

ADJOURNED MEETING CITY COUNCIL
March 8, 2011

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in an adjourned session on Tuesday, March 8, 2011, at 5:00 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, Jeanette M. Napier, Jack F. Neel, Dexter Townsend and T. Ed Underwood. Absent, none.

The Mayor and the City Council held a Fiscal Year 2011/2012 Planning and Budgeting Work Session in the Conference Room of the City Hall with the following Departments presenting: Parks and Recreation, Human Resources, Finance, Planning and Community Development, Police and Information Systems.

Parks and Recreation Director Toby Thorpe began by indicating his Department recently completed a review of its activities, strengths and weaknesses. He felt that the programs the Department offers are very popular. He said the Department needs to focus on improvements to its facilities and find more ways to generate revenues to support its activities. He mentioned that federal and state grant programs will most likely experience severe cuts and these are the funding sources that have allowed the Department to expand its infrastructure.

For the new year he mentioned cutting hours of operations and focusing on programs that generate revenue. He suggested the possible development of a splash park and noted area parks generate significant revenue.

He noted there may be an even greater need for programs and services if the school system eliminates most middle school athletics. Councilmember Neel said the City should monitor this situation so that the City is not forced to fill the service void.

Councilmember Alexander inquired about a multi-field athletic complex at Wiscasset property. Mr. Thorpe indicated it is too small a parcel to develop the needed facilities and said the City has been looking at property in the vicinity of the middle school for this possibility.

Mr. Thorpe distributed information from the EE Waddell cleaning contractor indicating they would be willing to reduce their fee for the front classroom cleaning from \$50.00 to \$25.00.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Townsend, seconded by Councilmember Alexander, the City Council approved the \$25.00 cleaning fee and \$25.00 room rental fee.

Human Resource Director Robert Whitley discussed the activities of his Department. He indicated that it appears the City will not have an increase in health insurance costs. He recommended staying with Blue Cross / Blue Shield if this holds true so the City can develop some stability with a carrier, also noting Blue Cross / Blue shield provides good service. City Council concurred.

Mr. Whitley discussed the way in which the City currently pays overtime. He noted that the total hours in a work period are considered hours worked for the computation of overtime, including sick and vacation. He noted this allows individuals to draw overtime pay for hours worked less than a full pay period. He said this practice is extremely unusual and is in excess of Fair Labor Standards Act. Finance Director Colleen Conroy, who researched this issue, could not find another local government that did this. He recommended following the Fair Labor Standards Act to pay overtime only when the hours worked were actually in excess of the hours in a pay period. He did note the City will begin emergency call back pay, in which all employees called back on an emergency basis, not on-call, will receive time and half for this work, regardless of their hours work in that pay period. It is considered paying a premium to employees for assisting in needed situations that are outside the norm. Councilmember Alexander indicated that the City could not go wrong following FLSA.

Finance Director Colleen Conroy discussed Finance Department accomplishments and goals. She noted the Department has very lean staffing, with employees being cross-trained and performing multiple functions.

Recent significant activities include the implementation of a time and attendance system, which has saved considerable amount of work for all City Departments and has improved time-keeping accountability. There has also been a recent, significant upgrade to the City's financial software package. Future projects include the implementation of a procurement card purchasing system and

expansion of the credit card and online payment capabilities the Department implemented recently.

Ms. Conroy noted that the projects above focus on a major goal of the Department, which is to allow the City as a whole to work more efficiently and effectively. She commended her staff for working cooperatively with all Departments to assist in allowing the City to work effectively towards its goals.

Mr. Keith Wolf, Director of Planning and Community Development discussed his Departmental operations with the Mayor and City Council. He began by providing an overview of the various boards and commissions the Department works with and their functions.

He indicated that the Community Appearance Commission would like to have funding in the upcoming budget for another community clean-up, which would be the first in three years. He also said additional funding would be needed to address the housing demolition wishes of City Council. It was noted that depending on the amount of asbestos abatement found in a structure, this could cost up to \$10,000 per structure. Upon questioning, Chief Oke said he would like to assist burning more structures for training purposes for the Fire Department, which may reduce the cost of demolition to the City. Councilmember Hall said she would like to see a list of all pending minimum housing projects Centralina Council of Governments is addressing.

Mr. Wolf noted his Department is responsible for the maintenance of the City Hall and therefore an increase in the maintenance budget would be necessary.

Chief Executive Officer of the Police Department Ronnie Michael provided an overview of the Department's needs. He said there is a need for four vehicles, but is requesting three. He hopes that the sale of surplus vehicles and drug seizure money will allow for the purchase of a fourth vehicle. He said the Department is having to replace several in-car computers and printers and commended the Information Systems Department for their assistance with this. He also said the Department continues to work on replacement radios to meet new banding requirements.

He is estimating a \$17,000 increase in the fuel budget with the rise in gas prices. He did note he asked all patrol officers to turn their vehicles off for

fifteen minutes per hour and to perform paperwork, which helps save on fuel consumption and costs. He also noted it is estimated that to continue to use the local Butterfly House will cost \$18,000.

He concluded his presentation by reviewing two capital needs, a new headquarters for the Police Department and a new location for a West Community Police Office.

Director of Information Systems Owen Squires provided an overview of his Department, its operations and services. He commended the City for creating this function as a stand alone Department, noting the amount of technology in all facets of City operations is significant and continues to grow. He said he is undertaking a strategic analysis of the technology needs of the City. The Department began by getting a handle and securing the physical inventory.

He noted that like the Finance and other Departments, Information Services partners with all Departments to make City activities possible. Being a stand alone Department has involved IS early in critical discussions about the City and has allowed them to assist in major projects. His goal is to develop a strong infrastructure that allows the City to seamlessly execute its goals.

He noted needs in the upcoming fiscal year include enhanced storage capabilities. He also indicated the Departmental strategic plan will continue to be developed and unveiled.

Mr. Squires and Councilmember Neel discussed the City's fiber infrastructure IS in developing and the potential impact of state legislation to prevent municipalities from participating in broadband operations.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Hall, seconded by Councilmember Napier, the meeting was adjourned to 5:00 on March 10 in the City Hall for a Budget Work Session.