



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, APRIL 18, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

The Columbia City Council held a Budget Workshop on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at City Hall (Mayor's Conference Room), Columbia, South Carolina. The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann, Mayor called the meeting to order at 11:13 a.m. and the following councilmembers were present: The Honorable Howard E. Duvall, Jr., The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr., The Honorable William Brennan, The Honorable Aditi Bussells, The Honorable Tina N. Herbert and The Honorable Peter M. Brown. Also present were Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. Moore Hammond, City Clerk. This meeting was advertised in accordance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.

INVOCATION

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

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Councilor Duvall recognized student reporters from *The Carolina News and Reporter*.

Councilor Bussells wished Councilman Duvall a happy 80th birthday.

1. Columbia Police Department Update - Mr. William H. "Skip" Holbrook, Chief of Police

- a) *Staffing, Recruitment and New Opportunities*

Mr. William H. "Skip" Holbrook, Chief of Police introduced Major George Drafts of the Administrative Bureau and the members of the Recruiting Unit: Corporal Rebecca Robinson, Master Police Officer Ashley Maddox, and Sergeant Harry Delage. He said this is my ninth year and the support I have received has been unwavering; whether it is the incredible pay plan or our fleet improvement. We ordered another 28 vehicles and we are well on our way to one person, one car. We are also getting rid of aged fleet. You helped us to leverage technology. We are still recovering from national issues involving law enforcement. We are unique with five colleges and universities, trauma hospitals, state government, sporting events, a growing homeless population, and gun crime. This is a lot for a department that struggles with staffing. We have 99 vacancies. However, diversity stands at 41% with 20% being women. Our 30 by 30 initiative is tracking well. Our applicants are better than last year. Earlier this year, we embarked upon a workload study with the ISS Agency to review how we are policing 137,000 people within 100⁺ square miles. We have four regions and 30 patrol zones. We are looking at the types of calls, the time



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spent on calls, the number of officers, and their time off. They are going from call to call with only 7% of their shift allowing for down time. The optimal ratio is using one-third of a shift to answer calls; one-third to complete reports from the calls; and the other one-third being proactive and doing community policing. A lot of special property checks deal with the homeless. We answered over 11,000 alarms and 95% were false alarms. We responded to 3,400 people in mental health crisis and conducted 1,000 mental health transports. We respond to other events including over 1,600 auto break-in delays and 8,000 collisions per year. The Richland County Sheriff's Department does not respond to traffic investigations. We should consider what we are statutorily required to respond to and what the shared responsibilities with our public are. As it relates to alarm calls, we have to change that behavior. We have looked at software that is compatible with our CAD system and it will require modification of our ordinance to establish a graduated notification and fine system. We are looking to outsource the prisoner and mental health transports and private property collisions where there is no damage. A red light camera pilot program could be game changing for our city.

There was a discussion about alternative response solutions that would take pressure off of sworn personnel, repeat offenders of false alarm calls, outsourcing responses to false alarm calls and special property checks, escorts, code enforcement credentials, mandatory online reporting, the use of cellphones while driving, and ensuring proper follow-up if contractors are utilized.

Mr. William H. "Skip" Holbrook, Chief of Police highlighted the recruiting team and the lateral hiring strategy that was implemented to encourage sworn officers to transfer from other agencies. The Recruiting Unit has held a lot of career fairs during the first quarter. We partnered with a marketing firm to develop a strategy for new hires. This includes a video, recruiting fairs, 6,000 emails to transitioning military personnel, radio advertising, signage, posters and online advertising.

b)Special events

Mr. William H. "Skip" Holbrook, Chief of Police said the Columbia Police Department participated in 321 special events last year, allocated over 15,000 man hours, and vetted 389 special event alcohol permits. Other city departments are equally taxed. The use of permanent bollards for downtown and Five Points would replace the use of vehicles and people at barricades.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said we have done the research previously. I want your feedback and to make sure you are comfortable with incorporating a fee structure for some of these tasks.



We Are Columbia

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Mr. William H. “Skip” Holbrook, Chief of Police said it is critical for us to look at alternative response models and create equity within our regions. The regions are divided among council lines but we want to create boundaries and also review facilities and how they impact recruiting.

Ms. Missy Caughman, Director of Budget, Program Management and Grants said the city of Columbia has a lot of events and activities in our communities. Various city departments assist with these events and activities, usually at no cost to the host. Event types range from block parties to walks, runs and races, religious events and festivals. We collect fees for the rental of city facilities, police services, parade permits and fire prevention and fire marshal services. Types of services performed include the delivery of barricades, use of mobile stage and sound system, facility and grounds setup, traffic control, public safety, and services that include the use of city equipment and staff time. Other cities charge additional fees for the rental of traffic control devices, roll cart rental and delivery, event venue setup, equipment usage, filming permits, and commercial filming. Next steps include working with departments on the fee structure and working with the Legal Department to draft city ordinances.

There was a request for staff to come back with options that include the installation of bollards and to identify a point of contact for these services.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said we will bring the proposed fees back to Council and have a public hearing. We will take another look at what other cities are doing. Chief is already realigning things in his shop. We want to look at Signal 30 and an outside entity helping to manage that equitably, as well.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC
City Clerk