



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The Columbia City Council conducted a virtual meeting on Tuesday, May 12, 2020 using video conferencing technology. The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 2:13 p.m. and the following members of Council were present: The Honorable Sam Davis, The Honorable Howard E. Duvall, Jr., The Honorable Mayor Pro-Tempore Edward H. McDowell, Jr., The Honorable Daniel J. Rickenmann, and The Honorable William Brennan. The Honorable Tameika Isaac Devine joined at 3:06 p.m. Also present were Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager and Ms. Erika D. M. Hammond, 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 Mayor Pro Tem Edward H. McDowell, Jr. offered the invocation.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Duvall, Council voted unanimously to adopt the agenda as presented.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said I want to acknowledge a note that Chief Holbrook shared with his officers reminding them that in 1963 President Kennedy designated this week as National Police Week. This Friday, May 15th is Peace Officers Memorial Day. It will not be celebrated in Washington, DC this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. But you will see many of our officers on Friday wearing a badge to acknowledge those lost in the line of duty or fallen in service to their community.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 1 THROUGH 6

Upon a single motion made by Mr. Duvall and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to approve the **Consent Agenda Items 1 through 6**.

1. Council is asked to approve an Agreement to commit Residential Parking for the 1300 Assembly Street Redevelopment Project within the Lady Street Garage, as requested by Parking Services. Award to 1300 Assembly, LLC of Columbia, SC. – *Approved*



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020**

2. Council is asked to approve an agreement for Project SS7497; Mill Creek Pump Station Miscellaneous Improvements, as requested by Columbia Water. Award to Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc. in the amount of \$294,115.00. The firm is located in Columbia, SC. – *Approved*

Funding Source: Water & Sewer Capital Projects (552999-SS749701-658650). The original budget amount is \$294,115.00.

This is a Mentor Protégé Program Project. Weston & Sampson of Columbia, SC is the Mentor and will provide project management, technical engineering support, and bidding/award services at 72.8% (\$214,115.00) of the contract value. Carper Civil Consulting, LLC, a Minority Business Enterprise (Woman) of Columbia, SC, is the Protégé and will assist with engineering design, management of sub consultant and permitting services at 20.4 % (\$60,000.00) of the contract value.

The following sub-consultant will provide additional services:

Howard Engineering, Inc., a Minority Business Enterprise (Woman), of Marietta, SC will provide electrical engineering design at 6.8% (\$20,000.00) of the contract value as a sub-consultant for Weston & Sampson (Mentor).

3. Council is asked to approve a Contract for Project WM4534; Water Main Repairs for Water Maintenance, as requested by Columbia Water. Award to North American Pipeline Management, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$345,906.00, which includes contingency. This firm is located in Greenville, SC. – *Approved*

Funding Source: Engineering Water System Improvements (5516220-WM453401-638500). The original budget amount is \$476,077.80.

This is a Mentor Protégé Program project. North American Pipeline Management, Inc., a Minority Business Enterprise (Woman) of Greenville, SC, is the Mentor and will be performing water line repairs at 80% (\$230,604.00) of the total contract value. Southern Roots Landscape Management, LLC of Columbia, SC is the Protégé and will be performing miscellaneous pipe work, trucking and restoration at 20% (\$57,651.00) of the total contract value.

4. Council is asked to approve Contract Amendment #1 for Project WM4231, Canal Water Treatment Plant High Service Pump Improvements in Rooms 2 and 3, as requested by Columbia Water. Award to URS Corporation in an amount not to exceed \$589,170.00. This firm is located in Columbia, SC. – *Approved*

Funding Source: Water & Sewer Capital Projects- Capital Project Cost- Engineering Services Canal WTP Improvements(5529999231-WM423101-658650). The original budgeted amount for this amendment is \$589,170.00. The total revised contract amount is \$2,620,985.00.



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020

This is a Mentor Protégé Program Project. URS Corporation (Mentor) will extend its existing construction administration and observation services at 73% (\$430,540.00) of the requested amendment amount. The Protégé, DESA, Inc., a Minority Business Enterprise (Woman) of Columbia, SC will be providing construction administration and observation services at 2% (\$12,630.00) of the requested amendment amount.

The following subcontractors will be providing additional services:

Howard Engineering, Minority Business Enterprise (Woman) of Marietta, SC will provide electrical and mechanical engineering, and construction observation services at 6% (\$36,000.00) of the requested amendment amount.

Chao & Associates of Columbia, SC will provide structural engineering, and architectural construction observation services at 19% (\$110,000.00) of the requested amendment amount.

5. Council is asked to approve Construction Change Order #3 for Project WM4231; Canal Water Treatment Plant Clearwell & High Services Pump Station Improvements Increase in Project Contingency, as requested by Columbia Water. Award to Adams Robinson Enterprise Inc. in the amount of \$2,500,000.00. This firm is located in Dayton, OH. – *Approved*

Funding Source: Water & Sewer Capital Projects- Capital Project Cost- Engineering Services Canal WTP Improvements(5529999-WM423101-658650). The original budget amount for this change order is \$2,500,000. This construction change order is for an increase of \$2,500,000.00 to the original contingency amount of \$750,000.00 for a total revised contingency of \$3,250,000.00. The total revised contract amount is \$46,831,000.

This Project had multiple program requirements and goals: Subcontracting Outreach Program Requirement (SOP) of 20%, Columbia Disadvantage Business Enterprise Program goal (CDBE) of 10%, and a Local Subcontracting requirement of 20%. When possible, the Prime will maintain these percentages throughout the duration of this project.

6. Ordinance No.: 2020-019 Granting an encroachment to 908-Scannell (Columbia), LLC for the use of right of way area of the 1300 block of Huger Street and 1300 block of Pulaski Street adjacent to 1101 Huger Street, 1300 Huger Street, 1310 Huger Street and 1320 Huger Street, Richland County TMS #09009-11-04 for sidewalks, driveways, landscaping and irrigation - *First reading approval was given on March 17, 2020 – Approved on second reading.*



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020

ORDINANCES - FIRST READING

7. Ordinance No.: 2020-026 Authorizing the City Manager to execute a Lease Agreement between the City of Columbia and 701 Whaley/Olympia, LLC for lease of a portion of the Wayne Street right of way adjacent to 701 Whaley Street, portion of Richland County TMS#08913-12-01, 08913-12-08 and 08913-12-10 – *Approved on first reading.*

Upon a motion made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to give first reading approval to Ordinance No.: 2020-026 Authorizing the City Manager to execute a Lease Agreement between the City of Columbia and 701 Whaley/Olympia, LLC for lease of a portion of the Wayne Street right of way adjacent to 701 Whaley Street, portion of Richland County TMS#08913-12-01, 08913-12-08 and 08913-12-10.

8. Ordinance No.: 2020-043 Authorizing the City Manager to execute a Thirteenth Amendment to Purchase Agreement between the City of Columbia and Bright-Meyers 2001 LLC for the sale of 5.97 +/-acres (Capital City Stadium), Richland County TMS #11204-02-02 – *Approved on first reading.*

Councilor Rickenmann asked for an update on the progress of the sale.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said they were waiting for this amendment to be approved. We had given them the verbal acknowledgement to proceed with finalizing the deal.

Mayor Benjamin said the feedback I received was that those extra few weeks were very crucial to them getting their deal finalized. With the situation we are all in right now it was prudent to give them more time.

Upon a motion made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Mr. Davis, Council voted unanimously to give first reading approval to Ordinance No.: 2020-043 Authorizing the City Manager to execute a Thirteenth Amendment to Purchase Agreement between the City of Columbia and Bright-Meyers 2001 LLC for the sale of 5.97 +/-acres (Capital City Stadium), Richland County TMS #11204-02-02.



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020**

ORDINANCE - SECOND READING

9. Ordinance No.: 2020-025 Consenting to the Inclusion of Property in a Multi-County Industrial/Business Park (604 Huger, LLC, Richland County TMS #08914-01-06, TMS #08914-01-07, TMS #08914-01-08, TMS #08914-01-09, and TMS #08914-01-10) - *First reading approval was given on March 17, 2020 – Approved on second reading.*

Upon a motion made by Mr. Duvall and seconded by Mayor Benjamin, Council voted [6 to 1] to give second reading approval to Ordinance No.: 2020-025 Consenting to the Inclusion of Property in a Multi-County Industrial/Business Park (604 Huger, LLC, Richland County TMS #08914-01-06, TMS #08914-01-07, TMS #08914-01-08, TMS #08914-01-09, and TMS #08914-01-10). Mr. Rickenmann, Mr. McDowell, Mr. Duvall, Ms. Devine, Mr. Davis, and Mayor Benjamin voted aye. Mr. Brennan voted nay.

RESOLUTION

10. Resolution No.: R-2020-053 Authorizing the City Manager to execute a First Amendment to Ground Lease Agreement between the City of Columbia and ASH Bickley Road, LLC (727 Harden Street) – *Approved*

Upon a motion made by Mr. McDowell and seconded by Mr. Duvall, Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution No.: R-2020-053 Authorizing the City Manager to execute a First Amendment to Ground Lease Agreement between the City of Columbia and ASH Bickley Road, LLC (727 Harden Street).

PUBLIC HEARING

11. City of Columbia Five Year Consolidated Plan and Fiscal Year Annual Action Plan - Ms. Gloria Saeed, Community Development Director

Ms. Gloria Saeed, Community Development Director said the Five Year Consolidated Plan (ConPlan) is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The ConPlan describes the jurisdictions of Community Development priorities and multi-year goals based on assessments of housing and community development needs and analysis of housing and economic market conditions. The City has partnered with Civitas to assist us with completing the Five Year Consolidated Plan and Fiscal Year Annual Action Plan.



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020

Mr. Eric Chatham, President of Civitas said the ConPlan is a HUD required document as a stipulation for the City receiving funds from HUD each year. HUD requires that at least every five years the City takes a pause in HUD programs and reanalyzes the community needs. The Consolidated Plan also includes our Annual Action Plan (AP). The AP describes the specific planned uses for HUD programs and how the funds will be allocated for this upcoming 2020 program year. The ConPlan includes the following major components: needs assessment, housing market analysis, five-year strategic plan, and citizen participation. We hosted a series of public meetings throughout the community. Many of the Council members were able to attend some of the meetings in their jurisdictions. The allocation amounts for each program is based on a formula from HUD. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is the oldest HUD program and has the widest eligible uses. The City often uses those funds for public facility improvements, sidewalks, parks, housing, non-residential building improvements, public services from outside agencies proving assistance to low-moderate income, and planning and administrative expenses. The Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) is primarily dedicated to providing affordable housing throughout the community. Affordable housing must be dedicated for households at or below 80% of the area median income. The City often uses those funds to provide housing development subsidies for multi-family and single-family housing developments. The City has a home buyer assistance program, owner-occupied rehabilitation program, and in some cases also offers a portion of those funds for rental assistance eligible vouchers. The third program the City receives annually is referred to as the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA). The program provides rental assistance and supportive services for persons in the region that have HIV or AIDS. Based on community feedback and conversations with staff we developed a list of these priority needs for the five-year period. These priorities are: expand and improve public infrastructure and facilities, preserve and develop affordable housing, public services and quality of life improvements, housing and supportive services for persons with HIV/AIDS, and provide for economic opportunities within Columbia. For our 2020 Action Plan, the table displays the projects and allocations for the CDBG program. The administration can be up to 20% of the allocation. For public facilities and infrastructure, we included park improvement projects at Hyatt Park and TS Martin Park that will be approved in the 2020 program year. Housing programs are ongoing programs that have been long operated by the City, which include the Housing Rehab Operations, Maintenance Assistance Program, and City Lender/Down Payment Assistance Loan Program. Public services are often your outside agencies which provide supportive services for low-moderate income individuals and families as well as supportive services for persons with special needs like homeless, elderly, or disabled. Under Economic Development and the Office of Business Opportunities, we are funding for commercial redevelopment and job retention programs. For the HOME program, administration is capped at 10% of the annual allocation. The Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) reserves are nonprofit affordable



We Are Columbia

COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020

housing developers in the community which the City is required to allocate at least 15% of funds to those eligible organizations. The City will continue to allocate part of the funds for owner occupied rehab. The difference from the CDBG program is that the HOME program allows for substantial rehabilitation which might include a whole house renovation and not just emergencies. HOME funds will also be allocated for the City Lender Program and all other affordable housing development programs for both rental and home ownership. For the HOPWA program, the City will allocate the maximum 3% for administration. We have listed the ongoing partners that provide HOPWA services for clients throughout the region with these funds. We had surveys open for both the community at large and stakeholder organizations. The surveys were available for almost three months. We promoted them through the City's website, social media, and during community meetings around the City. We only received 50 responses from the community at large and 33 responses from community organizations and stakeholders. Creation of affordable housing and homebuyer assistance was the number one priority in the responses from the stakeholders, followed by public services, homeowner and rental housing rehabilitation, public facilities improvements, and economic development. The most important fact we consolidated is that 55% of the renters in the City of Columbia pay more than 30% of their income towards housing costs. They are considered housing cost burdened. When you have such a high rate of cost burdened renters, it becomes difficult for that portion of the City's population to be able to have discretionary funding for any kind of other expenditures. This limits their ability to advance to home ownership. I would concur with the stakeholders that affordable rental housing development and preservation of existing affordable rental housing in the community has to be one of the highest priorities. The HUD programs primarily benefit the low to moderate income (LMI) households. The map indicates the low to moderate income areas throughout the City. At least 51% of people living in this area have incomes at or below 80% of the area median. Columbia median income is \$43,650, 80, the LMI in Columbia is approximately less than \$34,920. The HUD programs do adjust for household size. We are currently presenting the public hearing and have conducted a 30-day public comment period. We are looking for your approval and we will then conclude and summarize all of the feedback. We will be ready to submit the plan to HUD for approval by Friday, May 15th. HUD has a 45-day review period and we anticipate having approval and access to funds around July 31, 2020.

Councilman Davis asked about the possible anticipated cuts to fund allocations for FY 2020.

Ms. Gloria Saeed, Community Development Director said the amounts that we are showing in terms of the HUD 2020 fund allocations are what has already been allocated for the City to receive this year. HUD is pretty consistent in their amounts. The amount has an increase from what was allocated to the City last year.



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020

Councilor Brennan asked if funding for administration goes to City administration or if there is a third party that administers the use of the funds.

Ms. Gloria Saeed, Community Development Director said the funds are for City administration, including paying for the salaries of City staff.

Councilor Brennan asked if City Council has the discretion on how we decide to use these funds appropriately and effectively.

Ms. Gloria Saeed, Community Development Director said we certainly were looking at programs to recommend for funding. We need to make sure they are in alignment with the priorities and goals set forth in the Consolidated Plan. City Council does have the discretion to make specific requests and decisions on how to direct funds as long as they are still in line with the ConPlan.

Mr. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said the projects that were outlined in the presentation are the recommended projects. I want to make sure that is clear. They went through the committee process and review.

Ms. Gloria Saeed, Community Development Director said each year we go through the process where we hold meetings and put out the funds available for non-profits or groups to apply for. Normally, the process starts in the fall of each year. The applications are reviewed and vetted for completeness. The Citizens Advisory Committee assists in reviewing and making recommendations to Council for approval.

Councilor Rickenmann said it's very important that we move for some type of tax reform. If you look at the majority of cost that is generated in rent it comes from property taxes. Every one of those rental units are considered an investment property which is taxed at 6%. This continues to be a community burden which goes along with the studies we are going to see. This is another reason we need to look at a tax reform and figure out how we can become competitive because these same folks can go rent in another county and have a lot less rent and just commute into town. We need to keep folks in town and make it affordable. Unfortunately, this highlights the disadvantage that the tax structure has put on our City. I hope we can get to a point where we can level the playing field.

No one appeared in support of or in opposition to this matter.



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020

Upon a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mayor Benjamin, Council voted unanimously to approve City of Columbia Five Year Consolidated Plan and Fiscal Year Annual Action Plan for submission to the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION / ACTION

12. COVID-19 Update - The Honorable Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin – *Received as information no action was taken*

- *CARES Act Funding COVID-19 Relief Briefing - Ms. Gloria Saeed, Community Development Director*

Ms. Gloria Saeed, Community Development Director said the City is in a position to receive additional funding for CDBG CARES Act. The overall CARES Act covered CDBG in the amount of \$5 billion and the City of Columbia was awarded through the first round which consisted of \$2 billion in CDBG-CV funding. The City will receive an additional \$611,921. In addition, HOPWA funding has been awarded in the amount of \$220,838. The funds must be used to either prevent, prepare for, or respond to the pandemic. Some eligible uses include buildings and improvements including public facilities, assistance to businesses including special economic development assistance, and provisions of new or quantifiable increased public services. Other eligible uses include planning, capacity building, and technical assistance. Some of the programs we are already funding with our regular CDBG programs assist the low to moderate population by providing medical services, rental assistance, and food share programs. There has always been a need for these programs but now with the COVID-19 crisis in our community there are going to be additional needs in those areas. We are also receiving HOPWA-CV funds and they can be used for housing payment assistance, specifically to assist those who are HIV/AIDS positive. We will be extending the deadline for survey submissions to get feedback from citizens and stakeholders on how to utilize the additional funding. As we move forward in preparation of what is going to be a substantial amendment, once HUD approves the ConPlan and action plan that we will submit on May 15, 2020, we would like in the meantime to prepare information to bring back to Council in relation to the programs we will be recommending through the substantial amendment. HUD has extended the date to submit the ConPlan and Action Plan to August 16, 2020. We have also received guidelines on some of the things that will be extended for the substantial amendment. In the past we have funded public service providers with the maximum cap of 15%. HUD has released that cap due to COVID-19. They also reduced the 30-day public comment period to a 5-day comment period and have suspended in-person public hearings. One of the things HUD has not waived at this point are the requirements related to fair housing, nondiscrimination, labor standards, and the environment.



We Are Columbia

COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020

Those are some of the things they also have held in place with our CDBG-DR and CDBG Mitigation funding. We have a proposed timeline to work in conjunction with our submittal of the regular ConPlan and Action Plan. We have a deadline of May 15, 2020 to get them submitted. In the interim, we will prepare and conduct a survey to help determine needs and priorities for the CDBG-CV funds and HOPWA funds to have them available by May 26, 2020 for public comment. By June 30, 2020, our goal is to have our programs completed for CDBG-CV funding. We will post the public notice to allow for citizens' comments and then we will submit the substantial amendment to HUD for approval by July 15, 2020. HUD may take up to 45 days to review. We expect to hear back by August 30, 2020 and at that time be prepared to have those funds available.

Mayor Benjamin asked if we can use some of the funding for quarantine purposes for individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 and do not have the opportunity to isolate at home.

Ms. Gloria Saeed, Community Development Director said that is something that could prevent, prepare, or respond to the pandemic. We have to make sure whatever we propose we can tie it back to the Coronavirus pandemic itself, so that is a potential viable activity to fund. We do want to hear anything that you believe will be beneficial to the public so we can do our vetting to make sure it's going to meet the program requirements.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager asked if we are able to go down that path and implement something in that regard before submitting the substantial amendment and still expect to be able to apply the funding towards it.

Ms. Gloria Saeed, Community Development Director said let me double check on that. The key is that we have adequate documentation for the desired programs in order to make sure we can get reimbursed.

- *Guidelines for Greenways and Open Spaces - Mr. Henry Simons, Assistant City Manager for Operations*

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said we are not proposing to make any changes to the closure of our park facilities. I am not at the point to make a recommendation to open any amenities. If any tennis courts are open, they should not have been because the facilities are still closed per your ordinance. My main concern is sustaining a healthy workforce. The City is a public service delivery agency and our biggest ability to do that is with a healthy staff. There has to be a balance of what is absolutely necessary and when it is necessary. Our preparedness level for reopening is well underway. I think we have done a good job in maintaining the health of our



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020

staff. It is also a consistency thing because there are sports other than tennis. Every community has something they are excited about wanting to do. I understand there may be desires you are hearing in the community. This is why we have tried to be flexible about greenspaces and having a soft enforcement on their use.

Mr. Henry Simons, Assistant City Manager for Operations said our park facilities and amenities remain closed at this time. This decision was made out of an abundance of caution and to protect our team members and citizens. However, we would like to encourage citizens to utilize our greenways and open spaces for walking, jogging, and exercise. It is important to note that we are asking citizens not to engage in any other athletic activities or sports on greenways and other open spaces. We desire for our citizens to enjoy the greenspaces safely and we ask that they follow our guidelines. We are asking our citizens to avoid gatherings of three or more at all times. We will be sensitive of families of three or more people. We would rather citizens to utilize our greenways and open spaces in the morning so we can manage the traffic. We are also asking citizens to follow the CDC guidelines regarding personal hygiene and social distancing. If a citizen is exhibiting symptoms do not visit our greenways or open spaces. People with COVID-19 may not exhibit symptoms so it's important to practice all guidelines.

Councilor Davis asked if the walking trails around neighborhood parks are part of the greenway and open spaces reopening phase.

Mr. Henry Simons, Assistant City Manager for Operations said yes that is correct, you can use the walking trails with social distance.

Councilor Rickenmann said tennis courts are not supervised by staff and they are social distance capable. In Cayce, they were utilizing them and they had the social distancing signs. I don't understand why tennis courts are different than an open space or walking trail. For the most part, it is a one-on-one sport and no staff is exposed. I would like us to reconsider that.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said our staff is manning those facilities that have tennis courts. I think it will be inconsistent with other decisions. As you know, Greenview Park has a very active tennis community. We will have to bring back staff just for tennis. The facilities are still closed. Our staff helps to maintain the Columbia Tennis Center. I don't want to put you in the position of picking and choosing what is meaningful to our public who finds different things that are meaningful to them. We have to be careful when we go down that path. I personally do not recommend that yet.



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020**

Mayor Benjamin said we are in an odd place right now. We have a number of our citizens that are eager to return to normal life as much as possible. We hoped that this would have happened after a deceleration of cases. We are not there in terms of the articulated steps by public health officials. We continue to act in the interest of the people of Columbia. We are taking different steps based on our community, not other communities, who are taking different steps based on different metrics. We have to talk about how we prepare our staff to return at the appropriate time. In the absence of some formal consistent standards, we have to make consistent determinations of our priorities and steps we are taking. I prefer the former and not the latter. I think we have to keep our eyes on public health. I'd rather be overly cautious than not cautious enough.

Councilor Devine said my concern is about enforcement. I think we are going to see more confusion considering the Governor's order and his discussion of opening pools, greenspaces, and other things. What does this mean as far as our staff and putting them in a position to enforce and making sure they are protected. We have seen in other areas where people have tried to enforce things like masks and social distancing where it has put people in harm's way. I do feel like tennis is a sport that lends itself to social distancing but I do see where we need to be consistent with all of our facilities. I would be concerned if we say we are opening up, you may have some places where it will be hard to enforce social distancing. We have to be careful as we ease back in. We know people are eager and we need to have a consistent message and back up our concerns with data. I do want us to address enforcement especially when it comes to our staff enforcing the regulations.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said I have to think about the different repercussions for when and how we do things. We will have to enforce heavily if we open up things in mass. We can ease our way into things and do it in a measured way that will allow us to not have to have so much enforcement. I have not heard any complaints from our park rangers after the greenspaces reopening. We certainly have to be more clear in what is open, what can be used, and the guidelines citizens have to follow. Our rangers will be enforcing and CPD will be monitoring.

Mayor Benjamin said enforcing things that we shouldn't have to enforce are not in the responsibilities of our park staff, they are there to administer and serve our citizens when actively using park spaces. I also don't think it should be the fire marshals or police officers' jobs to handle the spacing of individuals outside of businesses. We are doing our best to help with social distancing but we have to make sure we keep our staff safe and healthy. We have to make sure that we continue to be clear in the rules and that they are articulated properly. If we see some type of egregious flouting of those rules, then we need to be prepared to respond however we need to keeping an eye on the issues of equity and consistency. Social distancing is not a



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020

criminal offense, while it is a public health issue. We are not in the business of penalizing people for recreating. We are going to have to work with the Sheriff and county to ensure folks who are participating in activities are being careful. The spread of the virus is very real despite what sport. We are going to have to listen to staff's feedback and give some guidance on what the markers are and how we continue to meet the overall needs. We have to keep the communication lines open. I am not comfortable with the data that we are seeing and we are going to have to see changes before we change course. The one piece of data that I hoped we were able to count on was the 14-day deceleration of cases. We are going to have to start determining what other standards we can rely on.

EMERGENCY ORDINANCE

13. Ordinance No.: 2020-048 Emergency Order to Extend the Temporary Closing of all Public Parks and Facilities to Protect the Health, Safety and Welfare of our Residents and Visitors

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said this approval will extend the ordinance you previously approved. The change includes is the reopening guidelines for greenways and open spaces. We will widely communicate that they are open to the public. We will be specific about what that means, the locations, and the guidelines the public needs to follow.

Mayor Benjamin asked what is the time extension of the ordinance. We need to revisit that before the ordinance expires.

Ms. Teresa Knox, City Attorney said the extension is for 60 days.

Upon a motion made by Mayor Benjamin and seconded by Mr. Duvall, Council voted unanimously to approve Ordinance No.: 2020-048 Emergency Order to Extend the Temporary Closing of all Public Parks and Facilities to Protect the Health, Safety and Welfare of our Residents and Visitors.



**COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020**

FISCAL YEAR 2020/2021 BUDGET WORKSHOP

14. Fiscal Year 2020/2021 Proposed Budget - Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget & Program Management Director – *Received as information no action was taken*

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget & Program Management Director said we are proposing the FY 2020/2021 budget. COVID-19 has financially impacted specific revenue streams. We have limited information that is generally used for forecasting revenues. Revenues that fluctuate based on economic drivers are anticipated to have the most impact. Business licenses being one of them on the general fund. The impact of COVID-19 in terms of severity and length of time are not known. We do anticipate impacts in our budgets for at least the two foreseeable fiscal years. The area that we think will see the most impact is business licenses. The revenues coming in this year are based on prior year activity so we are not seeing an impact on those other than the delay of those revenues coming in. Right now business licenses make up 28% of the general fund revenue streams. Other revenue streams that will be impacted are some of our user fees, in particular Parks and Recreation. We are also forecasting a reduction to the transfer from the hospitality tax. Other possible revenue streams that can be impacted are court fines, indirect property tax collections like our LOST revenues and delayed collections and payments. We anticipate a reduction in street parking meters since we are not collecting fees right now. Also as events are cancelled event parking will be reduced and two parking garages can potentially be impacted as well. Special revenue is where we certainly expect some significant impact both in hospitality tax and in particular accommodations tax with the decrease in occupancy rates in hotels now and in the foreseeable future. With the water and sewer fund and stormwater fund, we do not see as much as an impact in terms of our regular collections. There could be some impact in regards to ability to pay. As these revenues are impacted it will have impacts on the budget because our budgets are shaped by what we project in our revenues streams in order to have a balance budget. We do anticipate that as we have reduced revenues we will have reduced operating budgets. For our proposed FY 20/21 budget, we used our FY 18/19 actuals as our recommended budget to at least start this upcoming fiscal year. We do anticipate amending the budget later in the year. As we compare the budget proposed for next year, it shows a \$24 million reduction from the current year. Our proposed budget at this point for FY 20/21 is \$138,339,841, a reduction of 14.5% based on the current year amended budget. Our main goal continues to be to maintain existing service levels where possible but recognizing that some of our programs might have to be suspended. We will continue our public safety recruitment and retention efforts. Even though we are proposing the FY 18/19 actuals, we will have to work with our departments to revise their budgets. The budget you see today is not reflective of the departments' requests and does not show any actual allocations for each of our departments. This is a balanced budget that allow us to meet our requirements of passing a budget by June 30th. The



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020**

proposed operating budget for water and sewer is \$168,682,431, a 1.3% decrease from the current year amended budget. We are forecasting no rate increase for the upcoming year. The budget does include a \$40 million capital improvement program. While that is a reduction from current years, we do anticipate it will meet the deliverables of the EPA Consent Decree with an adjusted time frame. The capital improvement program funds reflect \$15 million for water improvements and \$25 million for wastewater improvements. The departments' budgets are proposed at \$99,937,452, making up about 50% of the operating budget. These budgets are reflective of what the departments submitted. With the water and sewer funds we are utilizing more technology to deliver services. We are seeing the advantage of that more so now in our current situation. The budget does reflect the continuation of the AMI project and more online opportunities to interact with customers. The debt service is reflected at \$41,946,034, that is about 25% of the operating budget. About 43% of the water capital improvement program is for our water plant improvements and the rest is for water quality and utility relocation. Wastewater capital improvement program funds include 35% for rehabilitation and 34% for program management. Also funded are capacity improvement projects and utility relocations. Our stormwater fund is proposed at \$14,023,299. The budget reflects a \$20 million capital improvement program for next year. The stormwater budget funds include 23% for Engineering and 30% for Public Works which includes operating costs. Public Works is inclusive of those services that provide support and maintenance of our stormwater system. Parking funds will see impacts on revenue due to COVID-19. The parking budget is proposed at \$7,727,250, a decrease of about 3%. The majority of our revenues come from street meters. The department budget reflects FY 18/19 actual expenditures and are not based on the requested FY 20/21 budgets. Debt service makes up \$2,711,776 of the parking fund, about 35% of the total budget. Hospitality tax is anticipated to be the most impacted area. The proposed budget is \$7,165,777, a reduction of \$4.1 million or 36.9%. The hospitality tax budget reflects a debt service of \$3,041,795. We have reflected a reduction in the transfer to the general fund of \$925,000. This leaves us with about \$1.3 million for allocations. We will work with City Council on making adjustments as we proceed. The accommodations tax budget was also significantly impacted. The proposed budget is \$1,472,056, a reduction of \$1.2 million or 46% from the current year. For both hospitality tax and accommodations tax, we will continue to monitor revenues and are prepared to amend the budget accordingly. We are seeking to set budget levels at amounts that are realistic in an effort to set expectations for funding limitations, especially for external groups that rely on these funding streams for operations. The budget is based on state law allocations. The first allocation being the reflection of the transfer to the general fund. We allocate 5% of the remaining amount for general purpose types of activities. We are proposing to move forward with the budget as presented today. We will advertise the budget in Monday's *The State* newspaper. We will have our public hearing and first reading on June 2nd and then second reading on June 16th. That will eliminate the need for any special called meetings in June.



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020**

Mayor Benjamin asked if there have been communications with any of the recipients of the hospitality tax and the committee as we look at proposed distribution cuts.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said yes we have talked to the committee through the committee chair and they received the letter you all directed us to draft. We have not had conversations with the line item agencies.

Ms. Missy Caughman, Budget & Program Management Director said we have spoken with the Hospitality Tax Committee to ask for some input on how they see collections. They have been informed that the committee allocations have been suspended until we know more information. They were asking for time to be able to focus on their own business operations. We have not had any further conversations with them. We have not heard back from many of the organizations yet to know whether they will continue to have their events. We can work through the applications to see which ones are still anticipating to move forward or the ones that have been cancelled altogether.

Councilor Duvall said we need to be strategic with our distributions this year to continue to find organizations that use the hospitality tax as a major part of their funding source. We have to realize that is going to be a big hit on a lot of these organizations. I think it is up to the Council to make wise choices as to which organizations get the capability from the hospitality tax to help the other organizations during this period of maybe a year or two. I have sent Council some proposals on the possible allocations.

Mayor Benjamin said there has to be a greater amount of dialogue with our organizations that provide the arts and cultural infrastructure of the City. We have to make sure we take care of the critical infrastructure of the City. I want to take a look at the transfer of the general fund and what remains to be allocated. I recommend we spend some time engaging with our philanthropic organizations that we hope will be willing to invest in Columbia. We need to start looking at other ways to keep supporting the arts and cultural infrastructure. We have to dig a little deeper into this with it being a difficult and unrecoverable loss for some of the organizations.

Councilor Devine said we don't know what is going to happen with our revenue. Do we see any glaring areas where we will need to pay attention to as it relates to staffing levels in the next coming months?



COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said there is nothing glaring at this time. I've been public in my position about looking at programmatic things that can certainly still allow the type of entity we are, to continue to do our job. There may be things we may have to hold before I get into reducing staff. We appreciate your support in always being flexible and helping us put this budget together.

Mayor Benjamin said let's see how we can curate public discussion in a way that can be illuminating for us. Events that may bring revenue also have expenses and some bring no revenue. Maybe there are ways in which these partners that rely on hospitality tax might be able to look at staff recommended numbers to find ways to stick around those perimeters. We can take their input going forward and see how helpful the discussions are.

Councilor Davis said I have looked at staff recommendations and I am impressed with their approach and how they looked at the anticipated impact. We have to keep law enforcement and first responders moving regardless of other distractions. We have to be able to use technology to our advantage so we can become a lot stronger and smarter moving forward.

Mr. Jeffery Palen, Assistant City Manager and Chief Financial Officer said we will be reviewing the forecast as we start to get actuals. One of the areas that will have the greatest impact will be the hospitality tax. The numbers presented today are decreases from prior years but as the economy starts back with summer activities there is potential for changes. A decade ago, we also had some budget issues but we came back later on in the year when we recognized additional revenues. There may not be funding today but we may be able to relook at that in some months.

RESOLUTION

15. Resolution No.: R-2020-056 Urging the United States Congress to Implement an Emergency Rental Assistance Program for Citizens Impacted by COVID-19 - *Approved*

Councilor Devine said this was a request from the Trade Organization of Apartment Complexes. We recognize that there were a lot of folks affected by COVID-19, but we want to make sure that people don't take advantage of programs that are in place for people who are struggling. This is a resolution for us to ask Congress to make sure there are parameters to the assistance that may get passed.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Devine and seconded by Mr. Duvall, Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution No.: R-2020-056 Urging the United States Congress to Implement an Emergency Rental Assistance Program for Citizens Impacted by COVID-19.



We Are Columbia

COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS/REFERRALS

No committee reports or referrals were made at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Voice message from Mr. Christopher Goodman, Columbia Resident said this is about the bike petition that we've been circulating. We see a real opportunity in this time of reduced travel with COVID-19 to advance the Walk Bike Plan. I know there are projects that have been considered over the years. We have watched as other neighboring cities like Charlotte and Greenville have taken the time to do some simple demonstration projects. Our petition that many of you have seen has twelve hundred signatures. I definitely hear a lot of positive responses. I think there is a real opportunity here, especially hearing the discussion you had about green spaces and those safe ways that we can be outside. This is also a safe way to start thinking differently about public spaces and our community. This is just part of an ongoing conversation that we will continue to have.

Ms. Teresa Wilson, City Manager said I am aware of the petition being circulated. Mr. Brennan and Ms. Devine have taken some leadership in asking staff to look at a demonstration project. We are reviewing the infrastructure and possible location. We had one meeting and we should be having another meeting in the next week to look at those recommendations. At least one demonstration project will move forward.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion made by Mr. Duvall and seconded by Mr. Rickenmann, Council voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 4:56 p.m. for the discussion of **Items 16** through **18** as presented.

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

*Legal advice pertaining to COVID-19
Columbia Housing Authority
Municipal Court
Development Corporations
Shared Micromobility*



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020**

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

W&S Letter of Credit, SMBC

18. Discussion of the employment of an employee pursuant to S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(1)

Municipal Court

ADJOURNMENT

Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Erika D. M. Hammond, CMC
City Clerk