

City of Smyrna

*2800 King Street
Smyrna, Georgia 30080*



Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 31, 2018

6:00 PM

City Hall

Committee of the Whole

1. Roll Call

Council: Mayor A. Max Bacon, Derek Norton, Andrea Blustein, Susan Wilkinson, Maryline Blackburn, Charles Welch, Ron Fennel

Staff: Tammi Saddler Jones (City Administrator), Scott Cochran (City Attorney), Elsa Thompson (Administrative Services Coordinator), Christy Ullman (Executive Asst. to the Mayor & Council), Ashley Youmans (ICMA Management Fellow), Rusty Martin (Senior Planner), Scott Stokes (Public Works Director), Kristin Robins (Finance Director), Kelly Brown (Purchasing Manager), Mike Hickenbottom (Acct Coordinator), Claire Philips (Accounts Payable), Jered Sigmon (Budget Officer), Greg Van Antwerp (Utility Svcs Manager),

Guests: Larry Terry (Croy Engineering), Averno Gumbs (Intern)

2. Call to Order

Mayor A. Max Bacon called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

3. Max the K9 Introduction

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones introduced Max the K-9. Officer Sellers, Max's handler advised that Max was a narcotics detection and tracking dog. Officer Sellers noted that Max was already trained when the police department purchased him and that he, himself trained for 160 hours to become Max's handler as well as achieves several State certifications. Max can detect 4 major narcotics as and he can track anything with a human scent. He advised that Max will be 2 years old in October and at 74.9 pounds was very playful and still had "some puppy" in him. Max the K-9 and Officer Sellers are currently assigned to the uniform patrol division. Max's name was picked by students at Belmont Hills Elementary after a contest to name him was held. Mayor Bacon said he thought the name was great and thanked them for coming.

4. Finance Department Presentation

Finance Director Kristin Robinson announced that Controller Richard Plate was out. She introduced her staff and asked that they individually stand to speak about their job duties and how long they had been with the City.

Mayor Bacon asked that they begin with the employee who had been with the City the longest.

Utility Services Manager Greg Van Antwerp was the oldest Finance Department employee. He noted that he had been with the City for 34 years. Mr. Van Antwerp advised that he managed the utilities service department which provided the City's residential water service. He noted that the department handled the meters, meter readings and billed customers. Mayor Bacon stated that if there was a problem with anyone's bill to send them to Mr. Van Antwerp. Councilmember Ron Fennel stated that he has received very good customer service reviews about Mr. Van Antwerp. Ms. Robinson noted that Mr. Van Antwerp was good at diffusing situations and stated that she was not aware at the amount of calls the utilities department received until he's out of the office. Mayor Bacon inquired how many people worked in his department. Mr. Van Antwerp advised that there are 3 customer service representatives and 3

technicians that he supervised. Mayor inquired about the manual reads. Mr. Van Antwerp advised that they are getting worse because the battery life in the current meters were expiring and that they were running approximately a few hundred per month. He noted that with the new technology they can read meters from 2 blocks away.

Account Coordinator Mike Hickenbottom was the second oldest employee at 32 years with the City. Mr. Hickenbottom advised that he worked in the tax office and serviced approximately 18,000 customers per year for property taxes. He summarized the various taxes and fees the City collects. Mayor Bacon noted that Mr. Van Antwerp and Mr. Hickenbottom had a high level of customer interaction and spotlighted one of Mr. Hickenbottom's most praiseworthy moments and commended Mr. Hickenbottom for his customer service skills.

Claire Phillips advised that she handled accounts payable and the payroll aspect of the Finance Department and had been with the City 25 years. Mayor Bacon noted that Ms. Phillips' mother and sister both worked for the City at one time as well.

Budget Officer Jered Sigmon advised that July would be his 9 year anniversary with the City. Mr. Sigmon stated that he has also worked in other departments within the City and began his career with Smyrna as an ICMA Fellow. He noted that he mainly worked on the City's budget and briefly summarized other duties he handled as well. Councilmember Maryline Blackburn asked him how he got into finance. Councilmember Ron Fennel stated that they are lucky to have Mr. Sigmon on staff.

Purchasing Manager Kelly Brown advised that August would make 2 years with the City for her. Ms. Brown stated that she handled all of the bids, bid advertisements in addition to making sure that all City employees are following the purchasing policy. Ms. Robinson stated that Ms. Brown had initially been hired as a Buyer but stepped into the role of Purchasing Manager when the previous manager retired although she currently assumed the responsibility for both jobs until a new Buyer is hired.

Ms. Robinson stated that they may be a small team but that they were a wonderful department.

Ms. Robinson announced that Mr. Hickenbottom had been selected to receive an employee recognition award. She noted that Terri Graham nominated him for his longtime customer service excellence and the outstanding job he does.

Ms. Saddler Jones advised that Administration wanted to restart the employee recognition awards and have employees nominated on a quarterly basis.

Mayor Bacon stated that he wanted recipients of the employee recognition award to receive monetary compensation as well.

Ms. Saddler Jones advised that staff would work on it to make it happen.

5. FY19 Proposed Budget

Finance Director Kristin Robinson presented an overview of the budget changes since the last Committee of the Whole meeting. She stated that the only change was an additional \$2,000 for Human Resources and advised that Human Resources Director Kay Bolick asked for the amount to be added to the department's professional services fund to cover costs for psychological evaluations for incoming detention

officers. She advised that there was only \$215 of unallocated money in the contingency fund due to merit increases and possible legal expenses and noted that \$867,000 had been set aside for that.

City Attorney Scott Cochran clarified that the specific dollar amount of \$867,000 was due to the amount of the demand.

Ms. Robinson stated that they had proposed to remove \$100,000 of committed funds for debt from the budget but recommended to leave it as is in case of any unforeseen events. She noted that they had been very thorough with completing the budget and that they put everything they could think of in the budget and a large contingency fund should not be needed.

Mayor Bacon inquired when they would know whether or not the legal issues would affect the City. Mr. Cochran stated that it could be 3 months and noted that the City over budgeted for the legal issue. Mr. Cochran advised that this was a case where they were considering reinstatement and the budget numbers reflected the worst case scenario of no reinstatement although he believed it would be worked out.

Mayor Bacon inquired if the payout for the legal issue happened, would it affect the budget items that had been approved such as the new positions and also wanted to know the number of new positions. Ms. Robinson advised that there were 11 new positions and that they would not be affected. Mayor Bacon expressed his concerns about the contingency fund. Ms. Robinson explained that the actual contingency fund is over one million dollars when you remove the items that they over budgeted for; if they funds were not used, they would go to the contingency fund because those funds are not considered part of the operating budget.

Budget Officer Jered Sigmon noted that it was not only about keeping the expenses where expected but the revenues turning out the way they were projected.

Councilmember Ron Fennel stated that Finance had done a great job over the last few years with the budget.

Mayor Bacon expressed his concerns about the overtime overages. Ms. Robinson advised that funds had been put into the FY19 budget for overtime and stated that some of the departments made adjustments to employee schedules to avoid overtime and gave an example of how the Parks and Recreation Department would be handling it.

Ms. Saddler Jones advised that she could share information that Parks and Recreation Director Richard Garland gave her about his plan to tackle overtime overages. Council advised that they would like the numbers sent to them.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson inquired what funds pay for emergency situations such as the incident with the restrooms at the Community Center over the Memorial Day holiday. Ms. Robinson advised that it would be covered by the City's insurance.

Mayor Bacon inquired if the overtime pay for the staff that handled the emergency situation over the weekend was also covered by insurance. Ms. Robinson advised that she was not sure but that Human Resources Director Kay Bolick might know. Ms. Saddler Jones advised that she would communicate with Ms. Bolick.

Ms. Wilkinson inquired about money for the bike park grant and if the City had the

funds to cover their portion. Ms. Robinson advised that there was no money in the budget for the park. Mr. Sigmon stated that initial expenses would be funded with SPLOST money and that he believed that Parks and Recreation Director Ricard Garland had anticipated expenses for the park but did not know how much the City's financial commitment would be. ICMA Fellow Ashley Youmans stated that the City's commitment was an estimated \$70,000 – the grant required that the City contribute at least 20%. Ms. Wilkinson inquired if those numbers included the restrooms. Ms. Youmans advised that it did not.

Ms. Wilkinson then inquired if there were funds budgeted to start on any of the prioritized projects in the Parks and Recreation Masterplan. Ms. Robinson stated that the funds will be mainly going towards repairs but that no new projects will be started. She noted that they would be discussing new projects at the upcoming SPLOST. Ms. Wilkinson inquired when the next SPLOST would take place.

Mr. Fennel explained the SPLOST process.

Mayor Bacon stated that he did not believe the park would be able to be funded by SPLOST rather a parks bond. Ms. Wilkins inquired when the last parks bond was done. Ms. Robinson advised that it was in 2005 and noted that approximately \$20,000,000 was owed. Ms. Robinson explained some of the City's background with bonds.

Councilmember Derek Norton inquired how much of surplus was left. Ms. Robinson advised that there was approximately one million dollars and hoping for a 2018 surplus to add to that.

Mayor Bacon asked for the dollar amount of the total budget. Ms. Robinson stated it was \$92,000,000.

Ms. Wilkinson stated that she had concerns that \$90,000 were spent on the parks masterplan but no funds were going towards doing the projects. She also voiced her concerns about the \$300,000 that were allocated for the museum.

Council had a discussion about Ms. Wilkinson's concerns.

Ms. Wilkson stated that she wanted it noted that she had a problem with \$300,000 being allocated for the museum when the City already had one and no funds were being allocated for new projects.

Mayor Bacon stated that if any Councilmember had an issue with the budget, they should vote against it and noted that there were some aspects of the budget that he did not like but that it did not mean he would vote against it. He commended Finance staff for their diligence in completing the budget.

Ms. Saddler Jones stated that if Council had any questions about anything regarding the budget, please let staff know and noted that staff had no issues being transparent.

Ms. Robinson advised Council about the small business grant that was discussed at the last meeting. She clarified that if the program is successful, the commitment would be \$20,000 per year for the next 10 years.

Council and staff thanked the Finance Department.

6. City Administrator Report

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones introduced Averno Gumbs as the newest City Intern. She stated that Ms. Gumbs was working towards a Master's in Public Administration at Clark Atlanta University and would be completing 495 hours as an unpaid intern with the City.

Councilmember Derek Norton asked Ms. Gumbs how many of those hours she had already completed. Ms. Gumbs advised that as of today's date she would be at 158 hours.

Ms. Gumbs greeted everyone and gave a brief summary about herself and noted that she was very happy to be working for the City of Smyrna.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson stated that Ms. Gumbs asked "awesome questions" at the budget meeting that was held the week prior.

Ms. Saddler Jones announced that the Johnson Controls service contract would end in June 2018. She advised that she and Public Works Director Scott Stokes had met with Johnson Controls and they would be providing the City with a proposal to see if Council would like to continue working with them.

Mr. Norton stated that he felt the City should look at other companies.

Councilmember Corkey Welch suggested that staff look over the original proposal from Johnson Controls to see what was truly saved over the life of the contract.

Ms. Saddler Jones advised that she, Mayor Bacon, Assistant City Administrator Scott Andrews and Community Relations Director Jennifer Bennett met with Google Fiber representatives earlier in the day. She noted that nothing much had changed with them but that Google Fiber was committed to doing service in the City. She noted that they currently serviced approximately 1,000 apartment units in the City but Google Fiber was not able to say when they would offer service in the City. She stated that they spoke briefly about the huts that Google Fiber had throughout the City and advised that they would be doing maintenance on them. Mr. Welch stated his concerns about the huts.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson inquired about the type of maintenance the huts needed. Ms. Saddler Jones advised that they were in need of landscaping.

Ms. Saddler Jones announced that Google Fiber donated \$2,500 to the Smyrna Library.

Mayor Bacon stated that it was a good meeting although he was hoping to hear that they would be offering service in the area soon and that the main reason for the delay was that Google Fiber was now on their 3rd CEO in 2 years so they were taking care of in-house issues first.

Lastly, Ms. Saddler Jones advised everyone of a meeting she and Councilmembers Andrea Blustein and Maryline Blackburn had with Chairman Boyce at the County Commissioners Office in reference to the CDBG facility in Ms. Blustein's Ward. She stated that the Chairman advised that as long as there is not a community and city consensus, the County would not be moving forward with anything at the facility on Teasley Drive.

Councilmember Andrea Blustein stated the issues the community had with a group

called the Zion Keepers that wanted to offer services for homeless veterans out of the facility and noted that they did not want them there.

Councilmember Maryline Blackburn advised that the County was willing to sell the City the facility.

Mr. Fennel inquired if there were any County project that could occupy the space. Ms. Blustein advised that the Chairman advised that the County had workers at the site cleaning and painting the building. She noted that he suggested that they could possibly make the facility a community computer lab. She stated that she did not believe the community would want the services if they were offered by the Zion Keepers.

Ms. Wilkinson noted that a group ran an afterschool program out of that building at one time although the County owned the building. She asked if it was possible to offer something like that. Ms. Saddler Jones advised that the County had a 5 year lease with the Zion Keepers.

Ms. Blackburn stated that they, along with the community would decide the services/ program that would be offered at the facility and that they could work something out with the Zion Keepers.

Council continued their discussion about the facility.

Ms. Saddler Jones advised she had nothing further.

7. Review of June 4, 2018 Mayor and Council Agenda

Mayor Bacon noted how short the agenda was and confirmed that there were only items on the Consent Agenda.

City Administrator Tammi Saddler Jones advised that Item 8D would be removed from the agenda at the suggestion of the City Attorney.

Mayor Bacon inquired if Item 8E reference the landscape truck was still going forward and if it was the best deal. Ms. Saddler Jones advised that there was only one bidder. Public Works Director Scott Stokes stated that they had sent bids to the company's Smyrna office and believed that the Doraville location was their home office.

Mayor Bacon read over the remaining items on the Consent Agenda.

Item 8G – Mayor Bacon confirmed that there were 2 ways to get speed humps put into a community; via a study or a petition. Mr. Stokes advised that he was correct.

City Attorney Scott Cochran advised that Council still had the final say in reference to the installation of speed humps.

Mr. Stokes provided data that was collected with the speed signs staff installed in the area. He advised that the first set of results clocked someone going 81 miles per hour on Carolyn Drive, a 25 miles an hour road. He provided a few other high speed numbers that the signs collected and stated that the speed study produced evidence that met the 85% requirement which showed that the speed humps were necessary. He noted that the final decision was to be made by Mayor and Council.

Councilmember Ron Fennel inquired how many humps would be installed.

Councilmember Derek Norton advised that they decided to install the first hump 500 feet from Spring Road, and then they would decide whether to install them in 500 or 1000 foot increments.

Councilmember Andrea Blustein asked Councilmember Derek Norton why she was not informed that speed humps would be installed on Spring Road as she had the left side of the street and he had the right.

Mr. Norton advised that this matter had been discussed for 2 years.

Ms. Blustein stated that the matter was not formally introduced and did not believe the speed humps were the answer to the problem.

Mr. Norton advised that several meetings had taken place and that all of the residents were pleased with the speed humps being installed.

Councilmember Susan Wilkinson inquired if they had to do the petition process and have the neighbors agree on it. She was advised that it did not because the data proved the speed humps were necessary.

Mr. Cochran advised that he felt this was the better route because the neighbors were not experts.

Mr. Stokes advised that they would start with 4 speed humps; 2 at Carolyn Drive and 2 at Spring Road.

There was no further discussion about the speed humps.

Ms. Saddler Jones advised that the police department had put together Hands-Free Law pamphlets and passed them around the room.

Mayor Bacon noted that he would like the hands-free law is advertised to the citizens and posted throughout the City.

Mayor Bacon inquired if anything needed to be added to the agenda. Nothing was added.

8. Other Business

Mayor Bacon reminded everyone to complete the City Administrator and City Clerk's performance evaluations and have them turned in by June 18th. He inquired if Ms. Saddler Jones had completed her department heads' evaluations. She advised that she had until June 28th to complete them.

Mr. Fennel reminded everyone that the State of the City Address was approaching and to be sure to RSVP; it will take place on July 12th. He also noted the Cobb Municipal Association event in Acworth at the lake but had to confirm the date.

Mayor Bacon spoke about the upcoming July 24th run-off election and advised that the City ordinance stated that a seat must be filled within 30 days of a vacancy. He noted that we were in violation of that and stated that if he'd known this information prior, he would have asked Former Councilmember Doug Stoner to hold off on resigning from

his seat so that the City could host its own special election. He noted that Ward 6 had no representation since February and stated that the City should not be piggybacking with the County on elections simply to save money.

There were no further discussions or comments.

9. Adjournment

Mayor A. Max Bacon declared the meeting adjourned at 7:26pm.