

Columbia City Council – Work Session Minutes
Monday, August 25, 2008, 5:30 p.m.
Council Chambers/4th floor conference room
Daniel-Boone Building

Council members present: Mayor Hindman, Paul Sturtz, Chris Janku, Karl Skala, Jerry Wade, Laura Nauser and Barbara Hoppe

Absent: None

The Council was provided with the following handouts: Parks and Recreation – draft fees and charges study, and a budget request for the proposed Columbia Police Review Board.

The City Manager suggested that the Oakland Park naming be placed on hold until after receiving a recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Commission. Council agreed to place this issue on hold.

Prior to discussing individual department budgets, the Council met to discuss their goals and priorities. Mr. Wade reviewed his proposal for the Council decision process (see handout). Mr. Wade led the discussion of Council goals. The following goals were noted on the flip chart: recreation and cultural opportunities, environmental stewardship, public safety, economic opportunity and development, fiscal responsibility, public governance, planning and infrastructure implementation and social services and health. Mr. Wade distributed an index card and asked Council members to prioritize (1 and 2). After receiving the Council's rankings, the top priorities were identified: Planning infrastructure and implementation, environmental stewardship, economic opportunity and development and public safety. Middle priorities include social services and health, recreational and cultural facilities.

The Council met in the Council Chamber to review Public Works and Water and Light budgets. Some of the highlights included:

Public Works:

- “free transit – suggested collaborate more with University. Cited programs in North Carolina. Parking fees to subsidize mass transit – utility is restricted as to how funds are used.
- Storm water – high priority – consider November 2009 ballot issue
- Transition to bag delivery (pick up at store) – prepare formal Council resolution; bring forward with solid waste ordinance changes.
- Commercial rate increase – suggested sending letters to customers affected by the change.
- Public Works budget includes 10% general fund money. Where does it end up? Mostly, street maintenance.
- Private collection sewer budget, page 505 – Is there any estimate/long range plan – how many will be converted. There are many on the back log list.
- PI/NRT enforcement – expanded the area; what, if any, additional emphasis? Same number of staff – no increase.
- Recovering costs we incur from repeat violations – Mayor's priority.

- Suggested something less than doubling the amount for 30 day pass and 25-ride.

Water and Light:

- Railroad revenues – page 78 – fund statement: user charges and switching fees.
- Solar Incentive Program – will be bringing forward ordinance.
- Railroad – strategic plan for maintenance and funding – inadequate maintenance for capital needs; business plan is lacking
- Interested in energy efficiency and renewables
- Improve street light efficiency by 100,000 or 7%; 3 year plan to reduce \$200,000 in 2010 and \$200,000 more in 2011; analysis/comparison of pole rates.
- Walnut street water tower – consider combining with art.
- Urging electric utility – long range plan – major implications energy efficiency; new technology available; begin gearing up transformation street lights.
- Pole attachment – do we have ability to increase costs?

Budget Amendment:

- RPC - \$25,000 move to reallocation – Bill report back on this Wednesday night.
- \$25,000 – Historical Preservation Fund
- Street light proposal – reduce by \$100,000
- Citizen Survey - \$25,000 – postpone
- Sustainability director – University extension interested in partnering with the City of Columbia
- Community Foundation –consider investment in foundation (about \$70,000)
- Consider General Fund ATB cut of .005 % or \$375,000 or .0025% or \$187,500
- Growth Management Planning consultant/form based zoning
- General Fund – rec services fund – recommend \$100,000 cut
- Scholarship money – does it need to increase?
- CARE budget – increase – fund same as last year
- United Way for the arts – review
- Fire territorial agreement
- Fuel surcharge
- Bank fees
- ½ person; \$10,000 police oversight

Scheduled September 3, 3pm – Council budget work session

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30 p.m.