



City of Greensboro

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

Meeting Minutes - Final City Council Work Session

Tuesday, June 23, 2020

2:30 PM

VIRTUAL

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I. Call To Order

This City Council Work Session of the City of Greensboro was called to order at 2:30 p.m. on the above date; Mayor Vaughan held a roll call to confirm attendance; The virtual meeting began with the following members present:

Mayor Nancy Vaughan, Mayor Pro-Tem Yvonne J. Johnson, Councilmembers Marikay Abuzuaite, Sharon Hightower, Nancy Hoffmann, Michelle Kennedy, Justin Outling, Tammi Thurm, and Goldie Wells.

Also present were City Manager David Parrish, City Attorney Chuck Watts and City Clerk, Angela R. Lord.

II. Presentations

1. [ID 20-0500](#) Public Safety

City Manager David Parrish spoke to employee residency requirements; to the structure of the Greensboro Police Department; compared peer municipalities requirements; outlined response times; spoke to national issues; to recruitment concerns; and to the use of chemical weapons.

Greensboro Police Chief Brian James voiced concerns with residency policies; spoke to quality applicants; to advantages and disadvantages to officers living within the community they serve; and to affordable housing.

Discussion ensued regarding officer residency; recruitment incentives; application requirements; community connectivity; incentives to encourage city residency; company vehicles; division protocols; and the value of community policing.

Mayor Vaughan spoke to the success, benefit, and availability of the 100 Homes programs.

Councilmember Hoffmann spoke to past experiences; to the need for resources for recruitment; to quality applicants; and to a changed world.

Councilmember Wells echoed past events in regards to police officers residency; spoke to commutes; to building community; and to the need to focus on homicides rather than residency of staff.

Councilmember Abuzuaite reaffirmed comments of Councilmember's Wells and Hoffmann; quoted an USA Today article; spoke to community work; reiterated the need for priorities; and spoke to hiring procedures.

Councilmember Hightower referenced a past residency issue with a Fire Chief; spoke to community policing and interactions; to training; to de-escalation and use of force; to building trust; to community programs; and to a safe community.

Councilmember Outling referenced the need for conversations and discussions; accomplishment of roles; and requested staff provide study data from peer municipalities.

Councilmember Thurm requested staff to provide incentives and tools needed for recruitment and retainment of police officers.

Discussion ensued regarding radius data; take home vehicles; policy changes; recruitment and residency incentives; military experience; budget reductions city wide; merit and Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA); training requirements; and 8 Can't Wait.

Councilmember Kennedy voiced concerns with communications from the Police Department; spoke to general city communications; to information provided to Council; to transparency; and to the need to work through miscommunication.

City Manager Parrish referenced timelines to disseminate information; explained the review process; spoke to coordination efforts; to departmental connection; and to weekly quality communications.

Councilmember Thurm requested staff to report to Council an assessment of communications in the police department; to provide findings and recommendations for improvements; and to research avenues for timely and accurate communications with Council.

Councilmember Outling voiced concerns with the communications structure within the organization; and inquired about accountability.

Discussion ensued regarding the history of departmental press releases; research for central versus de central communication efforts; the communication specialist workforce; the structure of the City Attorney office; transparency; and factual based reporting.

Mayor Pro-Tem Johnson inquired if Chief James would be available for closed session discussions regarding personnel to which Chief James responded in the affirmative.

Councilmember Hightower voiced the need for Council to be notified of press releases prior to the community.

Chief James referenced the Police Information Officer (PIO) duties; access to data bases; news media picking up stories from a police scanner; spoke to social media postings; to control of media press releases; and to miscommunication accountability.

Councilmember Abuzuaiter voiced the need for attorneys to be positioned within the police department; and spoke to the role of Council in regards to staffing.

Councilmember Hoffmann expressed the importance of communication; referenced damage in the Downtown area; quoted communications that followed the events; voiced concerns with negative communications to the citizens; and reiterated the need for improvement.

Discussion continued regarding accountability; policy modification; media misquotes and comments; Downtown vandalism; reliability of newspaper articles; the need to protect property; professional communications; and planned upcoming protest and rallies.

Mayor Vaughan requested staff to implement a policy for an After Action Report for the Greensboro Police Department (GPD); and to coordinate a GPD press conference for Chief James to clear up miscommunications regarding the May 30th and May 31st criminal activities in Downtown.

Chief James outlined the process of press releases review with Deputy Chiefs and the PIO.

Councilmember Hoffmann left the meeting at 3:37 p.m. due to technical difficulties.

Councilmember's Kennedy and Outling spoke to motions for staff to provide an operational assessment plan to

which City Attorney Chuck Watts explained motions and votes were not taken during work sessions. It was the consensus of Council for staff to report the assessment findings and plans at a future meeting.

Councilmember Thurm requested a work session be scheduled to discuss written consent concerns; and referenced data provided by the City Manager's office. City Manager Parrish spoke to an update on actions taken and peer city comparisons.

Mayor Vaughan requested a work session to be scheduled for August 11th for an update on the Greensboro Criminal Justice Advisory Commission work; and for written consent data review.

Councilmember Hightower requested the data to be forwarded to all Council.

Councilmember Wells referenced from the community to discuss the Pulpit Forum concerns.

Mayor Vaughan outlined conversations with Assistant City Manager Trey Davis; spoke to 8 Can't Wait codification; to a meeting with Greensboro Rising; and requested staff schedule a work session and a Special City Council meeting for July 2nd for consideration of a 8 Can't Wait resolution.

Discussion took place regarding rescheduling National Night Out events due to the pandemic.

Councilmember Hoffmann returned to the meeting at 3:52 p.m.

Discussion continued regarding police policies; benefits to deeper council conversations; the need for clarification on various items; implemented changes to policies; Council expectations; police reform; staff summaries provided to Council; and the need to update policy manuals.

III. Adjournment

Moved by Councilmember Hightower, seconded by Councilmember Abuzuaiter, to adjourn the work session. The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Mayor Nancy Vaughan, Mayor Pro-Tem Johnson Yvonne Johnson, Councilmembers Marikay Abuzuaiter, Sharon Hightower, Nancy Hoffmann, Michelle Kennedy, Justin Outling, Tammi Thurm, Goldie Wells.

Nays: None

THE CITY COUNCIL ADJOURNED AT 4:11 P.M.

ANGELA R. LORD
CITY CLERK

NANCY VAUGHAN
MAYOR