

CITY OF SALISBURY
WORK SESSION (VIA ZOOM MEETING)
MAY 3, 2021

Public Officials Present

Council President John “Jack” R. Heath
Councilwoman Angela M. Blake
Councilwoman April Jackson

Council Vice-President Muir Boda
Councilwoman Michele Gregory

Public Officials Absent

Mayor Jacob R. Day

In Attendance

Deputy City Administrator Andy Kitzrow, Department of Infrastructure & Development (DID) Director Amanda Pollack, Fire Chief John Tull, Housing and Community Development Director (HCDD) Ron Strickler, Director Bill Garrett, IT Assistant Director-GIS John O’Brien, City Attorney Michael Sullivan, City Clerk Kimberly Nichols, and members of the Public and press.

On May 3, 2021 the Salisbury City Council convened in a Work Session at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom. The following is a synopsis of the topics discussed:

Proclamation

Children’s Mental Health Matters Week

Deputy City Administrator Andy Kitzrow presented the proclamation declaring May 2-8, 2021 as Children’s Mental Health Matters Awareness Week. One in five children are diagnosed with a mental health condition in the United States, and early identification and treatment offer better opportunities to lead full, productive lives. Children’s Mental Health Matters is a Maryland Public Education Campaign co-sponsored by the Mental Health Association of Maryland and the Maryland Coalition of Families which coordinate non-profits, schools, agencies, and other partners to raise awareness of children’s mental health, reduce the stigma of mental health, encourage parents, and connect families with information and services. Obtaining an accurate diagnosis requires gathering information from sources including family, school, and others involved with the child. All citizens, government agencies, public and private institutions, businesses and schools were asked to change hearts, minds, and attitudes regarding mental health by embracing the theme, “Flip the Script on Mental Health.”

Mr. Kitzrow introduced Meredith Miller, Wicomico County Public Schools Mental Health Coordinator. She said the 2021 focus was to not just be healthy in the body, but in the minds. The Wicomico County Public Schools had activities going on throughout the week.

Blair Catlin-Brown, Social Worker from Salisbury Middle School said she was the first social worker at the school. This week they were doing activities with the children and the staff.

Councilwoman Blake, Social Worker from Choices Academy, said the students she worked with were from a vulnerable segment of the population. She said it was vital to break the stigma of mental health, and the more it was talked about, the more families were comfortable with it.

President Heath said the subject was near and dear to his heart since he was CEO of Lower Shore Enterprises for several years. He thanked them all for what they did.

Chesapeake Utilities Corporation- Somerset Natural Gas Project update

DID Director Amanda Pollack reported Chesapeake Utilities continued with the installation of the gas main through Salisbury and were approximately 64% complete to date. They could be finished by the end of June, and starting the tie-ins on the north side in late June. The City continued working with Chesapeake Utilities on the Rail Trail. The City received a Planting Plan from Chesapeake for the Lake Street Playground, which would be reviewed with Field Operations.

Ms. Blake asked if they would be doing a tree planting between EVO Brewery and Rt. 13. Ms. Pollack said they were not, as they did not want trees over their pipeline.

The update was for Council information and did not require consensus or action taken from Council.

Budget amendment to replace HVAC condensing unit at Fire Department

Fire Chief John Tull reported the request was for a budget amendment in the amount of \$31,945 to cover the unexpected cost of repairs to the HVAC system at the Headquarters facility. The system had a failed condensing unit and internal coil which resulted in no air conditioning in the entire building. The Fire Department consulted with Procurement and received a proposal from Electrical Automation Services, Inc. (EASI) who was awarded the City-wide contract for HVAC service and repairs.

Council reached unanimous consensus to advance the legislation to the Special Meeting following the Work Session.

Ordinance to amend the Fire Prevention Code (Chapter 8.11)

Chief Tull reported the amendment was the result of an annual review of the Fire Prevention Code based on FPA Code and departmental changes. The request was for additional permit requirements to fire hydrant or fire pump water flow test and the sale of consumer fireworks.

Mr. Boda asked for the fireworks fee, and Chief Tull said it would be \$250 for the sale of consumer fireworks in a stand-alone tent on commercial space, and \$125 for other commercial space for the sale of good within a building. It would be included in the FY22 Fees budget.

Ms. Jackson asked for explanation of Chapter 8.11.020, B.4.a.i., and Chief Tull replied it was a local amendment adopted that would allow the Fire Marshal to put different signage up on a building based on specific hazards encountered while in the buildings. This would allow units responding to be notified of the type of hazard in the building.

Council reached unanimous to advance the legislation to legislative session.

Budget Amendment to Purchase EnerGov Software

Deputy City Administrator Andy Kitzrow shared that the EnerGov discussion was back after it was previously presented in Work Session, and asked Council for their thoughts and questions.

Mr. Boda appreciated the additional information provided by Mr. Kitzrow. He thought it would make things much smoother and more efficient.

The following questions and concerns by Council were discussed:

- President Heath
 - Asked if the Construction Inspector was not hired due to COVID-19. Ms. Pollack said the job would be posted and hired before the end of the fiscal year.
 - Asked if The Planner I position was in the budget, and Ms. Pollack responded that it was in the budget.
 - Asked if the Administrative Assistant position was in the budget. Ms. Pollack said it was in the budget. They decided not to fill the two positions until the next fiscal year. Those savings were used to apply towards EnerGov. They wanted to fill the inspector vacancy, and hired someone. The new inspector was starting in May.
 - Asked if Ms. Pollack had problems with the \$127,000 coming from DID. She said the bulk of it was from Salaries and the associated health insurance from each of the three positions. There was also some overtime that the department would not need. She said she was comfortable with the transfer.
 - Asked if she had seen the new software and what she thought of it. Ms. Pollack said her staff received a demonstration and thought it would be more interactive. Her inspection staff was uploading PDFs. Instead of having a dynamic forum, they have to print, re-scan and upload as a PDF. This would make it more inclusive with the properties. If they had something associated with a property, they could see what HCDD posted, and HCDD could see what DID posted. Right now, the City did not have that. Permits and violations were currently in completely different systems. It would be nice to have all of the information on a property in one place.
 - Concerned since Munis had flaws and they were waiting for the next generation, which would come at a higher price. He asked how long the new system had been in use. Mr. Kitzrow said that each generation had upgrades. The City had explored EnerGov for at least three years. It was about five years old and a relatively newer software. Ms. Glanz said there were two divisions of the parent company. Munis was more clunky, but IS was going through the testing mechanism for the newest version to come to the City live in May or June. The web-based version would be more user-friendly. The EnerGov version was much more user-friendly and they paired together well. IT Director Bill Garrett had multiple discussions with their Tech staff ensuring it would integrate well. She said that Administration realized it was a lot of money and did not want to buy

software that would not work and that staff would not use. She indicated they felt that the price was well worth it for what the City would be gaining.

- Asked why the City did not put the project out for an RFP. Mr. Kitzrow said that because it was a Tyler Tech product, they were the only ones that would have it. They would not be going out for a formal solicitation for a proprietary software platform from a different company because that company would not be able to integrate with our current system through Munis and the other software platforms. He said it was sole source, and no other company offered the exact product.
- Asked if Boulder and Kansas City had Munis, and Mr. Strickler said they did.
- Asked if the use of these funds were reflected in the Financial Health Report provided by Mr. Cordrey the first day of the budget review. Mr. Kitzrow said that in Mr. Cordrey's presentation, with that any of the use of additional funds for things that were not already allocated from the total budget- it did not impact.
- His biggest issue was that the City was proposing taking \$19,000 from the Water & Sewer Fund and would be asking people to pay 6% more this coming year. Mr. Kitzrow said that because of the way the Water & Sewer Fund was set up with DID, it pulled from several accounts. Typically, with a lot of projects, a piece will come from Water & Sewer collective, whether it be from Salaries or just additional accounting when doing capital projects.
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- Ms. Blake
 - Asked if this was the same software that was on the "wish list" in the budget, and Mr. Kitzrow responded that it was and it had been there for a couple of years.
 - Asked what was prompting the process earlier than going through the budget process. Mr. Kitzrow answered it was more of an accounting situation where the City was currently in the FY21 Budget with available funds. The last two years EnerGov was presented to Council, there were higher priorities and funding was unavailable.
- Mr. Boda
 - Asked if landlords could pay fees using the system, and Mr. Strickler said they would want to set up new and renewal registrations payments.

Ms. Pollack said the vacant positions discussed had salaries shared 1/3 with the General Fund, 1/3 from Water, and 1/3 from Sewer.

Mr. Strickler said he reviewed documents and material from Boulder and Kansas City. Both municipalities were happy with the product, which rolled out in 2012. The City's ability to integrate daily work would increase. HCDD's current software, Comcate, did not communicate with Munis. When they moved information from Munis to Comcate and vice-versa, it cost a lot of time and man power. Integrating EnerGov with Munis was most important along with the ability for the user to access the system. He wanted to set up access for landlords to register properties through the system to eliminate the manpower it took with City employees.

Ms. Glanz said that HCDD had vehicular computer access and would be able to use the software. After the pandemic, the shift of computers to mobile devices could help eliminate some tablets.

Council reached consensus to advance the legislation to legislative agenda.

To amend Chapter 15.26 Rental OF Residential Premises of the Salisbury City Code by adding Subsection 15.26045 Fair Chance Housing

Office Intern Johanna Cooper discussed the ordinance that required all landlords and property managers to disclose all of their practices related to fees and background checks especially for criminal history on all promotional materials including the application and website. Required information would include description of fees, period of “lookbacks” on criminal histories and any other information related to background checks.

Ms. Glanz informed Council that Administration met with Salisbury Area Property Owners Association (SAPOA) at the end of March and had good conversation on the topic. There was consensus that the requirement was fair.

Mr. Boda said that anytime a credit check was done, the information of what was looked at should be given to the applicant beforehand.

Council reached unanimous consensus to advance the legislation to legislative agenda.

City of Salisbury Zoo Commission Proposal

Mr. Kitzrow discussed the activities the Zoo Commission (ZC) created and fostered. Currently, the ZC operated through an independent accounting system. All of the staff (educators, part-time staff, gift shop and concession stand workers, and greeters) were paid through the City which received reimbursement through the ZC. The ZC received education grants to help fund the full-time salaries. The proposal to Council was for all operations at the Zoo to become in-house and the reimbursements from the ZC would not be line per line. The City would collect all the revenues associated with the programs and events, gate revenue, and gift shop and concession stand revenues. He explained that the ZC, a non-profit, would continue to be the City’s philanthropic arm to collect private donations and manage Community Foundation endowments.

Mr. Kitzrow informed Council that the programs and events would continue to be break-even ventures. Whatever the net remaining balance, once all revenue and expenditures for the year were calculated, the ZC would subsidize that with the money collected through private donations, endowments and grants. Council would not see another line item in the budget. There would be funding increases, but it would be a wash, with no budgetary impact. Mr. Kitzrow said it would keep the money in the City and give better control in the accounting of the programs.

President Heath, who currently sat on the ZC, informed Council the ZC’s decision was unanimous. The accounting would be a lot cleaner, and it would protect the ZC in terms of the funding they could collect through grants. It would not change the budget whatsoever.

Mr. Boda thought it would streamline the process and give more accountability on the money received and let the ZC focus on what they did best.

Council reached unanimous consensus to the proposal as presented by Mr. Kitzrow.

Administration and Council Comments

Mr. Kitzrow expressed the importance of being vaccinated and said that Mayor Day was back in town from his year serving in Africa.

Mr. Boda said it was a beautiful weekend and asked everyone to be vaccinated.

Ms. Jackson told President Heath, Mr. Boda and Ron Strickler that she wanted to discuss housing conditions in District 1. The conversation was necessary because she had received many calls on the conditions. Please get vaccinated, social distance, wear your mask and sanitize.

Ms. Blake asked those healthy enough to please donate blood. Last week, the region was in a critical place.

Ms. Gregory said she was thankful for the rain as her allergies were better. She asked the public to get their vaccinations.

Ms. Jackson wished Ms. Blake a happy birthday.

President Heath agreed with Ms. Blake that the region was in a crisis concerning blood and asked for donations. He asked if the audience had any questions or comments in the audience.

Public Comments

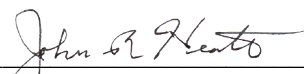
Colin Zimmerman with the Coastal Association of REALTORS told Council the association was supportive of the Fair Housing legislation, but the language stating “all promotional materials” concerned him because it meant radio, TV, billboards, and advertising. He wanted to ensure that everything they printed did not require a disclosure statement. He wanted “promotional materials” defined. Ms. Glanz said it was not the goal of the legislation, and revisions would be made prior to first reading.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the Work Session was adjourned at 5:36 p.m. at which time President Heath called the Special Meeting to order.



City Clerk



Council President