

**HIGH POINT CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
April 11, 2018 – 3:30 P.M.
3RD FLOOR LOBBY CONFERENCE ROOM**

MINUTES

Present:

Mayor Jay Wagner, Council Member Donald Scarborough (At Large), Council Member Britt Moore (At Large) [arrived at 3:48 p.m.], Council Member Jeffrey Golden (Ward 1) [arrived at 3:39 p.m.], Council Member Monica Peters (Ward 3) [arrived at 4:18 p.m.], Council Member Wesley Hudson (Ward 4) [departed before presentation on Communications & Public Engagement], Council Member Victor Jones (Ward 5) and Council Member Jason Ewing (Ward 6) [arrived at 3:36 p.m.]

Absent:

Mayor Pro Tem Chris Williams (Ward 2)

Staff Present:

Greg Demko, City Manager; Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Eric Olmedo, Budget and Administrative Director; Jeron Hollis, Director of Communication & Public Engagement; Ryan Ferguson, Marketing Manager; Jolie Helton, Communication Specialist; Brandon Cook, Communication Specialist; Fanta Dorley, Human Relations Manager; Angela Kirkwood, Director of Human Resources; Michael McNair, Director of Community Development & Housing; Thanena Wilson, Assistant Director of Community Development & Housing; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Sandra Keeney, Deputy City Clerk; and Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

News Media:

No News Media Present

Note: The following presentations will be attached and incorporated as a permanent part of these proceedings.

- ✓ PowerPoint Presentation: Communications and Public Engagement/Human Relations

Exhibit Book, Volume XX, Page 5

Human Relations Department and Communications & Public Engagement (CPE)

Jeron Hollis, Director of Communications & Public Engagement, explained that his department is a relatively new department, established in 2015. It consists of a combination of Communication & Public Engagement and Human Relations. On the communications side, there are three employees: Ryan Ferguson, Marketing Manager; Jolie Helton, Communications Specialist; and Brandon Cook, Communications Specialist. There are two employees on the Human Relations side of the department: Fanta Dorley, Human Relations Manager; and Janet Riley-Wright, Community Resources Specialist.

Human Relations Department

Mr. Hollis shared that Human Relations is a vital department to the city and advised that High Point is very fortunate to have a Human Relations entity because not every community has one. The Human Relations Department manages walk-in customer traffic addressing landlord/tenant or community resource questions and is a collaboration hub for community organizations and community events. They also provide fair housing training to landlords, property managers, tenants and other groups and partner with the Code Enforcement Division to resolve minimum housing concerns. Additionally, staff provides guidance and support for the Human Relations Commission.

Approximately 125 cases have been reported so far during FY 2017-2018. Four of which have been referred to the North Carolina Human Relations Commission and 34 of these cases were code enforcement referrals.

The Human Relations Commission was created by an ordinance adopted by the City Council and is comprised of nine members, with each council member making an appointment. The HRC submits its work plan to Council for approval twice a year. Human Relations Commission Workplan recommendations are:

- ✓ International Community Dinner
- ✓ Student Human Relations Commission mentorship
- ✓ Triad HRC meet and greet
- ✓ Meetings to take place in community
- ✓ Interfaith Summit
- ✓ Further involvement of millennials by requesting Council to add college and high school students
- ✓ Training and participating in YWCA Front Porch conversation partnership

Mr. Hollis touched on the 2017 Hi Fest event, which has grown tremendously since its inception with over 2,500 in attendance. For the first time in 2017, they did a neighborhood contest. The winner was the Eastside neighborhood community, who received \$1,500 to use in their community. The money that was awarded came from sponsorships secured by the High Point Realtors and Fox 8. Some other events that were sponsored by the Human Relations Department in 2017 were:

- ✓ High Point's first Housing Summit
- ✓ High Point's first National Day of Prayer Celebration
- ✓ Cities for citizenship (C4C) to promote citizenship and naturalization in High Point.

Mr. Hollis reported on the following challenges the department has been faced with:

- ✓ Significant demand for housing supportive services.
- ✓ Moving beyond recent history of the Human Relations Commission by rebuilding former relationships and building new partnerships that align with City Council goals.
- ✓ Integration of Human Relations services with other city functions.

Some upcoming initiatives that the department is working on include

- ✓ International Community Clinic
- ✓ Financial Literacy Project
- ✓ Beep Ball Tournament

Mr. Hollis concluded his presentation on the Human Relations Department by sharing some questions that might be asked by the residents.

Note: Council Member Hudson departed the meeting at this time and was not present from this point forward.

Marketing/Communications

Mr. Hollis reported that his department is also responsible for the marketing aspects of the city as follows:

- ✓ Branding
- ✓ News/Media relations
- ✓ Video production
- ✓ Website
- ✓ Crisis communication
- ✓ Social Media
- ✓ Customer Service
- ✓ Community Outreach
- ✓ Communication Approvals
- ✓ Writing
- ✓ Graphic Design

He explained one of the most important aspects of marketing is the branding aspect of it and he hopes that people are seeing a difference in the city's branding, in the appearance of city facilities, and signage. etc..... They also maintain the city's website and contents.

Social Media is another aspect of the department's responsibility. Mr. Hollis advised that they have the ability to leverage Social Media to get information out to the public in a way that is very inexpensive and easy on a platform that people are already using. The department is also updating some of the content on the city's High Point television channel, posting more videos and people have started to notice. The department is also creating and capturing content to be used for other purposes as well.

Mr. Hollis explained the department is also a great resource to city departments and offers assistance with graphic design, interviews with the news media, marketing, etc.... Last year, they integrated their HELP desk system with IT to help them better manage and track work orders within the departments. With the assistance of Hi tran, the CPE Marketing Division designed the wraps for the newly purchased buses. They have also been marketing the stadium and the last two Economic Development Corporation Annual Report covers were done in-house.

Chances are greater to get the word out using social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter because the news media/reporters are already following the city's posts on Social Media. Social Media is leveraged in a way to increase coverage.

Mr. Hollis' staff has been coaching/training departments for interviews with the news media. They also are proactive and constantly going out week by week to find out engagement opportunities. He shared the story that was picked up by multiple outlets of the news media regarding the citizen who thought she lost her keys in the recycle cart and the keys were found by a MRF employee. He conveyed that these "feel good" stories are what the public is hungry for. The reach of this story is an example of the good work that the city is doing especially through media, website, and electronic content. Another example is the high number of mentions that the city is getting on news broadcasts and Mr. Hollis pointed out people are talking about the city through digital, website, and social media.

The department is also responsible for designing bill inserts, brochures, and a newsletter that highlights projects, stories, etc..... He advised they use the "shotgun" approach to get messages out to the public and they try to do this through targeted information on the different platforms reach people where they are. Mr. Hollis shared some statistics on viewing habits and explained that staff is constant analyzing the statistics in an effort to better target the audience.

Mr. Hollis advised that the city currently sends out bill inserts with the utility bills to about 41,000 homes at a cost of .62 cents for each. Staff estimates that less than 10% of the customers look at the inserts. He explained that staff is exploring ways to use the resources from the mail inserts to possibly boost a social media post in an effort to reach a lot more people.

People continue to reach out to the city through social media. Staff gets direct messages on a regular basis from residents through Facebook and Twitter and provides quick responses, which helps gain public trust. Mr. Hollis reiterated that staff uses social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Nextdoor, etc.... all of which are platforms where information can be shared.

In an effort to improve the number of followers, staff started using GIFs on Social Media postings to attract more people and to gain more attention. Mr. Hollis explained that this gets people engaged and lures them to the platforms/website to see the not-so-interesting and other helpful things the city is sharing. One example provided was the recent "Best Dog" contest, which happened to coincide with March Madness. Since the "Best Dog" contest started, the numbers have increased exponentially with a reach close to 80,000 and engagement 18,000-19,000. Mr. Hollis shared that his department uses the Facebook algorithms to figure out how to best reach more people. Regarding the website, Mr. Hollis reported that the city has had 62,000 users since March 2017 and over 200,000 page views.

He noted that Spectrum News caught on to an inkling of what the city is doing and actually did a feature story on Jolie Helton, Communications Specialist, and how she creatively uses GIFs on the city's Facebook page to get the word out about other things going on.

Mr. Hollis reported that his department also creates and produces videos in-house with professional video equipment. The video production helps staff feed contents into the various social media platforms. Staff is able to create and produce videos at an effective and efficient pace and can generally turn a video around within a week's time. Producing these videos in-house allows staff to control their own timelines, calendars, etc.... Mr. Hollis shared clips of some of the video productions. Some examples of videos that staff has done are:

- Kerns Water Treatment Plant Re-Use (opportunity for investors to lease the building)
- Main Street Project (provided updates on project)
- Library Plaza Project (updates on project)
- Multi-Use Stadium Project (bi-weekly updates)

Some of the department's accomplishments were shared as follows:

- ✓ Design and rebranding of the High Point Transit System
- ✓ Council chamber up fit (enhanced technology)
- ✓ Upgraded employee badge system/equipment
- ✓ Fall 2017 Demo Day Celebration
- ✓ Assisted High Point Baseball, Inc. in groundbreaking ceremony

The following challenges were identified by the department:

- ✓ Further improve social media reach
- ✓ Get information out to more people (using targeted demographic data to identify audiences)
- ✓ Continue to improve cable channel content
- ✓ Improve media/interview presence for staff
- ✓ Standardization of all city marketing materials
- ✓ Increase efficiency of work order system

Other things the department is working on.....

- ✓ Department Communication Training
- ✓ Reestablish Marketing Team
- ✓ Farmer's Market Grand Opening
- ✓ "Dirty Jobs" Series
- ✓ Style Guide
- ✓ Next phase of Stadium marketing

In closing, Mr. Hollis shared some questions that might be asked by the residents.

Closed Session: Personnel

Upon motion by Council Member Ewing and second by Council Member Moore, Council entered into a closed session at 4:38 p.m. pursuant to N. C. General Statute 143-318.11(a)(6) to discuss a personnel matter. The motion carried by a unanimous 7-0 vote. [Mayor Pro Tem Williams and Council Member Hudson was absent]

Upon reconvening into open session at 5:20 p.m., the Mayor announced there would be no action taken as a result of the closed session.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m. upon motion duly made and seconded.

Jay W. Wagner, Mayor

Attest:

Lisa B. Vierling, MMC
City Clerk