

City of High Point

*Municipal Office Building
211 S. Hamilton Street
High Point, NC 27260*



Minutes

Monday, May 10, 2021

3:00 PM

Council Chambers

Special Called Meeting of City Council

*Jay W. Wagner, Mayor
Christopher Williams, Mayor Pro Tem
Michael A. Holmes, S. Wesley Hudson
Cyril A. Jefferson, Tyrone E. Johnson
Victor A. Jones, Britt W. Moore
Monica L. Peters*

Monica Peters

As part of the city of High Point's on-going COVID-19 mitigation efforts, in-person attendance will not be allowed at this meeting. Instead, the meeting will be live-streamed and the public can listen to the meeting as it is being live-streamed by clicking on the following link www.HighPointNC.gov/VirtualPublicMeeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Wagner called the Special Meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Following a roll call vote by Mayor Wagner for attendance, the following council members were identified as being present:

Mayor Jay W. Wagner (physically present)
Mayor Pro Tem Britt Moore-At Large (physically present)
Council Member Tyrone Johnson- At Large (physically present)
Council Member Cyril Jefferson- Ward 1 (physically present)
Council Member Christopher Williams- Ward 2 (physically present) [Arrived at 3:04 p.m.]
Council Member Monica Peters- Ward 3 (physically present)
Council Member Wesley Hudson- Ward 4 (physically present)
Council Member Victor Jones- Ward 5 (remote participation)
Council Member Michael Holmes- Ward 6 (remote participation) [Joined at 3:18 p.m.]

The following staff members were physically present:

Randy McCaslin, Interim City Manager; Eric Olmedo, Assistant City Manager; Greg Ferguson, Assistant City Manager; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Jeron Hollis, Managing Director; Stephen Hawryluk, Budget and Performance Manager; Bobby Fitzjohn, Financial Services Director; and Mary Brooks, Deputy City Clerk

The following staff members were remotely present:

Meghan Maguire, Assistant City Attorney

PRESENTATION OF ITEMS

[2021-189](#)

Budget Review-Proposed FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget #1

Staff will review the Proposed FY 2021-2022 Budget with Council

Eric Olmedo, Assistant City Manager made a PPP on the Proposed FY 2021-22 Annual Budget; said there were no proposed changes to the following: property tax rate water/sewer rate, garbage collection fee, and stormwater fee; proposed 10% decrease on residential electric rates; proposed increase to motor vehicle fees; proposed performance pay increase, and 1% match retirement match; restore funding for the High Point Museum, and for outside agency funding; eliminate targeted hiring freeze; continue funding for Forward High Point; restore funding for the Market Authority; provided proposed list of full and part time positions; spoke to the improvements to the Pay as you go Program with Water/Sewer, Electric, and Solid Waste; received guidance from federal government with instructions on how the city could spend the funds; said that the next steps would include a public hearing followed by adoption; and opened the floor for questions.

Council Member Jefferson asked if staff would come back at a future meeting to discuss the guidelines received from the government for the funding received. Mr. Olmedo replied yes; and that staff would come back to council with recommendations. .

Mayor Pro Tem Moore asked when will the 10% decrease for the electric service rates go into effect, if approved; and inquired on the proposed Human Resource Training Analyst position. Mr. Olmedo replied that the rate decrease would go into effect on October 1, 2021; said that the \$40,000 budget adjustment in the Human Resource department was to offset the cost for this Human Resource Training Analyst position; and that the position would be dedicated to training the city's 1500 employees.

Mayor Wagner inquired on the reasoning for the 9.1% decrease in the fund balance. Mr. Olmedo replied that he would answer that question when he reaches that section in the budget.

Mr. Olmedo continued discussion regarding the General Fund; provided a summary on the revenue fee, the estimated expenditures, and estimated fund balances.

Council Member Jefferson asked if the health insurance rates would increase. Mr. Olmedo replied that a 5.6% increase was projected; and that more information would be provided to council by late summer.

Mr. Olmedo gave an overview of the operating expenses in the proposed budget.

Stephen Hawryluk, Budget and Performance Manager spoke to personnel services; said that the hiring freeze would be eliminated; and that outside agency funding would be restored.

Council Member Jefferson inquired on the vacancy positions that were a part of the hiring freeze. Mr. Hawryluk replied that lifting the hiring freeze would restore and remove negative expenditure.

Council Member Peters referenced the capital project ordinance on page 117 of the budget; spoke to the 2/3 bonds projects; said that there were available funding; and inquired on options for improving the south main corridor area. Mr. Olmedo replied that there was already appropriated funding for the capital project ordinance. Randy McCaslin, Interim City Manager replied that the funding could only be used for road projects.

Mayor Wagner inquired on the I85 bridge improvement. Mr. McCaslin replied that when the Department of Transportation (NCDOT) complete their project; then the city would discuss enhancing that area.

Mr. Olmedo continued discussion regarding the expenditures in the general budget.

Council Member Holmes asked where could the federal funding that was received, be allocated in the general budget. Mr. Olmedo replied that staff would come back to council with a recommendation. Mr. McCaslin replied that council could come back with a budget amendment to have a program looked at after adoption of the proposed budget.

Mayor Wagner inquired on the additional positions in the Community and Engagement department. Mr. Hawryluk replied that the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer (DEI) position was originally in the manager's budget and would be relocated to the Community and Engagement department's budget, noted that this is an existing position; and that the other position was for a DEI Specialist.

Mayor Pro Tem Moore inquired if the additional proposed positions resulted in the elimination of the hiring freeze. Mr. McCaslin replied that the additional positions were new; and not from the hiring freeze.

Council Member Jefferson asked about adding staff to the legal department. JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney replied that there was discussion with the managers regarding bringing in a law student/intern to help estimate what the budget would be for the expansion of the legal department.

Mayor Wagner responded that adding an additional assistant attorney would save money due to contracting with outside legal.

Mayor Wagner inquired on the source of the fund increase in the transportation

department referenced on page 71 of the proposed budget. Mr. Hawryluk replied that the increase was due to a restoration of funding that was taken from their consulting account.

Council Member Williams inquired on the hiring challenge for CDL bus operators; and asked was it being addressed. Mr. Olmedo replied that staff would come back to council with that information. Mr. McCaslin asked council for feedback.

Council Member Williams spoke to attracting and retaining CDL drivers.

Mr. McCaslin advised that staff would come back to council with a plan; noted that the city was losing CDL drivers; it does need to be addressed; and spoke to the insurance company's requirements for CDL operators that required them to have two years of experience as a bus driver.

Council Member Jefferson asked were the bus routes and times expanded; and inquired on the status of the micro-hub. Mr. McCaslin replied that the bus routes and times were implemented. Greg Ferguson, Assistant City Manager replied that there was a potential submittal for a grant in regards to the micro-hub; a budget amendment could be made for the 20% match that the city would have to provide; and the this project would fall under the infrastructure bill program.

Council Member Jefferson inquired on the number of police officer vacancies with the High Point Police Department (HPPD); the timeframe it took to train officers; spoke to the need for mental health support for the community and officers; and asked for feedback discussions from the chief of police regarding these concerns. Mr. McCaslin replied that they were down 25 positions; spoke to the challenges of filling those positions; that the training timeframe would be around 9 months; and that staff would reach out to Chief Stroud to speak on the mental health issues directly.

Council Member Jones said that in a previous Public Safety Committee meeting there was an announcement of contracting with a mental health facility that would provide onsite deescalating situations for officers involved in crisis as well as for their spouses and family members.

Council Member Holmes recommended benchmarking with the city of Greensboro for mental health services; and inquired if the insurance requirements for CDL bus drivers was done locally or mandated by the state or government. Mr. McCaslin replied and spoke to the provisions in the current liability insurance; said that there wasn't an option to change it; spoke to the possibility of changing insurance companies in order to change the coverage; to safety being a priority; and that staff would like to have discussions with the transit manager before any changes were made.

Council Member Jefferson spoke to supporting the following initiatives: Minority Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE); Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP); Marketing & Branding efforts; Targeted Neighborhood Initiative; and expanding Wi-Fi and broadband services for those experiencing any type of barrier. There are opportunities for growth, and consideration for all of the said initiatives; and spoke to the next steps in supporting these programs.

Mayor Wagner asked if the recovery funds could be used for Wi-Fi services. Mr. Olmedo replied that it was on the list for potential uses of the funds; spoke to having conversations with the High Point School Partnership with Matt Theil, the county, and other partners; spoke to the challenges that citizens faced in regards to affordability; for the Targeted Neighborhood initiatives, and Marketing programs, there is still discussion regarding those programs until the scope is identified for a potential budget amendment; and that there was still discussions on the MWBE and FHAP.

Discussion took place regarding the history of how fair housing cases were handled within the city; the Disparity Study process, requirements and cost; improving and raising the MWBE participation; the MWBE program; comparisons with other cities regarding MWBE goals; concerns with the current fair housing complaint process; and to having further discussions on these initiatives/concerns.

Mr. Olmedo noted that the county had already began their Disparity Study; said that he met with Guilford County's MWBE Manager to discuss participating in the Disparity Study with the county; said that the cost would be between \$150,000 to \$200,000; and that if the city did one for High Point only that the cost would increase.

Mr. McCaslin recommended further discussion on said initiatives at a later date to allow staff to come back to council with recommendations and numbers.

Mr. Olmedo continued discussion regarding the proposed budget; gave an overview of the general debt services; the general capital projects; water and sewer operating revenue; the expenditures for personnel services; the electric fund; parking funds; solid waste revenue and expenditures; storm water revenue and expenditures; and the central services fund.

Mayor Wagner inquired on opportunities to refinance debt. Bobby Fitzjohn, Financial Services Director said that the city lost that ability due to recent tax law changes. Mr. Olmedo replied that the city's consultant would look into refinancing options.

Council Member Hudson inquired on the reason that the solid waste landfill was self-funded, and the collections was not. Mr. Olmedo replied that staff would come back to council with that information to clarify with numbers.

Mayor Pro Tem Moore inquired on the 10% reserve funds that was still available. Mr. Olmedo replied that in 2016 a rate stabilization went into effect which built a reserve funding used to maintain rates over a ten-year timeframe.

Mayor Wagner asked is staff could provide a rate comparison for the city with Duke Energy. Mr. Olmedo replied that staff would come back to council with that information; and that the and noted the different rate classes.

Council Member Williams voiced concerns the violent crime rates being committed by kids; the need for a full time position to coordinate and facilitate the mentorship program; spoke to feedback from the community for the need; and referenced the success with the Family Justice Center (FJC), and the Greater High Point Food Alliance (GHFA) that have full time positions.

Mayor Wagner said having a full time coordinator would maximize the potential to reach kids; said it would be a great opportunity to help kids; to modeling other successful agencies; to having support from other agencies that did duplicate services; and said that the full time position would be able to coordinate with other agencies to meet the same goals.

Mr. McCaslin asked would this position be with the city, or work under an umbrella with the united way with funding from the city. Mayor Wagner replied that there would need to be further discussion to make that decision; and spoke to allocating funds moving forward until a decision is made.

Mayor Pro Tem Moore recommended looking at current city positions, and experiences within the city as well for a possible additional duty.

It was the consensus of council to cancel the next two budget review meetings; and to have further discussion on the proposed budget at the Manager's Briefing scheduled for May 17, 2021 at 3 p.m.

Council Member Hudson inquired on a status of the hydraulics at stadium, and oak view bridge replacement. Mr. McCaslin replied that staff would come back with that information.

ADJOURNMENT

There being nothing further to discuss, no objections were voiced to adjourn the meeting at 4:54 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jay W. Wagner, Mayor

Attest:

Mary S. Brooks, Deputy City Clerk