

**GASTONIA CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP**  
**JANUARY 28, 2017 – 8:30 A.M.**  
**COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM – CITY HALL – GASTONIA, NC**

Mayor Bridgeman called the work session to order at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, January 28, 2017, in the Council Conference Room at City Hall. He then opened the meeting with prayer. Ms. Sherry H. Dunaway, City Clerk, recorded the minutes.

PRESENT: Mayor John D. Bridgeman  
 Mayor Pro Tem Todd Pierceall  
 Council Members: Robert Kellogg  
 David R. Kirlin  
 James Gallagher  
 Porter L. McAteer  
 David Humphries

City Manager Edward C. Munn  
 City Attorney L. Ashley Smith

ABSENT: None

Also in attendance were: Mr. J. Phillip Bombardier, Assistant City Manager; Mr. Todd Carpenter, Assistant City Manager; Ms. Melody Braddy, Director of Financial Services; Ms. Crystal Falls, Budget Administrator; Ms. Dawn Cross, Senior Budget Analyst; Ms. Rachel Bagley, Managing Executive for Marketing & Revitalization Initiatives; Mr. Mike Smith, Assistant Police Chief, Mr. Travis Brittain, Assistant Police Chief; Mr. Phil Welch, Fire Chief; Mr. Michael Peoples, Assistant City Manager; Mr. Matt Bernhardt, Director of Public Works and Utilities; Mr. Jason Thompson, Planning Director; Mr. Rusty Bost, Director of Engineering; Ms. Beverly Bieker, Chief Information Officer; Mr. Vincent Wong, Housing and Neighborhood Administrator; Ms. Kristy Crisp, Economic Development Coordinator/Business Services Manager; Ms. Judy Smith, Assistant Director of Human Resources; Mr. Chuck Dellinger, Director of Parks and Recreation and Mr. Cam Carpenter, Assistant Director Parks and Recreation.

**FINANCIAL OVERVIEW**

The following information was presented and discussed:

- December 2016 Monthly Financial Report / YTD
- Financial ‘Thermometers’ for Next Three Fiscal Years (including overview of Water/Sewer and Electric funds)
- 2018 Budget Schedule (set dates for outlook March 28, 29 or 30 & work sessions in May)

Mr. Munn presented a handout that has been incorporated into the exhibits. Mr. Munn stated this is from Electricities and it charts how they are doing. Mr. Munn noted that it states there is no projected rate increase in electric rates until 2020.

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Ms. Braddy proposed dates for the budget sessions and March 28<sup>th</sup>, May 9<sup>th</sup> and May 23<sup>rd</sup> were selected if needed.

(Reference as contained in Exhibit Book 3 to Minute Book 106 at Page 23.)

**EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION**  
**HEALTH INSURANCE/WELLNESS**

Information was provided and discussion ensued on the following:

- Market Study Recommendations
- City-Wide Compensation Options for FY 17/18 (and beyond)
- Health Insurance Cost Update

Mr. Munn presented a handout that has been incorporated into the exhibits and explained the Fairness Cloud and the long term effect.

Mr. Todd Carpenter discussed the market study that was completed with Springsted. Mr. Carpenter stated they met with Department Heads and Division Heads. Mr. Carpenter stated this was very beneficial for the organization. Job descriptions have been updated as noted in the exhibits. Mr. Carpenter also noted that we had 150 people that were below market, but the main issue seemed to be salary compression. Mr. Carpenter stated that Staff has recommended layering in an Across the Board increase to current salaries based on years of service effective July 1, 2017, and then establish a Pay for Performance based system in 2018/19.

Mr. Carpenter stated they had 21 meetings where they met with every employee in small groups at their worksite and discussed the wellness plan and spousal insurance changes.

Mr. Humphries inquired if the Public Works area could possibly get an exercise room with equipment to serve those 200 plus employees in that area. Mr. Carpenter stated this has been discussed and it is a money issue but they would like to see it done. Mr. Carpenter noted that Mr. Peoples is applying for a grant through Caromont that could possibly help with the funding for that project.

(Reference as contained in Exhibit Book 3 to Minute Book 106 at Page 24.)

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

Information was presented and discussion ensued on the following:

- Current Capital Projects Status Report
- Local Street Maintenance/Resurfacing (Funding from Vehicle License Tag Fee, Powell Bill funds, and Appropriation of Fund Balance)
- System Development Fee Study / Southeast Sewer & Water and Other Major Capital Water and Sewer Projects
- Building Improvements and Security Enhancements

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Mr. Bost added a Major Capital Projects map which has been incorporated into the exhibits.

Mr. Munn reviewed all Staff Recommendations as noted in the exhibits.

Councilman Kirlin stated that he would like us to keep street paving at the top of our list.

Mr. Bombardier noted that this is a priority for Staff as indicated in the Staff Recommendations as shown in the exhibits.

Councilman Kirlin stated we should keep roads high on our priority list and should set some sort of escalator and goals to set a course to get this accomplished.

Mayor Pro Tem Pierceall requested an updated project paving list. Mr. Bombardier stated a list would be sent to the entire Council.

The following handouts were incorporated into the exhibits: (1) Regionalization, Consolidation and Partner Projects and (2) Gaston County Township Grants – Project Update.

Mr. Peoples gave an update on the security enhancements for some city buildings.

(Reference as contained in Exhibit Book 3 to Minute Book 106 at Page 25.)

**EQUIPMENT**

Information was presented on the following:

- Police Body Cameras
- Radio Replacements and Update on Radio Systems
- Major ‘Rolling Stock’ (2017-18 Needs and Historic Trends)

Mr. Todd Carpenter stated that a Body Worn Camera Pilot program has been underway for about 18 months. Mr. Carpenter noted that they have looked at several body cam companies and have evaluated proposals, costs, and equipment and also reached out to other agencies to learn of their experience with the different vendors and their solutions. Mr. Carpenter noted technology has changed tremendously and at a fast rate. Mr. Carpenter stated they now are ready to make a recommendation.

Chief Smith gave a presentation about the pilot program that has been in place over the past two years.

Councilman Humphries made the motion to endorse the purchase of Body Worn Cameras. Councilman Kirlin seconded the motion and Council approved it unanimously.

Mr. Carpenter presented an update on the Public Safety Radio System.

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Mr. Joe Albright gave a report on the Outlook on City Rolling Stock and Equipment Considerations.

(Reference as contained in Exhibit Book 3 to Minute Book 106 at Page 26.)

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Information was provided and extensive discussion ensued on the following issues regarding Economic Development.

- FUSE District / Design Services and Further Progress
- Economic Development Plan / Retail Strategies Update
- City Code / Unified Development Ordinance Updates
- NC Route 7, Airline Ave and Gaston Ave Corridor Study
- New Tech Park / Additional Economic Development Sites
- Conference Center and Eastridge Mall Hotel Opportunities
- Franklin Boulevard Corridor Enhancements
- Second Ave – Downtown to Loray Mill
- Downtown Gastonia Development Update
- Small Business Conference

**LUNCH BREAK**

Council recessed for lunch at 12:00 p.m., and resumed the meeting at 12:18 p.m.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

(Continued)

Councilman Kirlin asked if the City could reach out to groups including our Community Watch organizations to get volunteers to assist with sign removal and trash pickup..

Mr. Peoples introduced Ms. Crystal Morphis who was hired by Electricities to complete our Economic Development Strategic Plan. Ms. Morphis reviewed the Economic Development Strategic Plan. Ms. Morphis submitted a summary of the recommendations from the Economic Development Strategic Plan that has been incorporated into the exhibits.

Mayor Pro Tem Pierceall stated he would like to see more work done on Highway 7 towards West Gastonia to beautify that area.

Councilman Humphries requested that the bridge be cleaned on Airline Avenue.

Councilman Kellogg stated he would like for the City to partner with the Chamber or some other business group to host a small business conference with small business owners in Gastonia that are looking to connect and find out information about the City.

Mr. Munn stated that Staff will work on coordinating this conference.

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(Reference as contained in Exhibit Book 3 to Minute Book 106 at Page 27.)

**ADVOCACY GOALS**  
**STATE AND FEDERAL**

Mr. Munn reviewed the 2017 Advocacy Agenda and further discussion ensued.

(Reference as contained in Exhibit Book 3 to Minute Book 106 at Page 28.)

**SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION**

Mayor Bridgeman encouraged Council to contact Staff with any questions they may have concerning anything discussed today

Mr. Munn distributed the Strategic Planning Workshop Summary and Direction which are hereby incorporated into the Exhibits.

(Reference as contained in Exhibit Book 3 to Minute Book 106 at Page 29.)

**MEETING ADJOURNED**

Mayor Bridgeman adjourned the meeting at 2:05 p.m.

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Mayor John D. Bridgeman

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L. Ashley Smith, City Attorney

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Sherry H. Dunaway, City Clerk

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