



Prosperity & Livability Committee
Members: Ewing, Hudson, Peters, and Golden
Chaired by Council Member Ewing
3rd Floor Lobby Conference Room
February 7, 2018 – 9:00 a.m.

MINUTES

Present:

Committee Chair Jason Ewing, and Committee Members Alyce Hill, Jay Wagner and Chris Williams

Staff Present:

Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Randy Hemann, Assistant City Manager; Jeron Hollis, Director of Communications and Public Engagement; Ryan Ferguson, Marketing Manager; Jolie Helton, Communications Specialist; Lt. Curtis Cheeks, III, High Point Police Department, Mark McDonald, Director of Transportation; Matt Carpenter, Traffic Signal Engineer; Tracy Pegram, Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation; Eric Olmedo, Budget and Administrative Director; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; and Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

Others Present:

Judy Stalder, TREBIC

News Media:

Pat Kimbrough, *High Point Enterprise*

Note: The following handouts were distributed during the meeting and will be attached as a permanent part of these proceedings:

- ✓ High Point Police Department- Special Events, Officer Employment Costs
- ✓ High Point Parks & Recreation Department- Special Events
- ✓ High Point Transportation Department- Special Events Cost Summary
- ✓ Procedure for Changes to City Charter

Chairman Ewing called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

Special Events

Deputy City Manager Randy McCaslin explained discussions began last fall and at that time the decision was made to continue discussions after the election and after the new Council was seated. He advised that the city does do numerous events throughout the year and although these events

are for a good cause, there is an enormous cost associated with it. He explained currently, the city pretty much absorbs all the cost, except in the case where the city has agreed to sponsor or co-sponsor an event. Both Greensboro and Winston Salem charge for special events.

Lt. Curtis Cheeks with the **High Point Police Department** shared a list of events that the Police Department has manned and in most cases also involved other city departments as well. The overall amount paid by the City of High Point in 2017 for event security/traffic direction was \$289,724.21. In addition to the events identified on the handout, there were also twenty-seven 5K walk/run events that required security/traffic direction. Each of these events were sponsored by the city at a cost of \$25,756.50. Mr. Cheeks noted this total amount fluctuates based on the total number of 5K walk/run events and the number of officers needed to work the events.

There were also two for profit events in 2017 where the officers pay was funded by the promotor. Lt. Cheeks explained that the prayer walk events are not listed on the information and noted that the reserve officers cover these events at no charge. Off duty officers cover the events where registration fees, sponsorships, etc.... are charged and the cost of these events vary according to traffic direction, size of the event.

He advised that the city events are determined through the city manager's office. As a general rule, non-supervisory officers cover these events, but depending on the size of the event, there are times supervisors may need to work, which drastically increases the cost due to the higher salaries. He provided an example using the Cycling Classic which requires 40 officers and use of supervisors.

Lt. Cheeks mentioned the need for an event coordinator that would be the point of contact from start to finish (planning, coordinating with the other departments, offering assistance and addressing questions during the process, etc....).

Regarding the **Parks & Recreation Department's** side, Tracy Pegram explained their involvement in special events typically involves their mobile stage, tents, bike racks, concession trailers. She advised their involvement is mostly the staff time for setting up the tents, stage, etc... and because most events occur on the weekends, it involves overtime for staff. The Parks & Recreation Department's expenses totaled \$22,353.09.

Matt Carpenter with the **High Point Transportation Department** reported that events cost the Transportation Department \$130,000 a year for regular time, overtime, and equipment costs. The big events for the Transportation Department are:

1. International Home Furnishings Market (cost: \$101,012.63)
2. Parades (i.e. MLK, Veteran's Day, and Holiday) (cost: \$14,653.55)
3. Other Special Events (cost: \$15,344.17)

He advised that they have only charged for one of the events, which was a for profit event (Half Marathon) and used Greensboro's rates to calculate the charge (\$1,300).

Chairman Ewing asked if the city recoups some of the cost for the Furniture Market. Mr. Carpenter replied that this is an operating expense that comes out of the Transportation Department's budget and the cost is about \$65,000 a year. Committee Member Peters inquired about the showroom tax revenues and if these are used to help offset the Furniture Market expenses. Mr. McCaslin explained that the showroom fees go directly to the Market Authority and the property taxes from the showrooms go to the city's General Fund, which goes to pay for most of these costs.

He reiterated that the costs are getting so large that it is impacting the budget and a policy decision has to be made whether Council wants to recoup part, some, or none of these costs that the city has been absorbing.

Mr. Carpenter reiterated the need for an events coordinator position. Mr. McCaslin agreed that the position would certainly be a part of staff's recommendation.

The Committee discussed at length whether to continue subsidizing these community events or start charging to recoup some or all of the expenses.

Chairman Ewing suggested that the city stop sponsoring these events, and felt that the Chamber would be a far better sponsor for most of the events. He felt it is a case of the city being philanthropic with taxpayer dollars versus an organization being philanthropic with its revenue. Committee Member Hudson mentioned the Uptowne Stroll and felt the Chamber should definitely be taking care of it because of the benefits to the businesses. He also inquired about the First Fridays and asked if the cost for these events is being covered by the city. Lt. Cheeks advised that the Police Department has been contacted about covering the First Fridays, but at this point nothing has yet been scheduled. He also mentioned the Coltrane Festival and questioned why they do not pay. Mr. McCaslin explained that it was deemed as one of those projects that brings in a lot of people into the city.

Chairman Ewing felt the city is overstepping its bounds in the role of municipal government and pointed out it is the role of the Convention & Visitors Bureau to do this. He added that the city already provides \$1.5 million in funding to the CVB and it would be nice to shift the money being spent on these events into road repair, sidewalks, or other areas where it would be more beneficial. He asked staff what would be easiest from a policy standpoint.

Mr. McCaslin stated that the easiest approach would be to say that the city would not sponsor events, but staff needs some direction from Council as far as what percentage they would like to recoup or recover. Committee Member Peters expressed concerns about doing this because it could result in lost events, but did agree that there should be a charge for the events. She felt the events coordinator position was a good idea because of the catalyst project and all the anticipated events that would be associated with it.

Committee Member Peters questioned the rates the city charges for use of the Theatre for events. She felt the rates are so high that it prohibits people from using the Theatre and that it is a shame that the Miss High Point Pageant is being held in Kernersville and not in High Point.

Chairman Ewing stated he would like to see what kind of fee structure staff could put together to recoup costs in the 50% range, and do a comparison with what other municipalities are charging for their events. He also suggested eliminating the City of High Point as a sponsor, and coming up with a grant amount to provide to the Chamber or other organizations that could sponsor these events.

Because of the budget impact, he suggested that this be ready for discussion by the full City Council on February 19th, so it can be figured into the 2018-2019 budget.

Potential Changes to the High Point Charter

Mr. McCaslin distributed a handout outlining the procedure to make an amendment to the City of High Point's Charter, specifically for the Terms of Office of the Mayor and City Council. He reviewed the following process for an amendment to the City Charter as authorized by N.C. General Statute 160A-102.

1. Resolution of Intent (ROI) approval by City Council
2. Upon adoption of the ROI, set date for public hearing not more than 45 days from adoption of the ROI
3. Publish notice of Public Hearing at least once, not less than 10 days prior to the date of the Public Hearing
4. Either at the City Council's next regularly scheduled meeting or not later than 60 days from the Public Hearing, City Council may adopt an ordinance to amend the Charter
5. Within 10 days after the ordinance is adopted, City Council must publish notice on the Charter change.

The above procedures are for Council to make the amendment to the Charter by Ordinance.

Other options that can be used that are also authorized by State Statute are:

1. Local Act
2. Referendum

The following scenarios were briefly discussed regarding the terms of office:

- Option to go from two-year terms to four-year terms
- Option to go to four-year staggered terms (this is what staff recommends)
- Option to set it up where half the Council is elected every two years
- Option for the Mayor to be elected for a four-year term, or a two year term
- Option for the Mayor, At Large, and three wards to be elected together (i.e. Mayor, At Large, Wards 1, 2, and 3 in one election; then Mayor, At Large, and Wards 4, 5, and 6 in the next two-year election cycle)
- Option for half the wards to be elected for a four-year term, and half elected for two-year terms to get to staggered terms
- Option to go to all At Large seats, or keep the wards

The change could be set up and in place for the next election cycle for implementation of the new terms.

Chairman Ewing favored four-year terms citing continuity because it would prove to be more beneficial to have an effective and efficient staff due to the necessary learning curve for new Council members to get acclimated. He noted staggered terms may be best from a standpoint of continuity with half coming and half going, but the Ward system might be a challenge and questioned the impact on voter turnout.

Committee Member Peters felt all the terms should be the same citing it would lessen confusion in the public.

As far as continuity, Committee Member Hudson felt this election was unique in the sense because it was such an important decision and there was such a huge issue. He did not feel there would be as much turnover in future elections and did not feel staggering terms would fix that. He also suggested identifying the Wards with geographic locations possibly, rather than numbers.

As a reminder, Mr. McCaslin pointed out that when the Census takes place every ten years, the ward lines have to be redrawn.

Regarding the Wards, Chairman Ewing suggested another option would be to go to full blown At Large seats, but due to the city's size, he felt there is great benefit for every resident to have one point of contact that solely represents them geographically, in addition to the three other Council persons representing them (i.e. Mayor, and two At Large). Committee Member Hudson preferred the Ward system citing it is much easier to have a very concise area to deal with. Chairman Ewing agreed and felt it would be more suitable to leave the current ward system in place.

Committee Member Hudson asked about staff's preference on the terms. Mr. McCaslin shared that he having worked in cities that had four-year staggered terms and cities that had two-year staggered terms, he preferred a four-year staggered term citing it takes a good year for Council members to understand their role and to understand the operations of the city. He felt from a continuity standpoint, it just makes more sense.

Chairman Ewing shared the consensus he has heard from others on Council is there is support to go to a four-year term, but the question is how it would be structured and whether or not to stagger the terms. He noted that personally he does not support staggered terms because of the confusion it could cause voters and from a cost savings standpoint. He suggested that staff be prepared to present the information on the process and options at the February 19th Special Meeting so it could be discussed by the entire Council.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m. upon motion duly made and seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa B. Vierling, MMC
City Clerk

Jason P. Ewing, Chairman

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