

**City Council Work Session
March 27, 2017**

The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City met in work session on Monday, March 27, 2017 in Council Chambers, located on the 2nd floor of the Municipal Administration Building, 306 E. Colonial Avenue, Elizabeth City, NC.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Joe Peel
Councilwoman Jean Baker
Councilman Ray Donnelly
Mayor Pro Tem Anita Hummer
Councilman Tony Stimatz
Councilman Rickey King
Councilman Darius Horton *(arrived at 5:48 p.m.)*

MEMBERS ABSENT: Councilman Michael Brooks
Councilman Johnnie Walton

OTHERS PRESENT: City Manager Rich Olson
City Attorney Bill Morgan
Finance Director Sarah Blanchard
Lieutenant Darrell Felton
Electric Department Superintendent Karl Clow
Electric Department Supervisor Jason Value
Assistant City Manager Angela Cole
Interim Human Resources Director Monica Cole
Public Utilities Director Paul Fredette
Parks and Recreation Director Dexter Harris
Fire Chief Larry Mackey
Deputy Fire Chief Chris Carver
ECDI Director Debbie Malenfant
Inspections Director Stanley Ward
City Clerk Vivian White

The City Council work session was called to order by Mayor Joe Peel at 5:32 p.m. Mayor Peel welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave the invocation, after which he led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Agenda Adjustments and Approval:

Mayor Peel requested the Council's pleasure regarding approval of the prepared agenda.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Hummer, seconded by Councilman Stimatz, to approve the agenda with any necessary adjustments. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Baker, Donnelly, Hummer, Stimatz, and King. Against: None. Motion carried. (Horton had not yet arrived.)

(Clerk notation: No adjustments to the agenda were requested.)

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. Discussion –Policy Related Items Not Discussed during Council Retreat:

Mayor Peel announced that there were several policy-related items that had not been discussed during the Council retreat due to the absence of time.

Mayor Peel announced that the first item was a discussion of the Finance Committee; and he invited comments by members of the City Council.

Councilman Donnelly responded "seems fine."

Councilman Stimatz stated that there had been discussion regarding whether or not the Council wanted to keep the Finance Committee. He said that he could not speak for anyone else, but he was glad personally that the Council had the Finance Committee to keep the Council from “knee-jerking” on issues based on feelings; and allowing City staff time to provide information in order to make good and rational decisions. He said “it keeps our emotions from running away with our pocketbook.”

Mayor Peel stated that the next item for discussion was the Weatherization Program.

Councilman Stimatz stated that at one point, there had been a discussion of having an upper limit on weatherization expenditures per home. He noted that during the last funding cycle, 15 homes out of 80 homes weatherized exceeded \$4,000. Mr. Olson agreed and noted that costs are dependent on a number of variables, such as the size of the structure and how bad the structure’s condition is. Mr. Olson reported that Energy Officer Dennis Gordon develops a scope of work for each home and has a pretty good idea going in how much the project will cost.

Mayor Peel thanked the City Manager for the research information provided on the weatherization program and pointed out that the weatherization program actually helps every citizen save money. He noted that as a result of all the homes weatherized, the City had saved over \$66,000 each year.

Mayor Peel announced that the last item to be discussed was the addition of indexed-searchable minutes to the City’s website.

Councilman Stimatz asked if this item was a potential budget item for next year. Mr. Olson responded in the affirmative and recognized City Clerk Vivian White to present the proposal.

Ms. White advised that American Legal Publishing, the company that publishes the City’s Code of Ordinances, has a program whereby they can take actual minute books and scan them into a type of file that allows them to be searchable. Ms. White advised that the City has minutes going back to 1891; but noted that the first several volumes are handwritten. She said that the handwritten minutes would have to be transcribed to be used in the proposed program. Ms. White noted that there are sixteen volumes that are typewritten and were contained in volumes that could be placed in the database and used by City staff and the public.

Ms. White stated that she believed it would be an enhancement to offer that type of service and explained the cost as being approximately \$695 for each volume to be processed. She noted that to do all typewritten books would cost about \$10,800.

Ms. White advised that the program is offered by American Legal Publishing through the League of Municipalities; and the League allows cities to pay for the cost over a two-year period. She stated that the questions before the Council were (1) whether the Council is interested in providing this service; and (2) how far back the program should include. She noted that the project could be approached in phases.

Mayor Peel asked the City Clerk’s opinion about the periods of time to be included. Ms. White responded that she would suggest going back to at least 1970. Mr. Olson noted that staff needed to know how far the Council wanted to go back in order to figure out a cost for budget purposes.

Motion was made by Councilman Stimatz, seconded by Councilwoman Baker that staff be directed to proceed with putting the minutes online back through those volumes, which include all of 1970; and prepare a budget presentation for the Finance Committee for recommendation to the Council. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Baker, Donnelly, Hummer, Stimatz, and King. Against: None. Motion carried. (Horton had not yet arrived.)

4. Update/Discussion – 800 MHz Radios/VIPER Network and Secondary PSAP:

Mayor Peel recognized Mr. Olson for his overview of this matter. Mr. Olson stated that he had reported in his March 10, 2017 FYI that all of the Elizabeth City Police Department's new 800 MHz radios had been programmed and installed at a cost of \$460,016.50. He noted that the Fire Department's radios had also been received and were purchased at a cost of \$235,879.

Mr. Olson recognized Fire Chief Mackey to provide an update on the 800 MHz network and how it will be utilized by the City.

Fire Chief Mackey reported, that according to the study that had been performed by Mission Critical Partners, the most efficient way to get the air operability needed for communications in this area was to transition to 800 MHz utilizing the State's VIPER Network. He said that doing so involved purchasing all the equipment required, including the equipment attached to the VIPER Network towers. He noted that would be a cost savings for the City, because the State would install the tower equipment and would maintain it after installation. He noted that approval was required by the State to utilize the state-owned network.

He reported that there were three parts to this project for which the City is involved: (1) purchasing all radios and equipment needed by the individual departments or units to take part in the system (2) the purchase of all equipment to be installed and maintained by the state; and (3) to negotiate an agreement with another Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) to become a secondary PSAP.

Chief Mackey stated that while Elizabeth City and Camden County are partners in the 911 System, Pasquotank County is the lead agency. He advised that the 911 Center currently operates under the leadership of the Sheriff's Department; and he thanked Sheriff Cartwright for his work in getting this project done.

Chief Mackey stated that the Police Department has already received and installed their radio system, which is currently operating on a UHF system. He stated that if at any time the 800 MHz system goes down in the future, the City will be able to fall back on the UHF system in the Police Department and the VHF system in the Fire Department. He noted those systems are fairly new and are still robust, which was the reason the departments requested the authority to purchase dual band radios. Chief Mackey stated that the Fire Department had accepted delivery of all its radios, but had not yet installed them.

Chief Mackey reported that the County is waiting on a final okay from the state to use 911 grant funding to purchase some equipment needed for connectivity in the 911 Center. He noted that the City is also waiting for the contract to be signed by the state for the City to actually connect to the VIPER Network.

Chief Mackey stated that the state had also approved transitioning the funding for the secondary PSAP to Martin County's regional PSAP. He noted that in partnering with Martin County, if the City is not using the PSAP service, the City does not have to pay. He said the only time the City will be charged for the secondary PSAP after it's built and in service is when it's actually used.

Chief Mackey advised that he and Chief Buffaloe would be working on protocols to be used with the City's back up system and would devise a regular schedule of testing to make certain the system would be available if and when needed.

Councilman Stimatz inquired of Chief Mackey when he thought the system would be up and running. Chief Mackey stated that Sheriff Cartwright had told him that once the contract is signed and the funds are released, it would take two weeks to a month.

City Manager Olson interjected that the City was looking at a 30-day phasing period to get all the local agencies online.

Mayor Peel thanked Chief Mackey for his report.

5. Consideration – Completion of ECPD Firing Range/Adoption of Budget Amendment to Cover Additional Costs:

Mayor Peel recognized Mr. Olson for his comments. Mr. Olson introduced Lt. Darrell Felton, range master for the City's Police Department firing range to provide an overview of the work being done at the firing range.

Using PowerPoint slides, Lt. Felton explained the configuration of the firing range as it stands currently. He reported that the Police Department is proposing to cover the firing range with an A-frame covering. He noted that the site is currently covered with rocks; and since officers must shoot prone, standing and kneeling, the rock surface presents some problems. He advised that without a covering, the range becomes very wet and officers often get their clothes and equipment soaked. Lt. Felton noted that at times weather conditions necessitate canceling training sessions, which causes logistical problems for the Police Department. He stated that with the A-frame covering, the department would be able to conduct firearms training in any conditions.

Lt. Felton provided maps of the range showing the location of the proposed A-frame structure, the new road and the new parking lot. He noted that the new road is needed for safety purposes to eliminate any accidental exposure to people while training is being conducted. He reported that the equipment being proposed for the range would be used for dual purposes: to assist officers to train in various firing positions as well as training by the K-9 division.

Councilman Horton asked about usage of the facility. Lt. Felton responded that the firing range is used monthly by the SRT Team and is used twice annually for all officers, as well as qualifications for all new officers.

Councilman Stimatz inquired if the facility will meet all the wind loading requirements and hurricane resistance standards. Mr. Olson stated that the building code requires that to be done.

Mr. Olson stated that the Council had authorized \$39,500 in the current fiscal year budget for range improvements. He reported that in order to complete all the proposed work, over \$60,000 was needed. He advised that staff was proposing to use forfeiture funds, which are funds used at the discretion of the Police Chief with the Council's approval. Mr. Olson reviewed the budget for the project as presented in the agenda package, which was estimated to be \$69,500.

Councilman Stimatz asked if the City had contemplated renting the firing range out to other entities. Mr. Olson said that the City would consider allowing other law enforcement agencies to utilize the range through an Interlocal Agreement. He advised that the range is not designed to be a public range; and doing so would add hundreds of thousands of dollars to the cost. Councilman Stimatz inquired if the City would charge other agencies to use the range. Mr. Olson stated that he would need to discuss that with Chief Buffaloe, but he believed the City should charge a minimal amount.

Councilman King noted that most of the local agencies do not have their own range. He said he believed there should be some charge, because there would be expenses to the City such as the lights needed at night. Mr. Olson pointed out that the City would need to have a staff person there at all times when others were using the range due to liability issues.

Councilman King inquired how long it would take to get the facility up and running. Mr. Olson and Lt. Felton stated it would probably take 90-120 days, but staff would get it done as soon as possible.

Motion was made by Councilman Donnelly, seconded by Councilman King to approve the completion of the Elizabeth City Firing Range as outlined in the itemized timeline and cost table provided; and further adopt the following budget amendment as presented. Those voting

in favor of the motion were: Baker, Donnelly, Hummer, Stimatz, King, and Horton. Against: None. Motion carried.

BUDGET AMENDMENT

BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City that the following amendment be made to the annual budget ordinance for fiscal year ending June 30, 2017:

SECTION I. That the General Fund Balance Appropriated (103990.0000) and Construction of Firing Range (105100.7300) be increased by \$30,000.

(To appropriate forfeiture funds received in prior years to provide additional funds for firing range.)

This amendment will decrease General Fund balance appropriated by \$30,000.

ADOPTED, this 27th day of March 2017.

Joseph W. Peel
Mayor

Vivian D. White, CMC/NCCMC
City Clerk

6. Committee Reports:

- a) EC-PC Economic Development Commission: Mayor Pro Tem Hummer, Councilwoman Baker, Councilman King and Mayor Peel

Mayor Pro Tem Hummer had no report.

- b) Central Communications Advisory Board: Councilman Brooks

Councilman Brooks was absent from the meeting.

- c) Fireman's Relief Fund Board: Councilman Brooks

Councilman Brooks was absent from the meeting.

- d) NC Eastern Municipal Power Agency: City Manager Olson and Mayor Peel

Mr. Olson stated that he had included everything from the last Agency meeting in his FYI.

- e) Elizabeth City Downtown, Inc.: Councilman Donnelly

Councilman Donnelly reported that the ECDI Board is working on its goals and objectives and putting together some strategies to implement them. He reminded everyone to attend the next Art Walk, which would follow the ribbon cutting for Veterans Park on April 7.

- f) Elizabeth City Area Chamber of Commerce Board: Mayor Peel

Mayor Peel reminded everyone to attend the opening of the Chambers Business Expo, which would be held on Wednesday evening March 29; and then all day on March 30 at the K. E. White Graduate Center.

- g) Finance Committee: Mayor Pro Tem Hummer, Councilman Donnelly, Councilman Horton and Mayor Peel

Mayor Pro Tem Hummer stated that the items on the Regular Agenda had been discussed by the Finance Committee.

- h) Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Councilman Walton

Councilman Walton was absent from the meeting.

Mayor Peel welcomed Parks and Recreation Director Dexter Harris for his comments. Mr. Harris reported that the site for the splash pad had been cleared and construction of the facility should begin shortly. He reported that the department had implemented parent orientation in connection with little league signups. He said the orientation for parents was something new in order to get parents more involved. He noted that the department had discussions with AYSO representatives to discuss having the AYSO pay for some of the costs for their use of the City's facilities. He reported that the department was discussing ideas for new activities such as flag football, soccer golf, and disc golf.

- i) Elizabeth City/Pasquotank County Airport Authority: Councilman Stimatz

Councilman Stimatz stated that the Authority held a strategic planning session in addition to its regular meeting. He reported that the planning session was held basically to discuss future property acquisition, which is closely tied to the master plan that is being completed over the next six months. He noted that "the Army is back and we're selling lots of gas." He reported that the wash rack upgrade return on investment had exceeded all expectations.

- j) Storm Water Advisory Board: Councilman Stimatz, Councilman King and Councilman Brooks

Councilman Stimatz stated that the board is currently waiting on an update on the storm water report elements.

- k) Tourism Development Authority: Councilwoman Baker

Councilwoman Baker reported that the Authority received presentations from six groups looking for support for their various projects. She reported that discussions were being held regarding the 2018 budget. She noted that ideas were being discussed for a new logo, possibly to replace "Harbor of Hospitality" to incorporate more of the things unique to Elizabeth City.

- l) Community Relations Commission: Councilman Brooks

Councilman Brooks was absent from the meeting.

Mr. Olson advised the Council that three Interlocal Agreements with Pasquotank County would be expiring at the end of the fiscal year: Animal Control, Central Communications and Emergency Management. He noted that staff was working on renewals for those agreements and would present them to the Council in the very near future.

Mayor Peel reported that one of the Council's goals is to improve relationships with all organizations in order to develop a more cohesive approach to economic and community development. He stated that a really good meeting had been held that included representation from organizations such as Elizabeth City Downtown, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Arts of the Albemarle, the Committee of 100, and the Chamber. He advised that each entity provided a presentation regarding what they do and what they were doing. He stated that out of that meeting, suggestions were made

to have another gathering to include the USCG, Sentara Albemarle, COA, ECSU and MACU to present what their plans were for the future, if help was needed to accomplish their goals and if impediments were identified that would keep them from realizing their plans. He said that meeting would be held on April 26. He pointed out that all the information gathered would be pulled together into a comprehensive community plan that would include the existing plans from all the organizations as an umbrella framework that would enable the groups to look more closely at what everyone was doing in order to better work together.

7. Adjournment:

There being no further business to be discussed, Mayor Peel adjourned the meeting at 6:19 p.m.

Joseph W. Peel
Mayor

Vivian D. White, CMC/NCCMC
City Clerk