

ADJOURNED MEETING CITY COUNCIL
February 6, 2018

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in an adjourned session on Tuesday, February 6, 2018, at 5:30 p.m. in the Executive Conference Room of the City Hall. Mayor Michael presided and the following Councilmembers were present, to wit: Mayor Pro Tem Martha Sue Hall, Bill Aldridge, Chris Bramlett, Benton Dry, Martha E. Hughes, Dexter Townsend and Chris Whitley. Absent, none.

The Mayor and the City Council held a Fiscal Year ~~2017/2018~~ 2018/2019 Planning and Budgeting Work Session in the Executive Conference Room of the City Hall.

Mayor Michael called the meeting to order.

The City Manager stated that he had tickets for Council concerning the bonus concert at the Agri-Civic Center on Sunday, February 17 at 3 pm that was presented by Tim Hedrick at the Council meeting on Monday.

The City Manager stated that IS Director Owen Squires is out of town at a conference and handed out a copy of his presentation to Council for review.

The City Manager stated that concerning Council doing something to thank all the water/sewer and public works staff for all they did during the cold winter and holidays, it was suggested by Public Works Director Ross Holshouser to have coffee/donuts at the City warehouse and Council be there. If this is okay, staff will set this up and let Council know good dates to consider doing this.

It was the consensus of City Council to have coffee/donuts at the City warehouse with Council there and to determine best date for this.

Finance Director Colleen Conroy came before Council and stated that her department is part of the administration section of budgeting and financial

reporting. She stated that Finance works with each department with their particular needs. Finance strives to keep up with ever changing rules and regulations of the Government Accounting Standards Board.

Ms. Conroy stated that they have successfully:

- 1) Set up an Internal Service Fund for Self-Insurance
- 2) Have a clean audit, no findings nor material weaknesses
- 3) Closed loan for the Land for the Albemarle Business Center
- 4) Implemented a new Cash & Investment Policy
- 5) Partnered with MultiBank Securities to expand investment Options
- 6) Transitioned 3 finance positions

Councilmember Aldridge came into the meeting at this time

Goals moving forward:

Utilize financial software more fully
Have investment assessment
Additional training on MUNIS System
Look at Vendor Self-Service and Citizens Self-Service
Major upgrade of Financial Accounting System
Complete an RFP for banking services
Updated Purchasing Policy completed soon
Staff Training
To use e-Connect Direct

To help insure that IS has sufficient funds to keep up processes that allow large files coming in to City or to be able to notify the sender that it did not go through

Also budget for paying for audit, financial software, a portion of the Financial Analyst, office supplies/materials leases on equipment, collection for taxes and bank fees.

Ms. Conroy stated that she appreciates Council's willingness to always look at employees first and provide COLA adjustments and some manner of increased compensation.

She stated that one thing has become an issue for us that relates to merit increases. Some sort of avenue needs to be available to department managers to increase a salary for excellent work. The department should be able to manage and justify to the City Manager why this employee should get a merit increase.

Ms. Conroy answered any questions that Council had.

Economic Development Director Mark Donham came before Council to review accomplishments and activities for 2017-18.

Selection of a Site and Development of the Albemarle Business Center

Contract on the purchase of property signed by Mayor February 6, 2017

Closing of property took place June 19, 2017

Preparation for infrastructure improvements have been made

Approved awarding a contract with Chambers Engineering to study and Master Plan the site to be completed by April or Mid-May 2018

Complete Phase one of the plan in one year and in good position to attract industry here

Hope to build first speculative building next year (2019) at cost of approx. \$1.9m

Re-Develop Historic Albemarle Hotel/Mayor Projects Downtown

Albemarle Hotel recently purchase by a developer group and in process of changing previous plans to include more apartments.

No official date to start, however, its development will be scheduled to dovetail completion of Pfeiffer's Health Sciences Facility.

Identify and Follow-Up with Leads for Business Location

Worked with 50 companies looking into locating or expanding in Albemarle with eight successes and ten are still viable prospects

Four RFP's submitted were looking at the Albemarle Business Center, one for 75 acres, one for 30 acres, one for 25 acres, and one for 20 acres.

Several looked at the Prime Power Park

Several prospects have looked at our older buildings

Implement and Evaluate Industry Recognition Program

Global Packaging and Kraftsman have agreed to participate and

Kraftsman has agreed to do a tour first in our next industry recognition

Ms. Donham stated he has visited 19 local businesses this year and many others over the phone or at meetings. Six have indicated they plan to expand.

Oversee Main Street Program

Assisting Joy Almond, Director and her assistant, Hailey.
Many volunteers that make the program work well
Chair the Economic Vitality Committee

Facilitate the Development of our Workforce

Working with Stanly Community College and NC Works Career Center to find ways to get the labor force repaired to meet the needs of business and industry
Supported two job fairs and participated with a Workforce Collaborative Planning Grant

Ms. Donham stated he is working with Retail Strategies to develop job opportunities in Albemarle. Retail continues to grow as we see restaurants open downtown and throughout the City. Several new retail stores to open and expand.

Ms. Donham also stated he is in contact with our local broadband fiber carriers in locating business and industry. He has been in contact with Windstream and Spectrum with the development of the Albemarle Business Center. Also looking at wireless options for the ABC. We have good access to broadband fiber here.

Marketing - Mr. Donham has completed the publication of the insert in the Charlotte Business Journal working with Mike Smith and SCC on this.

Continuing Development and Marketing of Roosevelt Ingram Site

The site is almost prepared for the Air National Guard to excavate and grade in mid-March. We have to relocate some electrical lines and place the sedimentary and erosion controls. Our electrical division is currently in the process of relocating the lines.

Ms. Donham stated that he prepares a monthly report each month for City Council.

Ms. Donham answered any questions that Council had.

Police Chief Danny Bowen came before City Council to discuss budget considerations for 2017/2018 as follows:

Capital Projects

Chief Bowen thanked City Council from all of the employees at the Albemarle Police Department for the work and investment in the future Police Department Headquarters. He also stated that they had relocated the West Community Office into an office in the Patterson Building at Stanly Community College, thanks to Dr. Enamait.

Personnel

2017 – 1 officer retired – Elbert Branch, SRO at Albemarle High School

2 Captains may be retiring late 2018

We will have promotional processes when those vacancies occur

2 Openings currently – we plan to leave these open for the remainder of this budget year.

Vehicles

We will request this budget year 3 new vehicles

In 2017 we lost one vehicle due to accident, one was totaled due to gunfire, two other vehicles also damaged by gunfire. They are being repaired and back on the road. In the current budget year, we purchased 2 Patrol vehicles, and 1 SRO vehicle

Training

NC continues to require officers to maintain 24 hours of in-service training to maintain their certification. In 2017, we purchased equipment to allow us to conduct scenario based training with “Live Fire” situations which was a great success and we are planning to expand it in 2018. We are also planning to have at least one training for everyone in the upcoming year that addresses handling stress from our job and counseling after critical incidents.

Community Events

On the Table February 21

Jr. Police Academy in June

Coffee with a Cop

Community National Night Out in 2018

Equipment Needs

Recently, we equipped patrol officers with Naloxone (NARCAN) which serves two purposes. We can come to the aid of someone that has had an opioid overdose or if a fellow officer is exposed to Heroin or Fentanyl, we can come to their aid.

Cameras – In 2017, we added 15 body worn cameras and would like to add another 15 of these in the next year’s budget to complete equip our patrol officers.

Technology

In-House computers, in-car laptops, cameras, and records management. Technology has grown to where it is a major part of our day to day operations. As we move forward, this will only continue to increase as our equipment becomes more dependent upon technology. Support for all these systems is necessary for us to operate.

Overall Budget

The budget for 2018-19 should be in line with the 2017-18 budget and do not foresee any major changes

Parks and Recreation Director Lisa Kiser came forward and briefly talked about philosophies and trained for planning and budgeting including, philosophies, social trends driving recreation profession, trends in parks/open spaces, trends in programs, looking at how to pay for it, and implementation and evaluation.

FY 2017-2018 in Review – Projects completed
Facilities/Capital

Chuck Morehead Park

Pool filtration systems replaced, shade structures installed, basketball court restriped, and Dog Park installed.

New picnic shelter to be completed by May 2018

Funding: PARTF grant (\$130,000), COA match (\$130,000), US Dept. of Agriculture – Urban Community Forest Grant (\$5,000) and COA match (\$5,000)

EE Waddell Center

Lights installed around track, new windows installed in Gym, new paint on gym walls, enclose door way at south end of gym, and install new flooring in gym and lobby

Remove asbestos from gym, gym ribbon cutting, and gutter & roof repairs in February 2018

Funding: Albemarle Rotary Club provided a \$30,000 sponsorship for half of the flooring for the gym. All other funding provided by COA.

Ingram Park

Demolition of chemical storage building, demolition of press box, demolition of fencing around ballfield, and removal of playground equipment.

Land is ready for National Guard to do earth moving exercises to bring lot to street level – date TBD

Central Auditorium

RFP/RFQ for audio, visual, lighting and drapery improvements, contract awarded to Music N More, and installation of audio, visual, lighting, drapery and lighting package

Training for new equipment and ready for rentals by March 2018.

Funding: COA

Wiscasset Athletic Park

Fundraising Feasibility Study

Funding: COA

Ms. Kiser talked about the Greenways/Trails concerning attending forums/workshops, working with Carolina Thread Trail and other Stanly County municipalities, other COA departments, establishing community partnerships for sponsorship of expansion of greenway through Albemarle.

Funding: COA

Policy

Updated Facility Rental Policies

Updating all Standard Operating Procedures for Parks n Rec

Updating all staff policies for Parks n Rec

Programming

Maintained certifications/memberships, Country-wide Programs, State-wide tournaments, and Adult Athletics

Capital Priorities

Immediate – upcoming FY

Revise Greenway Expansion Plans
Pool Basin resurfacing both pools
Pool house remodel both pools

Non-Capital Priorities

Immediate – upcoming FY

Fencing around Pool – Rock Creek
Repair steps at Rock Creek
Market sale of Ingram Park property
Picnic shelter improvements
Pool diving boards/lifeguard stands
John boat with 50 hp motor for treating
Invasive vegetation in City Lake Park

Technology Priorities

Immediate – upcoming FY

Online Program registration
Facility/Asset Management
Work Order database
Facility Rental Scheduler

Staff Development Priorities

Immediate – upcoming FY

Develop work plans and goals
Staff certified Park & Rec Professionals
(2 by end of FY19)
Training for staff
Parks staff certified as pesticide sprayer or playground inspector

Ms. Kiser reviewed with Council short term goals by FY 2020 and Intermediate goals by 2023 for capital and non-capital improvements, technology, and staff development.

Ms. Kiser answered any questions that Council had.

Planning and Development Services Director Kevin Robinson came before Council and reviewed his department summary including the Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, and Historic Resources Commission and also his budget information and department goals.

FY 2017-18 Department Summary

Maintenance:

Reggie Smith very effective as a custodian as well as filling in for Ron Epps in his absence at times. Ron Epps has overseen several maintenance projects with security alarms and emergency repair and maintenance.

Mr. Robinson stated that repair maintenance costs have been higher than normal this year when adjusted for new contracts. Hopefully we will get through April-June without major HVAC and other repairs needed. We will need to make a decision about the old fire station because the roof is beyond repair, HVAC and plumbing needs addressing with no money budgeted for this year.

We will look again at doing a facility assessment and adding Dude Solutions Capital Planning Software to address aging systems before end of life. Have a proposal for a 10 year contract on lighting with Netzero to switch to LED lighting.

Code Enforcement

331 violations so far this fiscal year
100% compliance rate with only one outstanding debt
Already far surpassed our annual average for cases
77% of budgeting funds used. Does not take into account debts paid. He said he does want to try to do a better job tracking this cost end of year.

Zoning Enforcement

27 sign permits, 1 sign violation letter sent, 1 abated
Numerous temporary signs removed during sweeps
Breaking sign enforcement into city quadrants has been effective in the long run
615 zoning inquiries, 18 zoning verification letters sent, 17 Violation, letters sent, 3 outstanding violations

Nasser and he have spent a great deal of research on zoning enforcement and abatement at the court level this year. We will be enforcement and abatement at the court level this year. We will be working with streamlining/standardizing what the attorney is needed for.

Minimum Housing- Demolitions

Watch list has grown to include up to 50 active properties
9 removed last fiscal year, including 1 removed by owner
Included 15 this year, 1 has been removed by owner already and 2

agreed to voluntary burns by the owner.

Hearings to be conducted next month on the other 12

We have used 21% of the allotted budget thus far. Most is title/attorney fees

The biggest issue remains coordination between multiple parties keeping things moving on schedule and keeping unnecessary costs down. This is really something 1 person should be handling most of and doing much of the work internally

Minimum Housing- Deteriorated Houses

Nasser and James Luster have worked to take on handful of minimum housing cases per quarter through to enforcement Since last year we have processed 18 of these cases, 9 of them have been closed and 3 close to completion

Our biggest need continue to be resources, manpower and funds to address this growing problem. We exceeded our allotted hours for James last year and will have some additional costs associated with that.

Michael and I have spoken with NFocus who has provided us with an estimate for their consulting services on a part time basis.

Planning Board

4 rezoning cases since July, recommended for approval of 3 Reviewed and recommended multiple ordinances since last year including: Adult gaming establishments, adult daycare, conditional use permit process and historic resource commission 2018 is expected to be a busy year for this board. We will be getting some major sections of our zoning ordinance before them to consider as amendments.

Planning Board is largely on track, but is down 1 member

Board of Adjustment

Considered and approved 3 variances

Considered and denied 1 appeal of the zoning administrator's decision

Historic Resources Commission

Approved 8 cases since last year, including 2 demolitions. Denied 1 case

There is a need to update HRC's guidelines manual, contains several weak spots, but is not something staff has the resources to do presently. Staff recommends revisiting the requirements for certified local government status this year in order to obtain some

matching grant funds to do this.

Development Review

262 coordination forms completed since July 2016

56 construction site plans reviewed

The City made great progress with coordination forms

Nasser was added to County's permitting system now better able to check on sites that zoning requirements are being enforced on new construction

David Bowers will be retiring in June and concerns with turnover at County Inspections, the City should pay special attention to the future of inspections in the City

Subdivisions

We have had 9 Minor or Exempt subdivisions since last year

Still have some work to do on our ordinances to separate out

Our development standards from those that are specifically

Related to "subdivisions". Overall this is a minor priority right now

Planning

Carolyn and staff has developed and implemented monthly

Training workshops, saving hundreds in training costs

Have had some hiccups internally, but are expecting to roll out our new permitting and code enforcement software in the next month

Purchased updated GIS software licenses. Will become capable of mapping and spatial data analysis in the future

In addition to the 4 adopted land use amendments, staff worked on multiple rewrites including outside storage, automobile sales and junkyards, landscaping, and parking which will hopefully be considered this year

Staff has begun proactively dissecting and re-writing sections of our zoning ordinance based on recommendations land use plan

We hope to eventually complete an in-house UDO rewrite over next few years. Normally this would cost b/n \$60-120K.

Existing comprehensive land use plan is probably sufficient until 2019, it may be time to start considering an update to accommodate growth anticipated. It is expected that a request to fund a big portion of this work through consultants will need to be included as a capital improvement the following fiscal year.

Budget

We have only used 57% of our budget and are at or below 60% for each account except for the following:

Workers comp 104%, unemployment insurance 66%, legal services 270%, professional services 77%, phone 65%, electricity 63%, printing 63%, building repair and maintenance 67%, and other services 77%

2018-19 Department Goals

In 2017, we have successfully implemented some new policies and programs in the department which have helped us improve our operations. As our new permitting software comes online this will help to speed up our in-house record keeping as well as our customer service. I anticipate 2018 is going to need to do a good bit of restructuring in order to continue in these efforts:

1. Overhaul internal policies and procedures - continued
2. Upgrade and streamline department technologies to more adequately assist the public- continued
3. Address Code Enforcement cases more effectively and efficiently - continued
4. Overhaul and amend City ordinance to address areas of inconsistency and changes to development processes- continued
5. Expand/Revise staff roles as Development Services “One-Stop Shop”
6. Need to address long term maintenance issues with downtown buildings and find most cost effective options for longevity

Mr. Robinson handed out a copy concerning the NFocus proposal from Patti Rader, Manager for Council to review. City Council asked that Centralina Council of Governments be contacted and a proposal for the same level of work be sought and that expectations are clearly communicated.

Mr. Robinson also handed out information concerning annual permit fee revenues, annual development valuation, and annual permits for Council review.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Dry, seconded by Councilmember Hughes, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned until Thursday, February 8 at 5:30 pm in the Executive Conference Room of City Hall for a City Council Budget and Planning Session.