



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES
January 9, 2012
5:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

S. Marmarou, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, D. Sterner, D. Reed, J. Waltman, F. Acosta

OTHERS PRESENT:

L. Kelleher, S. Katzenmoyer, C. Younger, C. Geffken, W. Heim

Mr. Acosta called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

I. Executive Session

Mr. Acosta announced the need for an executive session and cited Sunshine Act Section 708 (2) "to hold information, strategy and negotiation sessions related to the negotiation or arbitration of a collective bargaining agreement or, in the absence of a collective bargaining unit, related to labor relations and arbitration."

Council entered executive session at 5:05 pm and exited at 5:30 pm.

Chief Heim left the meeting at this time.

II. Reorganization and Committee Selection

Mr. Acosta announced that he has resigned his District 1 Council position in order to become Council President. He stated that Council now has 30 days to name a replacement.

Ms. Kelleher stated that she has the ad ready for the newspaper and it can appear on Friday. She suggested an application deadline of January 20, interviews on January 24 at 5 pm with a special meeting on Monday, January 30 at 5 pm.

Mr. Acosta stated that Committees will remain as is until after the District 1 replacement has been named in order to allow this person input on the committees on which they serve. He stated that Ms. Reed will act as chair of the Finance Committee and Mr. Waltman will act as chair of the Public Works Committee until reorganization occurs.

III. Proposed Redistricting Plan

Ms. Kelleher stated that the public hearing will be held on Tuesday, January 17 at 5 pm preceding Committee meetings. She stated that Mr. Jacobson will make a brief presentation and public comment will be received.

IV. Mayor's Proposed Transition Plan

Mr. Geffken stated that Mr. Spencer and Mr. Lloyd will be arriving shortly.

Ms. Kelleher noted the need to schedule an interview with the candidate for Community Development Director, Lenin Agudo.

Mr. Acosta suggested tabling this ordinance this evening. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that the salary is on the agenda for introduction but no appointment resolution appears this evening. Ms. Reed suggested that no action be taken until after the interview process has occurred.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz requested that no action be taken until after the interview occurs.

Mr. Geffken thanked Council staff for handling all the last minute changes to this evening's agenda.

Mr. Spencer, Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Murin arrived at this time.

Mr. Spencer stated that the transition team has made suggestions to revise the budget. He noted his hope that the Mayor and Council will examine the transition plan together. He noted his willingness to answer Council's questions as necessary to determine initiatives that can move forward with Council support and those initiatives which may need to be changed. He stated that the Charter provides the incoming Mayor with the ability to reopen and re-examine the budget to make amendments within 45 days. He stated that this would set the deadline as February 17. He stated that this transition plan has been vetted through PFM in relation to the Recovery Plan and that they have approved several items.

Mr. Lloyd distributed copies of the transition plan and supporting documentation.

Mr. Spencer noted his understanding that all initiatives will not be supported by Council at this time.

Mr. Acosta noted the need for Council to understand how these initiatives would decrease spending and whether or not the budget needs to be reopened in order to address these initiatives. Mr. Spencer noted that the initiatives need to be examined.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted that the transition document has been presented but that no ordinance reopening the budget appears on this evening's agenda. She stated that this is for discussion only and that if the budget is reopened there is only 45 days allowed for amendments.

Ms. Kelleher explained that the Administration has requested a resolution to reopen the 2012 budget be added to this evening's agenda. She stated that if the budget is reopened that it would need to be advertised and a public hearing held. She suggested introducing the ordinance at the January 23 meeting and that amendments would need to be enacted at the February 13 meeting unless a special meeting is held on February 17.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the same amount of material will need to be reviewed as during the regular budget process but in a much shorter time. She noted her concern that major budget changes cannot be thoroughly examined as needed in this short timeline. Mr. Spencer stated that he has the ability to make some of the changes and that Council action is not needed for all changes. He noted his hope to have Council support of the transition plan.

Mr. Acosta expressed his belief that the transition plan contains some good ideas but that other items cause him major concern. Mr. Spencer stated that the transition plan was drafted when the team was outside looking in. He stated that now that the team is inside that other suggestions or revisions may be made.

Ms. Reed stated that Mr. Spencer was part of the 2012 budget process and that he supported its passage as Council President. She stated that she does not support reopening the budget as she does not support added bureaucracy and increased positions in the Mayor's office. Mr. Spencer stated that the Recovery Plan initiatives can be addressed more quickly with these positions and that the salaries are justified by the savings.

Ms. Reed expressed her belief that there is no reason to reopen the budget and that these additional positions are superfluous with the ranks of police officers depleted. Mr. Spencer stated that the Recovery Plan initiatives need to be addressed and that the City needs to better communicate with citizens. He stated that investigation of the IT department has shown that they are saving the City money by internally completing various programming activities. He expressed the belief that IT is doing a great job.

Ms. Reed questioned if outsourced departments would be awarded through the RFP process or if they would be politically connected businesses. Mr. Spencer requested that Council keep an open mind and examine the transition plan together.

Mr. Waltman stated that there is a process to follow but that the achievable goals need to be defined first. He suggested that some initiatives be addressed now and others deferred. He noted his hope that the Recovery Plan would be amended in 2012. Mr. Spencer stated that PFM is aware of the transition plan.

Mr. Waltman noted the need for PFM to be accountable as well. He noted his willingness to examine new approaches but that initiatives must be vetted first. He noted that Council may value some initiatives and debate or reject others.

Mr. Acosta noted that current City employees must also be part of this process. He noted his hope that the expertise of employees is considered in relation to the proposed changes. He noted that there is much knowledge in this building.

Mr. Sterner stated that Council has an obligation to investigate all ways that expenses can be decreased and revenues increased. He noted the difficulty the short timeframe will place on the process. He noted that some initiatives can be addressed without reopening the budget but that much discussion is needed.

Mr. Marmarou noted the recent communications problems between the Administration and Council. He noted that this is a great opportunity for Council input and noted his willingness to listen and review all initiatives. He noted the need to work together.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the transition plan has many good components. She suggested that they be studied and included in the 2013 process. She noted the problems that could occur by outsourcing IT and that a move such as this would require much planning. She also noted the need to concentrate on core services. She noted her hope for good discussion in a planned way.

Mr. Spencer stated that the transition plan is a starting point for discussion. He noted the need for Council to understand the rationale of the changes and how savings are possible. He stated that he has begun examining City functions and that his point of view has begun to change. He noted his goal of exemplary customer service and that he now has a different view of IT. He noted that there are many new nuances to be discussed.

Mr. Waltman stated that there are only a few items in the transition plan which requires Council action. He noted the need to understand the proposed objectives of the initiatives may require the budget to be reopened. He suggested that amendments be made when initiatives are ready to move forward.

Mr. Spencer stated that there will be some structural change and that he hopes to explain these items to Council.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested creating a Gant chart to move the initiatives forward. She reminded all that Council activity will be increasing to address the zoning backlog and that rushing through a budget process is not wise.

Ms. Kelleher agreed that Council will begin hearing zoning cases and that they also need to fill a District Council seat.

Mr. Acosta noted his hope that Council will have an understanding of the initiatives that Mr. Spencer wants to move forward. He noted the need to update the transition plan as new information is learned and to include timeframes for initiatives.

Mr. Spencer stated that City employees are busy completing day-to-day functions and do not have time to work on Recovery Plan initiatives. He noted that the transition plan allows others to focus on the Recovery Plan initiatives. He stated that to date most of the initiatives addressed were financial and that Mr. Geffken has been integral in that process.

Mr. Sterner suggested performing a cost analysis of the transition plan initiatives. Mr. Lloyd stated that IT functions are not currently charged (via indirect costs) to the departments who benefit from their work. He stated that he is currently tracing these costs out to identify the true value of IT. He noted the need to understand the results achieved by funds spent.

Mr. Acosta noted his hope that this analysis will also occur with the Citizens Services Center (CSC). He stated that he has heard good comments from citizens who have used the CSC. He noted his concern that if the CSC is closed that customer service will suffer and that the process will be shifted to other departments who will not be able to handle the extra work. Mr. Lloyd stated that there will be no detriment to front line services.

Mr. Marmarou noted the need to closely examine all initiatives. Mr. Lloyd stated that he has been working with IT, CSC and HR this week. He stated that he is also working to provide a more detailed budget. Mr. Spencer stated that the entire budget has not been scrapped but that there needs to be a close look at IT, CSC and HR. He stated that customer service would not decline but that perhaps the format needed to change.

Mr. Marmarou left the meeting at this time.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that many Council initiatives are not included in the transition plan and that extensive work has already been done on them.

Mr. Waltman noted the need to understand how many initiatives can be done through budget amendment. He noted the need to address the key items which need review if the budget is reopened. He suggested taking two to three weeks to decide which initiatives should be addressed now. He stated that it is unrealistic to address the entire plan at one time.

Mr. Acosta questioned how all this will be communicated. Mr. Spencer stated that he will communicate with Council directly and through Council staff. He also noted the need to keep the community updated. He stated that the package may change.

Ms. Kelleher questioned if she should place the ad for the budget. Council replied negatively.

Mr. Acosta noted the need for further discussion and questioned the timeline. Ms. Kelleher stated that the ad would need to be placed no later than January 20.

Mr. Spencer stated that he is willing to have further discussions with Council and that Mr. Geffken can also respond to questions as needed.

Mr. Spencer, Mr. Murin, and Mr. Lloyd left the meeting at this time.

V. Agenda Review

Ms. Kelleher distributed a packet of additions to the agenda. An ordinance will be introduced regarding easements from Norfolk Southern and a resolution naming Mr. Acosta to the Recreation Commission. She added that the resolution regarding Pansy St will need to be moved from the consent agenda to introduction of new ordinances. She stated that the ordinances setting the salary of the Director of Fire and Rescue Services and the Director of Community Development will be withdrawn by the Administration.

Council reviewed this evening's agenda.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that Mr. Marmarou will not be in attendance. She questioned who would comment on the candidates brought forward for appointment and reappointment. Mr. Acosta suggested that Ms. Reed make comment. Ms. Reed agreed.

Ms. Kelleher noted the need to schedule an interview with Mr. Agudo. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz requested the job description and required experience before the interview is scheduled.

Ms. Kelleher noted the need to meet with HARB and suggested January 12 at 5 pm. Council agreed and requested that the meeting be limited to one hour.

Mr. Jones arrived at this time.

Ms. Kelleher also noted the need to interview Isamac Figueroa for Administrative Services Director. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz requested the job description and required experience for this position before the interview is scheduled. She questioned if these positions have been advertised or if candidates are being chosen by the Administration. Mr. Geffken stated that Mr. Spencer would need to answer this question.

Ms. Reed noted the need for Council to be cognizant of what is occurring. She stated that Council has a public responsibility to open these positions to all qualified candidates. She stated that she will not support these appointments as they appear to be political in nature.

The meeting adjourned at 6:29 pm.

Respectfully Submitted
Linda A. Kelleher, CMC, City Clerk