



City of Greensboro

Melvin Municipal Building
300 W. Washington Street
Greensboro, NC 27401

Meeting Minutes - Final City Council Work Session

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

2:00 PM

Plaza Level Conference Room

I. Call To Order

This Work Session of the City of Greensboro was called to order at 2:00 p.m. on the above date in the Plaza Level Conference Room of the Melvin Municipal Office Building with the following members present:

Present: Mayor Nancy Vaughan, Mayor Pro-Tem Yvonne Johnson, Councilmember Marikay Abuzuaite, Councilmember Mike Barber, Councilmember Sharon Hightower, Councilmember Nancy Hoffmann, Councilmember Justin Outling and Councilmember Tony Wilkins.

Absent: Councilmember Jamal Fox.

Also present were City Manager Jim Westmoreland, City Attorney Tom Carruthers, and Deputy City Clerk Angela R. Lord.

II. Presentations

[ID 17-0359](#)

Fiscal Year 2017-18 Budget Discussion

City Manager Jim Westmoreland provided an outline of the meeting; and recognized Budget and Evaluation Director Larry Davis to address the 2017-18 proposed budget.

Mr. Davis made a PowerPoint Presentation (PPP); spoke to the General Fund; outside water rates; outlined the 2017-18 recommended budget; the General Fund Budget major revenue changes; property and sales taxes; spoke to State collected revenues; appropriated fund balance; the need to replace the employee key system; and to renovation at the Cultural Arts Center.

Councilmember Wilkins asked for clarification on the revenue neutral rates.

Mr. Davis confirmed growth for the revenue neutral fund.

Discussion took place regarding reserves; balancing the budget; factors for the appropriated fund balance; and percentage mandates.

Mr. Davis explained the debt service goals; the City's contribution to the health insurance premiums; and outlined the general fund budget major expense increases.

City Manager Westmoreland spoke to his recommendation for outside agency funding; and to requested allocations by Council.

Councilmember Wilkins voiced appreciation for Council support of the Sanctuary House; highlighted the benefits of the program; spoke to a return on investment; and requested an allocation of \$35,000 for the organization.

Councilmember Hoffmann referenced a request for increased allocations to the Green Hill Center; highlighted the value of City employee free memberships; spoke to the return on investment; to getting employees involved in the arts; and requested Green Hill be put back on the list for the original ask of \$50,000.

Discussion ensued regarding the services offered by Green Hill Center; and tenants and rent for the Cultural Arts Center.

City Manager Westmoreland outlined the process for outside agency requests; stated the Community Partners Board had recommended twenty-three requests in which he accepted fifteen; spoke to the value of the outside agencies; to requests that were in alignment with the day-to-day operations of the City; to a request by Downtown Greensboro Incorporated (DGI) for \$50,000 for Economic Development that had not been recommended; and to economic development outreach.

Discussion continued regarding the purpose behind the request; Downtown maintenance; enhancement of services; and fundraising efforts by DGI.

Councilmember Abuzuaiter stated the requested allocation for Faith Action would not be for Identification bracelets; requested the amount to be increased to \$25,000; and referenced two years that the program paid for tax audits.

Councilmember Barber spoke to the opportunity to serve the community; and requested staff research the use of bond funds for the housing hub during this budget season.

Mayor Vaughan referenced a meeting and an announcement tomorrow; spoke to growth due to DGI; and voiced support for the \$50,000 for DGI for further economic development in Downtown.

Councilmember Outling spoke to members of Council addressing issues with buildings downtown; the expense of facade upgrades; and requested future project success information on outside agencies including the return on investments.

City Manager Westmoreland referenced a scheduled meeting to talk about proposals; and spoke to support mechanisms.

Council discussed Downtown economic growth; a growing tax base; the upcoming Performing Arts Center; diverting funds to outside agencies; return on investments; allocations for the Children's Museum; the Greensboro Development Fund; and small business loans.

Councilmember Hightower requested an update on the status of the Greensboro Community Development fund.

Mayor Vaughan requested staff provide a report of spending of City investments by the organization.

Councilmember Barber requested staff to include organizations that were hard to quantify; and for staff to research outsourcing the distribution of outside agency funding.

Mayor Pro-Tem Johnson voiced respect for the Community Foundation; spoke to Council being elected to make decisions; and to the outside agencies that rendered services to the City.

City Manager Westmoreland confirmed the allocation requests for outside agencies.

Mayor Vaughan reiterated her request to see how Greensboro Community Development funds were being spent.

City Manager Westmoreland recognized members of the Community Partners Board in attendance; and Assistant City Manager David Parrish to continue the PPP.

Councilmember Barber left the meeting at 2:43 p.m. and returned at 2:47 p.m.

Assistant City Manager Parrish outlined water increase options; spoke to forecasted increases; and to maintenance line updates.

Councilmember Hightower voiced concerns with increased water rates for outside the City; and asked for clarification for the use of the funds.

Senior Financial Services Manager Marlene Druga spoke to generated debt service increases; and to a yearly incremental increase.

Discussion took place regarding a three-year plan; average rates; anticipated increases; outside versus inside City rates; operational expenses; rehabilitation and replacement work; reduction to inside percentage rates; tier changes; revenue generation; a lower impact on City residents; and annexation incentives.

Councilmember Outling requested information on the full time employee positions proposed for Water Resources; and asked what was driving the increases.

Water Resources Director, Steve Drew spoke the value of the positions; contracting with an outside agency; confirmed a savings with internal employees; and spoke to plant expansions.

Council requested staff to develop and provide alternative options for the proposed Fiscal Year 2017-2018 water rate increases with emphasis placed on keeping inside user rates low.

City Manager Westmoreland continued the PPP; spoke to the competitive employee pay/benefits package; to proposed public safety employee increases; market values in relation to other municipalities; and the recommended merit budget for general employees.

Councilmember Outling voiced support for the managers recommendation; stated a 5% increase would be a good start; and requested an option to increase wages up to 75% for public safety employees.

Discussion ensued regarding the inclusion of Guilford Metro 911 employees in the salary increase; sworn employees; the current plan for Police and Fire; tier structures; exempt employees; compression issues; and range differences between junior and senior level employees.

Mayor Vaughan requested clarification on the tier structure.

Councilmember Barber spoke to a marketing splash; requested information based on society; voiced the need to have a 7.5% increase for public safety employees; and for an increased fleet for the officers.

Discussion continued regarding Greensboro being the third largest City in the state; clarifying the step program; officers eligible for the program; a market rate assessment; additional analysis; fundamental changes to adopted policies; equality and fairness to all employees; the loss of employees to other municipalities; and remaining competitive.

Councilmember Hightower requested an across the board increase for all City employees; and asked for comparative data.

Councilmembers Barber and Hoffmann recommended staff review current studies on the Fire and Police market values analyses.

City Manager Westmoreland spoke to data that reflected resignations; officers moving to other departments; pay rates; the cost of take home vehicles; and the desire of Council to remain competitive.

Mayor Vaughan spoke to wages in neighboring communities; referenced the \$15 minimum wage increase; voiced the need to be more aggressive; and expressed concern with the declining numbers in the recruitment classes.

Councilmember Hoffmann spoke to the cost associated with losing trained personnel.

Councilmember Outling voiced support for the increase; the need for Council to receive the information prior to voting; and spoke to development of a plan to cover additional costs.

Councilmember Wilkins inquired about the departure rate.

City Manager Westmoreland spoke to the issue of voluntary resignations; employees leaving to work for other cities; a second component that was pay related; and stated the need to figure the cost associated with the requested salary increases.

Councilmember Hightower voiced concerns with budget cuts to other departments; stated she would not support cuts; spoke to unfilled positions; a shortage in City staff; and stated Police Departments across the country were struggling to fill positions.

Discussion ensued regarding bond funding; time spent to train recruits; incentives being offered in other municipalities; Fire Department ISO 1 ratings; the possibility of increased insurance rates; calculating the cost of turnover; core departments supported by the general fund; and the need for some level of reductions.

Councilmember Wilkins left the meeting at 3:40 p.m. and returned at 3:44 p.m.

Moved by Councilmember Outling to move the City of Greensboro from the 50th to the 75th percentile for public safety.

City Manager Westmoreland explained an analysis would take approximately ninety days.

Councilmember Outling expressed concern about low salaries for public safety employees; and the need to know how much it would cost prior to voting.

Discussion continued regarding disapproval with the ninety-day plan; and the need for the increases in the 17-18 budget.

Mr. Davis asked for confirmation on Council's request for an increase from 5% to 7.5% for public safety employees; and spoke to approving an increase in July.

Councilmember Barber confirmed the request; spoke to entry-level positions; to proper salary adjustments for Fire and Police; referenced employee retirements; spoke to marketing the City; and requested a review of the step program of the public safety departments.

Councilmember Outling voiced concerns for finding the additional funding; spoke to keeping property tax rates the same; and to the bond project schedules.

Mayor Pro-Tem Johnson left the meeting at 3:55 p.m.

Councilmember Wilkins left the meeting at 3:55 p.m. and returned at 3:56 p.m.

Discussion ensued regarding Council directives for the proposed budget; implementing police fleet increases in phases; presentation of the proposed budget at community meetings; the upcoming schedule for the public hearing and budget work sessions; and discussion items for the next budget work session.

It was the consensus of Council to set a budget work session meeting for May 31st at 3:30 p.m. in the Plaza Level Conference Room.

(A copy of the PowerPoint Presentation is filed in Exhibit Drawer Z, Exhibit No. 19 which is hereby referred to and made a part of these minutes)

III. Adjournment

Moved by Councilmember Outling, seconded by Councilmember Hoffmann, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried by voice vote.

THE CITY COUNCIL ADJOURNED AT 4:00 P.M.

ANGELA R. LORD
DEPUTY CITY CLERK

NANCY VAUGHAN
MAYOR