

ADJOURNED MEETING CITY COUNCIL  
February 12, 2015

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in an adjourned session on Tuesday, February 12, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. in the Executive Conference Room of the City Hall. Mayor Michael presided and the following Councilmembers were present, to wit: Troy E. Alexander, Bill Aldridge, Benton Dry, Martha Sue Hall, Martha E. Hughes, Dexter Townsend and Chris Whitley. Absent, none.

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The Mayor and the City Council held a Fiscal Year 2013/2014 Planning and Budgeting Work Session in the Conference Room of the City Hall with the following Departments presenting: Public Housing, Public Utilities, Public Works, Finance, and Fire.

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Mayor Michael brought the meeting to order.

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Mayor Michael stated that Council will be receiving a memo from Human Resource Director Robert Whitley concerning Tuesday night's discussion of the Pay Plan. Robert has made the changes requested by the Mayor and Council and has updated the implementation costs.

Also, Mayor Michael stated that Council is receiving a report from Planning and Community Development Director concerning the attendance of each member of the Albemarle Community Appearance Board. Mayor Michael stated that issues concerning this board can be discussed at the joint meeting of Council, Planning Board, and Board of Adjustment on Wednesday, April 15 at 6:30 pm.

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Public Housing Director Cedric Baldwin came before Council to discuss his accomplishments for FY 2014-15 and priorities for FY 2015-16. He spoke with Council about continuing to improve the Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS), continuing to improve the Section 8 Management Program (SEMAP). The department has been rated by HUD as a High Performing Agency in each category.

Mr. Baldwin stated that the 2014 CFP HUD funds in the amount of \$287, 284, were used to replace some of the HVAC units in Amhurst Gardens, the purchase of a new maintenance vehicle, and development of the Five-Year Agency Plan. HUD will award \$292,217 in Capital funds for 2015 and will be used for modernization of the Public Housing units and buildings, management improvements, equipment, and fees and cost with maintaining the program.

Mr. Baldwin listed his needs and priorities:

Immediate Needs

Heat Treatment system for bed bugs for 5-6 units in need at Amhurst & Elizabeth Heights  
Phase II & Phase III of HVAC renovation at Amhurst Gardens  
Development of 2015-19 Five-Year Agency Plan  
Housing software  
Staff Trainings  
Purchase of 4WD maintenance vehicle

Short-term Needs

Renovations of the Family Life Center  
Continued Modernization of Public Housing Units  
New Vehicle for Director

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Councilmember Dry came into the meeting at this time.

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Public Utilities Director Mike Leonas came before Council and presented the FY 2014-15 budget status graphs for the water and sewer fund sales revenue, water and sewer budgeting expenditures, electric fund budgeted revenue, and electric fund budgeted expenditures.

Mr. Leonas also presented FY 2014-15 accomplishments for administration and customer service, electric division, plants division, systems division, and the maintenance division.

Mr. Leonas presented FY 2015-16 program goals and requests for administration and customer service, electric division, plants division, systems division, and the maintenance division.

Partial Lists/ Goals and Requests:

Administration & Customer Service Divisions

Complete Customer Service Policy Review & Revisions

Expand bill payment options

Explore Call Center options

Electric Division

Re-conductor along Efird, Wall, Stanly County Plaza

Continue 4kv conversion

Install 3-phase line reclosers

Continue downtown street light conversion to LEDs

Replace line truck (304), service truck (320), and pickup truck (323)

Add 3 personnel for succession of meter lab personnel and OH crew safety

Plants Division

Complete ROW survey for Old Whitney raw water line

Complete engineering design for Electrical Safety Upgrades at LCWWTP

Complete engineering design for Solids Handling Improvements at LCWWTP

Replace two existing screw pumps at LCWWTP

Complete engineering design for alum sludge handling at TTWTP

Begin engineering design for raw water intake relocation at TTWTP

Replace flatbed truck (607 LCWWTP), pickup truck (52 WTP), pickup truck (TTWTP)

Systems Division

Upgrade water line from 2" to 6" – Mill Street

Continue I&I reduction program

Continue AMR deployment on water meters

Replace sewer camera system

Replace dump truck (404)

Replace 4X4 pickup truck (463)

Maintenance Division

Implement CCMS (computerized maintenance management system)

Replace Service Truck & Crane

Replace pickup truck (610)

It was the consensus of the City Council that the Albemarle Police Department should remain open at night. However, the City Council felt that cost responsibilities for staffing for after hours calls related to power outages and other utilities issues rest with the Public Utilities Department. Council indicated they would like Public Utilities to fund the cost of the position necessary to keep the after hours utility call center open in the Police Department.

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Councilmember Townsend left the meeting at this time.

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Public Works Director Nina Underwood came before Council and reviewed with Council current and planned projects for her department.

Development of North Second Street Visioning Plan funded through COG Grant  
Leonard Avenue Traffic Study  
Leonard Avenue/US Hwy 52 Business Sidewalk project  
Landfill Leachate Force Main Financing and Construction  
Fleet Maintenance Facility Study  
Fleet Maintenance Software  
Renewal of Landfill 5-year Permit to Operate  
Street Pavement Condition Study

Next, Ms. Underwood gave her responsibilities and requests for each of Public Works' four divisions as follows:

Warehouse

Request network cameras - \$4,500-\$8,000

Maintenance Shop

Request the implementation of maintenance software

First Year: \$8,500

Annual Renewal: \$4,900

Request Maintenance Facility

Estimate to renovate/expand current facility: \$902,000

Estimate to build new facility: \$1,010,000

Streets

Request to move the purchase of a Paver from CIP FY 2015-16 to FY 2016-17, move up purchase of a Tandem Dump Truck with attachments: Cost \$125,000

Request Mowing Tractor for Public Works share - \$80,000

Streets Condition Study - \$30,000

Landfill

Working toward the renewal of Permit to Operate

The funding approval of the Leachate Force Main will allow moving forward with the final design approval and construction to connect the leachate collection pipe to the City's sanitary sewer system and then to cease our pump and haul which will reduce our workforce by one employee.

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Finance Director Colleen Conroy came before Council and stated that she attended the NC Local Government Investment Association Conference Monday and Tuesday of this week.

In discussion concerning credit card processing and controlling costs she stated that the City is looking into changing its credit card processing. We will be looking at fees to process from billing to accepting and posting payments. There is a difference in fees between keying the account number and a swipe of the card up to 1% difference in the rate charged to us. Banks having been taking much of this risk, but later this year if there is not a pin & chip method, the liability shifts from banks to the point of sale. Ms. Conroy also spoke of the experts and their predicting a rise in interest rates by this summer or fall.

Ms. Conroy spoke of her department and how:

Finance looks for inconsistencies, incorrect coding of invoices, lack of documentation, monitor budgets, and look at better internal controls

Finance works with other departments in paying bills, paying employees, assisting with purchasing, collecting payments, keeping up with their grants, working on debt issues, making work flow correctly and following guidelines to financial statements. She stated that the retirement systems may show a slight asset rather than liability as it is fully funded.

Ms. Conroy spoke of expanding the acceptance of credit card and electronic payments and the various issues with the Harris NorthStar in conjunction with Public Utilities, Emphasys with Public Housing, and Tyler Technologies which holds the City financials. We are continuing to look at offering Vendor Self Service that will help potential vendors come on board and can be used in the bidding process.

The Finance Department is proactive and realizes more and more customers want to pay in more and various ways. We are looking into payment via phone and their devices anywhere, anytime and we will still process payments whether credit card payments for the landfill or Parks & Recreation. Finance is discussing with Public Utilities and ElectriCities about the possibility of e-billing. The savings in postage would quickly pay for the program. Also, looking at rebates for water heater or heat pump and giving the customer an option of placing the refund on their utility bill rather than writing them a check.

Other items covered were:

Building a positive relationship with Customers

Looking at ways to streamline processes and increase efficiency

Better ways to mitigate the cost of bad debt write-off

Possibility using the Online Utility Exchange - \$10 fee to check credit to

Determine low, medium, or high risk and that determining their deposit amount if any

Possibility of merging Customer Service and Collections

Implementing the Pay Plan

Review health insurance for retirees

Continue departmental training to stay current with trends and technology

Public Utilities rate study

Financial Analyst come in concerning investments and debt

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Fire Chief Shawn Oke came before Council and stated that the replacement of outdated vehicle extraction equipment is currently in process. The City's match for this is \$6,880 and the City's match is \$25,700 on the upgrade of 800MHz radios.

2014-15 Accomplishments

All members NC Airport Rescue and Firefighting Certified

Start utilization of Employee Assistance Program for employee support after incident responses

Smoke alarm installation program through grants

2015-16 Goals

Improve employee diversity in the department

Implement Pay study recommendations

Pre-Plan program available on apparatus in 2016-17 budget years

Staff development through Grow Your Captain's Leadership program

Continued utilization of smoke alarm installation grants

Dispose of reserve ladder and engine apparatus

1) Hire an Assistant Fire Chief – Initial cost: \$139,000 Yearly: \$90,000

2) Purchase of Five Thermal Hangers – Cost: \$50,000

3) Reactivation of Call Force – One time expense: \$5,000 Training: \$4,000  
Annual Pay for Training: \$3,000-4,000

4) Relocation of Ladder Company to Old Fire Station on North Third Street –  
Cost undetermined

Future Recommended Improvements

Relocation or renovation of Fire Station Two, projected 2019-20 budget year

Addition of full time Fire Inspector  
Addition of a Battalion Chief  
Replacement of department's aerial ladder in the 2018-19 budgets. Estimated  
Cost: \$1,000,000  
Reduce the current Office of State Fire Marshal Fire Suppression Rating  
Schedule score from a four to a two.  
Begin process of accreditation for the fire department through the Commission on  
Fire Accreditation International.  
Acquisition of a rescue vehicle to carry the department's rescue equipment.

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Mayor Michael thanked all department heads for their reports and  
staying during the long hour sessions on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.

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Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by  
Councilmember Dry, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned until  
Monday, February 16 at 7:00 pm in the Council Chambers of City Hall for a  
regular session meeting.