



CITY OF COLUMBIA
WORK SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2013
2:00 P.M.
2ND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
1737 MAIN STREET

The Columbia City Council conducted a Work Session on Tuesday, October 1, 2013 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 2:09 p.m. and the following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Leona K. Plough, The Honorable Brian DeQuincey Newman, The Honorable Cameron A. Runyan and The Honorable Moe Baddourah. The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine joined the meeting at 2:16 p.m. Also present were Ms. Teresa B. Wilson, 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. Update on Upcoming Municipal Elections – Mr. Howard Jackson, Director of Richland County Elections & Voter Registration

Mr. Howard Jackson, Director of Richland County Elections & Voter Registration reported that the budget for November 5, 2013 has not changed. He said they presented a clean estimate to include all costs they would be billed for. He said that public testing of the voting machines and the database has been completed for the upcoming election. He announced that absentee satellite voting precincts are being added this year at the following locations: City Hall, Richland County Council Chambers, St. Andrews Park and the Adult Activity Center. He explained that every poll worker is a part time employee of Richland County and they must go through the hiring process including orientation. He noted that if they are in the retirement system, then we have to pay into that system on their behalf. He explained that lead poll managers, which are also called clerks receive \$180 and other poll managers receive \$120. He recalled that in 2009, the IRS informed counties that they were required to include poll workers as part-time employees. He said that the precincts that primarily consist of county voters, were billed to the county.

- **Ms. Devine arrived at 2:16 p.m.**

Councilor Plough asked to see what was paid in 2010. She expressed concerns about the number of precincts that are being opened with some having a small number of voters. She said we are opening these precincts, because this is a countywide referendum. She said we are being invoiced for four (4) precincts in District Four that have little to no registered voters.

Mr. Ken E. Gaines, City Attorney said we were opening all precincts out of caution in case the referendum did pass.

Councilor Devine echoed Ms. Plough's concerns about Council not being notified of this decision. She agreed that it needed to be a Council decision. She said if we are trying to maximize voter turnout and participation we need to be able to articulate the cost to citizens. She said the key is to educate voters on where to go. She asked for clarification on the costs for the December 3, 2013 election.

Mayor Benjamin stated that it's unwise to have all the precincts open in November and then shut some of them down in December, because it can create voter confusion.

Councilor Davis concurred, noting that voters don't like surprises on voting day.

Councilor Runyan asked about the use of a temporary employment agency.

Mr. Howard Jackson, Director of Richland County Elections & Voter Registration said they are used for day laborers and they are not paid benefits.

Councilor Baddourah asked if precincts are being divided. He thought that new precincts were being created for the precincts that have more than 1,500 voters.

Mr. Howard Jackson, Director of Richland County Elections & Voter Registration said 25 precincts will go into effect in January 2014. He said that 1,500 is the threshold to consider, but you have to consider other variables. He hopes that the absentee satellite locations will alleviate the pressure.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Runyan, Council voted unanimously to keep the precincts as listed. Mr. Newman was not present for the vote.

2. [Update from the Midlands Housing Trust Fund](#) – Mr. Brian Huskey, Executive Director of the Midlands Housing Trust Fund

Councilor Devine introduced Brian Huskey as the new Executive Director of the Midlands Housing Trust Fund, which was formed a few years ago. She reiterated her request for an update on the implementation of the Affordable Housing Taskforce recommendations. She also noted that she asked the City Manager to publicize the efforts of the Midlands Housing Trust Fund. She encouraged everyone to invite Mr. Huskey to make presentations to neighborhood organizations.

Mr. Brian Huskey, Executive Director of the Midlands Housing Trust Fund said their mission is to create quality affordable housing in the Midlands region of South Carolina and to have a footprint in seven (7) counties as a public private funding partnership that works through financing, technical assistance and advocacy of affordable housing projects. The organization provides loans to non-profits, for-profits and government entities for acquisition, predevelopment costs, soft costs, infrastructure construction and rehabilitation costs. He explained that the loans are driven by underwriting. He said they respond more nimbly than traditional lenders and they offer lower interest and higher advanced rates. He defined affordable housing as housing that is available for rental or

purchase by low- or moderate-income households in which the occupants pay no more than 30% of their income for total housing costs, including utilities. He said one of their current priorities is to secure a dedicated, recurring source of funding from the city for loan capitalization and operating costs. He said this will allow them to become a certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) in the next two years.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said the city appropriated \$100,000, but the Midlands Housing Trust Fund hasn't drawn that down yet. She said the city has come to the table as a leader and she doesn't anticipate that this will change.

Mr. Brian Huskey, Executive Director of the Midlands Housing Trust Fund said it isn't a dedicated funding source that the organization can count on year after year. He said the city's funding is out for a Request for Proposals and the city wants to see a concentrated focus on targeted areas.

Councilor Davis asked for examples of the developers. He stated that more affordable housing opportunities need to be created in District One, he said the city would benefit greatly in the areas with boarded up houses and where the owner can't afford to bring the property up to code.

Mr. Brian Huskey, Executive Director of the Midlands Housing Trust Fund named the Santee Lynch Community Development Corporation, Community Assistance Providers, and Habitat for Humanity; people that have the capacity and the interest to create affordable housing projects in the Midlands region.

Councilor Plough asked if they are trying to achieve owner occupied or rental units. She asked if single family homes are being funded with the caveat of transitioning to homeownership. She urged Mr. Huskey to get a copy of the city's housing policy.

Mr. Brian Huskey, Executive Director of the Midlands Housing Trust Fund said that multifamily units will help them to move quicker towards CDFI certification. He said there needs to be a combination. He noted that developers will drive that. He announced that a roundtable discussion is being scheduled with developers to determine what their needs and plans are. He hopes that city leaders will attend also.

Councilor Devine said she requested this presentation, because we have to recognize that the community includes single family and multifamily housing. She said the need for multifamily housing is growing and as leaders we must get this information out. She said we don't need to duplicate efforts and we need to inform residents that multifamily housing is not negative.

Mayor Benjamin asked about the use of inclusionary zoning revenue to support the local trust fund.

Mr. Brian Huskey, Executive Director of the Midlands Housing Trust Fund said he could research how those deals were structured. He said a novel concept out of Nashville was the use of revenue from vehicle emissions testing as a funding source.

Mayor Benjamin said let's make it crystal clear that the \$100,000 from the General Fund is an ongoing source of funding.

CITY MANAGER'S MONTH IN REVIEW – *Click here to review the full report*

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said it has become apparent that we work hard, but we don't always communicate what is being done. She said a Month in Review publication will be distributed to the public to highlight actions taken by City Council and other big topics of discussion.

Ms. Krista Hampton, Director of Planning and Development Services said in an effort to streamline processes, they've initiated a change in the process so that an existing lot of record no longer requires city approval and they are launching a new process that will reduce the review time for plans submitted with corrections.

Mr. Roger Myers, Business License Administrator reported that a new software processing system was implemented to improve the quality of customer service; they now require verification of gross revenue at the time of a business license renewal; the online license renewal software processing system is being tested; and a deputy business license administration position has been created.

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget Director presented *Build Columbia* as an initiative that seeks to capitalize on the opportunity to create linkages between the strategic operations, strategic direction, budget development and project implementation on a citywide and program-wide level. She said it is an effort to improve operations and to achieve efficiencies. She said one effort is the Columbia Lean Government Approach, which involves the elimination of waste and looking for those things that add value from a cost perspective, for the customer seeking the service to the employee providing the service.

Ms. Angela Adams, Customer Care Center said that the Customer Care Center has evolved and its primary focus is no longer limited to water and sewer services; the call center is designed to accept calls about all city services. She said that the consolidated call center has extended hours from 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.; citizens will reach an employee during that time; there is one phone number to call (545-3300); and they are working to improve the service level response time.

Mr. Joey Jaco, Director of Utilities and Engineering reported that the Request for Proposals for the Water Revenue Audit is due tomorrow. The audit will help to enhance business processes; it will review and analyze billing data in order to confirm that the proper rate structure is being used for all customers; and ensure that all customers are being billed accordingly.

Mr. John Spade, Parking Services Director reported that responses to the Request for Proposals for single head credit card meters are due on October 22, 2013 and a 60-day pilot project will be conducted once a vendor is selected. He announced that a 60-day timed parking pilot project will start in November within the 1600 block of Main Street. He indicated that we have attempted to push people into the garages and this program may help to do that. He said they are also looking at the pay by phone option. He noted that all meters will not be smart meters.

Ms. Pam Benjamin, Human Resources Director announced the launch of the City Manager's new initiative focused around improving the customer experience that residents and citizens have with the City of Columbia. She announced that a series of workshops in partnership with Melanie Huggins of the Richland County Public Library will be held with a cross section of employees and this initiative will incorporate the Build Columbia concept.

Ms. Leshia Utsey, Director of Public Relations announced the launch of the city's new website, which focuses on being more user-friendly and being a major marketing tool. She noted that the development of the site was a collaborative effort and departments and offices will have direct access and the ability to make immediate updates to their information in order to keep the site current.

Ms. Shawna Washington, Public Relations Manager provided a tour of the new website, which can be found at www.columbiasc.net. She reviewed the various features of the website to include visitor resources, quick links, latest social media updates, drop down sections and other components.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

3. [Best Management Practices Manual for Storm Water Management](#) – Mr. William Lamb, P.E., Senior Engineer for AMEC

Ms. Dana Higgins, City Engineer explained that the Best Management Practices Manual (BMP) is part of the city's Storm Water Ordinance and part of our MS4 permit. She said in December 2012, they began conducting monthly meetings to discuss the BMP Manual with stakeholders. She noted that the draft version of the BMP was also posted online.

Mr. William Lamb, P.E., Senior Engineer for AMEC said that his firm was brought on to help with the creation of the Best Management Practices Manual as it applies to site development and redevelopment. The goals of the BMP Manual are to: proactively address current and future federal and state storm water regulations without burdening development; provide engineers and developers with an effective method for comprehensive storm water quantity and quality management; provide economic incentives for using Low Impact Development (LID) BMP's and better site design practices; and protect our natural resources and environment for the benefit of our community, our health, our economy and future development. He said the Unified Sizing Criteria is a different method for designing for storm water. It has been adopted by

Georgia, Maryland and New York and it is currently being adopted by Lexington County. He said that storm water runoff from all developments end up in a stream at some point and the design criteria associated with the Unified Sizing Criteria will address water quality, channel protection, overbank flood protection and extreme flood protection. He said that LID BMP's can be used to address water quality and quantity and the concepts can be incorporated into the landscape design of a development. He said better site design practices are soft ways to design for storm water and credits will be given for four (4) better site design practices. He said they also wanted to provide incentives and a methodology in the BMP to give engineers and developers a means for calculating the benefits. He said that the city's storm water utility fee provides funding for storm water related activities. He suggested that properties be divided into two categories: single-family residential, which is a flat fee and non-single family residential, which is based on the impervious area. He proposed the implementation of a user fee credit of up to 30% for the non-single family residential category for sites with water quality treatment per the Unified Sizing Criteria. This credit will apply to the redevelopment or retrofitting of existing storm water facilities. He noted that each BMP includes a maintenance agreement along with inspection and maintenance schedules. He said that a series of nine (9) meetings were held and these topics were discussed in great detail. In closing, he said that this will benefit the city and developers and it will improve the quality of storm water design.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Baddourah, Council voted unanimously to approve the Best Management Practices Manual for Storm Water Management as presented.

**Upon a motion made by Mayor Benjamin and seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to waive attorney client privilege on all matters listed for Executive Session, except for the discussion of the employment of an employee.

4. **Palmetto Compress - Mr. Fred Delk, Executive Director of the Columbia Development Corporation

Mr. Fred Delk, Executive Director of the Columbia Development Corporation reported that they are not prepared to list any names or specifics of the proposals received, but they are in contract negotiations. He recalled that at the end of April, the CDC and City Council created a development loan agreement for the Corporation to purchase the Palmetto Compress Warehouse and to set up a line of credit. He noted that they purchased the building; conducted studies; conducted a national marketing campaign; and created a request for proposals (RFP). He said on September 18, 2013, they received six (6) responses to the RFP; the responses were reviewed by the CDC Development Committee, ranked and provided to the board last Friday. He said four (4) responses were very strong and three (3) appeared to offer full price for the purchase. He said the committee of ten (10) included the CDC board and four (4) city employees. He said they have opened discussions with the top ranked developer and will bring a recommendation to City Council. He noted that project proposals ranged from lodging, student housing, market rate apartments, offices, retail space and other various uses.

5. **SLED Investigation – Mr. Kenneth E. Gaines, Esq., City Attorney

Mr. Kenneth E. Gaines, Esq., City Attorney reported that the investigation is ongoing and is not fully completed yet.

6. **Christ Central - *This item was not discussed.*

7. **Transitions - Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director

Ms. Melisa Caughman, Budget Director reported that sex offenders are at Transitions during the day, but they do not stay overnight. She recalled that she previously shared the questions and concerns from the Midlands Housing Alliance.

8. **Emergency Preparedness - Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager

Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager reported that FEMA has implemented a National Incident Management System that includes procedures for emergency preparedness. He said that the city's Homeland Security Department was eliminated; however, there are well trained professionals in both the Police and Fire Departments that will manage emergency situations. He explained that we will create a team of individuals and a managed process so that in the event of an emergency, we will have the resources necessary to manage an incident. He said that two (2) existing positions will be upgraded: an existing position will be upgraded to a captain position for the Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and a police officer's position will be upgraded to the Emergency Preparedness Specialist. He added that the Assistant Fire Chief will be part of this group along with the Director of Public Works and the Deputy Chief of our Police Department. He said this group will meet regularly and they will be responsible for coordinating the training and planning. He acknowledged that there is an issue of space; the Emergency Operations Center is currently located at 1225 Lady Street; and there would have to be a separate location for others during an incident.

9. **Columbia Police Department Command Staff

Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager explained that the assistant police chief is resigning and the deputy chief position is vacant. He proposed a new structure for the police command staff. The proposal includes retitling the assistant chief position to deputy chief and the third level would be called police majors instead of deputy chiefs, increasing the current number of majors to three (3) from one (1). He said whether the current interim chief is appointed as the permanent chief or not, the City Manager and Senior Assistant City Manager will still have a vote in who gets appointed in these positions.

Mayor Benjamin said he fundamentally disagrees with this assessment. He asked where this proposal came from.

Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager said there are issues in our Police Department ranging from our promotion process to discipline. He said people need to be permanently in place to improve the morale and direction of the organization. He said that Acting Chief Santiago made this recommendation and it's exactly where we were several years ago in terms of how the structure was laid out. He said this structure is similar to the one used across the country.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said we believe that some of the things we've dealt with are a result of not having this command staff. She said whoever comes in as the Police Chief needs to understand that we have people in place who are quite capable. She said in this interim stage and going forward, this structure is management's preferred structure.

Mayor Benjamin asked if the qualifications for a deputy chief and a police major are the same.

Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager said there are basic qualifications in place and those can be tweaked.

Councilor Runyan expressed concerns about Administration vetoing the decisions of the Police Chief. He perceived that we have not set benchmarks and expectations for the Police Department. He said if we are micromanaging every decision being made, how are we holding them accountable.

Councilor Devine said she supports the recommendation.

Councilor Plough said she is in the middle on this. She said the chief needs to be here to make this presentation.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said we are in the middle of an investigation and to give Chief Santiago cover for his recommendation, the management team is standing to support him. She said we are not making any assumptions, but we endorse the recommendations he has made. She said that Chief Santiago can stand and speak.

Councilor Plough said timing is everything. She respects Administration recognizing the issues, but we need to hire a chief and allow him to hire and fire. She wants all department heads to have that authority and responsibility and then be held accountable.

Councilor Devine added that under normal circumstances that may be the preference, but we don't know when the investigation will be over. She said the chief will have the purview to make future changes or recommendations. She agreed that we don't need to micromanage, but when someone has to get up to speed, that adds angst in the elevation process of officers. We have great officers; the city managers want to elevate them; and that can boost morale.

Mr. S. Allison Baker, Senior Assistant City Manager said he has no illusions that he is a policeman and as an administrator he understands his role in supporting our Police Chief and Fire Chief. He said we are equipped to work with Ruben Santiago to address these issues.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

10. Discussion of employment of an employee- *This item was not discussed in Executive Session.*

- **Council adjourned the Work Session at 5:56 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. Moore
City Clerk