CITY OF SALISBURY
WORK SESSION
DECEMBER 1, 2014

Public Officials Present

Council President Jacob R. Day
Councilwoman Eugenie P. Shields
Vice President Laura Mitchell
Councilman Timothy K. Spies

Public Officials Not Present

Mayor James Ireton, Jr.
Councilman John "Jack" R. Heath

In Attendance

City Clerk Kimberly R. Nichols, CMC, City Administrator Tom Stevenson, Public Works Director Mike Moulds, Public Works Deputy Director Amanda Pollack, Internal Services Director Keith Cordrey, Fire Chief Rick Hoppes, City Attorney Mark Tilghman (left at 6:26 p.m.), and interested citizens and members of the press.

On December 1, 2014, Salisbury City Council convened in Open Session at 4:18 p.m. in Council Chambers, Room 301 of the Government Office Building.

Motion to convene in Closed Session

Mrs. Shields moved, Mr. Spies seconded and the vote was unanimous to convene in Closed Session to obtain legal advice on a legal matter and before a contract is awarded or bids are opened, to discuss a matter directly related to a negotiating strategy or the contents of a bid or proposal, if public discussion or disclosure would adversely impact the ability of the public body to participate in the competitive bidding or proposal process, in accordance with the Annotated Code of Maryland §10-508(a)(7)(14). The Closed Session began at 4:21 p.m.

At 4:32 p.m., upon a motion and seconded by Mrs. Shields and Mrs. Mitchell, respectively, and approved by unanimous vote in favor, the Closed Session was adjourned and Council convened in Open Session. The regularly scheduled Work Session began at 4:38 p.m.

SAFER Grant – Council discussion

Fire Chief Rick Hoppes joined Council at the table to discuss the expiration of the SAFER Grant and the need to keep the employees hired full time, but at this time the positions have now been terminated with the expiration of the Grant.

City Administrator Tom Stevenson read a statement from Mayor Ireton in his absence which requested for Council to consider the underlying cause of why more fire service personnel aren't hired, which is the lack of a Fire Service Agreement with Wicomico County. The equitable

response to extending the SAFER Grant officers into permanent status is for Fire leaders, Mayor and City Council, Volunteer Companies, Local IAFF (International Association of Fire Fighters), and the public to call upon Wicomico County leaders to correct the tax burden inequity in 2015.

Council then heard comments from two (2) Fire Fighters and a member of the Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland. The following is a synopsis of their remarks:

- Response times are great, but when they arrive to the scene and there's not enough people on the truck to do anything, what difference does it make to get there so fast?
- NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) says there has to be two in, two out and this can be done as long as all three apparatus pieces are on the scene
- Fire Department runs 8,000 EMS responses and 2,500 Fire responses per yet
- Elimination of the SAFER Grant officers will wear the remaining officers out
- Fire doubles every thirty seconds, so response times are very important
- Five ambulances are used in the City; the reduction in staffing will cut that down to three
- Nearly each day a 4th and 5th ambulance runs; can't be done without the SAFER staffing
- During the day, administration (the Chiefs) can run the ambulances if needed, so the 4th ambulance will possibly get out, but the 5th ambulance will most likely not
- Businesses' fire insurance premiums will go up with the reduction in staffing
- $600 per call is lost when the County ambulance answers calls that a City ambulance should take. There will be two or three lost calls per day if the personnel are eliminated.
- Sufficient staffing has been the Fire Department Personnel Committee's top concern for over eight years
- Fire Department Personnel Committee was told a couple of years ago to come up with a solution to insufficient staffing, and they came up with the SAFER Grant
- Requested Council to find funding for the two to three months before the SAFER Grant is hopefully reinstated, but if the grant is not reinstated, staffing will still badly be needed
- Appalled that the reason for not pursuing the staffing is because of politics
- Fire personnel risk their lives for the citizens but can't do so without the staffing

City Clerk Nichols received letters from two other people to distribute to the Council members.

Comments from the Council included the following:

- Council requested Mr. Stevenson to ask Mayor Ireton to forward a budget amendment or find another way to bring back the staffing lost in the expiration of the SAFER Grant
- When SAFER Grant was first received, Council asked Chief Hoppes about retention
- City's population has grown and the building stock is older and receives fewer renovations, presenting more opportunities for fire and loss of lives
- The City has the responsibility to provide for the safety of all its citizens
- Fiscal impacts represent an increase of $140,000 in overtime to cover the sick days, vacation days, etc. An additional up to $135,000 would go for unemployment insurance assuming none of the laid-off personnel finds other positions for the full 26 weeks. This equals $275,000, which is enough to hire the personnel back on and get the City from now to the grant award period.

- FEMA should award the grant in January or February of 2015, hold a 30 day application and review period, and award it in April or May, 2015
- When the new SAFER personnel were hired better response times were achieved, but the greater accomplishment was the ability to assemble first alarm response units on scene (two in - two out as recommended)
- Officer injuries on the scene dropped after the new SAFER personnel were hired
- Staffing levels have not kept up with the City's population growth in the Fire Department or the Police Department. This has been addressed with the Police Department, but not with the Fire Department because of the cushion of the SAFER Grant.
- The City should have put money away to keep the officers when the grant expired and needs to do so any time we depend on an operating grant
- We took the SAFER Grant to "try it before we buy it" but it's a public safety issue now, not about the money
- We didn't hold the staffing levels for the Police Department hostage, and we shouldn't hold the staffing levels for adequate service and safety in the Fire Department hostage for leverage in the Fire Service Agreement
- We have the funding in the current budget to retain those ten remaining Fire Fighters (have already hired two on) throughout the rest of the budget year, regardless of whether we receive the SAFER Grant or not
- The City of Salisbury's number one job is public safety
- The Fire Department is being asked to do more with less
- The Safer Grant option helped the City for the short term, but the City should not depend on operational grants and utilize capital grants wherever possible
- We have two options: 1) Budget amendment option, or 2) authorize the Fire Department to use the money that is likely to be returned at the end of the year anyway to fund the positions until the end of the year

Council unanimously agreed to ask Mr. Stevenson to relay their request to Mayor Ireton to advance the budget amendment or find another way to bring back the staffing lost with the expiration of the SAFER Grant.

Headquarters Live – Capacity Fee Waiver

Public Works Director Mike Moulds and Deputy Director Amanda Pollack joined Council at the table to discuss Headquarters Live's capacity fee waiver request and reported that Public Works' evaluation of the number of EDUs found the amount to be consistent with MDE's flow projection guidelines and meets the criteria outlined in Ordinance No. 2258. If approved by Council, the waiver will be valid for two years from the date of the resolution, and the EDU Incentive Area will have 289 EDUs remaining for other projects.

Upon the recommendation of Mr. Moulds and Ms. Pollack to approve the request, Council reached unanimous consensus to advance the resolution to the next Legislative Session.

Wayne Street Parking Modification Request from Salisbury University

Joining the City of Salisbury Public Works staff to discuss the Wayne Street parking request from Salisbury University (SU) were Robby Sheehan, Deputy Chief of Staff and Director of Government & Community Relations and Jeff Downes, Director of A/E Services and Capital Projects.

Ms. Pollack reported SU's request for parking modifications on Wayne Street and Power Street was due to the proposed Stadium project. Since the City of Salisbury owns both streets, parking modifications must be approved by Council with an ordinance.

Mr. Day asked how SU would respond should the City abandon the right of way to Wayne Street, and Mr. Sheehan indicated SU would consider accepting.

Mr. Downes noted that students would always search for free parking in lieu of buying permits, and the forty (40) or so students using Wayne Street would lose their free parking spaces, but eighty-five hundred (8,500) students would gain a $19 million stadium in a much more active, safe, pedestrian-friendly, and useful area. Free flowing pedestrian traffic cannot be achieved on game days when cars are bumper to bumper on both sides of Wayne Street.

Vice President Mitchell was not in favor of granting the request because many students use the parking spaces, and questioned why the street could not just be closed for big events. She asked to see the alternative plan for turning southbound on Rt. 13 without rights to Wayne Street. Mr. Downes indicated that closing the street could be done on game days, but the proposal was a re-design component of the new stadium. He restated that they would move forward to the eventual abandonment of the street with SU taking ownership, but there were two parking spaces on Power Street that SU requested be removed to gain access into the parking segment, and two bus spaces to the south. City Attorney Tilghman indicated this would require a separate piece of legislation and would be considered in conjunction with the abandonment.

Council reached consensus for Public Works to work with Messrs. Downes and Sheehan to begin the process for the City's potential abandonment of Wayne Street and to return to Council when the ordinance is completed. Mrs. Mitchell did not support the abandonment of the street.

Riverwalk Repair and Maintenance Update

Mr. Moulds and Ms. Pollack reported the first phase of the Riverwalk Repair and Maintenance has been completed and explained the process for the second phase, which includes stabilization of the bulkhead and replacement of the concrete surface. The following was discussed:

- Concrete wood planks will be used in all foot paths of the Riverwalk
- Patterns will be stamped into the concrete wood-like planks
- Property owners permission needed to use screw anchors which go underground
- Some railing is anchor chain and another type is on other parts of the walkway
- The $1.9 million in bond funds for this project
- Consistently selecting replacement materials to keep in line with standards

The report was for Council information only. Council took a ten minute break at 6:26 p.m.

Audit Presentation/Discussion

Internal Services Director Keith Cordrey and Barbacane, Thornton & Company LLP Auditor Pam Baker joined Council at the table to discuss the draft audit report ending June 30, 2014.

Ms. Baker reported that the first year Barbacane, Thornton & Company LLP came to Salisbury, administration had resolved to get the financial information and annual audit done in a more timely fashion than had previously been done, and that's now been accomplished. She added that this year City staff has produced its own financial statements by using the Munis system, and reported that Salisbury is one of the very few clients she has that utilizes their own automated system in which to build their financial statements. She commended Mr. Cordrey and his staff on the huge strides taken towards this end, and reported only one posting adjustment was needed this year, down from numerous adjustments in previous years.

Ms. Baker reviewed the audit results, which concluded that the financial statements of the City of Salisbury are fairly presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. She will present the final FY14 Audit Report at the December 8, 2014 Legislative Session.

Budget Amendment for Downtown Trolley

Mr. Stevenson passed out the trolley ridership data to Council. Mr. Robby Sheehan, SU Deputy Chief of Staff and Director of Government and Community Relations thanked City Council and Administration on behalf of SU for supporting the downtown trolley, the budget amendment earlier in the fiscal year, and this budget amendment being discussed.

After discussion, Council reached unanimous consensus to advance the budget amendment to the next legislative agenda.

Council discussion

City Clerk Nichols will send the 2015 meeting dates to Council for approval.

Mrs. Shields requested to review Police calls status sheets.

The Work Session was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Kimberly R. Nichols

City Clerk

Council President