

CITY OF COLONIAL HEIGHTS, VIRGINIA
Special Meeting of City Council
Tuesday, March 16, 2021

1. Call to Order.

The Special Meeting of City Council was called to order by Mayor Kochuba at 6:00 P.M.

2. Roll Call.

Present: Councilman Michael A. Cherry
Councilman John E. Piotrowski
Councilwoman Dr. Laura F. Poe
Councilman Robert W. Wade
Vice Mayor Elizabeth G. Luck
Mayor T. Gregory Kochuba

Absent: Councilman John T. Wood (arrived at 7:03 P.M.)

Also Present: Mr. Douglas E. Smith, City Manager
Mr. Hugh P. Fisher, III, City Attorney
Mrs. Pamela B. Wallace, City Clerk

3. Declarations of Personal Interest

There were none.

4. Work Session on the following items:

- A. AN ORDINANCE NO 21-4**
(First Reading) Awarding the City Manager a 2% bonus.

A motion was made by Mr. Piotrowski, seconded by Mrs. Luck, to approve Resolution No. 21-4.

<u>Vote:</u>	6-0
Yes:	Cherry
	Piotrowski
	Poe
	Wade
	Luck
	Kochuba
No:	None
Absent:	Wood
Abstained:	None

Motion UNANIMOUS PASS

B. Discussion on the Proposed FY22-FY26 Capital

Before beginning the discussion, Mr. Smith addressed Dr. Poe's question from the March 9, 2021 meeting, advising that the CIP workbook had been updated to reflect that Phase I renovations were funded in the 2020-2021 budget.

Mayor Kochuba requested that Council be provided the dollar amounts of the projects recommended for funding in the first year of the CIP; stating stated this would help Council during the upcoming budget process.

Mr. Smith advised that a large portion of his presentation was made during the presentation of the CIP at the March 9, 2021 meeting; however, Chief Hoover would provide information on the replacement of Engine-941. Mr. Smith added that a large portion of the cost for Engine941 would be funded from money set aside in the Fund Balance.

Fire and EMS Engine 941 Replacement

Chief Hoover began with the history of Engine-941 and its acquisition in 2004. Chief Hoover advised that the maker of the apparatus went out of business in 2014 and since that time, it has been extremely difficult to obtain parts for the vehicle. Chief Hoover provided Council with information relative to the increased number of hours the vehicle has been out of service relative to the number of hours in service since 2016; and in 2018, EMS staff began running a reserve engine to replace Engine-941.

Chief Hoover continued to address several questions from Council relative to continued use of the engine as a reserve; number of days out of service and the number of calls responded to by the engine; as well as housing issues. Additionally, Chief Hoover advised this was a 'turn-key' vehicle and no additional funds would be requested in the future. At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Cherry asked if it would be more cost effective to search for replacement equipment than to purchase a new engine. Chief Hoover stated he would need to look into Mr. Cherry's request and get back with him.

Shepherd Stadium Infield/Outfield Turf Renovations

There being no additional questions or comments, Mr. Smith asked Mr. Skalak to provide information on the turf project at Shepherd Stadium. Beginning, Mr. Skalak advised this was not part of the Chili Peppers contract; however, they would greatly benefit from it.

Mr. Skalak advised that construction to replace the existing grass with sod would begin in mid-August. Additionally, addressing Mayor Kochuba's comments relative to having additional games other than league games, Mr. Skalak advised Mr. Martin was aware of the installation and was accepting that there may not be additional games.

Main Pump Station Valve Replacement

Mr. Flippen addressed questions and provided information relative to the valve replacement project (\$100,000). Answering a question from Mr. Wood, Mr. Flippen stated he did not feel that the replacement of the valves would not make the project whole. Continuing, Mr. Flippen stated the only pump station he felt the City could make whole, would be the current project of the Hrouda pump station. Mr. Flippen stated that the valve replacement was essentially a component of the mechanical system of the pump station and shared the past maintenance history of the equipment at the pump station. Mr. Flippen recalled the infrastructure assessment, which included a 25-year CIP of improvements totaling several million dollars with the need for an 11% utility increase over the next 10 years. Mr. Flippen advised the project was an immediate need; however, it would not make it a “new station”. Mr. Flippen stated the largest component of the project was to bypass the sewage away from the station in an effort to install the new valves.

City Facilities Security Upgrade (Including the Courthouse)

Mr. Smith reported a draft report of the security assessment had been received which would be presented to Council at a later date. However, Mr. Smith advised funding was included in the CIP to cover the critical and high-level recommendations from the report.

Animal Shelter Entrance Improvements Phase I

Mr. Smith explained the placement of this project above sewer projects and its placement among transportation projects. Additionally, the project was not funded from a source that would be a typical sewer/water-related funding source because the funding source is shown as sale of property. Mr. Smith stated that the property had not been sold yet and did not recommend to aggressively proceed with the project.

At this time, Mr. Smith addressed individual questions from Council members regarding the following:

- Demolition of the City-owned property at 113 Highland Avenue and the expansion of the City Hall parking lot**
- The negative effects of the Boulevard/Westover intersection improvements to on-street parking for residents**
- Staff’s decision to proceed with a \$300,000 sewer project to address ongoing problems on Hill Place**

There being no further CIP project discussion, Mr. Smith advised the CIP would be on the April regular meeting agenda for public hearing.

C. Discussion Regarding Mobile Food Units

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Ms. Hall guided Council through a presentation and the history of allowing Mobile Food Units (MFU) to operate in the City beginning with the approval of MFU operation at Farmers Markets in 2017 and the expansion of MFU operation at Special events in 2019. Ms. Hall reviewed the general standards relative to permitted locations allowed for MFU operation. These locations include the Boulevard Business District, General Business District, and real property of a religious assembly. However, Ms. Hall advised there were exceptions for homeowners in a residential zoning district, which authorize the owner to have one or more MFU at the residence for noncommercial use. Additionally, MFU are allowed on City-owned property for special events that the Director of Recreation and Parks deems reasonably necessary. As stated by Ms. Hall, staff recommends allowing all MFU types with the exception of residential use types; however, the current provision for noncommercial use at a home would remain.

Ms. Hall advised that the current ordinance does not permit MFU in Planned Unit Development, Residential Office, or Industrial zoning districts. Ms. Hall clarified that the current ordinance only provided exception in residential zoning districts to the real property of religious assembly, but did not provide exception to other civic use types.

Mr. Wood expressed his concerns relative to the effects MFU would have on existing brick and mortar restaurants with Mr. Piotrowski adding that this would not have a negative impact on existing restaurants stating his support to change the ordinance to allow MFUs.

Mr. Cherry clarified the MFU could only operate on a property with the permission of the property owner. Concluding his comments, Mr. Cherry stated that the City needs to get out of its own way and move forward with expanding the MFU program.

Mayor Kochuba asked for an informal vote from Council supporting staff's recommendation to permit MFUs at all use types with the exception of residential use types and leaving the current provision for noncommercial use at a residence:

Cherry – Yes

Piotrowski – Yes

Poe – Yes

Wade- Yes

Wood – No

Luck - Yes

Kochuba – Yes

Continuing, Ms. Hall presented information relative the current ruling on the length of stay a MFU may be located on the same parcel. Ms. Hall advised the MFU may be located on the same parcel for up to three consecutive days and may do so for a maximum of four times a year. Ms. Hall advised it was staff's recommendation that Council consider expanding the scope of the mobile food unit ordinance to permit more permanent options.

There was discussion by Council relative to concerns associated with crime during late hours of operation and the possibility of increased cost to the City for additional police, zoning, and fire. Although there were concerns relative to the expansion of operation hours, there was continued discussion supporting the expansion of the MFU program.

With Council still having undecided questions relative to the time of operation, Mayor Kochuba asked for an informal Council vote to bring the item back for discussion at the April 20 work session.

Cherry – Yes

Piotrowski – Yes

Poe – Yes

Wade- Yes

Wood – No

Luck - Yes

Kochuba – Yes

D. Discussion Regarding Rental Properties

Mayor Kochuba expressed his concern relative to the rising number of rental properties within the City, many of which are not being maintained. Directing his question to Mr. Fisher, Mayor Kochuba asked if the City could impose an individual fee per rental unit with Mr. Fisher responding, “No.”

At this time, Ms. Hall provided Council with various housing types by jurisdiction advising of the percentage of owners versus renters beginning in 2018. Ms. Hall advised Colonial Heights fell within the state and national averages with a rental percentage of 36. Continuing, Ms. Hall presented information showing tenant profile and the median rent within the City, which again fell within the state and national averages. Ms. Hall did report she had noticed an influx of out-of-state investors who were buying properties to flip and rent.

At the conclusion of her presentation, Ms. Hall addressed some concerns relative to Housing and Urban Development (HUD) properties and vouchers for such properties. Included in the conversation, Ms. Hall noted the largest number of individuals renting vs. owning a home was between 25 and 34 years old.

E. Discussion Regarding Marketing of the Residential Rehabilitation Tax Abatement Program

At the request of Mayor Kochuba, Mr. Bruce Cashion, City Assessor, provided information relative to the City’s Residential Rehabilitation Tax Abatement Program. Mr. Cashion stated the program was advertised through the City Website and promotion through the Southside Association of Realtors. Mr. Cashion advised that currently, only one home had taken advantage of the program.

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Mr. Cashion provided the following comments relative to the program:

- **Did not feel the program was not set up properly and did not work well.**
- **Feels the program is antiquated and suggested “tweaking”.**
- **The surrounding localities were experiencing the same issues Colonial Heights was experiencing.**
- **There is no return on investment.**

After Mr. Cashion addressed questions from Council relative to the program, Mayor Kochuba advised Council should engage in further discussions during a future meeting to consider continuing the program.

7. Adjournment.

There being no further discussion, a motion to adjourn the Special Meeting was made by Mayor Kochuba, seconded by Mrs. Luck, and carried unanimously on voice vote at 8:42 P.M.

APPROVED:

T. Gregory Kochuba, Mayor

ATTEST:

Pamela B. Wallace, City Clerk