

**CITY OF COLUMBIA
WORK SESSION ACTION REPORT
OCTOBER 28, 2009 – 9:00 A.M.
CITY HALL - 1737 MAIN STREET
2nd Floor – Conference Room**



The Columbia City Council met for a Work Session on Wednesday, October 28, 2009 at City Hall 1737 Main Street, Columbia South Carolina. The Honorable Mayor Robert D. Coble called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. The following members of Council were present: The Honorable E.W. Cromartie, II, The Honorable Sam Davis, and The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine. The Honorable Kirkman Finlay II arrived at 9:09 a.m. and The Honorable Belinda F. Gergel arrived at 9:20 a.m. Also present were Mr. Steven A. Gantt, Interim City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Salley, City Clerk.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

1. **Update from the Columbia City Ballet – Mr. William Starrett, Executive and Artistic Director of the Columbia City Ballet

Mr. William Starrett, Executive and Artistic Director of the Columbia City Ballet introduced the dancers that were in attendance and provided an update on their recent activities. He announced that the Dracula Ballet will be returning for its 14th Anniversary at the Koger Center on Thursday, October 29, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. and all student tickets will cost \$10 as part of the company's educational outreach.

Councilor Devine expressed her support in considering a funding request from the Columbia City Ballet for a performance in Chicago. She suggested that the funds come from the Economic Development Special Projects Account since it doesn't qualify for funding from the Hospitality Tax Fund.

- **Mayor Coble left the meeting at 9:18 a.m. and Mayor Pro-Tempore Kirkman Finlay III is now presiding.**

2. **Legislative Update – Ms. Teresa Wilson Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs

Ms. Teresa Wilson Florence, Director of Governmental Affairs provided an update on pending legislation of interest to the City of Columbia.

This report was received as information. No action was taken.

3. **Accommodations Tax Collections – Mr. Bill Ellis, Deputy Finance Director

Mr. Bill Ellis, Deputy Finance Director reported that the first quarter collections for Accommodations Tax revenues are 12% below last year's collections. Due to this trend, there is a concern that we will not be able to meet our obligations for the Conventions and Visitors Bureau and Lake Murray Tourism. He requested that they be authorized to notify the two (2) organizations that they will only receive the revenue that has been generated.

There was a consensus of Council to direct Mr. Ellis to meet with Ms. Libby Gober, City Council Liaison to determine what was originally conveyed to the organizations in regards to the allocated funding versus revenue collections and to notify the organizations in writing with copies of the letters going to the members of City Council.

4. [Hampton Street Improvement Request \(Allen University\)](#) – The Honorable E.W. Cromartie, II

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to approve the Hampton Street Improvement Request as presented by staff with the addition of flashing caution lights and with the caveat that Allen University conduct a public awareness campaign related to pedestrian and student safety. The improvements requested include steps with a handrail in a location students are currently climbing a bank then a wall, landscape to include irrigation, and installation of a new mid-block raised crosswalk for students to use (striping only, no raised walk).

5. [Plug In Carolina Request for Letter of Intent](#) – Mr. John Spade, Director of Parking Services

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to approve the use of \$60,000 from the Clean Cities Grant to install Plug In charger stations within various City of Columbia parking garages. The City of Columbia will pay for the electricity consumed for the first three (3) years.

- **Council recessed at 10:11 a.m.**
- **Council reconvened at 10:22 a.m.**

6. Timeline for Audit Process / Outline of Steps in Audit Process – Mr. Bud Addison, Audit Senior Manager / Webster Rogers LLP

Mr. Bud Addison, Audit Senior Manager / Webster Rogers LLP reported that they have started the June 30, 2009 audit; to date, the information received has vastly improved from prior information; there has been a great deal of progress in the Finance Department and the accumulation of information; the information is not ready for four (4) areas; and assuming that there are no big glitches, the audit will be completed at the end of the year or mid-January 2010.

7. Update on Finlay Park Parking Lot and Gating – Mr. Allison Baker, Assistant City Manager of Public Services and Mr. Michael King, Assistant City Manager of Public Safety – *This update was deferred.*

There was a consensus of Council to schedule a Public Hearing on Wednesday, December 2, 2009.

- **Council recessed at 10:41 a.m.**
- **Council reconvened at 1:13 p.m. in the second floor Conference Room.**

8. **Council is asked to approve a Contract for a Performance Assessment as requested by The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine. Award to EquaTerra, Inc. in the amount of \$150,000. This firm is located in Houston, TX.

Upon motion by Ms. Devine, seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted four (4) to two (2) to approve a Contract for a Performance Assessment. Award to EquaTerra, Inc. in the amount of \$150,000. Mr. S. Allison Baker, Assistant City Manager for Community and Neighborhood Services will be the lead staff person to ensure that each department cooperates with this process. This firm is located in Houston, TX. Voting aye were Ms. Devine, Mr. Davis, Mr. Cromartie and Mayor Coble. Voting nay were Dr. Gergel and Mr. Finlay.

Upon motion by Ms. Devine, seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted five (5) to one (1) to allocate \$67,500 from the Economic Development Special Projects Account to fund one-half (1/2) of the cost for the Performance Assessment. The anticipated \$100,000 proceeds from the sale of 50' of right-of-way to Vista Bank will be transferred to the Economic Development Special Projects Account. A funding source for the remaining \$67,500 will be determined by staff and approved by Council. Voting aye were Mr. Finlay, Ms. Devine, Mr. Davis, Mr. Cromartie and Mayor Coble. Dr. Gergel voted nay.

9. Fiscal Year 2009 / 2010 Economic Development Special Projects Account – Mr. Jim Gambrell, Director of Economic Development - *Consideration of this item was deferred.*

- **Mr. Finlay and Dr. Gergel left the meeting at 2:36 p.m.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion by Mayor Coble, seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to go into Executive Session at 2:37 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 10.** and **111.** as outlined.

10. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements

- Burnside Property

This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.

- Landfill Contract

*This item was discussed in Executive Session. Please refer to **Item 13.***

- Farmer's Market Proposal
- In-House Medical Clinic

These items were discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.

11. Receipt of legal advice which relates to pending, threatened or potential claim

This item was discussed in Executive Session. No action was taken.

- **Council adjourned the Executive Session at 2:51 p.m. to reconvene the Work Session.**

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

12. **Landfill Contract

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted three (3) to one (1) to approve a five-year contract extension with Waste Management for disposal of the City's construction and demolition debris. Voting aye were Mr. Davis, Mr. Cromartie and Mayor Coble. Ms. Devine voted nay.

13. **MAST General Store, Inc.

Upon motion by Mr. Cromartie, seconded by Ms. Devine, Council voted unanimously to approve a \$2,000,000 (two million dollar), 10 (ten) year loan to Mast General Store, Inc. The funding will come from the Recovery Zone Facility Bonds that are authorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The City will work with Richland County and the Jobs-Economic Development Authority (JEDA) to facilitate the issuing of the bonds to Mast General Store and will pay the tax-exempt interest on the debt.

- **Council adjourned the meeting at 2:53 p.m.**