

AUGUST 5, 2014
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
GOVT. CTR – ROOM 120

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

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

STATE LOBBYIST UPDATE ON 2014 STATE LEGISLATION

Using a power point presentation (copy on file), Rufus Montgomery, President Cascon Group/state lobbyist, discussed Commission priorities (ASU Fine Arts Center, Albany projects and amending/preventing adverse legislation, explaining that there is often bad legislation that targets Albany. He stated that the budget crept back from \$19.3 billion to \$20.8 billion, adding that this year the governor signed 644 bills/vetoing 15. Regarding Dougherty County Legislative session, he noted that the change will add Representative-elect Darrel Ealum, who replaces Carol Fullerton.

Commissioner Postell asked the voting record for each of the Dougherty County legislators. Mr. Montgomery stated that he will provide this information.

Continuing with the power point presentation, he noted the Republican/Democratic makeup within the general assembly, adding that there may be changes in the upcoming election. He noted appropriations (ASU/Darton) and discussed HB 60 re: Gun Bill, HB 128 Downtown Renaissance Fund Act, HB 478 Debt collection, HB 176 Mobile Broadband Infrastructure and SB 213 Flint River Drought Protection.

In reply to Commissioner Postell, Mr. Montgomery discussed endangered species found in the Flint River as it pertains to environmental protection.

Continuing with the presentation, Mr. Montgomery discussed the Dougherty County Legislators and which committee they serve on, etc. He referenced the Commission priorities adding that state agencies were engaged last year (Juvenile Justice and Dept. of Behavioral Health). He commented on funding for the Fine Arts Center, Downtown Renaissance Fund and his coordination with the Federal Lobbyist.

Mayor Hubbard thanked Mr. Montgomery for the work he does in assisting the City.

CITY MANAGER SEARCH PROCESS

Mayor Hubbard asked Mr. Berry to share what has been done. Mr. Berry stated that they have been in contact with various agencies regarding the search for a city manager. Commissioner Postell asked why this process to search for a City Manager has been reactivated; Mayor

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Hubbard replied that some Commissioners asked to discuss it, which is why it is on the agenda, however, she advised that Mr. Berry is willing to stay with the City. Commissioner Postell suggested Mr. Berry remains as the City Manager.

Commissioner Fletcher mentioned the positive things Mr. Berry has been doing and asked him how long he plans to stay. Mayor Hubbard stated that he said he is willing to remain. Mr. Berry said he feels this is one of the best executive management teams, adding that he is breaking down silos and is pleased with the potential of what he sees.

Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked if options will be explored for a future city manager. Mr. Berry stated that details should be added to the ad that is running. Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked if we can move forward to hire a consultant to bring back the top five. Mayor Hubbard stated that we are not ready for this, with Mr. Berry concurring, adding that this would be the process. Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked how long the process will take. Mr. Berry stated 90 days assuming a good group of applicants are found. Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked if there are any search firms being looked at; Mr. Berry agreed and suggested that someone with experience in municipal government will be needed. Discussion followed with comments on keeping this item on the agenda and moving forward.

Commissioner Coleman asked for clarity, i.e., preparation for a consulting firm to implement the process. Mayor Hubbard stated that the process was stopped by the Commission. Commissioner Coleman asked what needs to be done to move it forward. Mayor Hubbard asked if the Commission wants to move forward with the process and discussed the criteria/screening process. She stated that the discussion today is whether to go forward or let it remain as is.

Commissioner Postell asked who asked to put this on the agenda. In reply to Commissioner Postell, the Clerk stated that she thought Mayor Pro Tem Howard was the last person to ask.

Mayor Pro Tem Howard suggested moving forward with the process, adding that it may be next year before a final decision is made. Commissioner Postell stated that he feels December will be an appropriate time to begin the process, adding that the Mayor should be involved in the process. He said he is satisfied with the direction we are moving and Mr. Berry can be given 90 days to do this and then put it back on the agenda to find out where we are. He discussed prior city manager searches dating back to former city manager Janice Jackson.

Mayor Hubbard agreed with Commissioner Postell. Commissioner Coleman asked if we are doing anything now regarding the process. Mayor Hubbard stated that the process was stopped and mentioned Mayor Pro Tem Howard bringing it up for discussion, adding that the question is where we go now. Commissioner Coleman agreed with Commissioner Postell to wait until December.

Commissioner Postell moved to delay the search process until late November/December, seconded by Commissioner Langstaff, the motion carried 6-1 with Mayor Pro Tem Howard voting no.

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COMMISSION EXPENSE REPORT (end of year)

The Clerk advised that information was put in the notebooks.

ITEM(S) FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Howard stated that he has been inundated with calls from citizens in E. Albany, which greatly concerns him and asked if individuals from the wards can meet with APD regarding recent break-ins. Mr. Berry stated that APD has begun intensive operations and they can begin to focus on various actions, adding that positive actions are happening now.

Commissioner Postell also expressed concern regarding recent break-ins, which some could be related to drugs. He mentioned the morale of APD and the uncaring attitude of police officers and asked that this be looked into from the Chief to the patrolmen. He said he will wait to hear the plan Mr. Berry has in mind. Mr. Berry said he asked HR to begin employee opinion surveys to monitor how they [employees] feel about everything and it will be measured.

Commissioner Fletcher commented on the neighborhood watch meeting she was at last night, adding that statistics showed that there was a good/light summer with crime being down, gangs being down, etc., activity. She agreed with Commissioner Postell that some employees are disgruntled and suggested that those with bad attitudes quit.

PUBLIC FUNCTION MATTERS

REQUEST TO COMMEMORATIVELY RENAME A PORTION OF OAKRIDGE DR., IN HONOR OF THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF MARS CHOCOLATE FACILITY IN ALBANY

Planning Director Paul Forgey discussed information (copy on file) regarding the renaming of a portion of Oakridge Drive as noted. He explained the process of commemoratively renaming the road, adding that it is the 50th anniversary of Mars Chocolate facility. He stated that Mac Phillips and Michele Coney (Mars Reps) are present.

Mayor Hubbard stated that she has toured the plant, which has some good things going on there. Discussion followed with Mr. Phillips stating that peanuts in candy bars are roasted in Albany.

Commissioner Fletcher mentioned the positive factors and asked Mr. Phillips why they are remaining in Albany. Mr. Phillips stated that he has been in several Mars facilities and Albany has one of the best work forces around; morale is high and employees are engaged. He said they [Mars] would love to grow here in Albany and feel that there is no reason to go anywhere else, adding that 90% of peanuts used in their candies are from Georgia.

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Commissioner Marietta congratulated them for this milestone and their community charity, including StriveToStrive and the Marathon that they sponsor.

Commissioner Postell stated that they are in his ward, adding that he is familiar with Ms. Coney. He said it is a pleasure to have them at the meeting this morning and that he supports the renaming.

Mayor Hubbard thanked them, adding that in looking at their statistics; the starting salary is \$16.00 per hour with an average annual salary of approximately \$80,000.

Setting a box of Munch Peanut Bar on the Commission table, Ms. Coney invited the Commission to sample the product; Mayor Hubbard stated that she had asked for samples to also be distributed to WG&L.

Commissioner Marietta moved to approve Option 1, seconded by Commissioner Langstaff; the motion unanimously carried.

In reply to Mayor Hubbard, Mr. Phillips stated that the ceremony will be held on October 10 and all Commissioners are invited.

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS

APPROVAL OF 2014 EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT AWARD

Director Shelena Hawkins discussed information (copy on file) pertaining to the grant through Dept. of Community Affairs in the amount of \$43,000 for repaid rehousing of homeless individuals.

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

GA INITIATIVE FOR COMMUNITY HOUSING PRESENTATION

Ms. Hawkins discussed information as noted (copy on file) regarding the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing. She discussed goals to include developing partners, etc., and encouraged Commissioners to get involved with this initiative.

Using a power point presentation (copy on file), Mr. Forgey discussed the program and gave an overview of GICH, referenced the partners, program responsibilities, local participants, the focus area (centering on downtown), with the target area being centers on the Choice Neighborhoods and Old Northside areas.

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Commissioner Postell questioned the Harlem area, with Mr. Forgey explaining that the maps are not exact, but include the Civic Center area, Whitney and Highland Ave. In reply to Commissioner Postell, Mr. Forgey stated that each area influences the downtown area.

Mayor Pro Tem Howard stated that only a portion of E. Albany is considered, asking if it is because of the current bridge construction. Mr. Forgey explained that there are a number of factors besides the bridge construction, i.e., the shopping center and possibilities along the waterfront. There is a small committee of volunteers, which has no budget, with the aim of creating an area that touches upon the target area. Once the bridge is complete, possibilities will open up in the area. Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked if it can be extended into E. Albany. Mr. Forgey said this can be taken into consideration, but they are trying to keep it where it is definable and manageable. Mayor Pro Tem Howard encouraged including E. Albany. Discussion followed on expanding into E. Albany.

Commissioner Coleman stated that he met with Dan McCarthy this last week. He said he shares the concerns about E. Albany and supports making it a mixed neighborhood. He asked to see the same commitment and vigor to expand into E. Albany.

Commissioner Fletcher mentioned that when businesses come in, it is her understanding that extra benefits are afforded for those coming to downtown. She asked what is considered 'downtown' in our community and if there is a guideline to let businesses know. Mr. Forgey explained the TAD boundaries and the downtown redevelopment area that is governed by the Riverfront ordinance, etc., adding that this information is shared to businesses and they are aware of it.

Referring to his ward (Ward II), Commissioner Coleman stated that it is the biggest ward, with most of it being in north central Albany and this is about being fair. There is no way around the fact that E. Albany needs attention. He mentioned that there are no fine dining establishments in E. Albany; people have to travel across town if they want something other than fast food.

Sharlene Cannon, Downtown Manager, interjected that typically, the downtown area is a footprint of the original community. It usually includes historical buildings, commerce, courthouse, business/public offices, etc. She stated that it appears there needs to be a broad focus and then narrow the focus and begin in the downtown area, which will sprawl throughout all of Albany; otherwise, there is sporadic growth sprouting up here and there. Commissioner Coleman said he has been in Albany for 58 years and it has not always been economically challenged, adding that industries were in E. Albany and it was a flourishing part of the city. He stated that he can support downtown, but it also needs to be stretched east. There is a vast amount of undeveloped land in E. Albany and it is time to focus there.

Commissioner Postell agreed with Commissioner Coleman and discussed MCLB, etc., agreeing that there are problems that must be corrected.

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Mayor Hubbard stated that she is proud that Albany is part of the initiative and feels that it can make a difference here.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE MATTERS

MERGING THE CITY OF ALBANY AND WG&L GEBCorp 457 (b) PLANS

Henry Cohen, HR Director, discussed information (copy on file) regarding adding WG&L employees to GEBCorp.

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

2015 EMPLOYEE GROUP BENEFIT PLANS

Mr. Cohen discussed information (copy on file) regarding employee group benefit plans. Commissioner Marietta asked if there are any pre-65 retirees on the committee. Mr. Cohen replied that the committee is not an employee represented committee. Commissioner Marietta mentioned the 9% premium increase for pre-65 retirees. Mr. Cohen explained the Commission voting last year to cap the increase for pre-65 retirees, which pushed up the employer portion to 57%. The aim is to get it back to the 50/50 split; however, 54% falls on the City. Discussion followed on the pre-65 benefit with Mr. Cohen explaining how calculations are determined. Jo Brophy, CFO, discussed the differences in the costs for employees/retirees and the goal to find the right balance by gradually increasing retiree premiums in order for them to cover their costs and restoring cost-sharing between retirees and the City over the next few years. Mr. Cohen added that the City's plan has 1,018 participants and 62 pre-65 retirees, who grab a huge part of the City's claims cost – the City has to keep a balance.

Mayor Hubbard asked the number of the pre-65 retirees; Mr. Cohen stated that he does not know the total number as opposed to the number who elected the pre-65 coverage. Mayor Hubbard asked if there are any regulations guiding what happens when an employee retires before normal retirement age. Mr. Cohen discussed employees who retire prior to age 65, with the City having some employees retiring at 55 and offering 'gap' coverage for those not yet Medicare-eligible. He added that Albany is one of only a few municipalities funding retiree benefits at all – most have gotten entirely away from that. Discussion followed with Mayor Hubbard suggesting that in the future, employees be made aware of the City not being able to afford those kinds of gaps.

Regarding the goal, Commissioner Marietta urged compassion for them [retirees] because some are being put into an untenable position and things of this nature affects the morale of employees. Mayor Hubbard suggested having language in the policy for those considering early retirement for them to aware of this. Mr. Cohen interjected that lowering pre-65 premiums pushes up employee premiums; this strikes a balance of what is fair to active employees and

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retirees needing this coverage until they are eligible for Medicare. Commissioner Marietta suggested having one of these categories of people on the committee to give that group a voice.

In reply to Mayor Pro Tem Howard, Mr. Cohen discussed employee use of the Wellness Center. Mayor Hubbard asked for an update of the Wellness Center and the percentage of those using the Wellness Center. Mr. Cohen stated he will have to get that information, he does not have the exact percentage, but looking at the Wellness Center's available slots, we are running above 90%, which is a very high utilization as well as being successful of reducing the no-show appointments. When first implemented, only 40 hours a week were available, we are now up to 80 hours of appointment time. Mayor Hubbard noted that utilization is up, but costs have not decreased. Ms. Brophy explained that the cost of the clinic is going up because utilization is up which drives the need for more provider hours causing an increase in their salary. However, as the clinic costs go up, claims are coming down. Albany's 'trend' is not the 5.5% healthcare cost, but is below that. The issue of 'cost sharing' has and will continue to be something with which the City must contend with the aim of limiting increases because healthcare cost are going to continue increasing.

Mayor Pro Tem Howard asked for additional information regarding the Wellness Center and the percentage of those using in order to show we are getting the best bang for the City's buck. Mr. Cohen said he can provide percentages on CareHere and discussed the Wellness Clinic costs, controlling costs, employee benefit of utilizing the clinic, etc.

Commissioner Postell questioned FY 2015 projections/fiscal impact. Mr. Cohen agreed that the difference is the employee share. Commissioner Postell asked the total cost for 2014. Mr. Cohen said 2014 is not complete and will be a projection. Ms. Brophy stated it will be approximately \$9.3 million, which is the City's contribution in FY 2014. In reply to Commissioner Postell, Ms. Brophy explained balancing ratios of the different groups.

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

PUBLIC WORKS MATTERS

SPEED LIMIT ORDINANCE UPDATE

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

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ITEM(S) FOR FUTURE AGENDA

Commissioner Coleman commented on the railroad crossing in E. Albany at Clark Ave., Swift and Blaylock. Mayor Hubbard stated that she asked for an update on this. Engineering Director Bruce Maples stated that he is working to provide an update.

Discussion followed on the DARTS survey that was sent recently with Commissioner Langstaff stating that he feels this would be a good place to express concerns.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

SONJA TOLBERT
CITY CLERK