

**HIGH POINT CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 11, 2020 – 3:00 P.M.
3RD FLOOR LOBBY CONFERENCE ROOM**

MINUTES

Present (5):

Mayor Pro Tem Christopher Williams (Ward 2); Council Member Tyrone Johnson (At Large) [arrived at 3:08 p.m.], Council Member Cyril Jefferson (Ward 1), Council Member Monica Peters (Ward 3) [departed the meeting at 4:00 p.m.], and Council Member Victor Jones (Ward 5) [arrived at 3:10 p.m.]

Absent (4):

Mayor Jay W. Wagner, Council Member Britt Moore (At Large), Council Member Wesley Hudson, and Council Member Michael Holmes

Staff Present:

Greg Demko, City Manager; Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Greg Ferguson, Assistant City Manager; Eric Olmedo, Assistant City Manager; Meghan Maguire, Assistant City Attorney; Jeron Hollis, Director of Communications & Public Engagement; Jelani Biggs, Human Relations Manager; Ryan Ferguson, Marketing Manager; Angela Kirkwood, Human Resources Director; David Briggs, Theatre Director; Mary Sizemore, Library Director; Gary Smith, Fleet Services Director; Roslyn McNeill, Budget Analyst; Linda Price, Budget Analyst; and Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

News Media Present:

Pat Kimbrough, *High Point Enterprise*

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Wagner called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m.

PRESENTATION OF ITEMS

2020-58 Departmental Overviews from the following Departments: Fleet Services; Library; Theatre; Communications & Public Engagement; and Human Relations

Staff will provide operational overviews on their respective departments

Fleet Services

Gary Smith, Director of Fleet Services, provided an overview of his department. Fleet Services manages the maintenance and repair operations, purchasing, fueling, and tire

repairs for all types of vehicles and equipment used in providing city services. These services are carried out by a team of 19 employees. The facility is located at 3524 Triangle Lake Road; operates from 7:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.; provides 24/7 support for emergencies, inclement weather, natural disasters, etc....; and provides mobile emergency service, fuel, and tire repairs. Fleet Services maintains 1,000+ pieces of equipment and the facility has 18 work bays, each designed specifically for equipment and vehicles.

Mr. Smith reported that one of the best investments for his department has been the purchase of the nitrogen machine for the Tire Shop, which allows even distribution and more stable tire pressure keeping the tires properly inflated, resulting in better fuel economy and longer tire life.

Fleet Services uses full and limited outsourcing with reliable vendors who assist them during peak workloads. Mr. Smith advised full outsourcing includes services such as paint and body work, towing, glass replacement, upholstery work, etc.....) and limited outsourcing includes mufflers/exhaust, welding services, etc.....).

Mr. Smith spoke to how the service procedures they provide are very efficient and allows them to better plan their workday. Employees can fill out a service envelope with specific service instructions and place it in the drop box that is available at the shop. The team sends out text updates on the repair status throughout the process.

Fleet Services operates and maintains a fuel system consisting of two (2) automated fuel sites. The fuel station locations are 816 W. Green Drive and 3524 Triangle Lake Road. Mr. Smith reported that the city now has WEX fuel cards which help to preserve mileage and wear and tear on vehicles allowing them to gas up where they are working rather than having to travel to the two fuel station locations. This service has proved to be extremely advantageous to the police, fire, solid waste, environmental services, etc....

Council Member Jones asked about discounts using the WEX fuel cards and Mr. Smith replied that some of the stations such as Sheetz and the bigger brands give the city an initial discount and they also take care of the taxes by backing the taxes out. He spoke to how the WEX cards are also helping to extend the life of the city's fuel tanks at the two fuel sites.

Mr. Smith then provided an overview of the Fleet Management schedule throughout the fiscal year. He spoke to how they begin placing orders in July bringing equipment/vehicle purchases to Council which helps in the lead time and savings and allows them to capitalize on the end of model year discounts. In the fall and winter the maintenance history of the equipment/vehicles is reviewed taking into consideration factors such as age, mileage, maintenance, useful life, etc..... In January, they meet with department heads to discuss their needs and in the Spring, they prepare vehicle and equipment specifications, contact potential vendors and suppliers, schedule

equipment demonstrations, and look for state and national contract opportunities.

Mr. Smith mentioned the surplus equipment is now sold through the GovDeals online auction and generates \$500,00-\$600,000 in revenue annually with a total of \$7,000,000 in revenues since 2008.

For the future needs of the department, Mr. Smith noted they are maxed out as far as space, so additional workspace is needed.

Council Member Jefferson inquired about the process for vendors for outsourcing purposes and asked how the vendor list has changed in the past 12 years. Mr. Smith explained that it depends on capability and the vendor or warranty and Mr. Smith advised they are constantly looking for new vendors and new service repair providers. Council Member Jefferson asked if there have been any complaints from vendors who aspired to get on the list and experienced challenges in doing so. Deputy City Manager Randy McCaslin advised that the Purchasing Department keeps a list of those wanting to do work and explained that any vendors can apply and all information is vetted by the various departments.

Mr. Smith concluded his presentation by mentioning the apprenticeship program that has been started at Guilford Technical Community College; 20 students are currently enrolled in the program and the evaluations are taking place this week.

Library

Mary Sizemore, Director of the High Point Public Library, distributed a copy of the February calendar highlighting various events going on at the Library. She reported that the High Point Museum is also under the umbrella of the High Point Library and shared some statistics of patron usage at the Library and the Museum and the services they provide. The biggest increase has been the e-content checkouts at 121,593. She noted that the computer lab usage is down 5% from last year and attributed this to more people owning electronic devices so they take advantage of the WiFi that the city offers as a service at the Library.

She spoke to the 54 full-time and 26 part-time positions they have and the nine (9) divisions: Lending Services; Children's Services; Research Services; Readers Services; Museum; Technical Services; Maintenance Services; Information Services; and Administration. The programming continues to increase and is very popular with the patrons and she spoke to the popularity of the drive-thru window at the Library.

Ms. Sizemore explained the Museum became part of the city in 2009 and they were a 501(c)(3) non-profit prior to that; the Curator at the Museum reports to the Library Director.

Limited Library Services are also offered at the following three locations:

1. Deep River Rec Center (Library customers may return materials 24/7 at the outdoor book drop, as well as pick up holds Monday-Friday 5:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.)
2. Allen Jay Rec Center (The Library provided encyclopedias and other homework-related materials for afterschool programs)
3. Northpoint Customer Services (books may be returned and holds picked up at Northpoint Customer Service Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.)

Ms. Sizemore spoke to how the Library is offering non-traditional, community-centered library programming such as gardening, dance, music, Art, Science, cooking, etc....

The FY 2020-2021 budget is \$5,309,451 with revenue sources from the following:

- ✓ City of High Point (\$4,881,891)
- ✓ Guilford County (\$359,960)
- ✓ Copies, fines, fees, miscellaneous (\$67,660)
- ✓ Additional funding from State Aid to Public Libraries varies annual; however, this current year it is \$83,000

Deputy City Manager Randy McCaslin pointed out the High Point Library is unique because generally library operations are funded by the counties. It was noted that there are only about 12-13 libraries in the state that receive most of their operational funding from municipalities.

Ms. Sizemore reported that they are developing a new 3-year strategic plan that was funded by an LSTA planning grant which includes the following areas of focus:

- ✓ Developing a growth and sustainability plan for the facility
- ✓ Preparing for the changing demographics of the community
- ✓ Expanding library services outside the main facility
- ✓ Enhancing marketing and communication (internally and externally)

Ms. Sizemore talked about how the High Point Farmers Market continues to grow with

- ✓ 18,000 visitors in 2019
- ✓ Twenty-plus regular vendors
- ✓ Health screenings every Saturday
- ✓ Cooking demonstrations
- ✓ A different community partner every Saturday
- ✓ Music and special events

Some new programs/services that were offered last year were: certified as an EBT Farmers Market; double the bucks; prescription for produce. The Guilford

Community Care Network partnership is new this year.

Plans are underway for developing a Sensory Garden to be installed on the Sunset side of the Library. Construction is anticipated April through October 2021 with the grand opening slated for November 2021.

Assistant City Manager Eric Olmedo asked Ms. Sizemore to elaborate on the partnership between the Greensboro Public Library and the High Point Public Library regarding the social worker interns. Ms. Sizemore advised that the staff at the Library must deal with a lot of mental health and drug issues and two social worker interns are placed at the two libraries. These interns are available to talk with anyone who needs help and they can refer them to the appropriate agencies for assistance.

Council Member Jefferson asked if there have been any collaboration efforts between the Library and other nonprofits regarding the homeless. Ms. Sizemore advised that they do have a liaison, Dan Hodgson, who is a former police officer and currently pastors a church downtown. She noted that Mr. Hodgson has a lot of experience in dealing with the unsheltered homeless and the homeless trust him. Council Member Jefferson inquired about a sustainable solution in having someone on staff to deal with these types of issues. Ms. Sizemore stated the hope is to secure a grant and ideally it would be a staff member.

Council Member Jefferson inquired about the various concerns and special events that are held at the Library and if the groups were being charged for using the facilities. Ms. Sizemore replied that there is not generally a charge for use of the facilities, but they do have to pay for all incidentals associated with the events such as off duty officers, etc.... Council Member Jefferson asked about the process for agencies who might be interested in partnering with the Library; Ms. Sizemore suggested they contact her.

Council Member Jefferson posed a question regarding the patrons that come into the Library to use the computers and if staff is tracking the sites and what they are using the computers for. Ms. Sizemore explained that the staff does track the types of questions that people ask and is always ready to assist anyone that needs help on a computer whether it be job searches, resumes, etc...

Council Member Jones inquired about the GTCC small business class that is held at the Library. Ms. Sizemore replied that GTCC has been using their facility for years to provide a resource for the community for anyone interested in small business.

Theatre

David Briggs, Theatre Director, distributed copies of the latest High Point Theatre Passport highlighting upcoming music and cultural events that are scheduled for 2019-2020 at the High Point Theatre, a 900-seat performing arts center with wonderful gallery spaces. He proceeded to share the vision and mission statements for the

Theatre.

The staff at the Theatre is relatively small and consists of six full-time and three part-time employees. The Theatre Advisory Commission, a nine-member advisory board, meets on a monthly basis to discuss the needs and make recommendations to the City Council.

Mr. Briggs noted the Theatre has enjoyed substantial growth in attendance and shared attendance numbers for 2014-2015 through 2018-2019. They have also experienced significant box office gross sales for the same time period—reaching \$665,347.09 for the 2018-2019 year. Events versus utilization for the 2015-2019 period was 223 days and 348 events. Concession growth has also increased for the period of 2011-2019 with a 23% cost of goods to service. Rental income at the Theatre continues to increase and Mr. Briggs attributed this to recent improvements to the facility such as the acoustic panels manufactured and installed by a local company, BuzziSpace. He noted that the rental fees have not increased since 2015.

The city of High Point realizes a \$8,678,926 economic impact from the Theatre. Mr. Briggs shared that for every dollar the High Point Theatre is given through the city of High Point, the return is seven to one (7:1), which has proved to be extremely successful. Council Member Jefferson asked how the High Point Theatre compares to other theatres in the area. Mr. Briggs stated he has not compared the numbers and spoke to the competition. He mentioned the Tanger Center that would soon be opening in Greensboro and noted that he does plan on obtaining demographics from them after six months of operation to determine how many people in the five zip codes in High Point spent money.

Mr. Briggs cited the following challenges they are faced with.

- ✓ Landlocked (no room for growth within the building).
- ✓ Cultural desert (outside of four weeks out of the year, there is not a lot of foot traffic in downtown High Point).
- ✓ No restaurants, no bars, no nightlife within close proximity to the Theatre.
- ✓ Aging property (building constructed in 1975).
- ✓ Building is not up to contemporary professional standards.
- ✓ Plumbing needs to be replaced in the building.
- ✓ Flooding in the basement.
- ✓ Seats need to be replaced and the flooring will have to be adjusted when seats are put back in place because of ADA requirements.
- ✓ Marketing in the digital age
- ✓ Red Lion Hotel is in desperate need of a major upgrade and companies/performers do not like staying there.

He then shared some of the opportunities.

- ✓ Partner with local arts agencies.
- ✓ Direct partnerships with the High Point Community Concert Association, Community Theatre, High Point Ballet, High Point Arts Council.
- ✓ Partnership with the Guilford County Schools.

Mr. Briggs shared some of the upcoming events/performances that have been scheduled at the High Point Theatre.

In closing, Mr. Briggs shared that the Theatre Art Galleries (TAG) is housed within the High Point Theatre and they provide up to four visual arts shows per year that are free to the community, offer camps/classes for youth and adults. The city of High Point provides \$31,000 in funding a year to TAG.

Council Member Jefferson inquired about revenues to expenses at the Theatre and Mr. Briggs advised their goal is to get to 50%; it has been around 25-35%, but the economic impact is really strong.

Mr. Briggs reported that new carpet would be installed in the Theatre in July.

Communications & Public Engagement

Ryan Ferguson, Marketing Director, displayed some city of High Point swag items.

Jeron Hollis, Director of Communications & Public Engagement, shared their Vision and Mission statements. The department was created in 2015 because of the need to have more of a public engagement presence in the community. The Communications & Public Engagement Department consists of six full-time employees (three on the marketing side and two on the Human Relations side).

He reported one of the things their department is tasked with is to maintain the city's image, messaging, and reputation. He spoke to the importance of them staying connected and communicating to the community through their actions, work, and examples that their partners are doing as a means of measuring up.

He explained part of their mission is two-fold as they have a section that is the city's marketing arm and a section that is the Human Relations arm and through those functions they are able to support the community and support departments ensuring engagement with the community. He advised that Human Relations is one of the few functions in the city that is mandated by ordinance. Because there is a segment of the population that may not be as well-connected with information, resources, and options, they can come into the Human Relations Department and staff can help provide them with the resources they need.

The Human Relations Division also collaborates with community organizations and they leverage relationships with many of the departments (i.e. Library, Theatre, Code Enforcement, etc...). They also provide Fair Housing training to landlords and provide

services to tenants as well. Mr. Hollis spoke to how most of their calls that come in are landlord/tenant disputes, customer service issues, discrimination-related issues, Fair Housing complaints, and some general complaints. Staff is able to refer residents with Fair Housing complaints to the State Human Relations Commission for resolution.

Mr. Hollis then introduced Jelani Biggs, Human Relations Manager, to provide an overview of Fair Housing. He shared that prior to accepting employment in High Point, he was a trained investigator for the city of Winston-Salem. He spoke to how advantageous it is for High Point to have a trained, certified HUD investigator on staff.

Mr. Biggs advised there are protected classes of the Fair Housing Act and explained there is an administrative side to fair housing investigations with a very involved process. He advised that Winston-Salem is a FAP (Fair Housing Assistance Program) agency which means they have a Memorandum of Agreement with HUD to formally investigate those complaints in conjunction with HUD, to conciliate them, resolve them, and go through the whole process. Mr. Biggs explained that High Point is not considered a FAP agency and spoke to the importance of setting expectations upfront when investigating complaints, so everyone understands the process. He reported that, historically, race comprises the majority of fair housing complaints and noted that disability makes up about 60% of fair housing cases across the nation. He further explained that landlords and housing providers are required to look at police reports for any domestic violence issues because HUD has determined that women are disproportionately impacted.

Mr. Hollis reported there are about seven fair housing equivalent providers in the State, so a majority of the entities do go through the Raleigh office.

Additionally, Mr. Hollis advised that the High Point Human Relations Commission periodically brings a work plan to Council for approval every six months. The HRC is comprised of nine (9) members and Mr. Hollis spoke to the importance of appointing people that have a passion for human rights issues to serve on the HRC to ensure they have an active group doing what is required in the ordinance. There are also two active subcommittees of the HRC: The International Committee and the Interfaith Committee. These subcommittees work on issues of cultural and religious significance.

Mr. Hollis spoke to the transition and reorganization of the Human Relations Commission in the recent years and how they are still in the process of building relationships, reaching out in the community and expanding the net of people in the groups that they help. From the standpoint of comparing High Point to Winston-Salem and Greensboro, Mr. Hollis explained that in High Point, Human Relations is a division of a department with only two employees; whereas, Winston-Salem and Greensboro both have stand alone departments with at least four employees and they carry out their own fair housing investigations.

To quell some false truths circulating in the community, Mr. Hollis clarified that the Human Relations function has not been eliminated in High Point, but the structure and execution of it was changed. He also clarified that High Point has never had the legal authority to conduct official fair housing investigations.

Council Member Jefferson inquired about the necessary steps for becoming a FAP Agency and the possibility of High Point obtaining the authority to conduct investigations. Mr. Hollis explained that it would involve an application process and review with HUD and would also require revisions to the city of High Point's Fair Housing Ordinance.

Marketing Division

Mr. Hollis advised that the Marketing Division, another arm of the Communications & Public Engagement Department, is responsible for branding for the city, video production, graphic design, community outreach, social media, etc... They are also responsible for maintaining the city's website, providing the necessary support to the various departments, disseminating information to the media, etc.... He then shared many of their successes and some of the work that they have done:

- ✓ Hi Tran bus wraps
- ✓ Videos promoting various projects throughout the city such as the BB&T Point Stadium project
- ✓ Came up with the graphic design for last year's Economic Development Corporation's Annual Report
- ✓ Assisted the Fire Department with their annual report
- ✓ Design and print insert materials
- ✓ Maintain city's website and Social Media
- ✓ Assist in the drafting of press releases
- ✓ Report on community meetings
- ✓ Maintain a cable access channel from Spectrum News and promote content

Mr. Hollis shared some statistics on the various generations and their viewing habits in Social Media and the different ways they consume information. This data is used for targeting purposes.

As a general practice, they do inserts that are included with the city's utility bills which costs about \$1,700 a month and after discovering that less than 10% of the people actually look at the content on the insert, they have been able to leverage the money spent on the inserts and use it for digital advertising in an effort to reach more people with a more crisp, real-time message.

He then recognized Ryan Ferguson, Marketing Manager, to provide an overview of things that the city is doing on the **Social Media** side.

Mr. Ferguson reported that Social Media is a huge brand awareness and marketing

strategy maximizes communication. He then provided some statistics obtained through analytics.

- ✓ Facebook likes (6,000)
- ✓ Twitter followers (2,000+)
- ✓ NextDoor (can get directly into 21% of the households and can target those markets)
- ✓ Most popular time for Facebook users on city's Facebook page is on a Tuesday around 5:00 p.m. (about 8,600 give or take)
- ✓ The least is on a Sunday (about 8,500)

He explained the algorithm process that Facebook uses and further explained that it takes more than just creating a Facebook page. Facebook wants people to pay to play, so through distinctive target marketing and through ads, the city can target users and get data that can be used for marketing purposes.

Mr. Hollis reiterated that the C&PE Department produces professional, in-house videos and advised that Brandon Cooke, a professional videographer and photographer, is the person on his team that does this. Producing videos in-house allows the city to control its branding, cost, content, media perspective, etc.... Mr. Hollis reiterated that they have the talent and resources that many of the municipalities lack which is an advantage. He stressed the point that the city must continue to improve the social media outreach because more people are engaging with social media. He spoke to some of the challenges they are faced with in the effort to continue branding standardization of all city marketing material and noted their biggest challenge is all the platforms that are out in the community and all the demands of the respective city departments requesting the services that the C&PE Department offers. He advised the real question is how they can best reach the most people.

He spoke to how they are reaching people and cited the following statistics.

- ✓ 600,000 users on the city's website
- ✓ 2.2 million-page views on website annually
- ✓ Reached 55,000 people on Facebook; 93,000 on Twitter

Mr. Hollis also spoke to the difficulty in having a master calendar for everything that is going on in High Point and advised that the CVB would be a logical place to reach out to as far as promotion of the various community events. He spoke to the expense this would entail and noted that although the city does have the technology, more funding would be needed to accomplish it.

Mr. Hollis concluded his comments by comparing the number of staff in High Point (3), Greensboro (12), and Winston-Salem (11) and spoke to the quality of the products that the Communications & Public Engagement Department in High Point turn out.

Following his presentation, Mr. Hollis entertained any additional questions.

Council Member Jefferson asked about all the work orders that come through the department, the return time for processing the work orders, and the measures in place to prevent any work orders from falling through the cracks. Mr. Hollis stressed that any organization is only as good as its people, so successful people make the city successful. As a result of having excellent employees, he explained that sometimes it does present challenges with managing their time and protecting them to ensure that their workload is appropriate. He explained that the work orders come in through the platform that IT uses and when the work orders come in, staff looks at the potential maximum reach to determine the priority of each work order request due to the limited resources available.

Council Member Jefferson complimented Mr. Hollis and his staff on the awesome PowerPoint presentation they prepared.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 5:16 p.m. upon motion duly made and seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher Williams, Mayor Pro Tem

Attest:

Lisa B. Vierling, City Clerk