and part of the request for so much financial support from the governing bodies. She inquired about the plan to triage and Christ Central managing that process. Have there been discussions to make sure that the necessary partners are willing to assist?

Pastor James Jones, CEO of Christ Central Ministries said that they haven't been at liberty to talk with anybody until they have a path forward.

Councilor Devine stated that there was a lack of bids, because there was a concerted effort to boycott the bid process. Our immediate point is the Winter Shelter, but overall, it's the homeless process. She questioned if the proposed triage center would be successful if those purposefully boycotting the process would not be there to make the process work. If not, what you are proposing may or may not work.

Pastor James Jones, CEO of Christ Central Ministries said that it is fair to say that Christ Central has been boycotted since day one and that we've managed to build 500 bed facilities around the city and throughout the state. We didn't bid on them participating, we bid on managing the winter shelter and forming a triage to get as many to those service providers as they would accept. He said that Christ Central may not be the answer; we may not be a good candidate.

Councilor Baddourah asked if Christ Center or anyone else submitted a bid with the expenses broken down with the cost for security, meals and other services. The winter shelter is just that, but you are proposing to provide year round services. If we are sending this out again, we need to make sure all of the expenses are broken down. He emphasized the need for security and feeling safe downtown. We want services in communication with other agencies around town. You did a great presentation. We want to make sure that tax dollars are well spent and that everybody knows where it's going.

Councilor Plough said that this is an extraordinary effort on their part to bring this to the forefront. She said that she is confused, because this Council technically rejected the bids when there were no bids that they could accept. We sent it to the Public Safety Committee and asked that a committee be formed to work with the Public Safety Committee and the various players as it relates to homelessness. This is wonderful input that could be utilized as we look at how we take the next step. This may be the next step; it may be some combination of this step.

Councilor Davis concurred with his colleagues in terms of the presentation. We are all partners in the mission to make sure the homeless are taken care of; their needs are being met; and that the agencies that have certain responsibilities live up to them. I always contend that part of that service delivery and care provision has a lot to do with location and a lot of what we and other cities have done over the years is put the homeless on display. In terms of where we've come from with this issue, location has always been an issue and a challenge. I think that if we are considering Main and Elmwood that would be a negative hit on that corner.

Pastor James Jones, CEO of Christ Central Ministries said that their church is very happy to continue to have services there. We are maxed out in our facility; we'll continue to build. He said that they would withdraw the bid completely and after you've had a chance for the other committees to rebid and rehearse then Christ Central will come back and serve in any way that we could. I did receive a call from Mr. Parker, asking me if I would serve on his committee. In light of the bid today that it would not be wise for me to serve on that committee, but I would serve in any way that's necessary.

Councilor Runyan explained that he asked Christ Central to come to Council today, because we all must realize that resources of government are finite and there is a role for government to play, but there is a role for the faith community and private sector to play. If we don't have a process in place to deal with the steady stream of folks; the providers get shut down because they can't find grants; the federal government shuts down their revenue streams, now you have a dam in Columbia with a lake of homeless people building up behind it. This is just my admonition to Council, because if and when that happens we are going to be dealing with problems exponentially worse than what we have right now. What does it say when we're held hostage by providers; people who are in the business of servicing the homeless population that boycott our bid process. We can reduce our winter population by a huge percentage in the course of this winter if we put the infrastructure in to get them out of downtown and on a path forward so they can become self-sufficient. I live in the area, I feel the concerns of the residents and I have the same concerns. I fundamentally believe that we can solve this problem, but we must have an honest assessment of where we are; what we need to do to go forward; what the risk factors are; and how do we mitigate them.

Councilor Devine suggested that this Council encourage the outside committee to move forward with its work.

Councilor Runyan said that that Dr. Parker made it clear that the committee was not tasked to deal with the Winter Shelter, which is the issue before us today. They are more focused on the global issues for homelessness and poverty in Columbia.

Mayor Benjamin asked Mr. Runyan to be a part of the dialog with the Public Safety Committee and Dr. Parker's committee.

Councilor Plaugh suggested that Mr. Baddourah be a part of Dr. Parker's committee, too.

Councilor Baddourah asked if this would be put out to bid again.

Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager said that he would like for the Public Safety Committee to recommend any changes to the RFP before it goes back out.

2. [Employment Gap](#) – Dr. Sonny White, President of Midlands Technical College

Mayor Benjamin said that workforce is the number one question on the list of everyone they talked to in the last year. Do you have a quality workforce that can do the jobs that we need in the 21st century? I can answer that question with a yes, because we have Midlands Technical College. The greatest legacy of the fathers of the 20th century is the technical college system and we by far have the best one here. I spent some time with Dr. White one month ago and we asked him to share this information with Council.

Dr. Sonny White, President of Midlands Technical College said that I am here to show you both a challenge and an opportunity; I came to ask for help from everybody in the room. He reported that Midlands Technical College has 18,000 credit students and 30,000 corporate and continuing education students for a total of 48,000 students from three counties. The state Department of Employment and Workforce reports that 26% of South Carolinians have a bachelor's degree or higher and 17% of all jobs require that level of education. It also reports that 45% of available jobs require middle skills, those defined as needing education and training beyond high school, but less than a four-year degree, which just 29% of available workers have. The remaining 45% of South Carolinians have just a high school education or less, far more than the 38% of jobs that require that low level of skill. We have to find a way to bring the adults up to middle-skilled level, because middle-skilled jobs pay over \$60,000 annually. We have to convince high school students, counselors and parents that not everybody has to go on to a four-year college or university to be successful. There are many, many jobs in the middle-skilled area for which a certificate or two year associate's degree will get them a great job. We decided to focus on customers and our job is to find the students and align them with the available jobs. The Economic Development Clusters that will bring over 20,000 jobs to the midlands area are Alternate Energy, Information Technology, Advanced Manufacturing and Health Sciences.

Mr. Chris Joye, Chairman of the Board of Trustees for Midlands Technical College reviewed the programs offered by Midlands Technical College in the gap areas. We visit with companies and ask them what they need. People want to provide for their families and that's what a job is. We can get them the right education and put them to work.

Dr. Sonny White, President of Midlands Technical College urged the Council to help Midlands Technical College identify platforms such as churches and community organizations where they can get this message out.

Councilor Baddourah stated that an economy anywhere in this world is balanced by the technical jobs and four-year degrees; a technical college education is important. He suggested that the City of Columbia through its Human Resources Department form a relationship with Midlands Technical College to offer continuing education to all employees who want to improve themselves.

Councilor Davis said that they started with a neighborhood cluster in this corridor. That is something worth looking at again through the Columbia Council of Neighborhoods.

Dr. Sonny White, President of Midlands Technical College stated that Mr. Davis and Mr. Hopkins started a program in North Columbia that incorporated Midlands Technical College's Quick Jobs Program where a student is trained for up to 8 hours a day to prepare for a job.

3. [Predictive Policing](#) – Dr. Donnie Fowler and Mr. Ryan Coonerty, former Mayor of Santa Cruz, California

Dr. Donnie Fowler told a story about nerds and cops; a bunch of professors getting together with the police department and determining how to prevent crime. Predictive policing is simple, it's about preventing crime before it happens; it's about being in a very specific place that's determined by experienced police and the most modern science mathematics and theory about criminal behavior. It's not rear view mirror policing. At the beginning of each shift, officers receive a Google map with a list of boxes that indicate where they should spend more time. He reported that in one year property crimes in Santa Cruz, CA declined by 19% and in the L.A. Foothill Division, property crimes declined by 12% in six months. The use of hotspots is a way to do predictive policing, but we take the hotspots and make them much clearer to the police officers and crime analysts. He explained that if your house is robbed the chances that your house will be robbed again in the near future skyrockets. If your house is robbed the chances that the houses around you are going to be robbed in the near future skyrockets. This is because the person who robbed your house knows how to get in and the houses around you are similar to yours; that's proximity. The second theory is that criminals like to be in familiar places. The stereotype is that bad guys come from across town or out of town. This is practical. At the beginning of the shift you will give boxes to each officer. The Police Chief and the analyst can make predictions of all crimes or property crimes or robbery or assaults. This is very secure, because it uses public data such as the type of crime, where it happened and what time of day it happened. This information can be sent to smart phones and iPads. We don't make tactical recommendations. Preventing crimes lessens the paperwork for the Police Department and decreases the number of investigations following a crime. Predictive Policing saved the L.A. Foothill Division \$4 million. Efficiency is also important. There are two crime analysts in the Columbia Police Department and a lot of their job is taking past crime data and putting pins on a map. This does all of the dots and maps for you and frees the analysts up to analyze where the patterns are, recommend what the solutions might be and what the tactics should be along with management. This requires no new hires and no new hardware. It is run by a single computer. The time savings equate to hiring two new crime analysts. It's not probable cause to arrest someone. It's not profiling, because no personal information is used. He said that no one outside California uses this software and he would love to say that his

hometown uses this and crime went down because of it. The cost is \$75,000, but because we want to work with you to build this out and make Columbia a showcase, we want to offer you a 50% discount. There is a significant benefit if you work with other jurisdictions. This software can be deployed within two weeks of signing the agreement.

Councilor Plaugh asked about the means that will be used to do this.

Police Chief Randy Scott noted that every police vehicle is equipped with wireless laptops.

Mr. Ryan Coonerty, former Mayor of Santa Cruz, California showed the Predictive Policing system on an iPad. He noted that it would be viewed the same way on any computer.

Councilor Davis inquired about the use of shot spotters with this system.

Dr. Donnie Fowler stated that shot spotters can work with this system to help law enforcement. A shot spotter is reactionary and requires the installation of microphones across the city.

Police Chief Randy Scott said that this is just another layer to assisting the police with predictive policing.

Mayor Benjamin said that this software follows the data. It gets you away from biases.

Councilor Baddourah said that this program would connect with the 911 system.

Councilor Plaugh inquired about the data collection component that would feed into this system.

Police Chief Randy Scott said that the data will most likely be exported through excel, but they will coordinate with the Information Technology Department to determine the best method of input into the program. You allowed us to hire analysts and we've made a lot of great strides in making sure our numbers are true. This is different, it's not numbers.

Councilor Devine asked if crime is being shifted somewhere else, because the police are concentrating on a specific area.

Mr. Ryan Coonerty, former Mayor of Santa Cruz, California stated that they looked for that in L.A., but it didn't move; it suppressed the crime. Adjacent jurisdictions didn't see increases in crime.

Dr. Donnie Fowler said that as crime moves the predictions will adjust for that move. There was a consensus of Council to discuss this matter at the next Public Safety Committee meeting and to engage in discussions with surrounding jurisdictions.

4. City of Columbia Logo Initiative – Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager

Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager explained that in an effort to move forward with goal four of our strategic plan, which focuses on improving internal and external communications, it's important to develop continuity as we work to enhance the branding of our city. The city staff has continued to build the website and we will show you what we have done. The official seal and logo of the City of Columbia is an important and vital part of the communications process. We would like to seek City Council's approval to begin using the official logo in conjunction with the "We Are Columbia" language that was developed during City Council's strategic planning process. There has been no recent confirmation of the style and color of the city's logo. This will represent what is used on our business cards, stationery and everything that's involved in communicating from the City of Columbia. We are recommending two variations of business cards; vertical/horizontal and/or smooth-edged/scalloped-edge logo. We are developing a style guide that will dictate exactly how the official logo can be used.

Ms. Doreen Sullivan, Post No Bills further explained that the website is most likely the first place people will go to find out about Columbia. She distributed samples of the options that are being recommended. She said that "We Are Columbia" is the perfect statement and the city is ready for it now. We feel that the seal with the scalloped-edge on the website is strong and it gives you that sense of authority and it is best to use a smoothed-edge on the printed materials. We will take the city's identity and create a style guide so that people won't change your logo. There will be rules and we will work together to enforce them. Currently, there are many different variations of your logo and this will help to achieve the continuity that you need.

Councilor Devine said that we need a real gateway into the City at I-77.

Mayor Benjamin said that the Lady of Justice is a gorgeous image that we need to put out there as much as we can. It is important that everything we do is consistent internally and externally. He asked that the amount of money spent on business cards decreases. He asked that a different font be used for "We Are Columbia".

Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager added that the members of City Council and Administration would be able to use the gold embossed logo. He noted that they would work to incorporate the new style as new items are purchased.

There was a consensus of Council to endorse staff recommendations and to reaffirm the fact that Lady Justice is the official city logo.

5. [Final Operating and Capital Improvement Program Budgets](#) – Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director

Mr. Steven A. Gantt, City Manager explained that City Council approved the ordinances to pass all of the budgets. In the future, we will attach these budgets to the ordinance that approves the annual budget.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Plaugh and seconded by Mr. Baddourah, Council voted unanimously to reaffirm the fiscal year 2012/2013 final operating and capital improvement program budgets for the General Fund, Water & Sewer, Storm Water, Parking, Hospitality Tax and Accommodations Tax Funds and to attach these budgets to Ordinance No.: 2012-051 – To Raise Revenue and Adopt the Budget for The City of Columbia, South Carolina, for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2013, that was approved on June 26, 2012.

6. Lester Drive Discussion – *This item was deferred.*

There was a consensus of Council to defer this matter and to notify Mr. Gilbert Walker, Executive Director of the Columbia Housing Authority that this will be discussed on August 7, 2012.

7. City Council August Meeting Schedule

There was a consensus of Council to conduct one meeting on Tuesday, August 7, 2012 at noon to accommodate the neighborhood festivities planned for National Night Out.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Baddourah, Council voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 4:03 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 8 through 11**.

8. Discussion of Employment of Employee – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*

9. 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.*

10. Receipt of legal advice which relates to a pending, threatened or potential claim – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*

11. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements – *This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.*

▪ **Council adjourned the Work Session at 5:45 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore
City Clerk