



City of Smyrna

2800 King Street
Smyrna, Georgia 30080

Meeting Minutes - Final Committee of the Whole

Thursday, October 29, 2020

6:00 PM

Community Center

Smyrna Community Center Magnolia Room / 200 Village Green Circle SE
Parking and entrance to meeting on Powder Springs Street Side of Building
MASKS REQUIRED / TEMPERATURE WILL BE CHECKED

Roll Call

Present 14 - Councilmember Derek Norton, Councilmember Charles Welch,
Councilmember Charles Welch, Councilmember Susan Wilkinson,
Councilmember Susan Wilkinson, Councilmember Glenn Pickens,
Councilmember Austin Wagner, Councilmember Travis Lindley,
Councilmember Charles Welch, Councilmember Charles Welch,
Councilmember Susan Wilkinson, Councilmember Susan Wilkinson, Mayor
pro tem / Councilmember Tim Gould, and Councilmember Lewis Wheaton

Also Present 1 - Scott Cochran

Staff 6 - Joe Bennett, Roy Acree, Frank Martin, Carol Sicard, Joey Staubes, and
Tina Monaghan

1. Call to Order

Mayor Derek Norton called the October 29, 2020 Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. New Business

A. [COW20-11](#) Parks and Rec Tennis Court Reservations Discussion - Richard Garland

This item was put on hold until a meeting at a later date due to Parks and Rec Director Richard Garland needing to remain at the Community Center due to power outage from Tropical Storm Zeta.

B. [COW20-12](#) Review and Discussion of 2021 Employee Benefits - Carol Sicard

Human Resources Director Carol Sicard spoke about this being the time of the year where we discuss and vote on benefits renewal. She introduced two gentlemen from Hutchinson Traylor that were there to speak about a new prescription drug plan and the savings that they will be able to offer.

Mr. John Knop said that there are no changes on the medical side of benefits. The goal is to lower cost on the drug end to save money to compensate for the increase on the medical side.

Mr. Matt Henderson was the second speaker. He explained that there are three

buckets of expense...medical, administrative, and pharmacy. He provided a detailed summary of Pharmacy Benefit Management (PBM) of which there are several main companies. He explained spread pricing. Transparency has been a struggle and has led to many hidden mark ups. Flat fee is where they charge a certain amount across the board which resulted in a savings in other cities that have used this proposed plan. Clawback was explained using \$10 but the drug only costs \$2 so where does the change go? Recommending a new PBM which will greatly reduce the amount of money that they city is paying. 89% savings on just three medications that a number of employees are currently taking. Two were cholesterol and one was for acid reflux. He then took the top five of the most expensive drugs that employees are taking. \$408,000 in just nine months. He said that the new PBM would cut this cost to the city down to \$0. Controlling the formulary to keep certain meds off the plan that are orphan drugs which are marked up versions of meds that are much cheaper.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson asked about generics. The PBM will make sure that generic drugs are used whenever possible.

Councilmember Charles "Corkey" Welch asked how this would affect the employees. Rather than paying the co-pay, they are paying the cost of the drug.

City Attorney Scott Cochran asked what will happen when a doctor prescribes a medication that they are trying to avoid. They have pharmacists on staff that will help work with the doctor to find another medication that will work at a lower cost.

Mayor Derek Norton said that they are encouraging people to go to other non-specialty pharmacies which should save money. If they want to go to specialty pharmacies then they have to pay an additional fee in order to do so. It will involve educating people on the topic.

The new plan would be Veracity RX benefits and we are currently using Express Scripts. Veracity RX benefits does not have any early termination fees so it would not hurt to try and see what we can save. They would like to send termination letter tomorrow to Express Scripts and replace them so that the city can get started with savings right away.

Mayor Norton said that he appreciated the details that the brokers provided because in years past, the brokers would often avoid providing any definitive details.

Ms. Sicard said it is super important to provide education relating to health care and health plans to employees and that is going to be the goal over the coming weeks and months.

3. Review of the November 2, 2020 Preliminary Mayor and Council Agenda

A. [COW20-14](#) Review of the November 2, 2020 Mayor and Council Preliminary Meeting Agenda

Mayor Norton spoke briefly about how COVID numbers are on the rise so he wanted to remind everyone to be safe and follow protocol.

Under land issues, the first two items will be tabled again. Mr. Joey Staubes, Planner II, provided some explanation on the items at the Mayor's request.

Mr. Staubes went over item C explaining the changes that were made including reducing the units by one and building a cul-de-sac rather than a hammer head. These changes were a result of meetings between the developer, residents of the area and some elected officials. The item was denied by the Planning and Zoning Board but the changes seem to meet the needs of everyone involved.

The Mayor asked Councilmember Travis Lindley what input he was given by the people in his ward. He feels good about the product as it stands. Everyone worked together to come up with a good end product.

Mr. Staubes said a commercial building permit will be added the final Mayor and Council agenda for an auto repair shop. A building permit was already issued. It will be located on one of the out parcels on Concord by the Kroger.

Councilmember Charles "Corkey" Welch asked to back up to the Church Street project. Zoned R-15 but Community Development are asking to go to R-10.

Councilmember Tim Gould asked about the conditions. Mr. Staubes stated that there are 25 to make sure everything is as the city requires it to be.

Mayor Norton asked Finance Director Kristin Robinson who was joining the meeting virtually to speak on the budget amendment agenda item.

Ms. Robinson explained that the budget amendments are usually done after each fiscal year to make sure everything balances out allowing the Finance Department to move funds around as needed. All of this was explained on the first hand out. The details of the SPLOST information was explained on the second hand out.

Councilmember Charles "Corkey" Welch asked Ms. Robinson if she knew what was being added to the fund balance since this was the end of year information. She provided an estimate of 2.8 million dollars. He requested a simple summary of the information on how she came to that balance.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson expressed interest in meeting with Ms. Robinson to discuss the details further because she was unable to hear all of the information that was being presented.

Councilmember Lewis Wheaton spoke about a great virtual town hall he hosted which had a high turn out. A lot of productive discussion was had.

Mayor Norton spoke about Oakdale Road request. There is a proposal designating \$10 million dollars in Local Maintenance Improvement Grant (LMIG) funding for that corridor. The goal is to put resources over there to connect Ward 7 to the rest of the city.

The Mayor asked Fire Chief Roy Acree about the deadline to apply for money for businesses from CARES Act which is the end of the month. At total of 30 plus applications were submitted and 50 were anticipated so there should be money left over. Mr. Bennett added to that as well speaking about what was going on in the City of Acworth in terms of assistance for small businesses.

Councilmember Wilkinson had a question for Community Development Director Rusty Martin. Something about a zoning sign that she saw outside of the city. Mr. Staubes is going to look into it.

Councilmember Gould said Memory Lane is going to come back to Mayor and Council. He asked City Attorney Scott Cochran to explain the situation. The License and Variance Board recently approved it but an appeal was submitted by a group of neighbors. Mayor and Council will consider the variance in mid-November because it has to be properly advertised. It will be treated as a variance with a public hearing.

Councilmember Austin Wagner spoke with Interim City Administrator Joe Bennett about CARES Act funding and helping residents pay utilities. He wanted to know where the city was at to be able to help people with their bills since Georgia Power has started shut offs again.

Councilmember Wheaton thinks that it may be a good idea to set aside some funding for utility assistance.

Councilmember Glenn Pickens asked Mr. Bennett about the CARES Act money. Mr. Bennett offered some explanation.

Chief Acree explained that approximately \$800,000 with another \$400,000 was anticipated to come in from the three approved draws. 1.2 million in total.

Mayor Norton asked staff to prepare a summary of CARES Act information including what we have received, what has come in so far and then asked everyone to put some thought into Councilmember Wagner's suggestion of helping people with utility bills. He mentioned about potentially using CDBG funding as well but that is limited to certain areas.

Public Works Director Frank Martin spoke about road closures and trees down from the storms. He has people on standby waiting for Georgia Power to clear the wires so that trees can be safely removed. There are also crews out cleaning up the roads from debris.

Councilmember Wilkinson asked if anyone had heard about a woman who was stuck in her home due to a tree and if the situation had been resolved.

Councilmember Welch asked if the City would get any funds for the storm clearing. Waiting to hear if Governor declares an emergency.

Councilmember Wilkinson expressed concern about changing land use on Church Street project. She feels that it is important to utilize the future land use plan as a guide.

4. Other Business (as needed)

Introduction of Dat Luu as Assistant IT Director

Interim City Administrator Joe Bennett spoke of Dat Luu and his experience in the IT field. He specializes in Cyber Security and has a bachelor's degree, master's degree, and many other certifications. Mr. Luu was previously with the City for six years and has most recently been working with Douglas County. He has decided to come back in the new position of Information Systems Assistant Director that was recently reclassified by Mayor and Council.

Mr. Luu thanked everyone and expressed his excitement to come back. His start date

will be November 16th. He is interested in making Smyrna a smart city and in assisting the City's IT department to run smoothly and progressively. He took a moment to introduce his lovely wife.

5. Executive Session (as needed)

Personnel Discussion

Councilmember Travis Lindley made a motion to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel. Councilmember Tim Gould seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 7 to 0.

Councilmember Lewis Wheaton made a motion to return to regular session. Councilmember Austin Wagner seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 7 to 0.

6. Adjournment

Mayor Norton adjourned the October 29, 2020 Committee of the Whole meeting at 8:10 PM.