

JUNE 16, 2015
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR. – RM. 120

PRESENT Mayor Dorothy Hubbard
Mayor Pro Tem Bobby Coleman
City Commissioners: Jon Howard, BJ Fletcher, Roger Marietta, Bob Langstaff,
Jr. and Tommie Postell
Interim City Mgr: Phil Roberson
City Attorney: CN Davis

Mayor Hubbard called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

SPEAKER APPEARANCES:

The Clerk advised that Phil Cannon and Larry Sexton were removed from the agenda at this time.

Patricia Swain, Georgia State African American Chamber of Commerce, stated that she and her husband formed the organization seven months ago due to growing disparity between Black businesses and other businesses. An entrepreneurial spirit exists within the African-American community, but they are unaware of how to tap into resources, which is why she and her husband created GSAACCI. She said they are present to request funding for a conference to be held in Miami, FL July 17-19 and briefly discussed the multi-cultural heritage market and how this can increase economic development in the city. She asked for \$3,000 to cover costs of attending the conference and mentioned that the benefit of attending the conference is the ability to share information and to learn more about heritage tourism. In closing, she discussed areas that they are promoting, partnerships and updating data pertaining to tourism.

Commissioner Marietta clarified that this will benefit Albany by bringing in tourism operations from all over the country; Ms. Swain agreed. In reply to Commissioner Marietta, she said that the hotel is filling up quickly, so time is an issue.

Commissioner Postell asked Ms. Swain when she became aware of the conference; Ms. Swain replied that they became aware last month. In response to Commissioner Postell regarding the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), Mr. Swain stated that they never received a call back from CVB, in which the information was relayed to Rachelle Beasley. In reply to Commissioner Postell, Ms. Swain distributed information (copy on file) regarding use of funds and stated that only two people will be traveling to Miami. She explained that they have an advisory board of five members, a directory board of five, and ten other members. Commissioner Postell agreed that this is a beneficial program if it promotes the City of Albany, adding that funds usually come from CVB for traveling. He explained that Commissioners are entrusted with public funds and have to be careful about spending these funds.

Commissioner Fletcher asked the number of local members and if this is privately funded. Ms. Swain replied that it has been privately funded; they have members from the state of Georgia, which include Dr. James Hill; Cornell Kimbrell (serves on the Advisory Board) and, Carl

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Windom is part of the organization, etc. Commissioner Fletcher agreed with Commissioner Postell that it is a private organization and privately funded.

Commissioner Marietta asked if Rachelle Beasley could provide information on funds/grant to honor this type of request. Ms. Beasley stated that, being a broad market, CVB usually partners with the State regarding the international market; Albany is a small market in comparison to Atlanta. Funds are used to partner with larger entities to ensure that funds go further. In reply to Commissioner Marietta, she stated that she was not aware of this organization. Commissioner Marietta asked if the two organizations can work together and perhaps partner in the future. Ms. Beasley replied that they can work together and explained that when going to market places such as the event in Miami, she tries to ensure that it is not just educational programming since the intent of CVB is to market Albany to tour operators, meeting planners, etc.

Commissioner Howard clarified that Mr. Swain attempted to reach Ms. Beasley more than just once. Ms. Swain stated that there were many emails and phone calls; Ms. Beasley interjected that she was not aware of any attempts to reach her. Mr. Swain stated that initially he made contact to share information with the CVB to introduce them to opportunities to market Albany for tourism opportunities. He mentioned a state-wide tour that would begin in Atlanta that included heritage tourism destinations not on the beaten path. Discussion followed on whether Ms. Beasley made contact with the Swains with Ms. Beasley stating that in the past she spoke with them and met with them; however, when the request for money, etc., came in it was either too late and/or not enough information was provided or it was for education. Commissioner Howard asked if this organization can work with them with Ms. Beasley stating that in the next budget year if a formal proposal, which she has not received, is provided; she will see if it is something they can work with.

Commissioner Postell stated that he met with Mr. Swain several months ago and suggested that it is not completed enough to give funds to go to Miami next month. He commented on the request and asked if they have matching funds on hand since the verbal request was for \$3,000 with the paper request being \$500.00 less. Mr. Swain explained the funding request and stated the object is to attend the trade show; it is not only for educational purposes. Commissioner Postell asked them to get with Ms. Beasley to bring back to the Commission in the future. Mr. Swain said they will work with anyone willing to work with them and thanked the Commission for the opportunity to make the presentation today and commented on tourism dollars in Georgia and this not being a divisive operation.

Commissioner Fletcher asked Mr. Davis if the Commission can give funding. Mr. Davis stated that if it is quid pro quo; there would have to be some consideration. As Commissioner Postell pointed out, it cannot be a gift or donation; there must be deliverables from the other side.

Mayor Hubbard questioned the organization with Mr. Swain explaining that they will join the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and State Chamber of Commerce as they develop and move

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forward. Mayor Hubbard asked to see the organizational structure with Ms. Swain providing the website.

Commissioner Howard stated that he hopes that organizations (CVB, etc) being funded will extend an olive branch to organizations wanting to work with them. Ms. Swain mentioned that most often visitors patronize places such as the Civil Rights Institute, RiverQuarium, etc., one/two times at the most; there must be economic development growth and an offering of other attractions to keep bringing visitors.

APPOINTMENTS:

1. Appointments to Community Development Council for one-year term expiring June 2016

Discussion followed with Commissioner Postell recommending Ms. Jean Nobles for South Albany. Mayor Hubbard asked if there are other vacancies in E. Albany and South Albany. Mayor Pro Tem Coleman asked if E. Towne Civic League still exists; Mayor Hubbard said that to her knowledge it does. Mayor Pro Tem Coleman reported that the building was sold with the organization receiving the money, adding that he does not know where they have moved. He asked if everyone was aware that Second Mt. Olive purchased the Boys and Girls Club in East Albany, with the proceeds being divided and E. Towne Civic League receiving some of the money and suggested that they no longer have a meeting place. Mayor Hubbard asked that this be reviewed; Mr. Davis stated that the last time he checked the Secretary of the State's records, they were current.

CANCELLING JULY 7, 2015 WORK SESSION

Commissioner Howard moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Postell; the motion unanimously carried.

TRAVEL:

Commissioner Howard moved to approve the following, seconded by Commissioner Postell; the motion unanimously carried.

1. S. Subadan, City Manager – GMA Annual Conference; Savannah, GA
June 27-28, 2015

ITEM FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Commissioner Marietta invited everyone to attend an event on Thursday regarding the Sabal Trail compressor, which is proposed to be moved into his ward. The meeting will be held at 6 pm at Darton and feedback is needed since it is currently being proposed to be in the city limits.

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Commissioner Postell asked Mr. Davis for information regarding the Sabal Trail and the current proposal of coming into city limits and wards, etc. Mayor Hubbard asked Mr. Davis to provide information regarding proposed changes. Commissioner Marietta stated that Ken Cutts from Congressman Bishop's office and county officials will be at the meeting and encouraged City Commissioners to attend.

Commissioner Howard mentioned (City Manager) Ms. Subadan coming to the work on Monday June 22 and suggested having a reception at 5:30 for light refreshments to welcome her to Albany. He moved to have a 5:30 reception, seconded by Commissioner Postell. Mayor Hubbard stated that a plan/forum is in place to 'meet the leaders' in August. Hearing no further comments, the motion unanimously carried.

Mayor Pro Tem Coleman distributed information (copy on file) regarding the composition of the Fire and Police. Mr. Davis explained that the intent is that an Interim City Manager would not have the power to appoint a Fire/Police Chief.

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

APPROVAL OF PUBLIC SERVICE GRANTS THROUGH CDBG

Shelena Hawkins, Director, distributed additional information pertaining to the monitoring process (copy on file) and discussed public service funding requests as noted. She advised that representatives from the agencies are present and they introduced themselves.

Commissioner Postell moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Langstaff; the motion unanimously carried.

TRANSFER OF WEATHERIZATION FUNDS TO SWGA COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL

Ms. Hawkins discussed information as noted, (copy on file) and distributed additional information regarding the SWGA Community Action Council, Inc., Year in Review (copy on file). Discussion followed on funding and the method used for weatherization.

Anne Hires and Randy Weldon, reps from SWGA Community Action Council, were present to answer questions. Commissioner Howard questioned the method of receiving funds for weatherization. Ms. Hires explained that the program is based on the federal poverty guidelines which require income guidelines being met to qualify and, there are additional points for elderly, handicapped, children under three, etc. Contractors are used, as well as an in-house group and all work and material is guaranteed for one year; she added that they do sealing, caulking,

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glazing, etc., with Mr. Weldon adding that it is not a rehab program, but rather one for energy efficiency. Discussion followed on the one year guarantee with Stephen Collier, ACM, stating that this is standard practice.

In reply to Commissioner Postell, Ms. Hawkins explained how money is distributed, which is through applications, adding that funding is City and County applicants. In reply to Commissioner Postell, Ms. Hawkins explained the funding process for both the City and County, expansion of services, etc. Discussion followed on GEFA vs. the utility department handling weatherization with Mr. Collier explaining that \$200,000 was included in the budget to run a program from Albany Utilities and is separate from the program under discussion. Commissioner Postell asked if there is a contract; Ms. Hawkins replied in the negative and explained that Commission approval is required prior to a contract being executed. Mr. Roberson stated that this will be distributed by the night meeting.

Commissioner Marietta asked restrictions of the funds, i.e., homeowners or renters? Ms. Hires said it can be homeowners or rental, adding that they serve 17 counties, with rules being the same.

Mayor Pro Tem Coleman asked if landlords are involved and providing funding. Ms. Hawkins explained that their properties are being improved with the benefit going to those living in the household/applicant, i.e., lowering utility bill. Discussion followed on renters moving out with Mayor Pro Tem Coleman suggesting something be in place to obligate the landlord. Ms. Hawkins explained that the contract is with the applicant and not the landlord.

Commissioner Fletcher commented on buildings with renters living in substandard housing and suggested that landlords should be put on the news and embarrassed. She mentioned the increasing heat with occupants suffering from intolerable conditions.

Commissioner Postell moved to delay this matter until the night meeting to give time to get a contract, seconded by Commissioner Langstaff. Hearing no further comments, the motion unanimously carried.

ITEM FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Commissioner Postell recognized APD Chief M. Persley; this is his first official meeting and he congratulated him for taking the helm of APD.

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PUBLIC FUNCTIONS MATTERS

MATTERS FOR PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIDERATION ON TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 2015, 6:30 PM, ROOM 100; GOVERNMENT CENTER BUILDING, 222 PINE AVE.

The Clerk read the following:

1. Zoning Case #15-020 – WRB Ventures, LLC/Owner; Melissa Strother/Applicant; request special approval to allow an Indoor/Outdoor Special Event Center within the C-5 Dist., for property located at 1308 Dawson Rd. PC Approved 6-0 - WARD 4

Commissioner Marietta expressed concern and drew a layout of the request pertaining to overflow parking. He stated that it is residential property and with no sidewalk, patrons would have to cross the property and asked if this should go back to Planning for review. In reply to Mayor Hubbard, Mary Teter, Senior Planner, stated that no one expressed concerns at the Planning Commission meeting, adding that she was contacted by the property owner. Commissioner Marietta said the property owner was not aware of the parking issue; therefore, they did not attend the meeting. Commissioner Fletcher spoke in favor of the application, in which a great deal of work was done on the property. She said there will be parking in the rear and that events will be small with no more than 50-60 people, adding that they agreed to insert a clause in the contract to be solely responsible for anything that happens. Commissioner Marietta again expressed concern on the parking and said he is not against the application, but recommended the issue be resolved. Paul Forgey, Planning Director, discussed planning laws/rules and explained that they cannot be denied based on not having sidewalks because there is a public right of way. Commissioner Marietta questioned the City having liability on city property if someone trips with Mr. Davis explaining that notice would be given if there is a defect on the right-of-way to have legal basis. He said the applicant may intend to get an indemnity policy for adjacent property owners, with the suggestion to bring additional information to the night meeting, i.e., lease, policy, etc.

Commissioner Langstaff noted page 20 and the reference of using valet parking. Ms. Teter stated that information will be provided.

GRANT ACCEPTANCE FROM GA DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES RE: HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY

Mr. Forgey discussed information as noted (copy on file) and asked for approval.

Commissioner Howard moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Postell; the motion unanimously carried.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE MATTERS

FY 2015 JAG GRANT

APD Chief M. Persley referred to page 39 and discussed information (copy on file) and asked for approval. Commissioner Langstaff moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Postell; the motion unanimously carried.

BUDGET AMENDMENT

Derrick Brown, Finance Director, discussed information as noted (copy on file) pertaining to a budget amendment. Commissioner Langstaff moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Postell.

Discussion followed on clarification of amendments, i.e., repairs to the Carver pool, etc., this not being a request for additional funding for Boys and Girls Club; EDC's amount, allotment to Boys and Girls Club being annually, with a stipend given to assist with operations, etc.

Hearing no further discussion, the motion unanimously carried.

WARD 3 CONSULTING EXPENSE

Commissioner Fletcher explained that she incurred this expense in an effort to learn about the budget and asked for approval. Commissioner Postell moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Marietta. Commissioner Langstaff asked if this will come from Commissioner Fletcher's budget and Commissioner Howard asked why this item came to the Commission.

In reply to Mayor Hubbard, Mr. Davis referred to page 47, which explains why this item was put on the agenda, i.e., he had asked that a detailed summary be provided, etc.

Hearing no further comments, the motion unanimously carried.

FEDERAL LOBBYIST CONTRACT RENEWAL

Wes Smith, ACM, discussed information as noted (copy on file) and recommended approval.

Commissioner Postell questioned the amount and asked if this is renewed yearly. Mr. Smith said typically it is a two-year cycle and this request is to enter into another two year cycle; a one year contract with a one year option. In reply to Commissioner Postell, Mr. Smith gave an overview of how the Federal Lobbyist has assisted the City of Albany, i.e., multi-modal, airport, etc. In reply to Commissioner Postell, Mr. Smith explained the annual fly-in to DC to meet with senators and Congressman Bishop which is a political benefit to Albany.

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Commissioner Marietta asked if Marion Turner can make contact with him re: Sabal Pipeline. Mayor Hubbard questioned additional expenses, with Mr. Smith explaining the \$10,000 that is used for him to come to Albany once a year.

Commissioner Postell moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Marietta, the motion unanimously carried.

CURRENT BIDS:

Joshua Williams, Buyer, discussed the following:

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| 1. | Purchase of mobile camera system, Motorola | |
| | Total expenditure | \$107,535.00 |

Commissioner Howard moved to approve, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher.

Commissioner Postell questioned the purchase of the cameras with Chief Persley stating that mobile cameras will be in all fleet cars. Commissioner Langstaff asked if these are independent cameras officers can wear; Chief Persley replied in the affirmative and explained funding, pilot programs, etc.

Hearing no further comments, the motion unanimously carried.

Commissioner Howard moved to approve the following, seconded by Commissioner Langstaff; the motion unanimously carried.

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| 2. | Printers and battery chargers, Southern Computer Warehouse | |
| | Total Expenditure | \$81,398.13 |

Commissioner Howard moved to approve the following, seconded by Commissioner Postell; the motion unanimously carried.

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| 3. | Dell Laptop Computers, Dell | |
| | Total Expenditure | \$105,901.40 |

Commissioner Howard moved to approve the following, seconded by Commissioner Fletcher; the motion unanimously carried.

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| 4. | Office Supplies, Staples | |
| | Total Expenditure | \$170,000.00 |

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Mayor Hubbard recognized AFD Chief James Carswell who is retiring, adding that this is his last meeting. She thanked Chief Carswell for his service to Albany. Chief Carswell thanked the Commission and citizens for their support.

BUDGET DISCUSSIONS:

1. Joel Holmes Recreation/Civic Center Director was present to answer questions.

Commissioner Howard asked the number of parks being managed. Mr. Holmes replied that there are 78 being maintained, which includes the golf course. Commissioner Howard asked the utilization of Paul Eames Park, which Mr. Holmes discussed. Commissioner Howard questioned information from the 2012 budget whereby \$1.0 million was reserved for improvements at the golf course and asked where the money went. Mr. Brown discussed monies in reserves for projects (\$2.0 million). Commissioner Howard mentioned tracking each fiscal year budget, consolidation of utilities and asked for a monthly update on departments to determine if there are shortfalls from state taxes/revenues. He mentioned upcoming SPLOST 7 and the Commission should be aware of the status of projects: over/under budget, on time/delayed, etc., adding that the pool in E. Albany should have been built by now. He said that a former Interim City Manager reported that \$200,000 was taken for another project and that he is infuriated that the pool, a SPLOST 6 project, has not yet been started and suggested that a check and balance system needs to be incorporated regarding projects. Mr. Roberson stated that he speaks with Ms. Subadan daily and mentioned the upcoming retreat being planned to discuss this along with other concerns. In reply to Mayor Hubbard, Mr. Roberson stated that the Thornton area is being looked at, adding that more information will be forthcoming. Commissioner Howard asked the City Attorney if an error occurred when the City Manager took money from recreation to improve the airport. Mr. Davis replied that it is more difficult now to make these type decisions and commented on the process of transferring funds which would require Commission approval, would have to show that a project is no longer feasible and information showing cash flow problems, etc.

2. Regarding the Civic Center, Mr. Holmes discussed \$200,000 in seed money to allow the City of Albany to put on shows/concerts, etc.; promoters would still bring in events, but to produce revenue the City can have concerts/shows/events. In reply to Commissioner Howard regarding what type of shows will come, Mr. Holmes explained looking at what's trending, popular acts, financing of affordable shows, etc. Mr. Roberson added that operating expenses were reduced and revenues increased to cover costs; this is a pilot program and only a start. The Commission will decide whether or not further allocations will be justified for future events.

Commissioner Marietta mentioned indoor football and the sports park, asking the timeline of both and if the budget will support them when they unfold. Mr. Holmes stated they are waiting on a response from the 340 Group which was included in the budget. Regarding the sports park, Mr. Smith interjected that they are meeting and when Ms. Subadan gets here it will be further

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discussed; however, there is nothing to present at this time. Commissioner Marietta asked if the Commission needs to set a deadline since it has been ongoing five years since SPLOST 6 was passed. Mr. Smith explained that the committee has met only three times, and this is the first time an organized nucleus has met to formulate ideas, which will be brought back to the Commission. Commissioner Marietta suggested having a decision by a certain date; if the committee is allowed to wash ideas for the next five years there will be no forward movement in getting the sports park done. He mentioned the County borrowing funds from the tennis center project and the prospect of no funds remaining for a sports park or pool. Discussion followed on how long a recommendation will be forthcoming, with Mr. Smith asking to allow the new City Manager to get here and get involved; it is premature to set a deadline at this time. In reply to Commissioner Marietta, Darrell Smith, Deputy Recreation Director, stated that he has not met with anyone; former Recreation Director Suzanne Davis had meetings, but it has been more about location than anything. Mayor Hubbard agreed that meetings should include the new City Manager. Commissioner Marietta agreed to wait until the new City Manager is here, suggesting again that a deadline needs to be set and he is not backing off on that and will be making a motion at the next work session to set one.

Commissioner Fletcher agreed with Commissioner Marietta on projects falling through the cracks and money being lost. She mentioned the study on a new trend whereby cities are opening splash parks instead of pools.

In response to Commissioner Howard, Mr. Roberson stated that Paul Eames Park has 25 acres. Commissioner Howard suggested this location for the tennis center and the pool, since the City owns the 25 acres. The City is virtually in the real estate business and the park could be a recreational hub. Mr. Roberson also suggested waiting to have input from Ms. Subadan when she reports to work.

Commissioner Postell asked the number of parks in each ward; Mr. Holmes said he will provide that information. Commissioner Postell questioned the increase in expenses and asked the number of employees in Recreation. Mr. Holmes replied that there are currently 33 employees; the department lost 20 employees when the facilities maintenance division was created. Commissioner Postell mentioned the downtown master plan's recommendation to tear down the civic center. Mr. Holmes stated that he was not involved in that plan. Discussion followed with Commissioner Postell commenting on various recreational areas and questioning the use of the additional \$273,000 in the budget. Mr. Holmes referred to the summary breakdown (copy on file) showing changes. Mr. Roberson advised that changes are also due to the salary survey – adding 10% across the board. Commissioner Postell countered that with the loss of 20 employees, with only 33 remaining, he still cannot understand the \$273,000 increase in that budget. Mr. Roberson explained that the amount was included to accommodate any kind of increases the pay study may show; it may prove that only a portion of that amount will be used. He added that a 10% increase was allotted each department for salaries to cover the pay study. Additional discussion followed on salaries for recreation, reduction in the workforce, back-filling positions, etc., with Mr. Roberson suggesting that most likely there will be additional changes if

the need to move more employees becomes apparent. Commissioner Postell agreed with Commissioner Howard regarding Paul Eames Park. Mayor Hubbard clarified that 10% was given to each department, but the entire amount may not be needed/used by every department. Mr. Roberson agreed and explained the intent of the salary study.

Commissioner Marietta mentioned that the American Legion hosts tournaments at Paul Eames and the suggestion to replace restroom/lavatories, etc. He also mentioned the summer food program and asked where the money comes from, how much food is used, etc. Mr. Smith replied that the school system does this now, but each gym and a number of playgrounds participate with the school system, which runs the program. He discussed staffing of gyms with temporary, summer help, etc., which is not an additional cost.

Referring to promoters, Mayor Pro Tem Coleman asked if they lack interest in putting on shows at the Civic Center. Mr. Holmes explained that the Civic Center charges rent and facilitates shows, while promoters bring the shows, put up funds for them and make the majority of the revenue. Mayor Pro Tem Coleman asked if he agrees that civic centers are not designed to make money, but are merely vehicles for money to be made off of hotels, restaurants, gas stations, local establishments. Mr. Holmes countered that the Civic Center still puts on shows and agreed that people patronize local businesses. Mayor Pro Tem Coleman stated that Mr. Holmes is using his funds to put on the shows; whereas if the promoter puts on the show, his money stays intact and he still gets the rent, adding that he does not feel taxpayer's monies should be used to promote shows.

Mayor Hubbard asked about losses at the golf course and mentioned clinics, tournaments, etc., explaining that she is trying to justify the losses and asked if there are suggestions on turning this around. She asked future plans for the golf course; Mr. Holmes replied that they are promoting and utilizing the golf course and said he can provide the money report regarding rounds played, tournaments, etc. He added that they are making changes and looking at ways to cut expenses, and stated that within the industry, golf is now on a downward trend. In reply to Mayor Hubbard he said he did not anticipate the budget figures looking the same next year as this year; he expects improvement.

Commissioner Postell suggested that the golf course, civic center and auditorium will never bring in revenue; they are merely for the public's entertainment. He said the best to hope for is to break even and suggested that more money will be lost trying to make money. Mayor Pro Tem Coleman stated that he is glad to hear there is a different plan for the golf course, explaining that a tournament was held earlier this month and he was embarrassed by the negative comments about the upkeep of the course.

3. Independent Agencies – Mr. Roberson stated that representatives are present to answer questions as noted in section page 18 of the budget book. Sharlene Cannon, Interim Downtown Manager, stated that she is present to address questions. Commissioner Howard stated that he cannot justify a city the size of Albany having three Assistant City Manager's. He

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said he feels that the City is too top-heavy with big salaries and suggested one of the ACM's take on a dual role and governing downtown and asked Ms. Cannon's opinion. Ms. Cannon recommended having someone whose focus is solely on developing downtown, adding that the downtown manager is also the director of ADICA/DDA. She discussed the challenges of her role and explained that we have a city full of vacant buildings with a lot of buildings being under-utilized, non-compliance within the Code and in terrible shape. Downtown development is hampered because of the lack of private investment with owners who are not willing to get the buildings up to code standards. Albany needs leadership with vision and everyone to get behind and embrace plans for downtown. She said the future of the Civic Center is not what concerns her and she entreated the Commission to make a move to build traffic downtown; otherwise the Commission will never realize any success in their aim. She mentioned getting residential development downtown as an impetus to bring businesses, adding that developers are waiting in the wings to get going. A brief discussion followed regarding the condition of downtown properties and bringing them back to life. Commissioner Howard asked if the old Albany Theatre can be salvaged. Ms. Cannon explained the significance of the building and said she cannot get anyone to support efforts after coming to the Commission three/four times. Commissioner Howard asked if she thinks part of the problem is that the children/grandchildren of property owners have left Albany and owners refuse to put more funds into those properties. Ms. Cannon agreed that could be a possible factor; however and most importantly, Commissioners have to show how important this cause is to them. She discussed the need for plans and said that negativity in this area is killing what hope is left to turn downtown on its heels. In response to Commissioner Howard, she said the Commission can support the effort with their vision, words and deeds. Referring to the master plan, she said it is not written in stone, but is rather a framework/ guideline to be used. The lack of Commission support was evident when only Mayor Hubbard and Commissioner Fletcher attended the master plan presentation.

Commissioner Fletcher stated that this has been going on for awhile and discussed why people are leaving Albany; landlords are allowed to dictate and cause devastation of downtown. She briefly discussed creating a vacancy tax to force owners to bring buildings up to standard. Mr. Roberson stated that the new city manager is motivated and the things discussed today are top on her list. He suggested having this discussed at the upcoming retreat. Commissioner Marietta asked if any progress has been made on the downtown master plan and suggested that it be sent to the Planning Commission to be re-worked/re-formulated. Mr. Roberson deferred to Mr. Forgey, who recommended that the Planning Commission review it and bring it to the City Commission for approval.

Commissioner Marietta moved to send the downtown master plan to Planning Commission to review and send it back to the Commission, seconded by Commissioner Postell.

Commissioner Postell asked for clarification on the status of the plan i.e. level of development. Ms. Cannon stated that it is on the City's website, and said a copy can be provided by the next

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meeting. Commissioner Marietta clarified that his motion is to have the Planning Commission review the plan and not vote on the plan at this time.

Mayor Pro Tem Coleman agreed with waiting on the new city manager to provide input and asked Mr. Davis if a vacancy tax is feasible. Mr. Davis stated that we have a blight ordinance that we follow, and that he will check on state authority to impose such a tax. Robert Carter, Chief Code Enforcement Officer, discussed the policy of declaring property as blighted and citing violators. He stated that property owners have no incentive to bring their property up to code, which could cost thousands of dollars, when they can pay a small fine each year. Mayor Hubbard asked Mr. Davis to research state law to determine the possibility of imposing vacancy tax/fee, if it exists. Commissioner Langstaff asked Mr. Davis to check with Macon because he thought they were in the process of establishing a vacancy tax. He agreed with Commissioner Coleman to wait until Ms. Subadan is here and has an opportunity to review the plan before sending it to the Planning Commission. Commissioner Marietta withdrew his motion, with Commissioner Postell withdrawing his second. Mayor Hubbard discussed hiring a Downtown Manager based on the fact that the City Manager felt that he could not control what goes on downtown unless the Downtown Manager reported to him. She said it is frustrating to see other cities accomplishing what Albany has failed to do.

Commissioner Postell referred to Mt. Olive Community Outreach and asked why are they 'zeroing' out now. Mr. Brown explained that there were no changes from what was approved in the current year; they did not receive any funding this year it was left as is. Regarding the Civil Rights Museum, he advised that the \$350,000 allocated through ADICA has \$100,000 for Civil Rights and \$250,000 for the RiverQuarium.

Mayor Pro Tem Coleman stated that he stands by the statement he made when first coming on the commission - taxpayers are not supposed to subsidize the building; they should have a board to solicit private funds. He suggested allocating a long term 'x' amount of dollars; when the monies have been expended there should be no additional funding. He said he will not vote for this budget as long as it contains these type entities. He mentioned the \$60,000 ASU asked for to help with 400 students in the summer program, which is a successful program, but cannot get funding. He suggested anyone asking for public funds should show, in writing, fundraising events and the amount that is raised. He said he is willing to be a gap provider as opposed to a total provider.

Commissioner Fletcher suggested giving a year's notice that in the next budget, the City will match what they have raised, which gives an incentive; it should apply to any organization receiving public funding.

Commissioner Marietta discussed going to Chehaw a few times recently and while he thought \$1.0 million was a lot of money for the Park, it is an essential part to the quality of life here. This applies to the RiverQuarium as well; both are raising funds exceeding the amount they are allotted and they are tourism generators. He cautioned against matching what they raise;

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Commissioner Fletcher interjected that a cap would be implemented. Discussion followed with Mayor Hubbard stating that the other side would be ‘is that a quality of life issue’; in other cities these type organizations receive assistance from local entities as these are quality of life issues. Commissioner Fletcher suggested that these groups provide quarterly reports and she so moved, seconded by Commissioner Marietta.

Commissioner Howard asked how much is given to the RiverQuarium, with Tommy Gregors stating \$200,000; \$100,000 goes to the Civil Rights Institute and funding going to EDC. Commissioner Howard said he will vote in favor, and agreed that organizations should come on a quarterly basis to show revenue and expenses; they must be held accountable for receiving taxpayer’s money; Commissioner Fletcher agreed.

Commissioner Postell mentioned that the Chehaw is the recipient of the largest amount of funding, but they have brought a great amount of transitional changes. He mentioned the five-year structure, in which the amount decreases each year; Mr. Davis agreed that Chehaw’s funding is decreased yearly. Commissioner Postell agreed with Commissioner Fletcher regarding quarterly reports, to include Chehaw; he also agreed with Mayor Pro Tem Coleman about funding ASU’s summer program. Mayor Hubbard stated that she gave ASU a personal donation last year; however, the City asked for a proposal, which was never provided. Discussion followed on what is being asked by ASU on the program.

Hearing no further comments, the motion unanimously carried.

At 11:59, Commissioner Marietta moved to extend the meeting for ten minutes, seconded by Commissioner Howard; the motion unanimously carried.

Commissioner Howard asked to hear comments from the Chamber and EDC. Barbara R. Holmes was present to answer questions. Commissioner Marietta mentioned the ‘shopping local’ campaign, in which the Chamber and EDC used outside companies for printing, etc., and said constituents are complaining. Ms. Holmes replied that this has to do with the best bid and for the most part, vendors are local; often items may not be available or are cost effective from outside Albany.

Commissioner Howard mentioned the \$250,000 allocated to EDC and asked how they are doing in creating/retaining jobs. Ms. Holmes stated that they are doing very well and provided stats on their progress, adding that they regularly provide updates to the Commission. Commissioner Howard asked for a list of permanent jobs with Ms. Holmes stating that Webstruant Store announced 150 jobs; Thrush announced 100; P&G announced 75; and 500 temporary positions. Commissioner Howard asked if the amount given is measurable; Ms. Holmes replied that the \$200.0 million in investment is a significant return on the \$250,000. Commissioner Howard asked about companies coming to Albany; Ms. Holmes advised that there are expansions that should be announced within the next few months. Commissioner Howard mentioned BRAC and asked if it will come up for discussion. Ms. Holmes explained the process with no

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announcements being made at this point. Mayor Hubbard mentioned a committee in Albany, in which she has attended meetings. Commissioner Howard asked the status of the industrial park on HWY 82. Ms. Holmes stated that it is in development, owned and managed by Payroll Development, which contracted with Dougherty County to cut infrastructure costs. Directing his comments to Ms. Beasley (CVB), Commissioner Howard stated that there have been no ribbon-cuttings in E. Albany or the south side of town. Ms. Beasley stated that the Chamber is responsible for those. Commissioner Fletcher stated that she would like to know, not necessarily today, why Albany is not being picked by companies, especially if it is something that can be corrected.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:11 p.m.

SONJA TOLBERT
CITY CLERK