



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2022

The Columbia City Council conducted a Work Session on Tuesday, August 30, 2022 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, Columbia, SC. The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann, Mayor called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. and the following members of Council were present: The Honorable Howard E. Duvall, Jr., The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr., Mayor Pro-Tempore, The Honorable William Brennan, The Honorable Aditi Bussells, The Honorable Tina N. Herbert, and The Honorable Joe E. Taylor, Jr. Also present were Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager and Ms. Leydi Y. Grajales, Assistant City Clerk. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act. *The minutes are numbered to coincide with the order of the meeting.*

INVOCATION

The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr. offered the invocation.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Upon a motion made by Mr. Duvall and seconded by Mayor Rickenmann, Council voted unanimously to adopt the agenda subject to adding the receipt of legal advice related to matters covered by attorney-client privilege pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2) - Take Home Car Program to Executive Session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Duvall and seconded by Ms. Herbert, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 1:06 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 1** and **2**.

1. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2)

Homeless Services

2. Receipt of legal advice related to matters covered by attorney-client privilege pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2)

Take Home Car Program

Council adjourned the Executive Session to reconvene the Work Session at 1:59 p.m.



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2022

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION

3. Office of Gun Violence Prevention - The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann, Mayor

Lieutenant Canon Fulmer, Crime Analyst in the Crime Gun Intel Unit of the Columbia Police Department said the right way to understand gun violence is to think of it in terms of people, places, and adjacent behaviors. Gun violence pulls at certain locations. There are reasons why it does that and there are certain things the Police Department can do to mitigate that. Over the past 12 to 18 months, gun violence has been increasing in Columbia. As of last Monday, we had 72 people shot this year. In Columbia, there are some places where shootings almost never happen, some places where it happens occasionally, and others where gun violence is just endemic. About 40 to 50% of shootings are most likely to happen between 6 p.m. and 2 a.m. In Columbia like in most American cities, there are some very small locations that account for a disproportionate number of shootings. The chronic shooting hotspots account for only 2% of Columbia's surface area. The areas with the biggest issues are Booker Washington Heights, Colonial Heights, Colony Forest Apartments, North Point Estates, Bayberry Mews Apartments, the area that surrounds the Millwood Avenue corridor and other series of apartments. All of these account for 1.34 square miles of Columbia. The gun violence in these areas is pretty constant. The research shows three main reasons why: features of the environment, recent nearby shooting, and the clustering of shootings over the long-term. Once a long-term pattern of crime is established at a location, the location tends to remain a high-crime area. Areas tend to remain cold or hot for extended periods of time, which may be evidence of the near repeat phenomenon. This tells us if we have a shooting at these perennial hotspots that applying some extra resources there over the next couple of weeks is probably a good way to mitigate the risk that has been increased by that first event. Past analysis has indicated that features of the environment such as vacant lots, vacant buildings, and street cuts tend to increase the likelihood of gun violence at a location. Recent research indicates that some features of the environment network together to create "infrastructure" that facilitates violent crime at nearby places. This idea is the foundation for the Place Network Investigations Strategy. An example of networked places would be a convenience store that draws potential victims to an area, a nearby cut provides a safe route for a suspect to flee from the area, or a nearby vacant building offers a place to stage up or flee to. It is well known that the presence of patrol officers in violent crime hot spots tends to reduce crime at those locations. According to some criminologists, there is evidence that the best reductions are achieved when officers are diligent to take proactive enforcement action while balancing that action with proactive community contacts and community engagement in the hot spot.



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2022

Mayor Rickenmann said the Columbia's Office of Gun Violence Prevention (OGVP) is important because last year we were roughly at 94 shootings and this year we are projecting over 120. Nationwide, we are seeing an increase in gun violence. Gun violence involves people, places, and behavior, as well as prevention, intervention, and enforcement. The OGVP will serve as the quarterback for city crime reduction resources. A key element of the mission will be assessing and improving environmental factors and behaviors that lead to violent outcomes. The OGVP will be charged with connecting community members with organizations that provide job training, apprenticeships, and other alternatives to lifestyles that lead to violent outcomes. The office will also help connect the City of Columbia, Columbia Police Department, community organizations, service providers, and crisis teams in order to establish stronger relationships. We need to create security and family units where neighbors are helping neighbors. We need to invest in our communities by creating green spaces and opportunities for public art to help enhance our neighborhoods. On the enforcement side, we have to work with our judicial system. This framework is recognized nationally. Creating the OGVP allows the City of Columbia to be an eligible recipient for numerous federal grants, third party grants, and corporate funding. Senator Scott has vocally supported Columbia creating this office to put federal funds in play for reducing violence in our city. Allowing the city to serve as the custodian of these efforts will remove duplicity and allow the city to work with partners already engaged and succeeding in the community. There are so many case studies and offices of gun violence being created across the U.S. All of them are community based first, law enforcement is second, and governmental entities and administration are third. Every time someone is killed in gun violence, there are a multitude of resources spent in hospitals, police, courts, and others. We need to be spending money to prevent instead of putting the resources at the end. The objectives of the office are to establish a qualified and experienced team to direct use of resources and efforts, build a network of trained community interrupters, create a catalog of community programs to foster relationships among neighbors, mediate conflicts in communities that have the potential to spill over into violence, and produce positive outcomes in high-violence areas in the City of Columbia. The current proposed funding source is the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to establish the first three years of the Office of Gun Violence Prevention.

Councilor McDowell said I like the collaborative approach. We have to emphasize the whole notion of having skin in the game.

Mayor Rickenmann said it is important that we have absolute outcomes and accountability measures. We need to have target expectations of reduction and be specific on the expected outcomes.



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2022

Councilor McDowell asked what are the next steps.

Mayor Rickenmann said I would hope that you collectively share your questions and get them answered. As we have the discussions, we need to carve out potential funding and set it aside because it is going to take some effort and money to get us going.

Councilor Brennan said as we move forward, I would like to see more information regarding that individual or organization that we need to bring everything together. We talked about an RFQ, but maybe we should do a job posting.

Mayor Rickenmann said we might use both paths so we can pick the best to help us bring all of this together.

Councilor Duvall said I support the idea of a coordinator for all the different services that are available. I do not want to commit \$800,000 before researching what else is available in the community. I would like for the Public Safety Committee to look at this and gather more information on what is available already and report back to Council.

Councilor Bussells asked how do we envision getting folks at the table. Where and what is the pull to want to get involved with the OGVP?

Mayor Rickenmann said what we are doing right now is not helping. We are up 18% in gun violence. We have to do something different and we need a lead coordinator. Right now, there are multiple groups doing small things. By bringing those folks together we have the availability for multiple funding sources. Nobody wants to see anyone else get shot. We need community support. These are things that we still have to talk about.

Councilor Taylor said we also need to look at setting higher bonds for repeating criminals. Personal Recognizance bonds are enabling more violence rather than stopping it. We need to look at the judicial side, too.

Mayor Rickenmann said after speaking to several mothers in the community, that is one of their biggest fears. They can tell us who is shooting but as soon as the person is arrested they are back on the community two days later and that is why they do not want to get involved.

Councilor Herbert said as opposed to us being the leader on the issue, I would feel more comfortable with us being a resource for the issue. If we put ourselves as a leader, people are going to expect us to solve the problem. I don't know if we have the capacity for that. As we further discuss this, we need to narrow the focus because it is too broad. We need to hone in on



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2022

the top two or three things this office can actually do. I think that \$800,000 is a lot of money. I don't think we need to hire four people to start off. The funding should reflect less.

Mayor Rickenmann said we budgeted based on over 100 offices out there. A good portion of that goes to interrupters. If we have organizations already doing that, then we can redirect that. I am planning for the absolute maximum based on some models. It does not mean we need to go there. We have to be very deliberate about how we do that. This is a basis to start.

Councilor Bussells said as we are finalizing the plans, there needs to be a vision and mission of the office or three pillars of work to be able to show success over time. We need to make sure we are clear on what the office and the director will do over the next three years. I would like to see us work closer with the Columbia Police Department and go after some funding. This Council has spent time, money, and effort to continue to recruit and retain police officers. Unfortunately we are still seeing a reduction of sworn police officers. There are a lot of things that we need to continue to address simultaneously for this to work.

There was a consensus of Council to establish the Office of Gun Violence Prevention and continue discussing the administration, responsibilities, and funding of the office.

Council recessed at 3:01 p.m. and reconvened the Work Session at 3:09 p.m.

Councilor McDowell took a moment of personal privilege to recognize Brother Thomas, as a victim of gun violence. At the age of 14 he was shot in the back and paralyzed from his waist down. He is here today because he wants to know what resources we could use to stop this violence.

4. American Rescue Plan Act Update - Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget, Program Management and Grants Director

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget, Program Management and Grants Director said the city received \$27 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). We have received both of our tranches. We now have final rules to follow from the U.S. Treasury regarding eligible uses. We are required to report to the Treasury every quarter. Our next reporting will be at the end of October. To date we have committed or expended \$11.6 million. That includes allocations that we have made in the current year's general fund budget; the allocation for grant contracts; and the upcoming allocations for police facility renovations and fire station renovations. City Council has also allocated funds for the Pathways Unit. Funds for the Columbia Police Department (CPD) demolition program for the elimination of blight was allocated last year. That program is



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2022

underway. The Fire Department gear extractors and seconded set of bunker gear is also included and was allocated previously. What is currently committed from lost revenue including what is planned for next year, subject to the continuation of the Pathways Unit as currently proposed, is \$5.9 million of the \$10 million that we have allocated. The public health category includes \$500,000 that was allocated from last year and the premium pay and vaccine incentives that were paid out over the last fiscal year. The proposed items on the table for consideration include CPD initiatives that address crime and gun violence; CPD demolition of vacant, abandoned, and hazardous property; Mayor's Office of Gun Violence Prevention three year program; Commercial Retention and Redevelopment Program (CRR) / Business Loan Program; food insecurities; and housing stability, attainability, and broadband accessibility.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said the purpose of this grouping is to be broad to be able to have an estimated amount tied to what we need.

Mayor Rickenmann said we have three years to spend this money. There are some things that we budgeted for that have changed or there are grants available for. There is a request to look for a program recreationist to put together a program to transport kids and get them involved in after-school programs and sports. This will be reimbursable but we have to talk about it at the appropriate time because it is one of the proposals that we received. We can do it month-to-month since it is reimbursable. The original proposal is for \$250,000 based on 12,000 young kids between various apartment complexes and neighborhoods. We may need to re-categorize this because originally we thought there may be a grocery store opportunity but we cannot get done. Do we want to make a list of community projects that we feel are appropriate?

Council Herbert said we need to look at time restraints and priorities. I just want to get an idea of what is time sensitive and what we can work on next year.

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget, Program Management and Grants Director said the only time restriction is that we need to have the funds committed to the Treasury by December of 2024.

Councilor Taylor said the Economic and Development Committee has not had a chance to have our discussion on the community development funds. The fact that we already appropriated \$500,000 for new grant writers will bring some significant opportunities for funding. We need to look at CDBG funding available for some of these things. Let's leave the money in the fund unencumbered for the time being.



We Are Columbia

COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2022

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget, Program Management and Grants Director said that is where they are remaining until Council makes allocations. Next week's budget amendment includes some ARPA allocations and that will be noted. What is for consideration is whether or not the mayor's funding request goes forward next week. Otherwise the allocation from lost revenues is what is noted so far. We need to keep an eye on the \$10 million in lost revenue. Everything else has to be allocated within those spending categories. We are looking to evaluate the items under the public safety category to see if they will fit more programmatically.

Mr. Henry Simons, MHA, Assistant City Manager for Operations said there was a broader discussion with the previous Council about Wi-Fi in our parks. As we evaluated that process, we worked internally with our IT team. This year in our operational budget, we are improving our Wi-Fi capabilities internally and we are also adding public use computers in our parks. If you all want to discuss connectivity into the community then that will be another conversation.

Mayor Rickenmann said Mayor Walker has made a proposal. We need to have that conversation so we can make some decisions.

Councilor Herbert said we need to decide if we are going to allocate some money to external organizations. I suggest for Council to set aside \$200,000 out of the OGVP for any other external group requests with the same mission.

Councilor Duvall said I agree we need to set aside some money for grants but I don't know how much. I would like for the Public Safety Committee to work on it.

Councilor Taylor said I agree to take the \$200,000 from community promotions but not out of the OGVP because we haven't vetted that budget yet. I would also yield to the city manager.

Councilor Brennan asked what are the auditing levels for external programs if it comes out of ARPA.

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget, Program Management and Grants Director said if it comes from the lost revenue, it has to meet what the city would have been doing as part of our service base. If it is programmatic, it has to meet one of the programs outlined by the ARPA allocation categories. The actual spending will be under federal requirements.

There was a consensus of Council to move forward with the proposed American Rescue Plan Act public safety investments.



**COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2022**

-
5. Community Promotions Grant Program Notice of Funding Availability - Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget, Program Management and Grants Director

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget, Program Management and Grants Director said the community promotions program fiscal year 2022/2023 budget includes \$140,000. The source is general fund and 5% state accommodations tax general purpose. It is up to Council to keep these funds programmatically specific or broad and open. In the past they have not been for specific areas of programmatic use. We would discourage reoccurring costs because these are one time funds.

Mayor Rickenmann said we need to come up with some parameters to make sure there is participation and maybe other findings attached to the programs. I would want smaller thresholds so these can be used for smaller programs.

Councilor Duvall said this is the fund we used to fund the Lourie Center at \$25,000.

Councilor Herbert said we can have two different categories: one for neighborhoods and one for programmatic requests where the funding can be more. I want to make sure the neighborhoods have the opportunity of taking advantage of these funds.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said we can help design a Notice of Funds Available requirements by what you're interested in using the \$140,00 from the general fund.

There was a consensus of Council to utilize \$140,000 from the general fund for community promotions grants and ask staff to come up with guidelines for allocations.

6. Hospitality Tax and Accommodations Tax Allocations - Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget, Program Management and Grants Director

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget, Program Management and Grants Director said the fiscal year 2022/2023 hospitality tax budget was \$12,772,297. You have allocated to date \$3 million to the Hospitality Tax Committee; \$2.5 million to debt service; \$3.7 million to the general fund; and \$2.5 million to line item agencies. What is under consideration included in the current year budget is a committee allocation to the Carolina Carillon Holiday Parade of \$25,000; \$400,000 for the Cultural Affairs Office; \$26,000 to the River Alliance; \$40,000 to the Parks & Recreation Foundation; \$10,000 for Leisure Fun; and \$28,000 for the marketing/tv campaign proposal.

Councilor Bussells said I would like to revisit Leisure Fun and find other options.



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2022

Councilor Taylor said we should use the marketing/TV fund for the campaign for appearance so people understand they are responsible for the curb and sidewalk. We need some ideas for a beautification campaign by next spring.

Councilor Herbert said the Affordable Housing Task Force talked about having a campaign involving all of Council to talk about the needs of affordable housing to all citizens.

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget, Program Management and Grants Director said the Hospitality Tax Committee's remaining balance is \$256,531. The committee recommended a second round of applications for events to be held January to June 2023. The unallocated remaining balance is \$553,266. Everything we are discussing is included in the current year's budget. You will take from the unallocated if you want to allocate more funding to line item agencies and the fireworks can also come out of there.

Mr. William Holbrook, Chief of Police introduced Officer Orlando Santos Maduro and recognized his ten years of service with the City of Columbia. We do a service pin and anniversary service date presentation but Officer Maduro was not able to make it. This young man is the epitome of professionalism. He has the best attitude and he is a mentor to our young officers.

There was a consensus of Council to allocate additional hospitality tax funding to the following line item agencies: Columbia Museum of Art at \$100,000; Columbia Music Festival Association at \$5,000; EdVenture at \$100,000; the Heritage Tours and Programs at \$103,000; and New Year's fireworks at \$25,000.

Councilor Bussells requested more information regarding what the line item agencies will be doing with the additional money before the next work session.

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget, Program Management and Grants Director said the fiscal year 2022/2023 budget for state accommodations tax is \$2,660,000. Per state law, \$25,000 has been transferred to the general fund and 5% is for general purpose activities which is \$131,750 of which \$40,000 has been allocated for community promotions grants. The Accommodations Tax Committee allocated \$1,975,488. ONE Columbia requested \$74,912. The unallocated remaining balance is \$527,763 for tourism related activities.

Mayor Rickenmann said we will hold the ONE Columbia request until we figure out the cultural affairs office and hold the unallocated funds until an event or something comes up for discussion.



**COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2022**

-
7. Previously Funded and/or Proposed City Council Special Events - Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget, Program Management and Grants Director

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget, Program Management and Grants Director said City Council special events are programs that have been previously sponsored. These include the Mayor's Walk Against Domestic Violence, Mayor's Breast Cancer Awareness Breakfast, Go Red Campaign (women's heart disease awareness), New Year's Eve fireworks (previously part of Famously Hot New Year's), and a new proposed diabetes awareness event. The cost is what has been averagely spent.

Mayor Rickenmann said we already took care of the fireworks so the number will change. I suggest we use part of that \$15,000 for the diabetes event and stay in the \$31,500 budget.

8. Recap of City Manager's Funding Recommendations for General Capital Projects - Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget, Program Management and Grants Director

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget, Program Management and Grants Director said the changes from the original list include allocations from fund balance for Finlay Park, Congaree Vista, and hospitality tax. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan was reduced to \$100,000. There is a tentative award of \$1.2 million for the Katherine Bellfield Teaching Kitchen Grant Match. Once we get a grant, we need to be able to act quickly to be able to allocate those funds. There has been a request to include the Saluda Greenway bathrooms. We have included those in the Congaree Vista allocation. The Assembly Street Grade Separation and Quiet Zone are not new items, they have just been previously shown as to be allocated from fund balance. The only change in the proposed and planned programs is the inclusion of the allocation for the homeless coordinator, of which we will make another allocation potentially from ARPA funds. The cultural affairs office is not part of the budget amendment because it is already part of the budget. When the budget amendment comes forward, the majority of these allocations will be allocated to our capital projects and some will be amending line item budgets.

9. Finlay Park Renovations - Mr. Jeff Palen, Assistant City Manager / Chief Financial Officer

Mr. Jeff Palen, Assistant City Manager / Chief Financial Officer said the total budget is \$21.5 million. Last year, \$1 million was approved from hospitality tax. The state has allocated an additional \$1 million. We are looking at using general fund cash, Congaree Vista cash, and hospitality tax cash totaling \$8.5 million. That leaves a \$10.5 million balance. We will set up a



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2022**

five year loan that will be payable out of next year's budget to come out of tourism development fee and state accommodations tax. The total is about \$2.5 million each year.

10. Take Home Car Program - The Honorable Joe E. Taylor, Jr. – *Withdrawn*

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC
City Clerk