

**City Council Retreat
February 18, 2021**

The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City met for a planning retreat on Thursday, February 18, 2021 in the ballroom of the Hilton Garden Inn Outer Banks, located at 5353 N. Virginia Dare Trail, Kitty Hawk, NC 27949.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Bettie Parker
Councilman Billy Caudle
Councilwoman Jeannie Young (*attended virtually*)
Councilman Chris Ruffieux
Mayor Pro Tem Johnnie Walton
Councilman Kem Spence (*attended virtually*)
Councilman Darius Horton
Councilman Gabriel Adkins

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilman Michael Brooks

OTHERS PRESENT: City Manager Montre' Freeman
Finance Director Evelyn Benton
Deputy Finance Director Alicia Steward
Chief of Police Eddie Buffaloe
Deputy Chief of Police James Avens
Interim Electric Superintendent Bob Vannoy
Electric Foreman Jason Value
Assistant City Manager Angela Judge
Human Resources Director Montique McClary
Human Resources Manager Monica Cole
Public Utilities Director Dwan Bell
Assistant Public Utilities Director Ryan Howell
Fire Chief Chris Carver
Deputy Fire Chief Darren Sanders
ECDI Director Debbie Malenfant
Planner Kellen Long
Parks and Recreation Director Sean Clark
Parks and Recreation Superintendent Jeffrey Simpson
IT Director Matthew Simpson
IT Assistant Pedro Holley
City Clerk April Onley
Deputy City Clerk Doris Walton
Finance Admin Ashley Eure

The City Council's retreat was called to order by Mayor Bettie Parker at 9:02 a.m. Mayor Parker welcomed everyone to the meeting and recognized Councilman Horton to give the invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Agenda Adjustments and Approval:

Mayor Parker asked the Council's pleasure on the presented agenda.

Motion was made by Councilman Darius Horton, seconded by Councilman Chris Ruffieux. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Caudle, Ruffieux, Walton, Horton, and Adkins. Against: None. Motion carried.

2. Statement of Disclosure:

The City Clerk read the Statement of Disclosure. No conflict of interest disclosures regarding items listed on the agenda were made.

3. Opening Remarks / Introduction and Purpose:

Mayor Pro Tem Walton thanked everyone for attending and offered opening remarks, followed by City Manager Freeman and Assistant City Manager Judge. Assistant City Manager Judge briefly discussed the fellowship program offered by the UNC School of Government.

4. Presentation – Garret T. Taylor – CEO – Uplift Comprehensive Services, LLC;

Mr. Taylor discussed the importance of diversity and inclusion. He said he found it to be a shame that the City doesn't include ECSU enough into the management of the City, and that it has taken too long for the City to have the leadership of an ECSU alumni.

5. Presentation – Perry James, CPA – Municipal Operations Consultant – NCLM:

Mr. James advised that he was a Municipal Operations Consultant with the North Carolina League of Municipalities, and that his purpose was to give an overview on the keys to municipal health. He explained the purpose of the LGC, the organization created to give overview and oversight in North Carolina in 62 counties and 152 cities and towns, as well as special districts that defaulted on outstanding debt during the Great Recession. LGC was given authorities to ensure that the default situations such as those that arose during the Great Recession did not occur again. He noted that one in every five municipalities are having significant financial issues right now.

6. Presentations by Department Directors:

a. Human Resources:

Manager Monica Cole provided an overview of the Human Resources Department. She said that in 2014, the Risk Manager retired and the position was not filled – it was absorbed by two remaining positions. HR lost one full-time and one part-time position, although a part-time was regained recently. She said HR still needs a full-time position as the workforce of the City has raised by 70%. She illustrated the core duties that an HR generalist employee would need to cover, and estimated the salary at about \$40,000, not including fringe benefits.

HR Director McClary briefly went through update on an ongoing study, which had begun with a 2019 RFP when the City began working with Management Advisory Group. The process began in late December, followed by a kickoff meeting on January 4th, in which they discussed recruitment and retention issues, as well as the study timeline. She said they are currently in the process of designing a market study to solicit information from our competitors, and will create a report on how comparable and competitive our employees' salaries are. She said the report should be ready by mid-April, which will include a presentation to the City Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Walton asked how much the compensation study cost. Director McClary said the price for Management Advisory Group was about \$20,000, which was the cheapest response received to the RFP. Mayor Pro Tem Walton asked of all of Director McClary's goals, which would be her top three in terms of priority? She replied that the most important thing was securing another full-time position; the second was analyzing how to better serve the workforce and determining the best candidates to fill each department's vacant positions.

Councilman Caudle asked if there was any automation or funding for automation on the horizon. He also asked if there was a back-up plan if Director McClary didn't get her full-time person – was there a way to make the part-time person they had now into a full-time person? Director McClary confirmed that was one of the back-up plans, but noted that it wouldn't take care of all of their problems.

Mayor Parker asked if Director McClary had been asking for this position during her entire tenure; and Ms. McClary replied that she had. Director McClary said they'd had interns and individuals who had trickled in and out, but said she found that problematic as well

because constantly having to retrain someone took a lot of time and wasn't the best use of resources.

b. Parks and Recreation:

Director Sean Clark and Superintendent Jeffrey Simpson explained that the Parks and Recreation department was in need of new equipment and maintenance, as well as supplies. They said it was imperative to create a preventative maintenance plan, as well as begin to make sure that each and every member of their staff knows how to view and understand the budget.

Director Clark and Superintendent Simpson briefly discussed some of the maintenance and/or replacement costs they were looking at for the coming budget year, including fixing the gym floor, which they estimated at about \$150,000. Superintendent Simpson noted that what had been assumed to be an air pocket under the floor is actually water, which has led to rot and likely mold. He added that the Fun Junktion shelter has holes and is about to fall down. Although the repairs have been put in the budget for the last six years, they have continuously been cut, and the shelter is now at a stage where it needs to be replaced entirely instead of repaired. He noted that Enfield Park cannot have children in the dugouts because the dugouts are too small and it's hazardous. He said that balls are being hit into Bojangles' parking lot, as well as going through the windows in the on-site maintenance buildings. He said the park need to renovated, and if we could get it up to par, youth tournaments could be held there as well as South Park. Mr. Simpson also advised that the Senior Center is having plumbing issues and needs a lighting upgrade – both are awaiting estimates.

Councilman Ruffieux asked how these requests would be prioritized. Director Clark said the gym floor was probably the biggest issue, but the new vehicles and the equipment were also extremely important. He said getting another position would be important as well, but taking care of existing staff would be higher on his list of importance.

Councilman Caudle said if we've gone to the trouble of making a master plan for Enfield Park, we need to pull that out and look into it. Superintendent Simpson said he was aware the plan existed, but he wasn't familiar with it. He said it was created by individual wants and not a true master plan. Councilman Caudle said he disagreed with that statement. He said the plan was definitely a master plan, and had it needed to be reviewed and found. ***(Clerk's Notation: The master plan for Enfield Park does exist – Deputy Clerk Walton was able to pull it up for Councilman Caudle directly after this exchange took place.)***

Mayor Pro Tem Walton said he wanted to look at some of the parking lots because he believed there were some issues there. He pointed out that he'd like a three-priority list, as it would be more helpful because long lists won't be feasible to get completed

c. Electric:

Superintendent Vannoy said he had five main goals, but the most important was the new hospital and the two outlying surgical centers that were currently in discussion for construction. He noted that the building company was looking for a "redundant-redundant system" – if one system is lost, the next one takes over. He said right now, we do not have the capacity to do this without a significantly large investment. He estimated it would require about 67 poles above ground, with 2-3 switches and underground work. He advised that this is not a normal setup for the City, and we may be able to have the hospital invest a little to help cover some of the costs. He said he has Progressive Engineering looking for other options, but as of now, none have been identified. He stated that eventually, most likely within the next three to four years, another substation will need to be built to help with the growth moving west. He said years ago, people thought the City's growth would move toward the Coast Guard Station, so they "beefed up" there, but that estimation proved to be incorrect.

Councilman Caudle asked if we knew what sort of price tag might be attached to this. Superintendent Vannoy said he did not know any firm numbers at this time and estimates were still coming out. Councilman Caudle asked for a ballpark number. Superintendent

Vannoy said he believed the high end might be somewhere in the range of \$3.5 million or more, but reiterated that it was still much too soon to know for certain.

Councilman Ruffieux asked if the hospital would be consuming power from both “threads.” Superintendent Vannoy said the hospital will start on one circuit; if it goes down, they will switch entirely over to another source. He noted that the City only pays up to the transformer – the hospital is responsible for everything behind and beyond it.

Mayor Pro Tem Walton asked if we had any knowledge of the timeframe we’d be looking at yet. Superintendent Vannoy responded that they’d be breaking ground in December of 2021, and would be looking for temporary service to their construction trailers by July of 2022.

Councilman Caudle said he assumed the hospital would also have backup generators. Superintendent Vannoy replied that they would because they would want to be part of the load shed program. Councilman Caudle asked if they’d want us to provide the generator; and Superintendent Vannoy said that he did not know, but his best guess at this time was that they would not.

Mayor Parker asked if there had been any conversation with the City prior to the hospital’s decision. Superintendent Vannoy replied that he had only been contacted in the last two weeks.

Councilman Horton asked if it would be customary to have the hospital pay to take care of such a thing. Superintendent Vannoy said our City would be gaining something out of this expansion too, so it was hard to ask how much the hospital would be willing to pay since we would also be reaping the benefits.

Councilman Ruffieux asked if part of this would be carried by the County. Superintendent Vannoy said he did not know, but he confirmed that all the electric service would be provided by the City.

Mayor Pro Tem Walton asked if there were any smaller projects on the horizon. Superintendent Vannoy said the Halstead Lighting project was coming, but it was already budgeted – he was just waiting on NCDOT approval. He said there were also potential MOUs to be considered, one of which would be with the Town of Hertford. He advised that Hertford had recently approached the City to inquire if we would be willing to take over their electrical needs and be paid for our services at an hourly rate. He pointed out that we would not be taking over their electric utility, just providing assistance. He noted it was still in the negotiation stage and would have to be drawn up and presented to the Council for final approval. He said this would be a big money-maker for the City. He said the other MOU the City had been approached about was regarding providing ECSU with emergency response assistance. Should they lose their power in a storm, we would respond and assist them with getting their lights back on as quickly as possible. He noted that this MOU was also in the infancy stage.

Councilman Ruffieux asked for further clarification on the ECSU MOU. Superintendent Vannoy said ECSU had a high-voltage system on the property and they had maintenance men who oversaw it. The school is asking for the City’s expertise to assist them if and when they ever lose their lights. City crews would isolate ECSU’s problems and get their lights back on.

Councilman Caudle asked why Hertford would seek us out instead of Dominion. Superintendent Vannoy said it’s likely because they aren’t looking for someone to “take them over”, just give them assistance. He said the City will be using the materials Hertford already has in place. Hertford will have to replenish their own supplies and equipment and the City will just provide the labor. Hertford will not have to pay anything until they call us. They have no employees “on the clock” and we are only called as needed.

Mayor Pro Tem Walton asked if we had the workforce to be able to engage in an MOU with Hertford. Superintendent Vannoy said there were only 900 meters in Hertford – it’s not a big overload and it’s only as-needed. He said in the event of a hurricane, the first priority is still the City. Only one of our six trucks would go to Hertford. Additional

resources would have to be called in from somewhere else. Manager Freeman said it's often more cost effective for a small municipality to look for on-demand service than paid daily service. Superintendent Vannoy said he felt we had the resources to do it and that it was a money-maker for the City. He ended his presentation with his budget request, which was for one additional aerial lift, which would cost roughly \$142,000 and would be financed or leased. He advised the Council that the City is providing resources when ElectriCities reaches out for help, but we need the resources to do so.

d. Fire:

Fire Chief Carver and Deputy Fire Chief Darren Saunders said the current issues are, as always, the need for additional personnel, station replacement or relocation, fire truck replacement, equipment needs, facility needs (some long-overdue maintenance needs that must be addressed), and support vehicle replacement. Chief Carver said he needed two additional personnel, which had been pushed for since Chief Mackey's time. He told the Council that 14 personnel per shift was needed for a department of our size. He pointed out that the safety of his firefighters was his top priority and making sure they had adequate resources was his number one concern. Chief Carver said his department ran 1,309 calls last year, which is an extreme amount for the personnel shortage that we have right now. He pointed out that Norfolk / Chesapeake would have 23 people on the same calls where we have only 13. He noted that we have a young, less-experienced department. He said that two additional firefighters would be about \$86,000, including salaries and benefits.

Chief Carver reminded the Council of the issues with Station II and the stray bullets that hit it back in August. He said we needed to start thinking about replacement or relocation of our station. He advised that the City needs a risk assessment study, which would show the ideal locations for stations; he estimated the study at \$15,000 and three months for completion. He said he would like to begin talking about property acquisition by the end of the year if that's the route we determine we need to go, which he felt would run the City \$4-5 million. He said that Station I was built for four people, and we have nine in there on a daily basis. If people have to sleep there, they are often sleeping in chairs or on the floor, which is not ideal whatsoever.

The largest vehicle expected to be presented in Fire's budget this year is a new engine or ladder truck for elevated stream. Our current truck is 11 years old. Fire trucks normally run 10 years on the front line and 10 years as a reserve; they are a 20-year item. Chief Carver noted this is the second year they have asked for a replacement. He said \$35,000 in repairs have been spent on it since July 1st, and the maintenance budget for Fire has been exceeded, although he did note that it has been an unusual year for breakdowns. He said it takes a year to build these trucks – they are not simply sitting on a lot. Budget impact is \$900,000 reflects a 3% increase April 1st – without an aerial on top is a little over \$600,000.

Chief Carver noted that Airpacks have changed in the standards and there is now a whole new fit for packs. For our Fire Department to become compliant, we are going to have to change out our existing packs with the new ones at a cost of \$5,500 for each pack, and we're going to need at least eight. He said Rescue Jacks would also be included in the budget, as it's impossible to do a safe removal without these. He briefly mentioned the Halstead Station Roof, which was built in 1974. He noted that water is getting between roofing insulation and metal; if no maintenance is performed, it's going to start deteriorating rapidly. Right now, ceiling tiles are being replaced and small holes patched for preservation, but it's getting overwhelming. The current estimate is \$160,000, but he did add that he believes we can get a lower quote. Also mentioned was the need for a new support vehicle, as the old minivan used to travel is leaking and a pickup would be preferred. He said Fire Prevention had one budgetary request, which was for an LED Sign, estimated about \$26,000

Councilman Adkins asked for the top three "wish list." Chief Carver said the equipment is his top priority because he has to have it for his personnel's safety, as well as for compliance.

e. Information Technology:

Director Simpson and Assistant Holley stated that due to their ever-expanding duties and operations, they were in need of at least two new personnel, a help desk technician and a network administrator.

f. Police:

Chief Buffalo and Deputy Chief Avenue said the Police Department was seeking five to 10 part-time officers at the rate of \$18 an hour. They said officers have been used over and over, and have had to cover crime scenes on their days off, as well as provide security in the middle of pandemic / maintain traffic control at City Hall / deal with irate customers, and cover at DSS. Chief Buffalo explained that our part-time officers meet same requirements as full-time; his intention is to use part-time officers to cover most of these “side” tasks, as well as special events.

The Police Department’s requests were as follows:

- Basic EMT Certification – COA will waive fees – will cost about \$11,000 after that. 10% increase in salary once an officer has it.
- Retention – Shift Premium - permanent shift agency – award night shift officers with annual \$4,160.46 for 20 officers = \$83,209.15.
- Acquisition of Mobile Command Unit – about \$40,000 – joint effort between Fire/PD/Public Works/Electric
- Civil Unrest Preparedness Equipment – ECPD does not have less-than-lethal equipment to deter a hostile crowd – estimated at \$13,000.
- ECPD Joint Dive Team – PD and Fire will receive specialized training and skills needed to safely execute all public safety diving scenarios, particularly geared toward search and recovery, disaster response, evidence collection and recovery – estimated at \$60,000.

Councilman Caudle asked about the mental health crisis and if there was training or a psychologist that was on call for the PD. Chief Buffalo said all officers were sent to training for co-responder response to mental health illness with Trillium and Integrated Family Services, and they were looking at bringing in four providers for mental health response. 911 will start sending calls to the mental health providers who are working with the City instead of directly to law enforcement. Councilman Caudle asked if funding was needed for this program. Chief Buffalo replied that we are one of the pilot sites and are getting this service for free at this time.

g. Planning / Elizabeth City Downtown, Inc:

Interim Director Malenfant gave an overview of what the Unified Development Ordinance does and the team who sees that it gets done. She said one of the concerns of the Community Development Department was stabilization – in the last five years, the department has had three directors, not counting interims. There has been 100% turnover in planning, building inspections, admin assistant staff and code enforcement over the last few years, which results in loss of community and inter-departmental relationships, and subject matter experts. The lost institutional knowledge must be rebuilt. She said in trying to look on the bright side, the changes can also be a means of eliminating stagnant mindsets, since there’s no one left to say “we’ve always done it that way.” She noted the department is currently seeking to hire a new Community Development Director who will create a positive and inclusive work environment and cultivate a desire for growth and improvement, as well as a successful plan. She stated she is currently in the process of rebuilding the lost knowledge base through trainings in technology and management, and UNC SOG certifications. She said she wants to automate simpler processes to have more time for things that don’t have easy / standard answers.

Planner Kellen Long explained Open Gov, and the City’s three-year contract with the company for online permitting. Since November 9th, we have had 731 records, 438 inspections, 193 permits issued and \$162,000 in revenue received through Open Gov. She said the online permitting creates a more efficient environment, which became extremely important with the pandemic, as it streamlined processes. She admitted there

are minor challenges with it, but they are being worked through. She explained that a customer can push their permits through the system and employees can pull the information out and make sure the customer gets their permit in a timely manner. Additionally, staff can track permits, see how many have been issued, view the revenue stream, etc. Customers can see where they are in the permitting process, and the permit goes to their email once it's approved.

Interim Director Malenfant stated that the Community Development Department's monetary asks are for increased travel / education, \$3,400 for Code Enforcement and increased postage. She said they are trying to work to avoid towing, avoid abatement, and are now even sending letters of gratitude to people who have received a citation and responded with an action plan or took care of the problem. She said they would also be asking for a new vehicle for the Code Enforcement Department and Building Inspection Training for a total request of \$37,000.

Councilman Caudle asked how Open Gov was received by people seeking permits. Planner Long replied that it was received well for the most part, but there were some developers who took a while getting used to creating accounts. There were a few complaints at first, but hardly any now. She pointed out that the larger developers love it because they can do everything at once.

Mayor Pro Tem Walton asked how many permits has been issued inside City limits for residents and not developers. Planner Long replied that she believed it was about 37. She said that on the commercial side, three site plans had been reviewed in the last three months, which is pretty steady pace for the department.

Debbie Malenfant also gave a brief overview of her role as ECDI Director, explaining that ECDI is a combination 501c3 that works in partnership with the City. She said in her role, she reports to both the City Manager and the ECDI Board of Directors, and is a one-employee division. 70% of her budget comes from fundraising, donations and grants. The mission is to be a catalyst of revitalization and resources. Challenges are bridging the "distance" between the colleges and the downtown area. She noted there are also problems with parking and the perception of lack of parking. She said ECDI was in need of a parking assessment study with improvement plan for downtown Elizabeth City, which would likely be up to a \$25,000 allocation.

h. Public Utilities:

Director Bell advised the Council that the Public Utilities Department was going to have some large budget asks this year. He said personnel-wise, he wanted a new employee in administrative staff, a second assistant director, with a salary of roughly \$72,000. He noted that the wood floors on second floor of the Public Works facility leaked and needed to be addressed. He mentioned that the GIS Department needs a vehicle because they are using their own vehicles to handle City business, which he does not find appropriate. He estimated the Street Maintenance needs at \$190,000 for a tractor with sidearm mower, commercial mower, and new pickup truck. Powell Bill was estimated at \$450,000, which included \$350,000 in street resurfacing and ramp/sidewalk repairs of \$100,000. Fleet Maintenance would include \$5,000 for an air compressor.

(Clerk's Notation: Councilman Adkins left the meeting at 3:10 p.m.)

Sold Waste needs included a dump truck and grappler truck totaling \$195,000

Water Treatment Division - \$2,985,952, which included capital equipment replacements and upgrades and capital improvement projects

Wastewater Treatment Division - \$750,000 for capital equipment replacements and upgrades

Director Bell said he felt that a capital project improvements study should be considered for either a wastewater treatment plant upgrade to the existing structures of the development of a new plant to increase capacity to keep up with City development.

Water and Sewer Division – \$2,812,265.07 in capital equipment replacement and upgrades and capital project improvements.

i. Finance:

Director Evelyn Benton said she'd be asking for \$5,000 in her budget this year. She pointed out that she expected to have no capital items associated with Data Processing or Customer Service this year. She said she did want to work on updating the Customer Service Policy now that Tyler and Nexgrid were firmly in place. Assistant Director Steward said she wanted to hire a bilingual speaker for the Customer Service division. Director Benton gave an overview of what she'd be delving into during the budget discussions in the coming weeks, noting that all major funds have seen increases this year, some attributed to the waiver and some to mild weather. She said the debt target has not been discussed yet, but once we've drawn that line we will really know what sort of funding allowances we have to work with.

7. Council Discussion:

a. Homelessness:

Manager Freeman said he understood that the Council wanted to eradicate homelessness and that they had identified a monetary amount that they wanted to put towards that issue each year. He noted that he did not expect the Council to make any sort of decision today, but he wanted to begin the conversation in earnest. Assistant City Manager Judge said she and Deputy Chief Avens did not prepare a formal presentation since the Council knew where they stood on the matter and now was the time to have an open conversation to the degree they'd like about how they wanted to approach homelessness in Elizabeth City. She said we know that we will need a facility, an operator and funding to even move out of the gate. A little more than \$47,000 is included in this budget year. Various community partners, River City and others wanted to help and aid in the cause. There are also state reps who have remained committed to the effort in trying to identify funding, so we know we have opportunity. ACM Judge stressed that the key to solving our homeless problem is remembering that it's personal, because for the last five or six years, there have been 16 to 25 individuals who have remained a consistent part of Elizabeth City's homeless demographic. In a population of 18,000, we know the people who make up our homeless population, so it's about taking care of our own.

Deputy Chief Avens presented a timeline of the City's work with the homeless problem over the last several years. He reminded the Council that in 2018, the Visions of Hope shelter was dismantled due to an infestation. In 2019, \$50,000 was earmarked for homelessness. In 2019, the City and County discussed utilizing the Health Department, which was determined too large to lease and maintain. In April 2019, staff reevaluated 709 Herrington Road, which they determined would cost at least \$75,000 to get it up to par. In May 2019, Representative Hunter proposed legislation to provide \$100,000 in funds to help provide a shelter, but the budget did not pass. In November 2019, the Council authorized the cold-weather voucher program, which was spearheaded by the Police Department until March of 2020. DC Avens said that 386 vouchers were issued in service to 36 males and 29 females, totaling thousands of dollars. In November 2020, the homeless discussion came up again, and the Council wanted to look at long-term solutions by establishing a shelter. He reiterated that there is \$47,765 earmarked for this year in the non-departmental balance for homeless-related projects and activities. In January 2021, River City CDC sent a letter requesting money from the City to help with their homeless efforts, but the Council did not move forward with that request. DC Avens advised that there is an example of a shelter in western NC that staff has been invited to view along with River City CDC. He explained that staff needs guidance on how the Council would like them to move forward. He said there are things on the table that informed decisions that can be made on, but staff needs Council direction.

Councilman Horton asked if possible sites for a shelter had been compiled, and ACM Judge confirmed that they had. She said it was based off of the last report from the former Community Development Developer of facilities that satisfied the requirements. She reminded the Council that residential properties were limited (without fire code satisfaction) to less than eight people, which left staff looking primarily toward commercial properties. She noted that the former Food Lion in Port Elizabeth is available. The former Carolina Center is closed and for sale. The Creative Kids Academy is available. The former Wells Fargo is available. Hampton Roads Banking is an in-town facility that is available. The former Kenyon Bailey facility is for sale. The former seafood restaurant on Hughes adjacent to Chauncey's Pawn Shop is available. The former Save-A-Lot adjacent to Roses is available, as is the former Wright Ice facility. She said there was also a medical office on Road Street that was available at this time.

Councilman Horton said he was pleased to hear the presentation, and while realistically some of the facilities are out of reach financially, it showed that staff and the manager are trying to have a real conversation about it. He said now that we have realistic options, we can look deeper and bring some pricing and costs back to the Council, and this serves as a step in the right direction. He said the Council needs to decide whether or not they're willing to designate a larger amount of money to a shelter. He said not securing the old health department was a shame, but it's a teachable lesson and we can learn from it. He said he wants to invest in a shelter – "we cannot sit back and want other persons ... I'm so grateful to our representative who is petitioning again for the same funds, but at the end of the day, this is our home and our people and we ought to be helping them in their road to recovery." He said he did not want to spend money on a temporary solution unless we were going to allocate more funds, and he believed it was imperative that the long road to recovery was served. He said he just wanted to see the Council pull the trigger on something soon. He opined that we need to provide a property that can be maintained by an outside organization, and noted that he didn't want to have a lot more conversations about it, but he wanted to make a decision soon. He said, "the City is not in the homeless business, but some of these organizations just need a place, and the City should provide the place." He requested that staff take the list of facilities mentioned and bring the Council information on the cost for each; a decision can be made during the budget whether one can or be purchased.

Councilman Caudle said he both agreed and disagreed with Councilman Horton. He said the call has gone out from established organizations who deal with homelessness that they need immediate assistance and he felt we should help them. He said he believed some money, maybe not all of it, should go toward meeting the immediate human need. He said he didn't know where he stood on having a building, and that he might feel better about helping someone who already had a building, but he'd have to think about that. He asked that this topic be added to Monday night's agenda.

Councilwoman Young said "when we started this endeavor on the homeless, we ran our employees ragged." She said she just wanted the Council to be extremely clear before they sent Assistant City Manager Judge and Deputy Chief Avens out to get prices unless it was certain that's the direction the Council wanted to go in. She said she wasn't sure she was sold on having a brick-and-mortar building because she didn't feel like the City could sustain a building once we got it up and running. She said our problem was beyond just homelessness; it was also mental illness and drugs. She stated that she did not believe the Council had the resources to attack all of those issues. She also said she knew for a fact that some of the properties being quoted were extremely expensive and would be out of the City's reach to acquire. She urged the Council to look at the problem realistically.

Councilman Horton said he didn't have a problem talking about the immediate need on Monday night, but he also wanted to know about the costs because he did not want to be responsible for putting a Band-Aid on the problem again.

Assistant City Manager Judge verified that an agenda item for Monday would be added including costs of the facilities that had been identified, as well as the immediate requests received by various organizations. She noted the facilities had not been vetted with the property owners, and staff would just include the square footage, and basic information. Councilman Horton asked if they could maybe estimate how many people could be put in each if they were to be converted to a homeless shelter. He also asked if the old jail could be added to the list.

b. Public Utilities (Wastewater Capacity):

Assistant Director Howell explained Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) can lead to sanitary sewer spills, reduced capacity sewer lines, pumps running longer, which causes more maintenance and break-downs. It also contributes to more flows, which exceeds the daily average of the plant. The state allows an average daily flow of 4.5MGD; when we exceed this, we receive NOVs, which can cost us thousands of dollars if not addressed properly. He discussed various solutions for identifying and correcting I&I. He advised that JMT engineers completed an assessment on our sanitary sewer system, divided by the pump stations service areas. The severity of defects and the pipes were prioritized – 1) Grice Street 2) Dawson Street 3) Grace Drive 4) Pearl Street 5) Providence Road and 6) Cale Street. Cost assessment is \$2,544,813.

Councilman Caudle said this was an important economic development piece, and if the City is going to be able to continue to grow, we have to be able to treat the sewage for new businesses and new homes. He said time and energy need to be spent now to make sure that we can move forward with this. He pointed out that it would be terrible to not be able to move a company here because we couldn't treat their sewage.

Mayor Pro Tem Walton said this would certainly affect everybody, but it was such a big project, that it was likely would not be able to be afforded or completed in the course of just one year.

c. Citizen Recognition Initiative:

Manager Freeman said this was an initiative brought forward to him by Mayor Pro Tem Walton. He said he didn't want to do a "citizen of the year" at this point, but did think this was an important initiative to look into because we should recognize our outstanding citizens. He noted that he had asked the HR Department to put a plan together for how to go about this in a sustainable, equitable and exciting way because he doesn't want it to feel like something that was just "thrown together."

Mayor Pro Tem Walton said he wants to change the mission statement from "our" citizens to "all" citizens. He opined that we also might want to re-analyze the City's "Harbor of Hospitality" slogan. He said he believed "Harbor of Hope for All People" was better because we are looking toward the future, not the past, and we have to recognize people. He said he's writing a book right now called Underrated because he doesn't want anyone else to tell his story but him. He says we can all do small things to make people feel good. He said it was unfortunate that Elizabeth City doesn't recognize his football career, but other places do. He pointed out that it doesn't cost much to buy a plaque and make someone feel good about what they've done.

9. Adjournment:

There being no further business to be discussed, Mayor Parker adjourned the meeting at 4:57 p.m.

Bettie J. Parker
Mayor

April D. Onley, NCCMC
City Clerk