

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, November 16, 2011, for the purpose of a City Manager Update.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:05p.m. It was held in the Multipurpose Room of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Emmett V. Jordan, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager and David Moran, Assistant City Manager

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Christopher Shuman, Molly Lester, Kelly Ivy, Marc Siegel and Bill Orleans.

Mayor Davis asked about the quarterly update on Council Membership & Training expenditures. Mr. McLaughlin responded that this would be prepared for Council

Financial Report Update

Mr. McLaughlin reviewed the Financial Update memo of 11/14/11 with Council. Mayor Davis and Mr. Putens asked if he was happy with the response from the State Department of Assessments and Taxation about the recent errors in estimating Property Tax revenues. Mr. McLaughlin responded he was not happy about the situation, but he understood what had happened.

Mr. Jordan asked about the next property assessment cycle. Mr. McLaughlin responded the next cycle would impact 2014. He expressed concern that assessments would have continued downward pressure during the next cycle.

Mr. McLaughlin reported that the City's Fund Balance was at 10.4% at the end of FY 2011.

Ms. Mach expressed a desire to move forward on the theater as soon as possible. Mr. Jordan got the impression that the \$80,000 Heritage grant needed to be spent by the end of the year. Mr. Putens suggested Council review the Public Works, Theater and Greenbelt Lake projects at a future work session. Mr. Herling asked for cost estimates for these projects. Mr. McLaughlin responded that the City owed itself \$900,000 on Public Works facility, the low estimate for the Theater renovation was \$800,000 and the lake project was roughly estimated at \$1.5 to 2 million. Council requested a work session to discuss these projects in greater detail.

Mr. McLaughlin reported that a new Government Accounting Standards Board regulation (GASB 54) would make the FY 2011 Financial Report look different. He reviewed a November 10, 2011, memo on this subject with Council.

MBO Review

Council reviewed the report on FY 2012 Management Objectives (MBO). Mr. Jordan requested a Saturday planning session for the City Council to review the City's visioning plan. Ms. Mach and Mr. Herling suggested a work session after the community visioning session. Ms. Pope

avored a session based on Council's priorities and goals. Mayor Davis suggested that the pre-budget work session could accomplish some of this. Mr. McLaughlin indicated there was value in having a Council work session after the community session to provide guidance to staff in preparing the FY 2013 Budget/work plan.

There was considerable discussion about visioning, goals and strategic planning.

Ms. Mach asked if staff was satisfied with Columbia Bank's service. Mr. McLaughlin responded that the City was generally pleased with their services. Mr. Shuman suggested the City improve wireless technology in City facilities like the Community Center, and this might enhance the ability to rent space to outside organizations.

Council Members expressed concern about an increase in Franklin Park complaints. Council suggested an Information Technology work session. Ms. Mach stressed the need for an education campaign about waste collection rules.

Response from Dr. Hite

Council expressed considerable confusion with this letter. Mr. McLaughlin believed that nothing was set in stone. He noted that the City had geared up to meet a School System deadline that now appears to not exist. There was considerable discussion about the Middle School. Ms. Pope believed the school system did not yet know what they wanted to do with the building.

Response from County Executive Baker

Council discussed the letter from the County Housing Authority and the possibility of using Tax Increment Financing for Franklin Park. Council also reviewed the letter from the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) about Greenbrook Lake and expressed concern about the document.

Organizational Assessment

Mr. Putens stated that the study would look at Departments, positions and functions, and then determine how best to structure that Department. There was considerable discussion about this study. Several Council Members cited examples of Federal agencies that had performed these types of studies.

Mr. McLaughlin summarized that what he had heard from Council was a desire for an operational assessment. He did not believe this was doable for \$50,000. He stated he understood the initial interest in the study to be evaluating the organization's structure and determining if the positions were in the right place.

Mr. Putens believed the study was more a look at workload and functions, and were the right positions and number of positions in place. Mayor Davis noted each department was a stovepipe and were there duplicated functions in each of these stovepipes. Mr. Jordan believed that whole departments had grown up around individuals and the organizational structure grew up at the same time. Given that transitions are occurring in senior staff, he wanted to know if this was the correct structure. Ms. Pope believed efficiency and productivity needed to be considered.

Mr. Shuman suggested that the Council meet with its peers at other governments and have a "peer review". Mr. Siegel didn't think the system was broken and he preferred the \$50,000 be used for another City need elsewhere. He was not against studies, but believed this was not the time for it.

Mayor Davis believed the City was falling behind, particularly in technology. Mr. Putens believed there was inequity in services in different parts of the City and cited trash collection as an example. Ms. Pope believed an outside, fresh, new look was warranted and believed this was a good opportunity.

Mr. McLaughlin stated he was hearing what was described in points 2,3 & 4 of his November 14 memorandum versus point 1. Mayor Davis stressed the need to look at redundancy. Ms. Pope believed that City services needed to be examined. Mr. Putens believed everything should be evaluated in terms of the best way to do something. Mr. Herling wanted to see how the Hyattsville study worked out.

Council asked the City Manager to develop a Request for Proposals document. Mr. Jordan wanted to hone in on what would work for the City. He stressed the need for succession planning and suggested meeting with the University Park's Mayor who is a consultant.

Informational Items.

Mr. Herling reported a WMATA bus explosion at 69 Court Ridge last Friday. Ms. Mach reported that she was representing Kaboom at a meeting in Baltimore. She also reported that the head of Kaboom was speaking at the Aspen Institute. Mayor Davis announced that there was an early bird registration special for the National League of Cities Conference in DC whose deadline was December 1.

Mayor Davis suggested a work session on the standing rules, agenda, etc. and Council agreed to hold this. Mayor Davis asked about Beltsville Agricultural Research Center gate hours and suggested two separate times. Mayor Davis referenced an issue of restrictive voting laws.

The meeting ended at 11:15p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

*David E. Moran
Assistant City Manager*