

**City Council Work Session
September 28, 2015**

The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City met in work session on Monday, September 28, 2015 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 Michael Brooks
Councilman Kem Spence
Councilman Darius Horton (*arrived at 6:39 p.m.*)
Councilman Johnnie Walton (*arrived at 6:48 p.m.*)

MEMBERS ABSENT: NONE

OTHERS PRESENT: Chief Eddie Buffaloe, Acting City Manager
City Attorney Bill Morgan
Finance Director Sarah Blanchard
Planning Director June Brooks
Electric Department Superintendent Karl Clow
Assistant to the City Manager Angela Cole
Human Resources Director Katherine Felton
Public Utilities Director Paul Fredette
Fire Chief Larry Mackey
IT Director Matthew Simpson
Inspections Director Stanley Ward
Parks and Recreation Superintendent "Hipp" Barclift
City Clerk Vivian White

The City Council work session was called to order by Mayor Joe Peel at 5:30 p.m. Mayor Peel welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave the invocation, after which he led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Peel welcomed Chief Eddie Buffaloe as acting city manager and announced that City Manager Rich Olson was out of town attending a manager's conference.

1. Agenda Adjustments and Approval:

Mayor Peel called for any adjustments to and approval of the agenda.

Mayor Peel announced that an addition to the agenda was needed to allow Councilwoman Jean Baker to introduce new Tourism Director Christina Rehlau.

Mayor Peel announced that the order of the agenda needed to be adjusted to allow the K-9 Unit presentation to be held earlier in the meeting.

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

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. Introduction of Tourism Development Authority Director Christina Rehkla by Councilwoman Jean Baker:

Mayor Peel recognized Councilwoman Baker for her comments. Councilwoman Baker welcomed Tourism Director Christina Rehkla to the podium. She reported that Ms. Rehkla is an Ohio native who worked most recently as research manager for the Virginia Tourism Corporation, which oversees the international “Virginia is for Lovers” travel and tourism campaign.

Ms. Rehkla thanked the Council for inviting her to attend the meeting and stated that she is looking forward to working to build a stronger tourism effort to bring visitors to Elizabeth City.

4. Presentation – K-9 Unit Operations – Chief Eddie Buffalo:

Mayor Peel recognized Chief Eddie Buffalo for his presentation.

Chief Buffalo reported through a series of PowerPoint slides that the City’s canine unit currently has three teams with one canine per handler. He said that all three teams are certified in article/evidence search, narcotics detection and tracking. He reported that all canines have been trained in obedience and agility. He stated that all three of the City’s canines are German Shepherds.

Chief Buffalo advised that the canine teams complete a minimum of 16 in-service training hours per month, which is an in-house policy that is not required by the state. He reported that the handlers are responsible for their canine partners both at work and at home. He provided statistics on their training hours; and reported that year to date as of August 31, 2015, the three officers and their canines have completed a total of 487.5 hours of training. He stated that the canine unit teams have been deployed a total of 306 times over the same time period.

Chief Buffalo provided statistics from November 2014 regarding reported seizures by the three teams, as follows:

Drug Type	Total Weight (Approx.)
Marijuana	738 grams (1.64 lbs)
Powder and “Crack” Cocaine	3033 grams (3.03 kilos)
Heroin	1004 grams (1.01 kilos)
Miscellaneous Pills	117 dosages units
<i>Other Items Seized</i>	
U.S. Currency	\$211,672.00
Guns	13

Chief Buffalo advised that currency seized is turned over as evidence to either state or federal agencies. He said that if the case is a state case, sometimes the courts award the funds to the school system. He reported that for federal cases, some of the funds come back to the local agency, but is oftentimes a long, slow process.

Chief Buffalo introduced P.O. III Stacy Rodriguez and her K-9 partner, Karma. Officer Rodriguez showcased Karma for the Councilmembers.

Councilwoman Baker stated that she had requested this K-9 presentation and she thanked Chief Buffalo for the information. She asked if the City still had “bite dogs” to which Chief Buffalo responded that the City no longer used apprehension dogs because it increased the City’s liability substantially.

Councilwoman Baker asked for clarification regarding when dogs are brought in on cases. Chief Buffalo responded that it is determined on a case by case basis, because “tracks don’t last forever.” He stated that circumstances such as weather, the

number of people at the scene, whether or not there is general foot traffic in the area and whether or not the scene has been contaminated, all play a part in the decision to use the dogs. He stated that officers try to deploy canines as much as possible, especially on home invasions and break-ins.

Councilwoman Baker stated that the dogs are a great service and inquired how they could become more visible to the community. Chief Buffaloe responded that Officer Rodriguez visits all the public schools and that the officers and their canines participate in various public events. He stated that the canine teams are a daily resource for the Police Department to use.

Councilman Donnelly inquired how often the canine officers get a vacation. Chief Buffaloe advised that whenever the handler is off duty, the canine is also off duty.

Mayor Peel thanked Chief Buffaloe and Officer Rodriguez for their presentation.

5. Presentation – Comprehensive Transportation Plan – Gretchen Byrum, NCDOT; Reza Jafari, NCDOT; Cathy Davison, Albemarle Commission:

Mayor Peel welcomed Gretchen Byrum and Reza Jafari of NCDOT and Cathy Davison of the Albemarle Commission for their presentation on the proposed Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

Using PowerPoint slides, Mr. Jafari described the process as a long-range multimodal transportation plan, which provides for a broad range of improvements over a 25-30 year planning period. He stated that the plan is developed cooperatively by NCDOT and local stakeholders. He reported that the plan will be used to select projects to be considered during the NCDOT project prioritization process for funding.

Mr. Jafari explained that the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) includes several transportation elements including highways, bike trails, pedestrian access and rail and transit. He noted that the CTP will show current deficiencies as well as recommended improvements for all modes of transportation. He stated that the current recommendations are in concept only and still require environmental analysis, design and safety considerations.

Mr. Jafari pointed out that the CTP does not promise to build roads and does not determine the locations of proposed new roads. He stated that the CTP benefits local and state governments by providing a common long-range vision, stronger ties to local priorities, better integration of transportation plans and serves as a guide for future development and transportation decisions. Additional benefits of the CTP noted by Mr. Jafari included reduced right of way and construction costs and minimization of impacts to natural and human environment.

Mr. Jafari provided copies of the CTP plan maps, which included information for local highways, pedestrian accesses and bicycle travel. He advised that upon completion of the CTP, the City Council would be asked to officially adopt the maps pertinent to the City's corporate boundaries. He encouraged input and participation by the City Council and the public to further refine the maps prior to adoption.

Councilman Donnelly stated that Elizabeth City-Pasquotank County is not a bicycle friendly community and he noted the absence of access for bikes on the maps provided. He suggested that, as a member of the River City Cycling Club, he felt the plan needed work in that area. He asked the representatives of NCDOT to take that information back to Raleigh with them. Ms. Byrum agreed that there were no multi-use paths identified on the maps. She noted that the current bike trail on Halstead Boulevard is the only path available at the present time. She advised that funding is a definite issue, especially for pedestrian and bike uses. She emphasized that development of the CTP does not consider funding constraints since the plan is being developed as a tool for project prioritization. Ms. Byrum requested that the Council keep in mind that a 20% match of local funds is required for all bike and pedestrian projects.

Councilman Stimatz pointed out that the maps do not show the location in Camden County where the proposed 158 Bypass would connect. He suggested that information would be helpful to the public. He also noted that the pedestrian insert map did not indicate the new sidewalks being installed on North Road Street/Highway 17 North. He pointed out the importance of this long overdue connection for pedestrians.

Mayor Peel noted that inside the City limits there are a couple of marked bike routes. He pointed out that once a cyclist leaves the City there are no safe routes and he suggested that three feet needed to be added to the roads in order to create a bike lane. Ms. Byrum responded that NCDOT has widened most every road locally for which NCDOT had right of way.

Mayor Peel noted that from the Coast Guard Base to Consolidated Road was a very dangerous stretch for cyclists. He stated that he had talked to a former Coast Guard captain about possibly placing a trail inside the base. Ms. Byrum suggested that the Council should go through its representative on the CTP committee and submit that as a plan suggestion. She stated that the CTP plan is generally amended every two years after adoption.

Ms. Byrum requested that the Council remember that in order to construct pedestrian and bike paths, right of way would have to be obtained, which made the projects very expensive.

Councilman Stimatz advised that as a member of the Airport Authority, he would offer that one of the things that had been considered in their long-term plan is to move the problematic road being discussed further south to reduce some obstructions on the airport. He stated that since the Airport Authority owns the property, right of way issues would be avoided and a bikeway could certainly be incorporated at that location. He said that he would have the airport manager contact NCDOT. Ms. Byrum noted that now is the time to get suggestions into the plan before it is adopted.

Councilman Donnelly noted that NCDOT did a great job by incorporating a walkway into the new Pasquotank River Bridge on Hwy 158 heading east. He stated that it appears that there is a good bikeway in that area for cyclists to work their way over to Camden.

Mayor Peel relayed his personal experiences while traveling in Ohio and Michigan a couple years ago and stated that he found hundreds of miles of bike and pedestrian trails available there. He pointed out that in this area, where the climate will accommodate year-round cycling, trails are not available.

Mayor Peel referred to the old railroad right of way depicted on the CTP map and asked if there had been any movement toward the idea of using it as a bikeway. Ms. Byrum responded that the railroad had been unwilling to allow NCDOT to place a path in that right of way, even though the tracks are not being used.

Hearing no further discussion by the Council, Mayor Peel thanked the representatives for the presentation.

6. Presentation – Water/Wastewater Asset Management Plan (and Adoption of Resolution) – Paul Fredette, Public Utilities Director and Angela Cole, Assistant to the City Manager:

Mayor Peel recognized Ms. Cole and Mr. Fredette for their presentation.

Through the use of a PowerPoint presentation Ms. Cole and Mr. Fredette presented an overview of the City's Asset Management Plan for Water and Wastewater that had been prepared for the Council's consideration by City staff. Ms. Cole reminded the Council that the impetus for compiling the plan was to enhance the City's CDBG application for infrastructure improvement funding. She stated that the application package is to be delivered to NCDENR by the September 30, 2015 deadline.

Ms. Cole defined the Asset Management Plan as a detailed reporting of the City's water and wastewater infrastructure, the condition of the reported infrastructure and a listing of the capital that is recommended for repair, replacement, or upgrade in the next five years - or roughly 2020, if starting from the current fiscal year.

Ms. Cole reported that in 2013, the North Carolina General Assembly allocated CDBG funds to the infrastructure program and transferred administration of the program to the Division of Water Infrastructure. She said that the purpose of these funds is to construct public water and sewer infrastructure in areas where the percentage of low to moderate income persons is at least 51 percent.

Ms. Cole stated that additionally, the plan document will serve as a reference guide for system operations and an accounting of capital projects for the City. She reported that the plan document, as provided to the Council, will be included with the grant application package.

Ms. Cole advised that the plan document contains four sections, as follows:

1. Water Supply Systems;
2. Sewage (or Wastewater) Treatment Systems;
3. Water Loss Prevention Program; and
4. Capital Improvement Plan.

She pointed out that each section contains supporting data and inventory, both within the division and in the appendices.

Ms. Cole first reviewed the section on Water Supply Systems. She stated that there are three subdivisions in that section of the document – Water Supply, Treatment and Distribution System. She reported that the chapter details the source of the City's water, which is presently by 16 wells; the condition of the raw water transmission line; and the capacity and safe yields for each well. She stated that the chapter also includes a data table detailing flow, depth, and pumping level for each well. She pointed out that the information provided also includes a location map depicting City well locations.

Next, Ms. Cole presented the second subsection of the document on Water Treatment. She reported that this section discusses a brief history of the plant structure and its current condition. She advised that the chapter also included a discussion of the treatment system and the typical technical jargon that accompanies formal plan documents such as the Asset Management Plan. She pointed out that the report provides the various permit numbers maintained for water supply, discharge, and lime sludge, as well as the unit process of the water treatment plan.

The next section reviewed by Ms. Cole was the Water Distribution System subsection. She stated that the information provided included the distribution system by inventory, the composition of the system's pipes, their condition, and their location. She stated that the plan also includes a summary discussion of each appurtenance to the distribution system, including the three elevated storage tanks, the 1200-plus main line valves, annual hydrant inspection, the water meter replacement program, and the Nexgrid smart grid fixed area network full deployment.

Ms. Cole reported that Section 2 of the plan is aptly named and sectioned and discusses the sewage collection system – the infrastructure and process to collect wastewater and excrement conveyed in the City's sewers. She reviewed the first subsection and stated that it defines and clarifies collection and treatment system elements including an inventory of the City's pump stations, gravity pipes, manholes, force mains and pump stations. She said that examples of the information reported in this section include:

1. 90 miles of gravity pipe;
2. 2200 manholes;
3. Gravity sewer lines in older sections of the City that are in marginal condition;

4. 39 miles of force main, which are generally in better condition than the gravity sewer lines; and
5. 60 sewage pump stations

Ms. Cole reported that the discussion of the wastewater treatment plant is presented to include its history, modernization, the DENR permits that the City holds, as well as the assets that make up the plant. Quoting the plan directly, she stated that the plant is “a complex and customized collection of assets that can be classified as tanks, pumps, interconnecting pipes, chemical feed systems and instrumentation.” She said that in this subsection of the report, staff listed four critical capital improvement projects that will benefit the necessary operations of the plant itself.

Ms. Cole next reviewed Section 3 of the plan regarding Water Loss Prevention. She stated that, just as in the City’s residential or commercial environments, detecting and repairing leaks is important to water conservation, efficiency, and financial prudence. She reported that the third section of the document explains some reasons for water loss, discusses the importance of prevention and reports the City’s program to reduce the water losses in the distribution system. She advised that three years ago, the City began to collect and evaluate data to determine the City’s level of water loss. She said that the results of that study are discussed in some detail along with a graphic presentation of the data in that section of the document. Ms. Cole reported that the study period identified is from 2006 to 2015 and shows an average of 30% water loss annually. She pointed out that the City’s lowest percentage loss was in 2010 at 26%; and in 2015 the City is reporting its highest unaccounted loss of 35%, which is a substantial gap from the industry accepted average of 12%.

Ms. Cole stated that the final section of the report was used to prioritize the needs in the water supply and sewerage collection systems and present them as a Capital Improvement Plan that the City can realistically fund. She stated that the summary does not anticipate the fiscal year in which the projects may be funded, but the projects are identified by their intent and the reason for their priority.

She identified the seven water capital improvement projects, which total almost 4.3 million dollars, as follows:

1. Replace Raw Water Transmission Main;
2. Replace Lime Feed System;
3. Waterproof Accelerator Tanks;
4. Implement smart grid system;
5. Replace Road Street Water Line;
6. Install Finish Water Pumps; and
7. Repair/Replace Water Mains.

She next identified the seven sewage capital improvement projects, totaling just over 3.3 million dollars, as follows:

1. Replace Herrington Road/Charles Creek Sewer Line;
2. Installation Plunger Pump;
3. Replace Bar Screen and Rake;
4. Replace Maintenance Bldg. Roof;
5. Replace Road Street Sewer Line;
6. Upgrades to Sewer Pump Stations; and
7. Repair/Replace Sewer Mains.

Ms. Cole acknowledged that the document, as presented, required another review for grammar and punctuation. She stated that staff will perform these last edits before submittal with the grant application.

Councilman Stimatz stated that he thought a better presentation was needed for the CIP needs versus the budget. He pointed out that at a minimum the City should spend 2.5 million dollars each year just doing critical infrastructure replacement. He inquired of the Finance Director the revenue in the Water and Sewer Budget at the current time. Ms. Blanchard responded that the operating budget is currently 9.2 million dollars. He said that if the normal operating and maintenance costs are subtracted from that

amount, in all likelihood money would not be available to do any major capital projects. He stated that is the issue that citizens need to be aware of, because if grant funding is not available, there is only one other place to get the funding – and that is in rate increases. He made the point that the City could not survive without water and sewer services.

Councilman Stimatz noted that the table on annual water loss does not include its cost and he stated that it would be helpful to have an understanding of what that cost involves. He also noted that in the sewer section of the document, the same issue existed – the differential between how much water is processed is shown for the sewer plant but its cost is not provided. He stated that it is imperative to get the message out to the citizens about the importance of keeping yard waste material from clogging the storm drains causing a spillover into the sewers that requires expensive treatment.

Councilman Donnelly noted that the water loss section shows a loss of 35% in the current year, with an industry average of 12%. He stated that it was important for the public to know that the smart grid system is not only going to help with electric rates and controlling energy usage, but will also help with water usage and identifying the location of leaks.

Mayor Peel stated that one project that many citizens are interested in is the Road Street project. He said that he had asked the City Manager what the cost of the rehabilitation project would be, based on the recent design study. He said that the estimated cost of that project will be 1.4 million dollars. He noted that it would take a 5% rate increase to borrow the money over a five-year period just to do that project. He noted that it was important for the public to realize that fact.

Motion was made by Councilman Tony Stimatz, seconded by Councilman Ray Donnelly, to adopt the following resolution approving the City of Elizabeth City Asset Management Plan for Water and Wastewater Systems. Those voting in favor were: Baker, Donnelly, Hummer, Stimatz, Brooks and Spence. Against: None. The motion carried. (Horton and Walton had not yet arrived.)

RESOLUTION # 2015-09-04
Approving the 2015 City of Elizabeth City Asset Management Plan
Water and Wastewater Systems

WHEREAS, City staff has made a comprehensive effort to compile available information into a single document that presents an inventory and conditional assessment of the City's water and wastewater systems infrastructure; and also includes a water loss prevention program with the intended objective to identify and reduce water losses that the City is now experiencing in the City's water distribution system; and

WHEREAS, the plan, as designed, will be updated regularly and will serve the City well as a management guideline for the operation and maintenance of the City's water and wastewater systems; and

WHEREAS, this plan was presented to the City Council of Elizabeth City during the regular work session meeting held on September 28, 2015 for Councilmembers review, comment and consideration.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ELIZABETH CITY that the City of Elizabeth City Asset Management Plan for Water and Wastewater Systems is hereby approved this date by the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City.

ADOPTED, this the 28th day of September 2015.

Joseph W. Peel
Mayor

Attest:

Vivian D. White, CMC/NCCMC
City Clerk

7. Committee Reports:

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

Mayor Pro Tem Hummer reported on the three-day NC Congressional Delegation Summit held in Washington DC, which was attended by City Manager Olson, Economic Developer Wayne Harris and Airport Manager Dion Viventi. She stated that the Amazon Wind Farm being constructed would yield 104 towers in total with 50 being built in Pasquotank County. She said that the County taxes would be \$5,000 per tower and \$6,000 per tower to the property owner. She reported that when the farm is complete, Iberdrola Renewables will become the largest taxpayer in both Perquimans and Pasquotank Counties. She noted the recent ribbon cuttings for Hobby Lobby, TJ Maxx and the Northeast Academy for Aerospace and Advanced Technology as well as the installation of ECSU Chancellor Stacey Franklin Jones.

- b) Central Communications Advisory Board: Councilman Spence

Councilman Spence had no report.

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

Councilman Brooks had no report.

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

Mayor Peel stated that a meeting would be held on October 21, 2015.

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

Councilman Donnelly reminded everyone that First Friday ArtWalk would be held on October 2. He stated that ECDI is soliciting participation in its downtown discount card program. He announced that ECDI will be hosting an Italian dinner in connection with the upcoming GhostWalk event in October. He reported that the Holiday Celebration is being planned for Friday, November 27 and that planning is also underway for Small Business Saturday on November 28. Councilman Donnelly thanked new ECDI Director Wade Nichols for the job he is doing. He invited everyone to attend the "Meet and Greet" for Mr. Nichols, which is being planned for October 7.

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

Mayor Peel noted that the Chamber has kicked off its capital campaign to expand its offices on Ehringhaus Street by about 1,500 square feet. He said that the purpose of the expansion is to build a space to enable more services for Chamber members. He noted that the kickoff event for the capital campaign was a Chamber-Oke. He noted that the Council was well-represented at the event by Councilman Tony Stimatz.

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

Mayor Pro Tem Hummer reported that the Finance Committee had met and forwarded Community Support Grant award recommendations to the City Council for consideration during the Regular Session.

h) Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Councilman Horton

Councilman Horton had no report.

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

Councilman Stimatz stated that the taxiway area project is proceeding nicely. He reported that the apron may now be able to handle heavier aircraft than originally thought. He stated that discussion had been held regarding the possibility of installing a wash rack, since the Coast Guard Base rack is no longer available for use. He advised that the DOD contract fuel sales are going extremely well. He stated that things are moving ahead with the purchase of land by the Coast Guard as it relates to the DRS hangar facilities.

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

Councilman Stimatz stated that the board met and discussed the proposed outreach program. He said that staff had submitted some great ideas to help people understand why it is important not to put trash in the gutter line or street in order to keep trash out of the storm drains. He stated that the board hopes to launch the campaign during the first part of 2016. He stated that the Public Works Department is currently working on cleaning out the large culvert in the Tiber Creek Basin that runs from Water Street to Dyer Street. In reporting on a recent unusual rain event, he noted that at some point the City needed to determine what size rain event it is willing to accept and then build its system accordingly.

k) Tourism Development Authority: Councilwoman Baker

Councilwoman Baker reported that the Authority had provided funding for a 9-ball Pool Tournament event that would be coming to Elizabeth City in October. She stated that this event is a precursor to an event being held in Chesapeake, Va. She noted that the players are nationally known and the event will be televised.

8. Adjournment:

There being no further business to be discussed, Mayor Peel adjourned the meeting at 6:51 p.m.

Joseph W. Peel
Mayor

Vivian D. White, CMC/NCCMC
City Clerk