

Minutes
Finance and Policy Committee
May 4, 2020
6:00 p.m.
4th committee meeting

Members present were Chairman Reynolds, Committee members Diane Kuzniar and Carol King all present remotely. Finance Director Holly Abercrombie and HR Director Mark Putnam were present remotely and City Administrator Brandon Madden was present on site at city hall.

1. Call to Order- Chairman Reynolds

2. Public Comment

3. Reading and Approval of Minutes

a. Finance Committee Meeting: March 2, 2020

Councilwoman King made a motion to accept the minutes as distributed with Councilwoman Kuzniar seconding. The vote was unanimous (3-0).

4. Reports or Communications from City Officers

a. Department Reports

City Administrator Brandon Madden

Budget Review- Administration is well within budget parameters.

Finance Director Holly Abercrombie

Budget Review- Holly reported most departments across the board look good. The revenues look good. Property taxes are good, hospitality and accommodations were not as low as she thought they might be. Business license revenues are still coming in.

Councilwoman King asked Holly if she is still seeing business license money come in. Holly said right now they are trailing a little behind from last year.

HR Director Mark Putnam- Mark said the HR department is recruiting for Fire Chief. 11 interviews have been done over the phone. 10 were from the outside and 1 candidate is internal.

5. Unfinished Business

a. Public Comment Rules- Comments from Council regarding public comment and Greenville County council rules are attached. Brandon said basically staff is asking Council what they would like included under public comment in the Council rules. Councilwoman King said she personally does not have an issue with the way our Council rules are written in Section 4, number one. She understands the purpose behind the proposed amendment and likes portions of the proposed amendment. She likes the flow of our current Section 4. She asked if something could just be announced before public comment at the beginning of the meeting to remind public that Council does not interact and comment.

Councilwoman Kuzniar agrees with Councilwoman King. Normally the same people come to the Council meetings unless there is something of special interest. She said the Mayor can state that Council will not respond to the residents' comments.

Chairman Reynolds said what he is hearing is that the Council Rules document we have currently is well worded and an announcement before the public comment section of a Council meeting will suffice. No action will be taken on this item.

6. New Business

a. Employee Vacation Hours Deadline Rollback- Our policy states that as of July 1st, anyone that has accumulated vacation leave over 240 hours for employees other than firefighters, and 213.75 for firefighters, loses what has been accumulated over the maximum. With the events over the last two months, employees have not been able to take vacation. All departments have stepped up. Staff proposes to move the deadline back from July 1st to October 1st to allow employees to be able to take vacation.

Chairman Reynolds asked Holly if this would cause any problems. Holly said it will not be that difficult, it would just impact compensated absences.

Councilwoman Kuzniar asked how many employees would this impact. Mark said about 30 and there are about 900 hours impacted.

Councilwoman King made a motion to send this item to Council with recommendation of changing the policy for this year to a deadline to take any extra vacation over the maximum by October 1st. Councilwoman Kuzniar seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous (3-0).

Mark thanked committee. This is a great gesture for our employees.

b. Budget amendment- Throughout the year Council has approved various expenditures, projects, and grants. Staff has accumulated all items to present in one budget amendment. Councilwoman King made a motion to send this to Council with Councilwoman Kuzniar seconding. The vote was unanimous (3-0).

- c. City Phone System Upgrade- The City's phone system is maintained by VC3. The contract will expire in 2021, but they are moving to a new system. With the move, there are two options. One is to continue with the contract terms that we have with about \$100 cost savings a month. The other option is to move to a new contract for an additional 60 months, the City would receive new phones, and the savings would be about \$300 per month. The recommendation from staff is to go with option one and let the contract expire in November 2021. Staff did some initial research last year, and if we rebid the city's phone contract, we could potentially realize a substantial savings on state contract.

Councilwoman King made a motion to send this item to Council with a recommendation of the option to continue with the current contract expiration of November 2021. Councilwoman Kuzniar seconded and the vote was unanimous (3-0).

- d. FOIA policy- Pursuant to the State FOIA law, the City is required to establish a rate for searching, retrieving, and redacting records attendant to FOIA request. Also, the City must pass an ordinance establishing a fee schedule consistent with the FOIA requirements. Councilwoman King asked if this was something we have to do on an annual basis because she does not know if there has been anything new on FOIA law since 2017. Brandon said this is an update to the City's 2017 FOIA policy adding more information.

Councilwoman Kuzniar made a motion to send this item to Council with Councilwoman King seconding. The vote was unanimous (3-0).

- e. Business License Permit Fee Ordinance- The City is operating under an emergency ordinance and one of the provisions was to waive late fees associated with City business license permits until May 23, 2020.

Given the impact of COVID-19, along with the tax filing extensions implemented for State and Federal taxes, the waiver of late fees associated with City business license permits through June 30, 2020 may assist businesses as they mitigate the fiscal impacts resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The waiver of the late fees may result in a longer closeout period for the current fiscal year due to the fact that business license permit revenues will be collected and reconciled after the fiscal year ends. Councilwoman King asked Holly her thoughts and if this would be a hardship to her office. Holly said there will be more accruals, but it is not a big deal.

Councilwoman King made a motion to send this item to Council with Councilwoman Kuzniar seconding. The vote was unanimous (3-0).

7. Public Comment

Mayor Merritt said he would like to clarify something about the public comment rules item. It was alluded to during committee discussion that page 17 was a proposed amendment. Mayor Merritt said that was not a proposed amendment but a proposal to consider additional guidelines for announcement during Council meetings. Page 3 of the Council Rules talks about addressing Council under Section 4. On the next page under public hearings, there is an inconsistency of public comment guidelines between a regular meeting and a public hearing. He thought Committee would like to be consistent in the public comment guidelines since this Committee has been diligent in wanting consistency throughout the City on other issues. Mayor Merritt wanted to reiterate the public comment proposal was a talking point, not an amendment.

Standing committee rules do not address public comment because those comments and how to handle them are left up to the committee chairs.

8. Committee Concerns-

Councilwoman King said she read today that this week is Municipal Clerk's week. She would like to recognize Clerk Cindy Miller for all she does to keep Council organized, especially during this time.

9. Adjournment- Chairman Reynolds adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Miller
Municipal Clerk