

ADJOURNED MEETING CITY COUNCIL
March 12, 2009

The City Council of the City of Albemarle met in an adjourned session on Thursday, March 12, 2009, at 5:00 p.m. in the City Hall Annex Conference Room. Mayor Pro-Tem Troy E. Alexander presided and the following Councilmembers were present, to wit: Martha Sue Hall, Judy Holcomb, Jeanette M. Napier, Jack F. Neel, Dexter Townsend and T. Ed Underwood. Absent, Mayor Elbert L. "Whit" Whitley.

The City Council held a Budget Work Session with the following Departments: Public Utilities, Planning and Community Development, Engineering Services, Finance and Public Works.

Ernie Borders presented the major initiatives of the Public Utilities Department for FY 2009/2010. He began by reviewing cost cutting measures which include elimination of unnecessary positions, the installation of automated meter reading equipment, energy efficient street lighting and reorganizing the administrative division to reduce significant overtime.

He noted that significant upgrades were needed to the water plants and wastewater treatment plants. He said he would also like to fund the painting of the water tank at the US Highway 52 Plant.

Mr. Borders said he will also be proposing a water and sewer rate increase. The increase will not apply to the first 300 cubic feet. He also said he would like to increase the tap fees for the first time since 1992.

Bob Sasser, Director of Planning and Community Development, presented the Departmental budget needs. Mr. Sasser said he would like to fund the development of a Unified Development Ordinance. He said this would combine the Zoning, Subdivision and Planning Ordinances into a single, more user friendly document. The document that would also provide drawings to help explain rules and regulations. He also suggested developing additional commercial design standards to require more attractive commercial development.

He also recommended some potential cost cutting measures. He said the bi-monthly meeting between the City Council and the Planning and Zoning Board could be eliminated and they could hold meetings in an as needed basis. He also said the City could be less aggressive in code enforcement, but this would allow nuisances to persist. He also suggested less training in the upcoming year as well as increasing development fees.

Director of Engineering Services Jon Mendenhall presented his Departmental work plan. He said he would like the City to complete the Clean Water Management Trust Fund project at Don Montgomery Park. It will also be a year for the biennial municipal bridge inspections. He also reported projects including acquiring traffic survey equipment and creek maintenance which would include the formation of a storm water team.

He concluded his presentation by stating he hopes to complete the Safe Routes to School Grant and noted there will be a need for water quality monitoring in conjunction with the storm water retention device built at Don Montgomery Park. A majority of this testing could be performed by the Public Utilities Department.

Director of Finance Colleen Conroy indicated a majority of the needs in the Finance Department for the upcoming fiscal year are in the Information Systems Division. She distributed a list of the needs containing a brief explanation of each. They include: a new phone system, core switches for the City Hall, server replacements, expansion of the City's fiber network, and increased travel and training. She noted the increased travel and training was necessary to cut down on the amount of money spent on specialized contract services. These services can often be very expensive. Ms. Conroy also said she is researching time and attendance systems.

She concluded her comments by noting that she felt the most important thing that could be done was to continue to support our employees, as they are the most valuable resource the City has.

Director of Public Works Michael Lambert began his presentation by reviewing the accomplishments of the Public Works Department in the current

fiscal year. He noted he would like to be able to continue this same level of service in the upcoming year.

He reviewed the financial status of the City of Albemarle Landfill, where the cost of operation is rising and revenues are down. In order to reduce expenses, he and his staff are looking at reducing the hours of operation of the facility. Councilmember Holcomb indicated she thought this was a good idea. He said he will also be proposing a tipping fee increase, as tipping fees are very low in comparison to other facilities across the state. Finally, he said they will make a greater effort to market the Landfill and its services.

Councilmember Alexander commended the Department on the cleanliness of the streets. Mr. Lambert said there is a noticeable difference in this service area in recent years, primarily due to the employee responsible for street sweeping, Mr. Scottie Honeycutt.

Councilmember Hall invited any member of Council interested in attending the RPO meeting next Thursday, March 19.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Alexander, seconded by Councilmember Holcomb and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned.