

ADJOURNED MEETING CITY COUNCIL  
February 12, 2019

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in an adjourned session on Tuesday, February 12, 2019, 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, Martha E. Hughes, Shirley Lowder, Dexter Townsend and Chris Whitley. Absent, none.

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The Mayor and the City Council held a Fiscal Year 2019/2020 Planning and Budgeting Work Session in the Executive Conference Room of the City Hall.

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Mayor Michael called the meeting to order.

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Finance Director Colleen Conroy stated what a year it's been in the Finance Department. Sandy Burris retired December 2017 and Kim Speights moved into that position then she hired Tanner Denton to take Kim's job. Matt Smith left and we've hired Jacob Weavil, Lindsay Carter quit and we moved Richard Lanzillotti to that position and hired a new Customer Service/Collections representative – Jessica Peck. The City was at the end of our three year contract so we are preparing to bid audit services for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, 2020, & 2021.

Ms. Conroy stated that the Good news is that for the first time ever, the City received the GFOA (Government Finance Officers Association) award for excellence in financial reporting. We have submitted these statements for the 2018 fiscal year and hope to receive the award again

In the upcoming budget, she requested that salaries be increased as our employees are our biggest asset and with the job market opening, we must stay competitive. We will continue to use our training/travel budget to be sure all employees keep up with the latest trends and sufficiently train our new employees. License and support fees continue to rise with all software related products. We see no capital expenditures but the cost of everything rises, even office supplies, so we must ensure our budget reflects rising cost of doing business.

She thanked City Council for their continued support.

Ms. Conroy answered any questions that Council had.

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Economic Development Director Mark Donham came before Council to review accomplishments and activities for 2019-20.

### **Accomplishments**

- **Albemarle Corporate Center**
  - ElectriCities recognizes the ABC as a Smart Site 3-22-18
  - Completed the first contract with Chambers Engineering including a:
  - City Council approved and Mayor Michael signed the second contract with Chambers Engineering for detailed design on 10-17-18.
  - All City Departments involved in the development of the ABC met with the Mayor and Chambers Engineering and to evaluate status of projects to prepare for the budget preparation.
- **Downtown**
  - Worked with the **Pfeiffer University**:
    - Prepared an updated Impact of Pfeiffer Downtown to assist them with their loan application. Completed – April 4, 2018
    - Researched and provided information on fiber availability.
    - Pfeiffer broke ground January 17, 2019
    - Began working on an evaluation of Student needs to determine the types of stores needed in the downtown.

#### **Historic Albemarle Hotel**

- Property sold to developers
  - The owner/developers of the building continue to prepare their plans for development. They plan to meet with City Council in March 2019.
- **Prospect management**
  - Pfeiffer formally announced increasing their original investment from \$5,000,000 to \$15,000,000. They broke ground July 17, 2019. This will add 20 jobs and bring 200 post graduate students downtown.
  - On February 22, 2018, Quality Enclosures announced they will purchase and move into the former Metal Forge building located at 1301 Mabry Dr.

- Enforce was investigating shutting down in Albemarle and moving to South Carolina. With the assistance of the State, County, and City, they announced on October 18, 2018 that they would stay in Albemarle.
- On August 7, 2018, Mayor Michael signed a Lease Contract with Carolina Treetop Challenge (CTC). CTC will invest \$800,000 in Rock Creek Park to build several challenge courses that will include multiple challenge elements.
- **Market Albemarle** to potential prospects
  - Advertized in the Charlotte USA Economic Development Guide jointly with Stanly County EDC, Stanly Discovery County Magazine, Charlotte USA Economic Development Magazine and jointly marketed with ElectriCities and Retail Strategies for retail development
- **Workforce**
  - Worked with Stanly Community College and the NC Works Career Center to hold a Job Fair and a student and local business interface.
- Continued to research and work on improving **broadband**. Received input from Time Warner and Windstream on having broadband in the Albemarle Business Center.
- - **Sell Roosevelt Ingram Site** –Downtown
  - **Pfeiffer University** - Work with Pfeiffer to identify the wants and needs of their students.
  - **Historic Hotel Albemarle** – The developers are planning to make a presentation in March 2019.
  - **Main Street Program** - Work with Joy and Akii to assist them with economic development activities and general administrative review.
  - Identify with DFI ways to facilitate the development of the downtown to meet the needs of Pfeiffer students.
- **Marketing Albemarle** – Continue to prepare joint advertising with the Stanly County, Stanly Community College, and ElectriCities.
- **Retail Development** – Work with Retail Strategies to continue attracting retail businesses to Albemarle.
- **Prospect Management** - Continue to work with Stanly County, North Carolina, ElectriCities, Charlotte Regional Partnership, and others to identify prospects, provide information to prospects, and locate business and industry.

- **Sell Roosevelt - Ingram Site** – Work with the Air National Guard find a way to establish a similar arrangement with another agency using the site for training their heavy equipment crews
- **Newly attracted businesses** – Follow-up with newly attracted business and work with the City Team to ensure a successful start-up.

Ms. Donham answered any questions that Council had.

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Police Chief Danny Bowen came before City Council to discuss budget considerations for 2019/2020 as follows:

### **Capital Projects**

The demo portion of the new building that will be the future Police Department Headquarters should start in the next month. Construction is estimated to take approximately one year. Hopefully the building will be ready to occupy sometime summer of 2020.

### **Personnel**

Currently we have 5 officers in Field Training. They should complete their training in March. Two of these are officers that left us previously and have returned (Hunter Lowder and Tim Hartsell)

At this time we have 6 open positions, we have a hiring process that closed on February 1. We have several applicants in that process that look promising. We also have a few applicants from the last hiring process that we are still considering for positions.

### **Vehicles**

In the upcoming budget year he is planning to request 3 vehicles. In the current budget year the department purchased 3 Patrol vehicles. We also purchased 1 Vehicle for detectives using drug seizure funds.

### **Training**

NC continues to require officers to maintain 24 hours of in-service training to maintain their certification. Some of this is online and some is classroom and hands on. We exceed this requirement with our officers.

### **Community Events**

We are again making plans to conduct a Jr. Police Academy again in June. Last year was very successful and we plan to make this years even better.

The department is planning another Community Night Out in 2019; we had a great crowd in this past year. LaShanta Watkins organized that event and it was the most successful to date. They will try to improve the event in 2019.

### **Equipment**

All of our patrol officers are equipped with Naloxone (NARCAN); this serves a two-fold purpose. One, we can come to the aid of someone that has had an opioid overdose, and second, if one of their fellow officers is exposed to Heroin or Fentanyl we can come to their aid.

All Patrol Officers are equipped with a body camera that is assigned to them. This eliminates the down time between shifts for uploading data and recharging cameras.

All officers are assigned their own Mobile Data Terminal (laptop) this allows them to do reports and access information anywhere they have a connection.

### **Retention and Recruitment**

The biggest obstacle that the department faces in 2019 is the recruitment of new officers and retention of the current officers. Surrounding departments are offering incentives to draw officers to their agency. Here are a few ideas that we can use to increase or recruiting and retention efforts:

Pay Incentives – Several other agencies offer a pay increase for a 2 or 4 year degree, the ability to speak a second language, having an Advanced Law Enforcement Certificate, and other increases

Residency Requirement – Currently our requirement is that you must live in an adjoining county. I feel that it would be more feasible to apply a radius for a residence requirement, Ex. Must live within 30 miles of City Hall. Currently you can live in Woodleaf, NC on the north side of Salisbury which is 40+ miles for Albemarle, but you cannot live a few miles past Midland when it turns into Mecklenburg County. We need to look at what is best for the city in order to expand our available work force.

The City of Albemarle is a great place to work and we offer our employees great benefits, however the competition for quality employees is increasing and we must be competitive in order to attract good quality applicants.

### **Overall Budget**

Chief Bowen estimated that 2019-2020 budget will see a few increases in some areas, but overall will remain in line with the current budget.

Chief Bowen answered any questions that Council had.

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Parks and Recreation Director Lisa Kiser came forward and gave her report to Council.

**Present Day: Where We Are**

**Philosophies/Guiding Principles**

- Connecting People through Programs and Places
- Increasing Health & Wellness
- Increasing Community Vitality

**Future: Where We Are Headed**

**Social Trends Driving Recreation Profession**

- Aging Population
  - 20% of residents are 65 years and over (US Census 2017)
- Creative problem solving for social issues
  - Opioid crisis
  - Homelessness
  - Obesity
- Mental Health
- Passive Recreation
  - Greenways/Open Corridors
  - Landscape Design
  - Dog Parks
- Technology
  - Online registration
  - Interactive displays in parks
  - E-gaming
  - STEM Activities – Computer Coding, 3D Printing, Gaming

**Achieving our Goals**

- Planning
  - Attend workshops, trainings, and conferences
  - Develop high quality programs
  - Timelines for completion of special projects
  - Develop preventative maintenance plans

- Inventory all Park & Recreation assets
- Research alternative revenue streams
- Evaluation
  - Economic Impact of Parks/Programs
  - Changing demographics of the community
  - Evaluate needs of the community for programming and facilities
  - Validity of Park/Programs
  - Customer Service philosophies
  - Frequently for improvements

### **2018-2019 Parks and Recreation Budget Priorities**

#### FY 2018-19 in Review

#### **Facilities/Capital**

##### Chuck Morehead Park – completed December 2018

- Pool Filtration System Replaced – completed August 2017
- Shade Structures Installed – completed May 2017
- Basketball Court restriped – completed September 2017
- Dog Park Installed
  - Fencing – completed April 2017
  - Amenities – completed April 2018
  - Landscaping – completed November 2017
  - Walking Track – completed May 2017
- New Picnic Shelter – completed December 2018

**Funding:** PARTF Grant (\$130,000); City of Albemarle (\$130,000 match); US Department of Agriculture – Urban and Community Forest Grant (\$5,000); City of Albemarle (\$5,000 match)

##### E.E. Waddell Center

- Gutter & Roof Repairs – completed September 2018

**Funding:** General Fund

##### Don Montgomery Park (Florence Repairs)

- Debris Removal – completed December 2018
- Grading – completed January 2019
- Irrigation – February 2019
- Fencing – March 2019
- Plant grass – March/April 2019

- Installation of equipment in dugouts and field – May 2019

**Funding:** FEMA Public Assistance Grants

Optimist Park (Florence Repairs)

- Debris Removal and Clean-up – completed December 2018
- Grading – March 2019
- Mitigation for future events – March 2019
- Fencing – March 2019
- Grass – March/April 2019
- Installation of equipment in dugouts and field – April 2019

**Funding:** FEMA Public Assistance Grants

Rock Creek Park (Florence Repairs)

- Debris Removal and Clean-up – completed October 2018
- Drainage repairs around softball field – completed January 2019
- Repair of pool equipment – April 2019
- Repair trail – completed November 2018
- Dirt added to softball field – completed February 2019
- Mitigate future damage by moving pool mechanics to pool deck - TBD

**Funding:** FEMA Public Assistance Grants

Roger Snyder Greenway

- Replace washed away fencing – April 2019
- Replace retaining wall that washed away - TBD

**Funding:** FEMA Public Assistance Grants

Carolina Treetop Challenge @ Rock Creek Park

- Removed debris from maintenance building and leased area – September 2018
- Road Improvements (PW) – TBD
- Water/Sewer Improvements (PU) – In progress
- Installation of Sprinkler System (Fire) – In progress
- Fence Installation – dependent on schedule of contractors
- Foot Bridge Installation – TBD

**Programming**

- Maintained Certifications/Memberships:
  - Tree City USA – 10 years (National)
  - Playful City USA (National)



- Babe Ruth Youth Baseball (National)
- Jr NBA Basketball Program (National)
- Dixie Youth Baseball (Regional)
- North Carolina Recreation & Parks Association (State)
- National Recreation & Parks Association (National)

**Revenue Collected**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Program Fees	\$25,542
Admissions	\$1,175
Rentals	\$19,770
Sponsorships/Grants/Contributions	\$2,970
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$49,457</b>

**Capital Priorities**

<b>Immediate (upcoming FY)</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pool Basin Resurfacing at Rock Creek Pool</li> <li>• Exhaust/HVAC system at EE Waddell Gym</li> <li>• Master Plan update</li> <li>• Signage Upgrades</li> <li>• Security Upgrades (Waddell)</li> <li>• Playground Improvements</li> <li>• Soccer Complex upgrades (dependent on securing grant)</li> </ul>		

**Non-Capital Priorities**

<b>Immediate (upcoming FY)</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Picnic Shelter Improvements</li> <li>• Pool Diving Boards/Lifeguard Stands</li> <li>• Mower and Park</li> </ul>	•	

<b>Maintenance Equipment Replacements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace flooring at Niven Center</li> </ul>		
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**Technology Priorities**

**Staff Development Priorities**

<b>Immediate (upcoming FY)</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop work plans and goals</li> <li>• Staff certified Park &amp; Recreation Professionals (2 by end of FY20)</li> <li>• Training for staff</li> <li>• Parks Staff certified as playground inspector</li> </ul>	-	•

Ms. Kiser answered any questions that Council had.

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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.

**Planning & Development Services Department**

**FY 18-19 Department Summary**

**Maintenance:**

- Maintenance projects, including issues with major roof leaks as well as security alarms.
- Shopping around for service quotes. It is hoped that we can get through the next 4 months without major HVAC and other repairs needed. We may want to reconsider our service contract with FSS soon. We may find significant cost savings and better overall service elsewhere.
- Installing new LED lights throughout City Hall. This will be an ongoing project for the 18-24 months, but we should see significant savings in electricity and doing this in house should save us at least 40% over the contract prices we looked at last year.

- It is recommended that we look at installing a monitor on the generator to prevent the recent issues we had with it. This is expected to be in the hundreds \$.
- Facility Assessment and Dude Solutions Capital Planning software remain an option to assist downtown property maintenance and system longevity should we decide to do it Citywide.

### **Code Enforcement:**

- 160 violations abated so far this fiscal year, 29 active cases, 85.3% compliance rate
- Already at almost 99.6% of our annual budget on abatement, 61% through fiscal year.
- part time code enforcement position has been extremely helpful and has allowed us to still stay under budget on salaries

### **Zoning - Enforcement:**

- 23 sign permits, 11% decrease. 18 sign violation letters sent, 1800% increase.
- Approximately 200 temporary signs removed during sweeps
- 625 zoning inquiries, 1.6% increase from last year.
- 11 zoning verification letters sent, only 3-4 violation letters sent (besides signage), 1 outstanding violation, 503 Old Charlotte Rd.

### **Minimum Housing – Demolitions**

- Watch list has shrunk to only 39 active properties. Steady progress is being made each year, but there are still numerous dilapidated structures we haven't even added into this list yet.
- 7 were removed last fiscal year, including 1 removed by owner.
- We currently have 5 from last year awaiting burn or demolition with another 6 we are addressing this year. 1117 E McGill St. has recent renovations that have started.
- Having James on board to manage these in house has been very helpful so far.

### **Planning and Zoning Board**

- Combining the boards has been extremely helpful thus far. We have been able to meet more regularly with board members and have had a full board at every hearing thus far.
- Reviewed and recommended multiple ordinances since last year including: Dwellings, combination of planning and zoning board, and a request to add retail in industrial districts.

- Considered 4 variance requests and approved or approved w. conditions 2 of them.
- Considered and recommended approval of 2 preliminary subdivisions
- Considered and recommended approval of 2 apartments

### **Historic Resources Commission**

- Approved 9 Minor cases since last year and 4 Majors, with only 1 denial in the last year.
- Goals right now for Commission are to increase training, updating rules of procedure and guidelines and trying again to get certified local government status for grants.
- HRC needs 1 new Commissioner appointed.

### **Development Review**

- 220 coordination forms completed since last year, down about 16%.
- 56 site plans reviewed since last Feb, matching last year's numbers at this time.

### **Subdivisions**

- We have had 11 Minor or Exempt subdivisions since last year, up 18%
- 2 Major subdivisions, the first "Major" subdivisions approved in at least 3 years.

### **"Planning"**

Staff continues to do bi-monthly workshops for the boards. This save hundreds in training costs and getting several times more board members trained this year.

- Our new hires, Jay and Ellie have been extremely helpful in pickup up the pieces and in moving forward.
- We have purchased GIS software licenses and Jay has made strides combining County data and city data in a new database he hope we will be able to add to our website eventually.
- We are now using our permitting software, iworq.

### **Budget**

- Planning and Development Services has remained below budget overall over the last year, but we have seen some sizable expenses in some areas.

Solid waste costs is now coming to this department's accounts, but costs are not significantly changed as a whole.

- We are spending more in total on abatement costs this year.
- Planning legal fees are expected to be in excess of 20K this year. Another year of significant costs for this department.

**2018-2019 Department Goals**

2018 saw significant turnover for our small staff and was largely spent trying to get this department back to full speed and running smoothly. We did however make several notable achievement and have successfully implemented some new policies and programs in the department which have helped us improve our operations.

**1. Overhaul internal policies and procedures to more adequately provide for better customer service and processing of cases.**

Ongoing.

Mr. Robinson answered any questions that Council had.

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IS Director Owen Squires came before Council to give his budget report:

- Information Systems’ staff intentionally acts as facilitators, interpreters, between a department’s need for consistent operations and the ongoing evolution of their unique applications and services.
  - Departments are now regularly bringing us in early as they talk with vendors about future services and tools.
  - Acting as the facilitator for each department’s technology-related operations continues to be critical.
  - Information Systems is unique in that we not only work with every city department and division, we also must understand their daily operations.
  - I would be remiss if I did not point out the great work that is happening both within the IS Department suite, and out in the field every day.
  - Communication methods continue to be the most obvious example of our personal life influencing business (and Government) operations.
  - Citywide we work to discover how we can best communicate, and sell, the good things that are happening across the City.
  - We continue to facilitate conversations that seek out how we can leverage efforts, and knowledge, that city departments have already discovered.

**Highlights from a few of our current fiscal year’s projects:**

- Storage and compute platform:

- Have completed the installation of a new virtual services platform. The key thing is that it is a modular platform. It used to be the norm that we purchased “best of breed.” Meaning we chose the best servers we could afford, the best storage system, the best networking, and configured them to talk to each other.
- With a modular configuration it is much easier to sustain. It is also critical to a disaster recovery planning process – it is a combined system, just a module...
- Edge network refresh (Nhia has taken the lead on installing and documenting the install and configuration):
  - Our existing network switches were installed during 2009.
  - Working with Parks & Recreation, and Public Housing.
- Completion of our App Store deployment:
  - We have completed the deployment of the City’s *App Store* to all computers, all users, where it is practical.
- When a new version of software is needed, or a new application needs to be installed.
- New storage and compute platform at the City’s Landfill. With the number of cameras and security systems in place at the landfill – including the new Employee Operations Building – we have installed a dedicated platform for their operations.
- Working with multiple departments as we build the framework, the forms and workflow, for what will become our citywide document management platform.

Mr. Squires answered any questions that Council had.

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Upon a motion by Councilmember Aldridge, seconded by Councilmember Hall, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned until Thursday, February 14 at 5:30 pm in the Raymond I. Allen Room of City Hall for a City Council Budget Work Session.