

**HIGH POINT CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING  
February 19, 2018 – 4:00 P.M.  
3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR LOBBY CONFERENCE ROOM**

**MINUTES**

**Present:**

Mayor Jay Wagner [arrived after meeting had started]; Mayor Pro Tem Chris Williams (Ward 2) [arrived after meeting had started]; Council Members Britt Moore, (At Large); Don Scarborough (At Large); Jeffrey Golden (Ward 1) Monica Peters (Ward 3) Wesley Hudson (Ward 4); Victor Jones (Ward 5); Jason Ewing (Ward 6) [arrived after meeting had started]

**Staff Present:**

Greg Demko, City Manager; Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Randy Hemann, Assistant City Manager; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Eric Olmedo, Budget and Administrative Director; Loren Hill, President High Point Economic Development Corporation, Mike McNair, Director of Community Development & Housing; Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

**Also Present:**

Judy Stalder, TREBIC

**News Media:**

No News Media Present

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

- ✓ The City of High Point and The Ferguson Group—Working in Partnership for 14 years (**Exhibit Book, Volume XII, Page 60**)
- ✓ City of High Point, North Carolina 2017 Federal Agenda (**Exhibit Book, Volume XII, Page 61**)
- ✓ Procedure for Changes to City Charter (**Exhibit Book, Volume XII, Page 62**)

In the absence of Mayor Wagner and Mayor Pro Tem Williams, Council Member Golden called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**Update from The Ferguson Group on Lobbying Efforts**

City Manager Greg Demko introduced Jennifer Imo with The Ferguson Group, the city's Federal lobbyist. Ms. Imo has been assisting the City of High Point with lobbying efforts for the past 14 years.

Ms. Imo provided a brief overview of what her role is as the city's Federal lobbyist. She serves as a liaison between the city and the Congressional delegation in Washington, D.C to help secure federal funding for projects in High Point. She explained that sometimes legislative or policy issues throw up hurdles and make it more difficult to get projects done, but they assess situations

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by working with the various federal agencies and, when necessary, also taps into the Congressional delegation to help move the process along.

She meets and works closely with the city staff to discuss the city's needs and helps identify projects that potential funding could be secured for. She referenced the 2017 Federal Agenda that identifies the types of projects and funding opportunities for the departments in the city. The work with The Ferguson Group has proven to be a real success and the city has enjoyed a 33:1 return on its investment in federal lobbying services. One example provided was they helped secure over \$1.4 million in funding last year for the Police Department's Domestic Violence Initiative.

Ms. Imo advised that they have been proactive in their advocacy work and have been providing Realtime updates to the managers regarding the comprehensive tax bill/infrastructure package and what implications it can have on local governments. She stressed the importance of getting through local priorities by pushing to complete the planning/engineering stages to have the projects ready for when the city can get an injection of federal funds. The Ferguson Group continues to actively monitor legislative and policy issues and identify the possible impacts.

Through the discussions Ms. Imo had with the managers and city staff today, she will update the Federal Agenda list before the National League of Cities Conference scheduled in March in Washington, D.C. While in Washington, Ms. Imo will have dinner with the Council and will schedule some meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday to meet with the Congressional delegation on Capitol Hill.

Following the presentation, Ms. Imo entertained questions.

City Manager Greg Demko mentioned the city's effort and progress in blight reduction, which has resulted in a substantial amount of city resources. He asked if the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding would be coming back to increase the block grant portion to the different cities. Ms. Imo replied that she has no doubt that it will be coming back, noting that it has a lot of support on the Hill, but she did not feel it would be increased exponentially.

Council Member Peters made an inquiry regarding rail cuts and mentioned the rail tracks going through Ward 3. She explained there are several businesses in this area such as Pandora's Manor, the CO HAB and they have asked for some kind of buffer zone for when trains are traveling through the business area so they won't have to blow their horns. She felt softening the noise would be a positive thing in this area and would hopefully promote additional businesses to locate in the area. Ms. Imo agreed to add it to her list and would check into it. Deputy City Manager McCaslin pointed out these are at-grade crossings and the State law requires the trains to blow their whistles in certain areas. He also offered to work through NCDOT and Norfolk Southern to see if anything could be done.

Council Member Peters also asked about the possibility of building some type of walk-over bridge over the tracks because children and adults have been seen crawling under stopped trains to get to the other side which poses a safety hazard.

**Possible Charter Change (Terms of Office)**

Deputy Manager McCaslin advised this was discussed a couple of weeks ago in the Prosperity & Livability Committee and Chairman Ewing suggested it be discussed by the City Council as a group.

Mr. McCaslin reported there are three ways to amend a Charter for elections:

1. General Assembly (legislation)
2. Referendum (cost associated with it)
3. Adoption of Ordinance by City Council

He proceeded to further explain the process for making a Charter change by Ordinance for Terms of Office 160A-101(4) and Amendment of City Charter 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;
5. Within 10 days after the ordinance is adopted, the City Council must publish notice on the Charter change.

Mr. McCaslin advised there are 552 incorporated cities/townships/villages in North Carolina. Out of this number 82 have a population greater than 10,000. Of the 82, he shared that:

- ✓ 1 selects the mayor from the governing body after it is elected;
- ✓ 81 select the mayor separately in an election;
- ✓ 40 elect the mayor to a two-year term; and
- ✓ 42 have a four-year term

For the Governing Boards:

- ✓ 22 have two-year terms
- ✓ 5 have four-year, non-staggered terms
- ✓ 54 have four-year staggered terms
- ✓ 1 city has a hybrid system with five board members: three are elected every two years with the top two vote-getters receiving four-year terms, and the others elected get a two-year term

Various scenarios were discussed about how the terms could be staggered. From staff's perspective, Mr. McCaslin advised that a two-year term does not allow enough time for projects to be carried to completion because of the time it takes to get through the engineering, bidding, construction process, but a four-year term would more than likely result in a project being

completed within the Council's term that started it. He felt staggered terms generally mean better continuity.

Responding to a question that was posed about how the first election would be handled should Council decide to go with staggered terms, Mr. McCaslin explained that the whole Council would be up for election in the 2019 Election, but the top vote-getters would get four-year terms, and the low vote-getters would get two-year terms, so the terms would then be staggered.

There were also some concerns voiced regarding what this change would do to the Ward restrictions that are in place. City Attorney JoAnne Carlyle mentioned the case, and advised that she has been intently listening to the discussion to ensure that what is done follows the case.

Council Member Ewing asked how many of the 54 cities with four-year staggered terms are governed by an all At Large Council versus a Ward or District system. While Mr. McCaslin did not have these figures readily available, he offered to provide the link to the School of Government website so Council could review the information for all of the 552 cities.

Several Council Members questioned the reasons the terms have changed over the years. Mr. McCaslin advised that staff has done some research dating back to 2000 and would send this history out to the Council.

**Closed Session (Attorney-Client Privilege)**

**Mayor Pro Tem Williams moved to go into Closed Session at 4:50 p.m. pursuant to N.C. General Statute 143-318.11(a)3 to discuss several matters involving attorney-client privilege. Council Member Ewing made a second to the motion, which carried by a 9-0 unanimous vote.**

Upon motion by Council Member Moore and second by Council Member Ewing, Council reconvened into Open Session at 5:11 p.m.. Mayor Wagner announced there would be no action taken as a result of the Closed Session.

The meeting adjourned at 5:11 p.m. upon motion duly made and seconded.

*Respectfully Submitted,*

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*Jay W. Wagner, Mayor*

*Attest:*

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*Lisa B. Vierling, MMC  
City Clerk*