



**MANAGER'S BRIEFING
(Virtual Meeting)
May 17, 2021 – 3:30 p.m.**

As part of the city of High Point's COVID-19 mitigation efforts, in-person attendance was not allowed at this meeting. Instead, the meeting was live-streamed, and the public was provided a link to listen to the meeting as it was being live-streamed.

www.HighPointNC.gov/VirtualPublicMeeting

Present:

Mayor Jay W. Wagner; Mayor Pro Tem Britt W. Moore, At Large; Council Member Tyrone Johnson, At Large; Council Member Cyril Jefferson, Ward 1; Council Member Christopher Williams, Ward 2; Council Member Monica Peters, Ward 3 [Arrived at 3:36 p.m.] ; and Council Member Victor Jones, Ward 5

Remotely Present:

Council Member Wesley Hudson, Ward 4; and Council Member Michael Holmes, Ward 6 [Joined at 3:35 p.m.]

Staff Present:

Randy McCaslin, Interim City Manager; Eric Olmedo, Assistant City Manager; Greg Ferguson, Assistant City Manager; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Jeron Hollis, Managing Director; Jelani Biggs, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer; Rase McCray, Human Relations Manager; Stephen Hawryluk, Budget & Performance Manager; Bobby Fitzjohn, Financial Services Director; and Mary S. Brooks, Deputy City Clerk

Staff Remotely Present:

Travis Stroud, Chief of Police; Mark McDonald, Transportation Director; and Angela Wynes, Transit Manager

Others Present:

Melody Burnett, Visit High Point; and with the High Point Market Authority: Tom Conley, and Terry Venable

PRESENTATION OF ITEMS

2021-214 Presentation- Market Authority's FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget

As part of the budget process and in preparation of the pending adoption of the City of High Point's FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget, City Council will hear a presentation regarding the Market Authority's FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget. The approval of the Market Authority's budget and contract will be on the City Council Agenda for May 17, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. and action may be taken at that time. The public hearing on the City of High Point FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget will be held on Monday, May 17, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

Stephen Hawryluk, Budget and Performance Manager recognized Terry Venable, and Tom Conley from the Market Authority (Authority) to give a presentation on the Market Authority's FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget.

Mr. Conley noted that the FY 2021-22 Budget was approved by the Executive Committee; said that it did not reflect future funding; there is a pending request for funding from the state, COVID-19 Relief funding, and the Department of Transportation (DOT); spoke to the impact the pandemic made on the Furniture Market (Market); said the budget for this year was close to \$300,000; spoke to recruiting, and retaining furniture buyers, and promoting the Market; said that the 'Welcome Back' Market concert was rescheduled to October, 2021; voiced appreciation for the support from Visit High Point, and High Point University; said that the Authority would be providing transportation internally for the Market beginning in October; and spoke to the upcoming Furniture Market scheduled for June, 2021.

Mayor Pro Tem Moore thanked the Market Authority for their report; inquired if the Furniture Market would return back to its regular dates; and if there would be international visitors/buyers at the upcoming Market. Mr. Conley replied that some of the showrooms created virtual exhibits; offered tours on an as needed basis; spoke to two successful Pre-Markets; said that the Market wanted to focus on keeping the Market in April and October; and that he anticipated a smaller number of international visitors.

Council Member Williams spoke to the benefits of having the Market back to the regular dates in April and October; and said that it would keep from having conflicts with other International Markets.

Council Member Jefferson inquired if it was possible to monetize virtual exhibits for international buyers; and spoke to the three leg stool: product education and networking. Mr. Conley replied that it could not be monetized; and spoke to having regular attendance at the October Market.

Mr. Conley thanked everyone for their continued support.

2021-215 Presentation- Convention & Visitors Bureau (Visit High Point Inc.) FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget

As part of the budget process and in preparation of the pending adoption of the City of High Point's FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget, City Council will hear a presentation regarding the Convention & Visitors Bureau (Visit High Point Inc.) FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget. The approval of the Convention & Visitors Bureau (Visit High Point Inc.) will be on the City Council Agenda for May 17, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. and action may be taken at that time. The public hearing on the City of High Point FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget will be held on Monday, May 17, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

Stephen Hawryluk, Budget and Performance Manager recognized Melody Burnette, Visit High Point to give a presentation on the Convention and Visitors Bureau FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget.

Ms. Burnette extended greetings; spoke to having a balanced budget; to implementing a concierge program that would offer complementary services to visitors; said that there would be an upscale for additional charges; to launching a Juneteenth celebration; to recruiting visitors to High Point that would be attending the Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem; mentioned Q's Corner that accommodated to all ability levels; spoke to comparisons with other cities regarding a certification program for hospitality; to the increased relocations to High Point; spoke to the boomerang campaign-citizens that moved away would return; and opened the floor for questions.

Mayor Wagner inquired if the American Recovery funds could be used to replace loss revenue with Visit High Point. Eric Olmedo, Assistant City Manager replied that they would be able to determine that information once they receive further guidance.

Ms. Burnett spoke to receiving COVID-19 relief funding; a PPP loan; and spoke to focusing on sustaining restaurants.

Mayor Wagner inquired on the low stock and need for hotels in High Point. Ms. Burnett replied and discussed the demand and need for hotels; having to refer visitors to other cities for hotel stay; to conducting a leakage study that tracked visitors using GPS; and voiced concerns for immediate partners (restaurants) that would lose business because of the low stock of hotels.

Council Member Williams inquired on restaurants' capacity to serve during the Market; and if there was any data to support this information. Ms. Burnett replied that Visit High Point did not have any data measuring the capacity of performance by employees; and spoke to the low hiring rate.

Council Member Jefferson inquired on the relocation process; and asked for more information on the Drive High Point Foundations Grants. Ms. Burnette replied that High Point was a certified retirement destination; said that the 'Live in High Point' website was used to leverage interest for those looking to relocate; said that she mailed out 335 packets as of April to those who were prequalified, and showed interest; explained the process for funding the Sponsorship Program for organizations using the Grant funding.

Council Member Holmes thanked Ms. Burnette for her time and efforts.

2021-216 City of High Point's Proposed FY 2021-2022 Budget

City Council will continue discussion regarding the City of High Point's Proposed FY 2021-2022 Budget in anticipation of the public hearing on the budget which is scheduled for Monday, May 17, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

Eric Olmedo, Assistant City Manager began discussion regarding updates to information requested by council regarding the Proposed FY 2021-22 Budget; spoke to the Transit Department; said that the impact from COVID-19 resulted in limited bus routes; there was a three year plan for new services in the works; spoke to having discussions on insurance requirements for CDL drivers; on implementing programs to deal with insurance issues; spoke to the challenges faced while hiring CDL drivers; and recognized Angela Wynes, Transit Manager in attendance to answer any questions.

Mayor Pro Tem Moore inquired on the challenges faced hiring qualified applicants (CDL drivers). Ms. Wynes replied that a big component was hiring CDL operators with customer service skills.

Council Member Jefferson inquired on comparison strategies with other municipalities regarding hiring and retaining CDL operators. Ms. Wynes replied that transit employees in the cities of Greensboro and Winston-Salem were not municipal employees; said that they were from a management company or third party; they were unionized; and that they were facing the same challenges as High Point.

Council Member Williams voiced concerns using third parties; said that the budget would be in control by those companies; and that it would be better controlled in-house.

Council Member Holmes said that, as the liaison for the PART Board, there was and would be ongoing discussion regarding optimizing across municipalities on working together.

Council Member Peters asked if the requirements for CDL operators have an impact on the amount of interest for the positions. Mr. Olmedo replied yes.

Council Member Jones spoke to having training programs where insurance company would approve CDL operators with less than 2 years' experience.

Council Member Holmes asked was there discussion on subsidy for insurance premiums for the training program; and what metrics were used to determine the pay scale for CDL operators. Council Member Johnson inquired if the pay was competitive with other cities; and inquired if the pay was consistent with Greensboro. Mayor Pro Tem Moore asked if the drivers received full benefits. Mr. Olmedo replied that subsidy for insurance was not a part of the conversation yet; and spoke to having a pay scale study completed. Ms. Wynes replied that the starting pay for CDL operators was based on experience with probationary increases; the full-time drivers receive full benefits;

city of Greensboro drivers were unionized; and that the transit department currently need two full-time drivers, and 4 part-time drivers.

Mr. Olmedo continued discussion regarding civilian mental health support for the High Point Police Department (HPPD); spoke to the need for a mental health professional; and to other steps to be taken before implementing this program.

Council Member Jefferson inquired on the timeframe to implement the program. Travis Stroud, Chief of Police replied that when the Assistant Chief of Police position is approved, the HPPD would concentrate on community engagement; said that mental health was not a criminal violation; expressed the need for research to study other programs, and assistance from mental health professionals before implementing the program.

Council Member Peters asked if there had been communication with the Mental Health Associates of the Triad. Chief Stroud replied that there was no communication as of yet; said that the partnership with them was new; and voiced the importance of mental health wellness with the police officers with the HPPD.

Council Member Jefferson spoke to having a due diligence approach on calls received related to mental health; and inquired on the funding to implement the program. Chief Stroud replied and spoke to contracting with mental health professionals on a case by case basis; voiced concerns of the immediate availability of third parties while responding to a call; concerns protecting third parties during dangerous encounters; and said that he did not have the cost for funding at this time for the program.

Mr. Olmedo continued discussion regarding the Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE); said that Guilford Council was embarking on a Disparity Study (Study) facilitated by Griffin & Strong, PC (G&S); spoke to having a discussion with G&S to have a better scope and scale to embark on the Study; provided updates on MWBE participation with the city that included the baseball stadium, and police department headquarters project as followed: in 2019 MWBE participation was 15.7%; in 2020 MWBE participation was 13.1%; and in 2021 the estimated MWBE participation was 15.3% with the police department headquarters project.

Mayor Wagner inquired if the city ever met the 10% MWBE participation goal. Mr. Olmedo replied no; and that the goal was met due to the contribution from Samet Corporation.

Council Member Jefferson asked for disaggregating data for MWBE participation that would exclude Samet Corporation's contributions. Mr. Olmedo replied that data would have to be prepared; and that staff would provide that information.

Mr. Olmedo recognized Rae McCray, Human Relations Manager to give a presentation on the Fair Housing Assistance Program.

Mr. McCray made a PowerPoint Presentation on the Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP); explained how the FHAP worked, and it's purpose; spoke to the requirements that the city would need in order to become FHAP certified; provided a history on the city's Fair Housing ordinance as followed: 2007 passed initial local Fair Housing

ordinance, 2016 local ordinance amended to more accurately describe Human Relations structure and activities, and in 2021 council approved the Human Relations Commission initiative to explore FHAP certification; said that the Human Relations office currently advises housing providers and residents on how to submit their complaints to Raleigh; and recognized Jelani Biggs, Diversity Equity and Inclusion Officer to discuss the process with NC HRC Referrals.

Mr. Biggs stated that since November 2019, the city's Human Relations Department had referred 20 cases to the NC HRC; that HUD set expectations on the number of cases based on the population size of the city; and that the NC HRC referrals were filed for the protected class.

Mr. McCray continued discussion regarding the next steps for the 2021 work plan that included: community workshops led by subject-matter experts, staff would send a recommendation to council, and if recommended, council would adopt an ordinance that would be sent to HUD to become certified for interim certification; and voiced appreciation to Council Member Johnson, who is the Human Relations Liaison, for his efforts and great dialogue.

Council Member Williams inquired if the 20 cases over the 18-month timeframe submitted to NC HRC fit with the population size of High Point; and if the numbers would change since COVID-19 with the state coming out of the eviction moratorium. Mr. Biggs replied yes that the number of cases submitted did fit the population size of High Point; and that the state is expecting an influx of housing cases due to the eviction moratorium.

Mayor Wagner asked if the city was certified that the Human Relations department would not be referring cases to Raleigh. Mr. Biggs replied yes; and the city would handle complaints locally with exceptions.

Mayor Wagner inquired if the current referral system practices' effectiveness. Mr. Biggs replied and spoke to barriers faced with citizens while filing complaints such as distance, available resources; issues navigating documents; and voiced the need to assure all cases were handled efficiently.

Discussion took place regarding complaints from constituents to council members as followed: fear of being evicted due to retaliation, feeling powerless, marginalized, and oppressed; and on the need of handling cases inhouse.

Council Member Jones discussed his experience as a liaison on the Human Relations Commission regarding Fair Housing Complaints; asked was there a lag time on submitting complaints locally versus sending them to Raleigh; and voiced the need to sustain the current complaint process. Mr. Biggs replied that there was no difference in timeframe of locally versus Raleigh.

Council Member Williams inquired if there was any outreach to the community educating them on the process; making them aware that the services are available; and on issues with housing standards being met. Mr. Biggs replied that Human Relations partnered with the Community Development department on outreach; spoke to the available resources funded by HUD; to code enforcement officers reporting code violations in reference to housing standards; and partnering with the Family Justice Center with the domestic/sexual assault victims with housing concerns of being evicted.

Mayor Pro Tem Moore asked were there any complaints from providers. Mr. Biggs replied no; and spoke to having a robust relationship with providers; and to having stakeholders in work sessions.

Mayor Wagner inquired on the number of cases that were found in violation from Raleigh since 2016. Mr. Biggs replied that he would request that information; and stated that many cases would settle or consulate before conclusion.

Jeron Hollis, Managing Director spoke to the next steps; to having discussion with subject matter experts so that the work plan could be fulfilled by the summer; and to having a staffing piece in the budget.

Discussion took place regarding adopting and approving the FY budget.

Mayor Wagner spoke to doing a budget amendment; and to allowing the Board of Realtors feedback before decisions were made.

Mr. Hollis spoke to what the workshops consisted of; said it involved dialogue, and education with stakeholders since the work plan was approved in March; and spoke to meeting the criteria to become FHAP certified.

Council Member Jefferson inquired on earmarking funding for staffing operations for the Fair Housing Program. Mr. Hollis replied and advised the decision would be made by management and council. Randy McCaslin, Interim City Manager replied yes, that the staffing position could be earmarked.

Council Member Williams spoke to having a better understanding of the funding for said position.

Mayor Wagner asked considering a case was brought to court, who would prosecute it. Mr. Biggs replied that the legal department would prosecute the case; and that the legal department would have access to the online system that would have the case information.

JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney advised that the city would have to rely on outside counsel until an additional Assistant City Attorney was hired; that the authority from Raleigh would be transferred to council in which council could delegate to a commission or department; and that the Fair Housing cases would be an added duty for the new assistant city attorney.

Mr. Biggs noted his experience working in Winston-Salem with Fair Housing cases and stated that only one case went to court during his time there; and expressed that every party is interested in conciliating.

Mayor Wagner asked if an additional legal assistant would be needed upon hiring another assistant attorney. Ms. Carlyle replied yes, as well as more office space.

Mr. McCray noted that only one additional staffing position was needed for his department.

Mayor Wagner advised council to allow the work plan to be completed with feedback from the stakeholder; and to come back at a later date for further discussion.

Mr. McCaslin advised council to submit questions or concerns to staff before addressing the FY 2021-22 Budget on Wednesday.

Mayor Wagner advised that due to the meeting going over time, the Regular Council meeting would begin at 5:35 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m. upon motion duly made and seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary S. Brooks,
Deputy City Clerk

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