

ADJOURNED MEETING CITY COUNCIL  
March 7, 2012

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in an adjourned session on Wednesday, March 7, 2012, at 5:15 p.m. in the Conference Room of the City Hall. Mayor Elbert L. Whitley presided and the following Councilmembers were present, to wit: Troy E. Alexander, Martha Sue Hall, Judy Holcomb, Ronnie Michael, Dexter Townsend and T. Ed Underwood. Absent, Jack F. Neel.

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The Mayor and the City Council held a Fiscal Year 2012/2013 Planning and Budgeting Work Session in the Conference Room of the City Hall with the following Departments presenting: Human Resources, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Public Housing, and Information Systems.

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Human Resource Director Robert Whitley discussed the medical insurance options that the City is looking at this year including:

1) Blue Cross/Blue Shield (fully insured) with the trend being with around 10% or a little less increase for the coming year.

2) Partially Self-funded Insurance – the City has been discussing this for several years. He is currently getting information/quotes from third party administrators (TPA).

Mr. Whitley gave items the Council needs to consider for a partially self-funded insurance including:

- 1) The City would reap the benefits if costs are less unlike being fully insured with Blue Cross/Blue Shield before.
- 2) Wellness savings will be fully realized by the City.
- 3) The partially self-funded insurance is customizable and the City can develop the plans/tiers or benefits that meet our needs.
- 4) Two levels of stop-loss protection keep the City's exposure to defined levels.

Mr. Whitley stated that he had found in his research that the best company to work with as an administrator might be Med-Cost.

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Parks and Recreation Director Toby Thorpe began by looking at What's Important Now as far as resources and liabilities. He stated that the resources include his experienced and dependable staff, community partnerships and support and the “can do” attitude among his staff. The liabilities the department faces are aging facilities and equipment and budget constraints.

Mr. Thorpe stated that with the changing demographics within the City, the wants and needs from customers is changing. There is more demand for “care-based” services and increased demand for services for those affected by the economic crunch that are doing less traveling and wanting family activities here at home.

The next item covered was the capital improvements for his department separated into immediate, short-term (1 to 2 years) and intermediate-term (2 to 5 years). The immediate items included resurfacing Rock Creek Park tennis courts with a cost of between \$5,000-\$10,000 if installed in-house. The short-term goals are to complete the Niven Center renovation, the completion of Phase III of the Snyder Greenway, and an acquisition of land for an athletic complex and hopefully using Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) matching grant funds. In the intermediate to continue the Greenway development, the construction of an athletic complex, and subsequent phases of the EE Waddell Center renovations.

Mr. Thorpe also covered his immediate, short-term, and intermediate-term goals for program development. His immediate goal is to have an Albemarle Parks and Recreation 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Festival where the primary expense will be a fireworks display costing approximately between \$5,000-\$10,000. Also to determine program offerings based on the feedback from the public. His department’s short-term goals are to establish after-school programming at the Niven Center, to re-establish the summer day camp program, and to use technology to full advantage in operations.

The last item Mr. Thorpe talked about was his staff development and his immediate, short-term, and intermediate-term goals for his department. In the immediate, his goals are adding part-time people as summer park attendants, summer maintenance workers, and increased security and better customer service between May-August. In the short-term to fill a vacant custodian position at the EE Waddell Center and a night supervisor at the Niven Center. In the intermediate to advance professional development opportunities for his staff.

Mr. Thorpe answered any questions that Council had.

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Councilmember Holcomb asked Public Works Director Mike Lambert about being able to sell one of Kelly Pickler's damaged signs. She mentioned a gentleman that is interested in purchasing it. Mr. Lambert stated that the sign would need to be declared surplus first. He also stated that this sign could be sold through GovDeals.

Upon questioning, Mr. Lambert and Councilmember Michael stated that the auction choice for surplus is determined by the City Manager.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Holcomb, seconded by Council Underwood, and unanimously carried, the City Council declared a damaged Kelly Pickler sign surplus and ordered sold.

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Public Works Director Mike Lambert discussed departmental projects and goals. His department includes, streets, downtown services, the warehouse, fleet maintenance, and solid waste. In the streets division, he stated there is \$152,000 in the budget for resurfacing of roads. He mentioned some of the sidewalk projects and the Safe Routes to Schools. Also, in the streets division he handles the street sweeping and clearing of ditches. The Powell Bill Fund balance is very solid with a balance of \$400,000 and should be around \$300,000 this upcoming year.

In the Downtown Services division his department handles the maintenance, event management and property management of the downtown.

In the Warehouse division his department continues to provide City-wide fuel distribution and inventory management.

In the Fleet Maintenance division his department continues with their commitment to service and maintain City vehicles and equipment inventory. He stated they handle around 1500 work orders per year.

In the Solid Waste division there have been operational improvements made. In the last 1.5 years there have been 4 inspections of the Landfill from NCDENR and his department was in compliance each time. Also, their recycling sales last year were in excess of \$50,000 not including tipping fees.

Mr. Lambert stated that since 2008, his department has lowered full time employees from 44 to 36 in the current year. His budget is \$5.85 million with total expenditure budget for Public Works, which includes general fund, Powell bill and solid waste. He noted that \$1.85 million or 32% of the total budget is payroll, which includes benefits. Also, Only \$20,900 or less than 1% is budgeted for overtime. He mentioned a flat line general fund budget for 2012-13 or he may be able to reduce it.

In closing, Mr. Lambert talked about the City's recycling center and what can be recycled and how much it cost.

Councilmember Michael asked if the City could not offer some type of recycling service but not Citywide.

Councilmember Hall asked if the City could offer the residents some type of incentive to get some residents to recycle.

Councilmember Holcomb stated that residents that will recycle do not mind paying extra for this service.

Councilmember Alexander stated he would like to see the City continue with Green Pieces.

Mayor Whitley stated that if we stay with alternate 1 on the new proposal, the City will be saving close to \$180,000 a year from the present cost. This would be the least expensive route for the City.

City Manager Raymond Allen stated if not adding a recycling choice tonight, then there would be no vote necessary by Council.

Mayor Whitley asked that Finance Director Colleen Conroy be asked about credit on utility bill if people decide to recycle.

The City Manager stated that Steve Megson with Green Pieces did and is willing to have Citywide recycling events.

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The Mayor and City Council discussed the tree lights downtown and how will they be lighted. The City Manager stated that normally after the Christmas holidays they are left on until sometime in March.

The Council decided by consensus to turn off the downtown tree lights at each the time change in March, and to turn on the downtown tree lights in November.

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Director of Public Housing Garry Lewis discussed Public Housing and Section 8 priorities. One of the items addressed as a priority in Public Housing is unit turnaround time for vacant units, improve lease-up rate for vacant units, improve housing

management assessment programs, and improve REAC score. Per the June 30, 2011 audit, revenues over expenditures increased by \$112,262.

Mr. Lewis requested that as a Section 8 program priority, that the Housing Assistance Technician position that was part-time become a full time position to address the demands of leasing an additional 45-55 units and to carry the additional work load. Also the 1999 Chevy Malibu that supports Section 8 inspection activities needs to be considered for replacement at some point. He stated that on February 2 and 8, 2012, approximately 300 applications for voucher were received. These applications will be process for eligibility and vouchers will be given out to eligible families.

Mr. Lewis talked about resident initiative activities such as GED classes offered, bimonthly resident council community watch meetings, and a new program of home care nurse assistance certification classes being held at SCC and ESC.

In closing, Mr. Lewis stated that some of the new work projects include: Fiber wiring connectivity at the Family Life Center, desk top replacing with thin clients systems, and Microsoft office version 2010 and license. These administration fees of around \$11,000 can be covered by HUD.

Mr. Lewis answered any questions that Council had.

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Information Services Director Owen Squires stated that just 15 years ago when talking about technology, most people would agree the City's billing and financial computer system was the core of technology. Now, is not so much about computers as it is about our using new sets of tools that have a technology component built in to them. Mr. Squires gave examples such as a meeting with ElectriCities to chart a new direction with regards to how we together support the ElectriCities-hosted applications. ElectriCities is a key technology partner for the City. Another example, was regarding the Niven Center project. He stated that they are working with City staff and the architect on HVAC controls, doors and security for the facility, potential for the CATV used at the facility, phone service, building wiring (and wireless), and computers. He stated that we also need to coordinate the integration of phone services for the campus and also the general technology infrastructure. He continued to state that today it is more cost effective and easier to enable wireless access for many areas than it is to try and factor in all of the potential spots that a network drop should be placed.

He stated that a great example of how IS is working with individual departments is Technician Mike Devlin to continue working with the Albemarle Police Department with Mobile Data Terminals (MDT). Mike Devlin has automated the delivery of important reports and policy manuals. Each time an officer logs in, the

machine checks to see if it has the most current copy of 20+ forms and report templates. If not, those forms are updated. Mike sits with each officer and walks them through he use and access for each of the public safety specific applications on the machine.

He stated that another great example of how IS is working with departments is Technician Bruce McCauley working with Finance on the Munis ER system. This year we are beginning the integration of paperless processing for accounts payables and purchase orders. Bruce is the primary contact for Tyler Technologies as we all work together to implement these systems.

Mr. Squires talked about how in the past to activate a printer on a single workstation, it could take 30-45 minutes. Today, all of our network-enabled printers are able to be "pushed out" and installed on local workstations. Installation time for an existing and current printer is at most 5 minutes and IS does not need to be involved in the installation.

Also, Mr. Squires stated that his department continues to approach work order tickets smarter rather than just spending time re-doing the same fixes over and over. He further mentioned that 10-15 years ago a computer technician could be and was expected to basically know it all. With the complexity of even the operating systems used today dictate that sometimes we reach out to support organizations that we have built relationships with. This is cost effective in that it allows the systems to be installed or maintained in minutes by a specialist on the system, not tying up our technicians for days, weeks, or even months studying and training on a new system.

Mr. Squires stated that the next fiscal period, the City has several critical systems to consider. The most pressing is our desktop computing environment. We are finishing the compilation of bids and quotes for moving ahead with a desktop environment that virtualizes, or move to network servers, a City staff's applications and settings. This means swapping out a failed computer will take only minutes instead of days. Secondly, wireless access for computers and devices is something else that become a major issue for staff. We will need to start using devices that are not "hard wired" to a location, a more resilient wireless infrastructure. He mentioned current wireless systems that are technology-wise five years old and some of the servers purchased in 2009 come off warranty this fall.

He stated that he will be looking at what the costs will be to renew or replace our phone system which this fall will be 3 years old. Also, in closing, he stated that printers are perhaps one of the most difficult technology environments to sustain and our aging printer population is becoming a challenge. Today all of these devices are commonly combined into one unit for copying, faxing, scanning. He stated that we need to be looking at a purchasing program that sustains the needed functions instead of using individual devices.

He answered any questions that Council had.

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Mayor Whitley stated that Sherrill Smith with the Stanly County Democratic Party asked about using the Council Chambers on April 14 for the Stanly County Democratic Convention. The Mayor asked that Ray speak on the policies for using our community room and Council Chambers.

The City Manager stated that the use of Council Chambers by the policy is for City of Albemarle programs, official local government agencies local to Stanly County, and other government entities including State and Federal. He also stated that Council can make an exception of they so choose. The City Council continued to discuss this matter further.

Councilmember Michael stated that he had no problem with making an exception but not in changing the policy.

Councilmember Hall moved to allow the Stanly County Democratic Party to use Council Chambers for the Stanly County Democratic Convention on April 14 and be made aware that the capacity for Council Chambers is 94. Councilmember Townsend seconded the motion. Voting for the motion were Councilmembers Alexander, Holcomb, Townsend, and Underwood. Voting against the motion were Councilmembers Holcomb and Michael. The motion carried.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Townsend, seconded by Councilmember Hall, and unanimously carried, the City Council approved allowing the Stanly County Democratic Party to use Council Chambers for the Stanly County Democratic Convention on April 14 for a fee of \$100 and be made aware that the capacity for Council Chambers is 94.

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Upon a motion by Councilmember Alexander, seconded by Councilmember Michael, the meeting was adjourned to 5:15 on March 8 in the City Hall for a Budget Work Session.