

COUNCIL BUDGET WORK SESSION
January 25, 2019 – 6:00 P.M
City Council Conference Room – City Hall - Gastonia, NC

Mayor Walker E. Reid, III, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. on January 25, 2019, in the City Council Conference Room, City Hall. Ms. Sherry Dunaway, City Clerk, recorded the minutes.

PRESENT: Mayor Walker E. Reid, III

Mayor Pro Tem David R. Kirlin

Council Members: Robert Kellogg
Jennifer Stepp
David Humphries

City Manager Michael C. Peoples

City Attorney L. Ashley Smith

ABSENT: Councilman Todd Pierceall
Councilman Jim Gallagher

Also in attendance were: Mr. Todd Carpenter, Deputy City Manager; Mr. J. Phillip Bombardier, Assistant City Manager; Ms. Melody Braddy, Assistant City Manager; Ms. Crystal Certain, Director of Financial Services; Ms. Rachel Bagley, Director of Marketing and Communications; Mr. Rob Helton, Police Chief; Mr. Phil Welch, Fire Chief; Works and Utilities; Mr. Joe Albright, Director of Enterprise Services; Mr. Jason Thompson, Planning Director; Mr. Rusty Bost, Director of Development Services; Mr. Vincent Wong, Director of Community Development and Innovation; Ms. Kristy Crisp, Economic Development Director; Ms. Judy Smith, Director of Human Resources; Ms. Ann Tippitt, Executive Director, Schiele Museum; Mr. Dale Denton, Director of Public Works; and Mr. Cam Carpenter, Director of Parks and Cultural Service; Crystal Falls, Budget Administrator; and Jessica Williams, Budget Analyst.

WELCOME, OPENING COMMENTS, AND MEETING GUIDELINES

Mayor Reid opened and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLAN
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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Mr. Peoples stated that Councilman Gallagher will not be present because he is in Raleigh where he has been appointed Chairman of the ElectriCities Board of Directors earlier today. Mr. Peoples also stated that Councilman Pierceall cannot be present due to illness.

Mr. Peoples stated we would be going through the Strategic Plan Review and discuss some accomplishments, update Goals and Objectives, discuss the Advocacy Agenda and prepare for tomorrow's budget meeting.

Mr. Peoples noted there are no changes to the Vision, Mission and Core Values and they would not be discussed unless Council would like to make any changes.

Mr. Peoples reviewed the various accomplishments of each department as shown in the exhibits. Mr. Peoples noted these are goals that were approved and there are multiple pages you can review and he noted the larger accomplishments are highlighted in yellow.

Mr. Peoples stated there are 75 Goals and Objectives as shown in your exhibits and the goal is to narrow it down to 50, if possible. Following discussion, Mr. Peoples noted the updated Goals and Objectives would be presented for approval at the February 5th Council meeting.

Mr. Peoples discussed the Healthy Community goals.

Mayor Pro Tem Kirlin asked about tree saves and what we are doing in new developments.

Mr. Peoples stated it is a balance and we have people dedicated to looking at this issue.

Mr. Peoples noted the next item is Good Government.

Ms. Bieker discussed the City facilities with fiber and the ongoing plans.

Mr. Peoples stated we will not know until March when we meet with ElectriCities about future electric rates.

Further discussion ensued.

Mr. Albright discussed the Municipal Operation Center facility Master Plan and the implementation plans to update the facility.

Mr. Peoples stated we are still working on our one-stop shop and we are working for ways to help our citizens move through the process. Mr. Peoples noted that we are also working to evaluate ways to expand opportunities for citizen feedback to build customer relationships, gauge service satisfaction and provide opportunity for improvement.

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Staff answered various questions.

Mr. Peoples discussed Public Safety existing and proposed goals as shown in the exhibits noting again that staffing issues will be addressed in tomorrow's meeting.

Mr. Carpenter discussed the Neighborhood Outreach program that we currently have and what we are planning to do to strengthen and include existing Community Watch program and answered questions from Council.

Mr. Peoples discussed Community Identity and noted that Ms. Bagley and her staff are doing a great job with social media and relaying information to employees and citizens.

Mr. Peoples discussed diversity. Mr. Carpenter gave an update on what is being done with diversity and what the challenges are at this time.

Mayor Pro Tem Kirlin stated that we should possibly have a special meeting to address the issue further. Mr. Carpenter stated he would get information out to Council. Mayor Reid directed staff to select a date and time for further discussion.

Mr. Peoples discussed the light rail from Charlotte and the possible westward expansion. Mr. Bost also provided some information about the light rail study.

Further discussion ensued.

Mr. Peoples discussed Economic Vitality and the goals as shown in the exhibits.

Ms. Crisp discussed Loray Mill and the incubator concept.

Mayor Pro Tem Kirlin stated at some time he would like to hear from staff about what the state of affordable housing is in Gastonia and what we are currently doing. Is the currently available housing clean and affordable and what resources do we have that we could apply?

Mr. Wong stated they would be presenting a presentation soon concerning the affordable housing issue.

Councilman Kellogg noted that we should be proactive and deal with affordable housing before it becomes a crisis.

Councilman Humphries stated he would like to see something added under Economic Development about trying to get a grocery store in the Highland community and to try to push

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more for that type of development where it is needed, and the West side and Highland is where it is needed now noting there is only a Food Lion on the west end of town since the BI-LO closed.

Mr. Peoples noted the City's UDO would be discussed tomorrow.

Following discussion, Mr. Peoples noted the updated Goals and Objectives would be presented for approval at the February 5th Council meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Kirlin stated he would like to see a breakdown on utility bills for where usage is and it may be helpful for customers trying to keep their utility bills down.

Mr. Bombardier stated that is smart meter technology and does come at a cost and there are a few issues. Mr. Albright noted that they have explored those options involving IT and Finance and what we have found if we are looking to upgrade to smart metering system is that we would be looking at \$10 plus million dollars and rearranging of personnel on the electric side to maintain the grid and possibly some new employees. Mr. Albright noted they have explored different vendors and are looking at vendors that can do both water and electric meters well and they will continue to explore those options.

Mayor Reid paused the meeting for a 15 minute break at 4:07 p.m.

(Reference as contained in Exhibit Book 4 to Minute Book 108 at Page 1).

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY AGENDA

The meeting reconvened at 4:24 p.m.

Mr. Peoples reviewed the 2019 Legislative Advocacy Agenda as shown in the exhibits.

Further discussion ensued..

Mayor Reid asked if there was some way to identify state roads so that citizens would know they are not city roads. Mr. Peoples noted they would look at that.

(Reference as contained in Exhibit Book 4 to Minute Book 108 at Page 2).

SUMMARY

Mr. Peoples presented a short recap of items.

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ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Reid adjourned the meeting at 5:10 p.m.

Mayor Walker E. Reid, III

L. Ashley Smith, City Attorney

Sherry H. Dunaway, City Clerk

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