



Minutes of the Burlington Virtual City Council Work Session

5:00pm – Monday, January 3, 2022

Municipal Conference Room, 425 S. Lexington Avenue, Burlington, NC 27215

Council Members Present:

Mayor Jim Butler
Mayor Pro Tem Harold Owen
Council Member Kathy Hykes
Council Member Ronnie Wall
Council Member Bob Ward (Virtual)

Council Members Absent: None

Staff Present:

City Manager, Hardin Watkins
City Attorney, David Huffman
Interim City Clerk, V. Michelle Parker-Evans (Virtual)
Brian Long, Police Chief

Virtual - Scott Bibler, Peter Bishop, Cheryl Brown, Jaime Joyner, Nolan Kirkman, Todd Lambert, Tony Laws, Jamie Lawson, Mike Nunn, Conrad Olmedo, Peggy Reece, Paige Shepard, Brian Tennent, John Vernon

Media Present: None

Guest Presenters: Matt Reece, Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC)

A) Haw River Trail Memorandum of Understanding

Cheryl Brown, Interim Assistant City Manager introduced the item. She noted that the City of Burlington had been a participant since 2006. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was designed to promote appropriate development and conversation of the Haw River Trail. Alamance County has requested that the City of Burlington participate and renew the MOU for the period of January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2032.

No action was required of the Council. A revised MOU would be forthcoming and be placed as a consent item on a future City Council agenda.

Tony Laws, Recreation and Parks Director, clarified that the MOU did not obligate the City for financial purposes.

There were no questions from Council.

B) Voluntary Non-Contiguous Annexation Requests

Jamie Lawson, Principal Planner, introduced the item. She stated that there were six (6) petitions for voluntary annexation. Four (4) of the petitions were for water and sewer utilities. Two (2) of the requests were for water only. She noted that the requests had been approved by the City Manager.

Staff recommended that Council defer action to a future date on the six requests. Ms. Lawson requested to add the item to the consent agenda of the January 4, 2022, City Council meeting for deferral.

Council had no further questions.

C) Request for Mid-Year Adjustment for Sworn Police Officers and Telecommunicators

Jaime Joyner, Human Resources Director, followed up on the presentation made at the December 6, 2021, Worksession and asked Council to consider approval at the January 4, 2022, City Council meeting.

Brian Long, Police Chief, was present to answer any additional questions. He reiterated the great need to invest in the future of the Department.

Council members asked if the salary increase might help to bring back some officers who left. Chief Long responded that it would be an incentive and attractive for lateral hires. The ladder system would consider years of experience and education, and additional compensation would be provided.

Mayor Butler clarified that the request was specifically for police and telecommunicators. Manager Watkins elaborated on the plan to look at salaries of other employees. He stated that 80-90 percent of the work had been completed, and he would bring that proposal to the Council at its direction. The proposal would be for all employees not included in the police group being discussed.

Mayor Butler commented on specifics included in the data presented for police. Manager Watkins noted that the proposal for other employees was not market based. He added that Human Resources would continue to look at one third of employees each year for market comparisons.

Mayor Pro Tem Owen interjected that the City was in direct competition with Orange County. He suggested that Orange and Chatham Counties be included in the market, especially for water resources positions. There was a high turnover and challenge in replacing those employees.

Ms. Joyner noted that water resources, non-sworn police employees and administrative clerical staff were in the current one third study. The target date for the current study was Feb/March with an anticipated pay change date of July 1, 2022.

Mr. Reece stated that Orange and Chatham counties were not included but could be looked at. He spoke about the challenge of looking for comparisons in classifications. There was further discussion about a presentation at the March Worksession.

There were no other questions or comments from Council. The mid-year adjustment item would be placed on the January 4, 2022, consent agenda.

D) Policy for Allowable Costs and Costs Principals for Expenditure of American Rescue Plan Act Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Awards (ARPA)

Peggy Reece, Director of Finance & Risk Management presented the item. She explained that the policy was one step of many to come for the spending of ARPA funds. The policy needed to be approved and in place to be in compliance with spending the funds.

Ms. Reece requested to have the item placed on the consent agenda for the January 4, 2022, meeting. She clarified that this was a federal requirement and was the policy that detailed the process to be used in spending funds.

Mayor Butler questioned whether there was any more information on allowable uses of the funds. Ms. Reece responded that the City was still operating under the interim final rule. Bill 3011 which stipulated that local governments could spend 10 million or 30 percent, whichever is greater, on normal governmental operating expenditures was passed by the Senate. The House of Representatives had not approved the Bill at this time. If that Bill passed, the City would be able to look at additional capital projects. Currently the funds could be used for street paving, premium pay or COVID expenses.

The item would be placed on the Consent Agenda for January 4, 2022.

E) Moorefield Building Discussion

Assistant City Manager, Nolan Kirkman, introduced the item. He stated that there would be a brief discussion to engage direction from Council for staff on next steps.

Mr. Kirkman shared background on the building. It was purchased in 2017. He spoke about the underground tanks on the site of the property. If the building was demolished, there would be clean up costs associated with the removal of the tanks. He added it would be difficult to estimate the costs at this time.

The primary concern of the building was the roof. Mr. Kirkman noted that a decision needed to be made soon to replace the roof. That cost was estimated between \$47,000 - \$112,000. If the Council opted for demolition, demolition and remediation could be done simultaneously, and turf would occupy the site. Walls on the attached buildings would have to be addressed. It was estimated the \$75,000 would be the cost for demolition.

Mr. Fred Patrick, Project Manager, was available for questions.

Council discussed the possibility of adding a second story to any new construction for storage and rehearsal space. The downstairs space could be used for events or performing arts.

After further discussion, it was the consensus of the Council to opt for demolition and remediation of the building. A demolition plan would be brought back to the Council. Mr. Kirkman gave an estimated timeline for demolition, revised concepts, and development at the site.

F) Boards and Commission Reports

Mr. Brian Tennent, Transportation Engineer and Operations Manager, introduced the item. Casey Lewis, storeowner of Carolina Sundries requested to convert two existing parking spaces to a loading zone at the intersection of South Spring Street and Davis Street. The loading zone would be operational from 8 am –

6 pm for 30 minutes. After that time, the spaces could be used for parking. The loading zone would not be specific to Carolina Sundries. Other businesses could also use the space.

The Traffic Commission recommended approval of the request. Mr. Tennent requested to add the item to the January 4, 2022, Consent Agenda.

G) City Manager Report

Mayor Butler, Mayor Pro Tem Owens, and Manager Watkins discussed a conference call with Guilford County Commissioners and health professionals regarding the COVID pandemic.

Skip Alston, Chair of the Guilford County Board of Commissioners, shared the status and effects of positive COVID cases in Guilford County. The Public Safety system was experiencing great strains and ICU beds were in critical supply.

Everyone on the call was asked to use resources to encourage booster shots. Mayor Butler reiterated the importance of vaccines. It was determined that 18–24-year-olds were largely impacted by the virus. 100 percent of those affected had the Omicron strain. Council felt the call was very informative.

Manager Watkins would work with Community Engagement to get more information on the City’s social media platforms.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

V Michelle Parker-Evans

V. Michelle Parker-Evans
Interim City Clerk