

ADJOURNED MEETING CITY COUNCIL
August 19, 2015

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in an adjourned session on Wednesday, August 19, 2015, at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall in the Raymond I. Allen Community Room. Mayor Michael presided and the following Councilmembers were present, to wit: Mayor Pro Tem Troy E. Alexander, Bill Aldridge, Martha Sue Hall, Martha Hughes, Dexter Townsend and Chris Whitley. Absent, Benton Dry.

Mayor Michael brought the meeting to order. This meeting is being held to review a branding presentation for the City of Albemarle and Stanly County by North Star Destination Strategies.

Stanly County Manager Andy Lucas introduced Mr. Don McEachern, President and CEO, North Star Destination Strategies who presented the final results of the branding project. Mr. McEachern stated that it began with research, on to a strategy, to being creative, and turning in to action. North Star helped to identify competitive advantages and what makes Stanly County and the City of Albemarle special and distinct and then how to articulate it.

The community, consumers and competition were some of the research instruments involved. Research included interviews, focus groups, and surveys. The target audience, point of difference which was having an abundance of water – the source of all life and exceptional quality of life and benefits for Albemarle and Stanly County were determined. The brand narrative logo and strapline includes Water, Air, and Land. The presentation demonstrated executions of the brand for both Albemarle and Stanly County along with the slogan and brand.

Next, is the implementation of the brand which includes brand action merchandising ideas showing examples of letterhead, envelopes, water bottles, pens, business cards, caps, tee shirts, etc., incorporating water, air, and land with fun, opportunity, shopping, agriculture, education and success. Mr. McEachern stated that the infrastructure throughout Albemarle/Stanly County represents a unique, three-dimensional medium for displaying our brand. Options include adding some element of the brand to infrastructure that already exist as well as developing new infrastructure in places where demand and opportunity are high. Items to consider are pole banners, water

towers, vehicles, park benches, crosswalks, or community signage. He stated that a total re-haul of all signage in Albemarle/Stanly County (entryway, directional, etc.) would not be immediately feasible, but signage is a critical branding component for communities. Effective signage can positively impact a visitor's experience and also advance general awareness.

Also reviewed were examples of an economic development folder, red carpet tours which could be given to specific prospects and targets with logo and itinerary. Vehicular, parking and pedestrian directionals were also displayed. Examples of a tourism guide book with language of our vineyards, fishing, boating, biking, dining, agriculture, art, museum and gold mines as attractions were also included.

Mr. McEachern stated that this information can be placed on a portal web page which is most often a web page specially designed that brings information together in this case for both Stanly County and the City of Albemarle and each information source gets its dedicated area on the page for displaying information.

Mr. McEachern answered any questions that any one in the audience had. He also stated that the full package should be sent to Council and Stanly County by September with the graphics being sent in just a few days. Upon questioning, Mr. McEachern stated there was a committee of three people from the City and three people from the County which met at least 10 times during the research phase. There were 50-100 people involved from inside and outside the County in the research phase.

Mayor Michael stated that once the package is received in September, the City and the County will then officially be able to adopt the branding recommendations. Mayor Michael thanked Mr. McEachern for coming and presenting the results to us.

Mayor Michael stated that City Council will take a brief recess and return to complete other business.

Mayor Michael brought the meeting back to order to discuss several issues concerning the new personnel policy that was just adopted on July 5, 2015.

Councilmember Alexander stated that there have been some questions pertaining to some of the new changes in the personnel policy just approved which now states that all positions will be advertised and open to the outside as well as internal candidates instead of first promoting from within.

The policy states “the City will conduct an open recruitment and consider external and internal candidates rather than automatically promoting from within.” “Candidates for promotion shall be chosen on the basis of their qualifications and their work records.” “Internal candidates shall apply for promotions using the same application process as external candidates.” The City Manager indicated he was bringing this to the attention of the Mayor and Council because he needs clarification on the intent of this section of the policy. He noted there are internal concerns about the practicality of advertising all positions.

It was the consensus of the Mayor and City Council that the intent of the policy is to provide for career development by allowing promotions from within without advertising; however, when the internal advancement process is complete and there is still a need for an additional employee to address the vacancy, then all positions must be advertised. It was noted that internal promotions are not automatic and there may be cases where advertising for a non-entry level position is prudent. The City Manager said the City will proceed this way and that he and Human Resources Director Robert Whitley will review the policy to determine if changes are needed to the policy to make clarifications.

Also, there were questions dealing with the changes concerning holiday pay and it not being counted as hours worked. It was explained that the new City-wide policy of being on call gives an employee one hour pay a day just for being on call. If the employee responds and comes in to work, they are paid for at least 2 hours even if they work 2 hours or less. If they respond and come in to work but have taken a sick day, vacation day, or we have had a holiday that week, the holiday and other time off does not count as hours worked and therefore is not included in the hours in the computation of overtime. This meets the standards of FLSA.

It was the consensus of City Council that information be gathered by researching the practices of ElectriCities members to determine how holiday pay is handled.

Mayor Michael stated that he had a handout for Council on confidential personnel matters related to draft information for the setting of expectations and performance standards of the City Manager for the next twelve-month period.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Aldridge, seconded by Councilmember Hall, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned.