



**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION held Monday, May 20, 2002,
for the purpose of reviewing the final changes to the FY 2003 proposed
budget.**

The meeting began at 8:05 p.m. It was held in the Council Room at the Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Rodney M. Roberts, Alan Turnbull, Thomas X. White and Mayor Judith F. Davis. Mr. Edward V. J. Putens arrived at 8:12 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; David Moran, Assistant to the City Manager; Jeffrey Williams, City Treasurer; Kenneth Hall, Public Works Director; Carol Leventhal, Greenbelt CARES Director; Celia Craze, Planning & Community Development Director; James Craze, Chief of Police; Hank Irving, Recreation Director; and Anne Marie Belton, Executive Associate.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Amy Boyes, Gazette Newspapers; James Giese, Greenbelt News Review; Sheldon Goldberg, Advisory Planning Board; Stephen Robinson, Information Technology Director; Bill Phelan, Public Works Assistant Director; Carolyn Clemens, Superintendent of Operations; Lt. Dan O'Neil; Sgt. James Parker; Julie McHale, Recreation Supervisor; Joe McNeal, Community Center Supervisor; Di Quynn-Reno, Aquatic Coordinator; and Karen Haseley, Therapeutic Recreation Supervisor.

Informational Items

Mayor Davis began the meeting by informing the audience that the meeting would be ending by 11 p.m. If a decision has not been reached by that time, the meeting will be adjourned and continued on Wednesday, May 22.

Mayor Davis announced that a ribbon cutting ceremony will be held on June 1 at 11 a.m. at the newly equipped playground at Buddy Attick Park as part of the Greenbelt Day festivities. She also shared with Council that there will be a Smart Growth forum at the University of Maryland on May 21.

Mayor Davis also informed Council that there are currently three Greenbelt residents under consideration to fill the vacant school board positions. Mayor Davis requested input from the Council on how letters of support for the candidates should be sent. Mr. White suggested that each member of Council send their own letter of support.

General Fund Revenues

The City is expecting a savings of approximately \$3,300 in electricity costs. This is due to a lower rate from Washington Gas Energy.

General Fund Expenditures

Administration - Mr. Putens requested \$5,000 be added to the proposed budget for training opportunities for members of the senior staff. Mr. McLaughlin informed Council that he has given thought to having someone from the Cooper Center at the University of Virginia to come to the City and offer training classes.

Planning & Community Development - At the work session for this department, a request was made for an additional planner and clerical staff. Ms. Craze noted that it is anticipated that a member of the clerical staff will be retiring in fiscal year 2003 and this position will be evaluated at that time. Added to the list for final consideration was an additional \$33,800, funding for nine months salary for an additional planner.

Public Safety - Council inquired about the status of the financial information needed to make a decision on the new retirement benefit, LEOPS, for the police officers. Mr. Williams informed Council that the State is still formulating actual numbers for the City. Mr. Williams stated that he believes the additional cost will be in the neighborhood of \$350,000. Council decided to hold off on a decision at that point in the meeting.

Funding for one cadet position was identified at \$24,900. These funds will only cover 9 months of this positions salary.

Public Works - \$25,000 was identified for further consideration to fund two additional staff for seasonal work. Also identified was \$1,600 for Nextel phones.

Recreation - Mr. White proposed an additional \$5,000 for recreational equipment at the Springhill Lake Recreation facility.

At the Recreation Department's budget work session, a request was made to reclassify the Food Service Manager position. The position is currently a non-classified position without benefits. Mr. McLaughlin informed Council that a study of non-classified positions is in the process of being done and a report should be available to Council by August.

Additional funding in the amount of \$5,800 was proposed for the City's contribution groups. The changes to the proposed budget are as follows: Boys and Girls Club increased \$5,000; Aquatic Booster Club reduced \$900; Greenbelt Little League increased \$400; Greenbelt Arts Center increased \$1,200; and the Greenbelt Writer's Group increased \$100.

Miscellaneous - Mr. Putens requested that Council give consideration to adding \$5,000 for the Advisory Committee on Education scholarship fund. He stated that he would like these funds to be available to assist troubled youths in Greenbelt schools. It was decided that this funding level was not substantial enough to make an impact on the schools in Greenbelt.

Capital Projects - Funding for proposed capital projects this year is based on a flat dollar amount of \$400,000. In previous years, funding was equivalent to 7 cents on the City tax rate. Mayor Davis suggested that in future years an amount equivalent to a certain amount of cents on the tax rate be proposed as opposed to a flat dollar amount.

In order to fund all of the requests made, Mr. McLaughlin noted that if there is to be a tax increase, it apply only to real property because of the gap between real and personal property tax rates. Mr. Williams informed Council that 1 cent on the real property tax rate is equivalent to \$107,700. Mayor Davis proposed raising the real property tax rate to .635. Both Mr. Roberts and Mr. Turnbull stated that they did not want to raise the tax rate this year. Mr. White and Mr. Putens stated that they were comfortable with increasing real property taxes by 1 cent in order to fund the above items.

The meeting ended at 10:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Anne Marie Belton
Executive Associate