

**HIGH POINT CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
JANUARY 18, 2022 – 4:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS – HIGH POINT MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Mayor Wagner called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

He then called the roll for attendance. The following council members were present:

Mayor Jay W. Wagner; Mayor Pro Tem Monica L. Peters, Ward 3; Council Member Britt W. Moore, At Large; Council Member Tyrone Johnson, At Large [Arrived at 5:28 p.m.]; Council Member Cyril Jefferson, Ward 1 [Arrived at 4:11 p.m.]; Council Member Christopher Williams, Ward 2; Wesley Hudson, Ward 4 [Arrived at 4:03 p.m.]; Council Member Victor Jones, Ward 5; and Council Member Michael Holmes, Ward 6 [Arrived at 5:22 p.m.]

Staff present:

Tasha Long Ford, City Manager; Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Greg Ferguson, Assistant City Manager; Eric Olmedo, Assistant City Manager; Jeron Hollis, Managing Director; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Meghan Maguire, Assistant City Attorney; Sandy Dunbeck, Economic Development Director; Jelani Biggs, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer (participated remotely); Ryan Ferguson, Marketing Manager; Bobby Fitzjohn, Financial Services Director; Stephen Hawryluk, Budget and Performance Manager; Gary Edwards, Electric Utilities Director; Tyler Berrier, Electric Utilities Assistant Director; Lisa Vierling, City Clerk; and Mary S. Brooks, Deputy City Clerk

Others present:

Patrick Harman (Hayden-Harman Foundation); Susan Harman; Debbie Lumpkins, Executive Director of High Point Arts Council

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

2022-11 Economic Development--Downtown Incentive Policy and a modification to the Office and Industrial Incentive Policy

City Council is requested to adopt a targeted Downtown Incentive Policy and a modification to the Office and Industrial Incentive Policy.

Sandy Dunbeck, Director of Economic Development spoke to the targeted Downtown Incentive Policy and a modification to the Office and Industrial Incentive Policy (Policy); said that the Policy's incentives would be funded by the City Economic Development Fund;

the Policy would become effective upon adoption of the resolution until June 30, 2023; discussed the incentives for the new policy which would be lower for rent assistance compared to the previous policy; the upfit assistance was a modification to the new policy; spoke to investors that are interested in the downtown area; and voiced the need of assistance to bringing buildings up to current standard.

Mayor Wagner noted that this item would be on tonight's agenda for the council meeting.

2022-25

MWBE (Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprises) Update

Staff will provide an update on the City of High Point's MWBE (Minority Women Business Enterprise) Program.

Jelani Biggs, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer made PowerPoint Presentation on the Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) Program Development; said that the purpose of a comprehensive M/WBE program was to create a centralized and formalized process that connects underrepresented businesses with opportunities, resources, and technical assistance; and outlined and discussed the following:

Key Considerations:

- Review current M/WBE engagement efforts of Purchasing staff that serve as the foundation for creating more comprehensive education, engagement, and compliance function.
- Emphasize M/WBE firms in strengthening procurement processes and programs, including: Provide prime contractors with tools to meet M/WBE goals
- Expand partnerships and explore the creation of business development programs
- Continue to improve the vendor databases
- Leverage new and existing staff resources to the achieve the initiatives
- Conduct a disparity study, which could serve as a basis for future procurement and professional service guidelines.

Mr. Biggs discussed current practices, current policies for procedures for construction contracts; procedures for purchasing, professional and personal service contracts; explained what a Disparity Study (Study) entailed; said that the Study would tell where the city currently stood regarding M/WBE engagement and utilization; provided cost comparisons for the Study with other cities: Asheville (budgeted \$320k for its 2016 Disparity Study); and Charlotte (budgeted \$345k for its 2017 Disparity Study); provided a list of cities that have or planned to conduct a Study; and provided recommendations as follows:

- *Add an M/WBE Coordinator to the Financial Services Department*
- *DEI staff would provide logistical support for vendor outreach and engagement*
- *Conduct a disparity study to identify areas of opportunity and establish specific goals.*

Council Member Williams asked if staff could provide the cost for the Study with the cities of Asheville, and Wilmington. Mr. Biggs believed that Asheville's Study was around \$320k; and noted that the Study would need to be conducted every five years.

Council Member Moore asked when the city of Greensboro's Study was conducted; what the results were with comparing cities; and asked for data regarding M/WBE efforts, policies, and procedures for the years 2019 and 2020. Mr. Biggs replied that staff would follow up with the city of Greensboro regarding their Study results, and provide that information to council; for data regarding M/WBE efforts with High Point, the Financial Services Department is currently executing functions that were recommended in this presentation regarding M/WBE efforts as additional duties; spoke to having a holistic M/WBE program; said that the Study would be a legal pathway in addition to state goals the city had for construction projects; and that the Study would be legally justify any metrics the city had for meeting goals.

Mayor Wagner inquired on how disparity was measured; and if was measured by the percentage of the population. Mr. Biggs replied that the Study looked to identify the market area based on utilization with vendors along with where the city stood; said that it would legally be best to conduct a Study while using metrics and numbers stating where the city stood with their goals.

Mayor Wagner asked for historical data regarding M/WBE goals. Eric Olmedo, Assistant City Manager replied that staff would provide that information.

Council Member Jefferson spoke to a prior discussion regarding M/WBE goals, and adding the cost for the Study in the city's budget; inquired if there could be action taken during the discussion meeting regarding the historical data presented by staff to consider approving and adding the Disparity Study to the budget; and spoke to being a more diverse and inclusive city.

Discussion took place regarding M/WBE goals; looking at disadvantaged groups; the legality of a Disparity Study; and to the history of discrimination and national awareness.

JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney advised council that conducting a Disparity Study would help ensure any protective classes programs would withstand scrutiny in a court of law.

Mayor Pro Tem Peters asked if staff could find out the reason why some M/WBE goals were not met; would the Study attract more M/WBE firms; and how much the Study would cost. Ms. Carlyle replied that monitoring M/WBE goals was something that staff should continually monitor; and recommended not to provide that information until a Study was conducted from a legal standpoint. Tasha Logan Ford, City Manager replied that an estimate for cost of the Study would not be available until a request for proposal was submitted; that M/WBE participation could be provided after the Study's results; said that in addition to the Study, that the city needs to assure that they are adequately staffed; that a new staff position would need to be a part of the budget along with the Study; and if council would like to proceed with the recommendations at a different time to please let staff know. Ms. Logan Ford stated that the new positions would be allocated in the Financial Services Department; and that person would remain after the Study; and noted that the city would always hire the best firm.

Council Member Williams inquired on the timeframe to conduct a Study. Ms. Logan Ford replied that the timeframe for the Study would average one year to complete.

Mayor Wagner requested that staff come back to council with information on a proposal for the Study for further discussion with council.

Council Member Moore asked Mr. Biggs to report back with the Disparity Study results from comparable cities. Mr. Biggs replied that staff would follow up with comparisons from other cities regarding the Disparity Study's end results.

Ms. Logan Ford advised council that staff would follow up with an update at the first meeting of council in February.

2022-26

American Rescue Plan Update

Staff will provide an update on the American Rescue Plan funding.

Jeron Hollis, Managing Director made PowerPoint Presentation on the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funding; gave an overview regarding the feedback from the community during the town meetings that included demographics of the audience; said that feedback was also received from online surveys, and hardcopies were provided to citizens upon request as well; the town meetings were promoted through the city's social media platforms, press releases, TV channel, and flyers-in Spanish and English.

Mr. Hollis continued discussion regarding the five questions [1. What negative economic impacts from COVID-19 does the city need to address?, 2. What should the City focus on regarding water and sewer?, 3. What general government services should the City focus on?, 4. What are some neighborhood improvement projects that can enhance the look and feel of our communities?, and 5 Do you have any questions for us regarding the ARPA funds or allocation process?] where attendees at the town meetings were asked; and outlined the responses and comment summary that included suggestions as followed:

- *General community issues*
- *Housing Issues*
- *Employment Issues*
- *Infrastructure issues*
- *Economic Development*
- *Education Issues*
- *Community Programs/Nonprofits Issues*

Mayor Wagner asked if there was any discussion regarding broadband. Mr. Hollis replied yes, that there were discussion on broadband, and education issues; and voiced the importance to establish guideline so that the community would know what to expect during the next steps for the ARPA funds.

Tasha Logan Ford, City Manager spoke to identifying programs and areas to focus on; said that a presentation would be given next to regarding the use of the ARPA to support the city's capital projects.

Council Member Williams inquired on the feedback from citizens regarding the restriction associated with the ARPA funds. Ms. Logan Ford replied that staff did not go into details regarding restrictions; said that discussion would be a part of the next conversation with the community; said that at the time of the town meetings there was not at guidance on how to use the ARPA, however guidance had been received for further discussion.

Mayor Pro Tem Peters asked if any applications for funding were received. Ms. Logan Ford replied that the city had received numerous interest; and that the application process had not been provided for the public at this time.

Council Member Jones inquired on the number of participants for the town meetings. Mr. Hollis replied that there were between 12 to 15 in person attendees per meeting; and a little under 100 surveys conducted; and that staff would pull more feedback data to provide to council.

Council Member Williams noted that the city of High Point had the highest number of attendees at the Guilford County town meeting conducted here at City Hall.

Council Member Moore thanked everyone for their hard work and efforts.

Stephen Hawryluk, Budget and Performance Manager discussed and outlined the deferred budget items, with cost, recommended to be funded with ARPA fund as followed:

- *Vehicles and other rolling stock: \$1,926,240*
- *IT Equipment: \$276,000*
- *Transportation Equipment: \$50,000*
- *Parking Improvements: \$150,000*
- *Fire Projects: \$325,000*
- *Parks and Recreation Projects: \$871,845*
- *Stadium Projects: \$214,000*
- *Stadium Reserve: \$360,000*
- *Planning Projects: \$145,000*
- *Transportation Projects: \$740,000*
- *Public Services Projects: \$115,000*
- *Other Projects: \$139,000*
- *Samet Drive Engineering: \$250,000*

Mr. Hawryluk; and Mr. Hollis concluded their presentations; and entertained questions.

Council Member Jefferson asked if the recommended budget items could be prioritized. Ms. Logan Ford replied yes; and that staff would schedule a future meeting for further discussion.

2022-27 Closed Session- Economic Development

Staff is requesting Council enter into a Closed Session pursuant to N.C. General Statute 143-318.11(a)(4) for the purpose of economic development.

Council Member Moore moved to go into Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(4) for Economic Development at 5:13 p.m. Council Member Jefferson made a second to the motion which carried by the following 7-0 unanimous vote:

Aye (7): Mayor Wagner, Mayor Pro Tem Peters, Council Member Moore, Council Member Jefferson, Council Member Williams, Council Member Hudson, and Council Member Jones

Absent (2): Council Member Johnson, and Council Member Holmes

Upon reconvening into Open Session at 5:39 p.m., Mayor Wagner announced that there would be no action taken as a result of the Closed Session.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jay W. Wagner, Mayor

Attest:

Mary S. Brooks, CMC
City Clerk