

CITY OF COLONIAL HEIGHTS, VIRGINIA
Special Meeting of City Council
Tuesday, October 20, 2020

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 Kenneth B. Frenier
Councilman John E. Piotrowski
Vice Mayor Elizabeth G. Luck
Mayor T. Gregory Kochuba

Absent: Councilman Michael A. Cherry
Councilman W. Joe Green, Jr.
Councilman John T. Wood (arrived late)

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

3. Declarations of Personal Interest

There were none.

4. Special Meeting on the following item:

- A. Presentation of the Quarterly Financial Report**
Presentation of the Quarterly Financial Report for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2020-2021.

Before Mrs. Minor's presentation, Mr. Smith stated staff supported the recommendation. Mrs. Minor provided Council with a copy of the quarterly report for FY2021 cautioning that much of the revenue sources are not currently posted. Mrs. Minor commended Mr. Feasenmyer and his staff for the increase in delinquent BPOL collections; however, Mrs. Minor reported that other local taxes were trending slightly behind those of last year but were not of too much concern. Mrs. Minor reported charges for current services would have been closer to the September reporting had there not been for the late mailing of utility bills, the numbers would have been in line with the previous month. Overall, Mrs. Minor stated that she was excited that the quarterly report on the revenue side looked as good as it did.

Moving to expenditures, Mrs. Minor commended staff for their efforts relative to expenditures and provided a graph illustrating department expenditures were below 25% in every case. Mrs. Minor stated this is typically where expenditures should be within the first quarter. Mrs. Minor clarified that the numbers were trending behind last year's spending as staff continued to hold back on many purchase orders.

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Focusing on the Utilities Fund, Mrs. Minor stated there was a long-term issue of not replacing infrastructure as fast as it was depreciating. Mrs. Minor stated the City was being impacted by a number of short-term trends: 1. Not collecting penalties and interest in the utilities fund; 2. Not performing cut-offs which impacts collections percentage in the utilities fund; 3. A previous printing issue of utility bills. However, Mrs. Minor stated although these were short-term issues, she expected to see a more significant impact to cash in the fund but was pleasantly surprised. Continuing, Mrs. Minor noted the recent infrastructure emergencies along Conduit Road totaling approximately \$630,000 to date. Mrs. Minor advised that historically, the City received a \$300,000 ± refund from the South Central Wastewater Authority each year to help fund emergency repairs; however, this year's refund was only \$39,000 further advising staff would continue to monitor the situation. Mrs. Minor stated staff would most likely come back to Council to request the previously recommended rate increases budgeted for FY2021.

Addressing Mayor Kochuba's question relative to "long-term" and "short-term", Mrs. Minor stated currently, the City was in a reactive state, and while this does replace existing infrastructure, this was not the most cost-efficient way of replacement. Mrs. Minor stated staff preferred to be funded enough to be pro-active in an effort to replace infrastructure on a regular schedule to avoid emergency situations.

Mrs. Minor addressed Mr. Piotrowski's questions relative to delinquent utility bills stating that staff was waiting for more information from the state before any further action will be taken. Joining the conversation, Mayor Kochuba stated this may be an area where Council will need to become involved.

Continuing, Mrs. Minor provided the top six revenue tax streams (real estate, sales and use, meals, business licenses, personal property, and lodging) and comparisons of current revenue compared to last year's collection. Mrs. Minor reported that with the exception of Lodging Tax, the City was in a good position relative to last year. Mrs. Minor pointed out that the Sales and Use tax look extremely good; understanding that the first six months of FY20, there was a decline, possibly related to the Cigarette Tax.

Lastly, Mrs. Minor provided an update on the City's cash and investments; specifically noting the three items available for the City's operational needs: Checking, EMS Deposit, and the LGIP of which the City is able to use the interest from the account. Mrs. Minor noted that September was usually one of the City's lowest cash flow points in the year and the City starts to draw down on the LGIP account until Real Estate Collections begin to come in. Mrs. Minor reported the current year's cash flow was better due to receipt of \$1.2M in CARES Funds. The information provided by Mrs. Minor listed a total of \$18,558,727.75 in cash and investments.

B. Request for Pay Plan Amendment – Financial Systems Analyst

Mr. Smith advised the proposed request was to reclassify a position in the Finance Department for which he supported staff's recommendation. After Mr. Smith's brief

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comments, Mrs. Minor provided background information on the existing two Financial Specialist II positions and the evolving need to reclassify one of those positions. Mrs. Minor advised that the Finance Department requires a position to support the existing and newly implemented financial system, to include maintaining system security, creating reports, providing process support, assigning roles and permissions, backing up and restoring data, and providing testing and training, among other duties. Mrs. Minor advised that currently, a Financial Specialist II was performing most of these duties, but the responsibilities were not reflected in her job description.

Mrs. Minor requested Council's consideration supporting a new job description separate from the existing Financial Specialist II to reflect the highly technical responsibilities currently performed by one of the two Financial Specialist II positions in the Finance Department and sought to reclassify one of the two Financial Specialist II positions to a Financial Systems Analyst.

Vote:	4-0
Yes:	Frenier
No:	Piotrowski
	Luck
	Kochuba
Absent:	Cherry
	Green, Jr.
	Wood (arrived late)
Abstained:	None

Motion UNANIMOUS PASS

C. COVID-19 Grant Funding Update

Before reporting on new items or changes to COVID funding, Mr. Smith provided updated information relative to COVID funding for Public Safety Salaries. Mr. Smith reported there had been some discrepancy as to the information coming from the agency; however, clarification has been made stating that the work of Public Safety employees is substantially different and different use than the approved budget. Mr. Smith stated this was key, this clarification was a key criteria which must be met. Continuing, Mr. Smith stated that all payroll costs for Public Safety employees can be covered by COVID funding, including the support of the administrative accommodation by the Inspector General.

Mr. Smith provided information relative to the updated guidelines relative to hazard pay, stating it must be more specifically designated. Mr. Smith clarified the designation as those public safety personnel who enforce public safety orders but not an across the board for the entire department. Mr. Smith advised this was how staff was concluding the current fiscal year charging hazard pay to the General Fund and would be moving forward with the same into the upcoming fiscal year.

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Noting the handout, Mr. Smith advised that not all funds for hazard pay had been designated and those funds could be used for other expenses moving forward. Addressing Mayor Kochuba's question, Mr. Smith advised funding only covered through December 30, 2020 with a few exceptions. Addressing Mayor Kochuba's continued question regarding the estimated amount, Mr. Smith stated the current proposed plan for the current physical year, estimated \$952,000.

Moving forward, Mr. Smith provided information relative to the following new and/or changed items:

- **District 19**
- **EMS Incident Reporting Software**
- **12th Circuit Jury Plan**

Mr. Smith provided information relative to the Supreme Court of Virginia's order requiring Chief Judges to submit a jury plan in order to conduct jury trials; the Colonial Heights Court's plan has been approved.

Addressing Mayor Kochuba's questions, Sheriff Wilson reported there had been no jury trials at the Courthouse since the beginning of the COVID pandemic; however, jury trials will commence next month provided required COVID safety measures have been implemented.

It was the consensus of Council to approve CARES funds supporting implementation of safety measures supporting the 12th Circuit Jury Plan.

- **HVAC Disinfecting System for City Schools**

Mr. Smith advised this concept would be to install the proposed system throughout the school system. Continuing, Mr. Smith advised the City was receiving an additional round of CDBG funding for Corona Virus response, further advising that HUD gave its approval to use said funds for the HVAC project. Mr. Smith advised the approved CDBG funding was approximately \$104,000 and the total cost of the school project was \$245,000. Mr. Smith advised the schools were receiving a \$50,000 from the Cameron Foundation and advised it was staff's recommendation to approve CARES funding in the amount of \$90,000 and move forward with the request for CDBG funding.

After further discussion and clarification of the proposed CARES funding for the schools, it was the consensus of Council for staff to move forward with the request and allocation on of CDBG and CARES funds as presented by Mr. Smith.

Moving forward, Mr. Smith provided information on City facility air cleaning equipment being considered to assist in cleaning rooms after use. Mr. Smith advised demonstrations of each system would be made within the week; after which time staff would consider and bring their final recommendation before Council. Sheriff Wilson

provided information relative to the types of systems and the implementation of each system.

Mr. Smith requested support from Council to allocate \$25,000 for a marketing strategy by Petersburg Area Regional Tourism. The allocation would be used by PART to promote the locality as “open for business” emphasizing COVID Safety. It was the consensus of Council to move forward with the allocation.

D. Discussion Regarding Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Funding Applications and Hazard Mitigation Grant Application

Mr. Flippen provided an overview of the following projects included in the upcoming CMAQ application:

- **Conduit Road Project** will include reconstruction of roadway sidewalks and bike lanes, signal improvements at West Roslyn Road, and a new signal at Westover Avenue (Estimated: \$3.6M)
- **Continuation of Lakeview Avenue** to reconstruct roadway and install a new center lane, new buffer strips and sidewalks, improved storm drainage, utilities and street lighting (Estimate: \$3.0M)
- **Fall Line Trail** which is the proposed Ashland to Petersburg Trail – Mr. Flippen shared an aerial photo of the area of the Fall Line Trail which is the proposed developable section; pointing out the area between north Dupuy Avenue to west Westover Avenue. Mr. Flippen stated he had expressed his concerns relative to the difficulty associated with developing a regional trail so close to residential neighborhoods. Continuing, Mr. Flippen stated that Chesterfield County was prepared, should they receive funding for the project, to hold a required public meeting as well as notify residents affected by visiting them door-to door prior to the public meeting. Directing Council’s attention to the aerial photo, Mr. Flippen advised that the proposed location was on City property; however, the property in itself is actually located in Chesterfield County.

After additional clarification by Mr. Flippen of the Colonial Heights/Chesterfield property line, Mr. Wood stated his support would be determined by the support of the residents being affected by and/or living near the project.

In conclusion, Mr. Smith introduced 610 Lakeview Avenue as a proposed application for a Hazard Mitigation Grant. Mr. Smith stated the property was in a flood plain and had been affected by the recent flooding in the City; specifically noting the property was in the Resource Protection Area of the Chesapeake Bay and staff had been in discussions with FEMA regarding a Hazard Mitigation Grant. Mr. Smith provided Council with an aerial view of the property as well as photos depicting the water line on the structure from the last flood.

At this time Chief Hoover provided Council with information from FEMA relative to the Hazard Mitigation Grant process. Chief Hoover advised that the grant in question

was specific to flooding and the homeowner must voluntarily agree to participate and sell their property to the City at a fair market value, after being assessed; should the property be approved for the grant. After the City's acquisition of the property, the City would turn the City into green space, as it backs to a City park. Chief Hoover noted acquisition of the property would be an asset to the City as the property was adjacent to a City park and could become a greenspace.

Chief Hoover stated he and Ms. Hall met with the property owner earlier in the week, after which time the property owner responded that he was interested in the program and advised he had national flood insurance; which is a qualifier for the grant. Chief Hoover continued to explain the grant process which had a very short time frame; specifically noting that the state application must be submitted by November 10, 2020.

After brief comments, it was the consensus of Council for staff to move forward with the project.

E. Economic Development Update

Mrs. Epps provided Council with information relative to the Small Business Grant Program, which was initiated by the Economic Development Authority. Mrs. Epps reported that 70 applications had been received, with 68 applications being approved and two rejected. Mrs. Epps advised there was still \$115,000 left from the \$500,000; and it was her hope that the remainder of that money would be used by October 31, 2020, which was the close date.

Addressing questions, Mrs. Epps advised there were no repeat applicants and further described the protocol and criteria for distribution of funds. Continuing, Mrs. Epps provided the types of businesses applying for the grant; specifically noting that the largest business sector applied for was on the Boulevard.

Moving on to properties, Mrs. Epps reported on the following:

- Walgreens building on the Boulevard, noting that the price had been reduced and several inquiries received.
- Proposed pharmaceutical company to locate in Petersburg which could create "spin-off" properties which may generate business in the City.
- Draft update on the dining brochure which included several newly opened restaurants.
- Development of a Retail Strategic Plan by the Virginia Gateway Region and the creation of a grant to be made available to those localities of the gateway region.
- Presentation of unemployment rates pre, during and current COVID.
- Update on the City's involvement with Richmond Regional Tourism and an upcoming tour of the area with Tourism and City Staff to include Shepherd Stadium and several of the hotels; lunch will be at the Keystone Grill.

F. City Branding Project Discussion

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Mr. Smith presented a modified design to reflect a more defined compass theme to reflect and/or symbolize the central location of the City.

After much discussion, it was the consensus of Council that staff goes back to the drawing board to develop additional ideas.

G. City Council Retreat Update and Discussion.

Mayor Kochuba advised that due to the current economic uncertainty, he was suggesting a one-day retreat to be held locally. Mayor Kochuba advised he tasked the Clerk with obtaining suitable locations and venues; the Clerk provided the following:

- Roslyn Conference and Retreat Center, Richmond, Virginia**
- Hilton Hotel at Short Pump**
- Ashton Creek Vineyard, Chester, VA**

It was the consensus of Council to hold the Retreat on Friday at Ashton Creek Vineyard location.

H. City Council Upcoming Meeting Schedule

Mayor Kochuba advised that the November regular and work session would be held as scheduled and there would be no December work session, only the regular meeting. Additionally, Mayor Kochuba advised of a farewell reception for Messrs. Frenier and Green on Thursday, December 10 at in the Courthouse Multipurpose Room.

6. Adjournment.

A motion to adjourn the Special Meeting was made by Mr. Cherry, seconded by Mrs. Luck, and carried unanimously on voice vote at 8:30 P.M.

APPROVED:

T. Gregory Kochuba, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Pamela B. Wallace, City Clerk