

CITY COMMISSION/CRA WORKSHOP MEETING
JUNE 6, 2022
4:30 P.M.

This Commission Meeting was conducted utilizing Communications Media Technology. Some Staff members were present in the Commission Chambers while others were present via the Zoom application to respect the social distancing guidelines.

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Shirley Groover Bryant, Mayor
Tambra Varnadore, Vice Mayor, Commissioner, Ward 2
Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner-at-Large 2
Sheldon Jones, Commissioner-at-Large 1
Harold Smith, Commissioner, Ward 1
Brian Williams, Commissioner, Ward 3

STAFF PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney
Xavier Colon, Interim CRA Director
Jim Freeman, City Clerk
Cheryl Miller, Finance Director
Mohammed Rayan, Public Works Director
Scott Tyler, Chief of Police
Cassi Bailey, Assistant City Clerk
Penny Johnston, Executive Assistant

STAFF PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY:

Todd Williams, Information Technology (IT) Consultant

Mayor Bryant opened the Workshop at 4:32 P.M.

1. FY21 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (C. Miller/J. Freeman)
4:30-4:45 P.M.

Mr. Freeman gave a brief introduction. Cheryl Miller, Finance Director, went over the Power Point for the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, which was included in the Agenda. The City received their 16th consecutive Certificate of Excellence award for their previous year's Audit. They also received the Distinguished Budget award for the 13th consecutive year. Ms. Miller discussed the Financial Highlights and referenced her presentation.

Daniel Anderson, Director of Mauldin & Jenkins, referenced the handout that was given to the Commissioners prior to the meeting, and has been included in the record. His company issued an Unmodified Audit Report, which is the highest form of assurance they can render with regard to the fairness of financial information. Commissioner Varnadore congratulated the staff.

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2. CDBG Housing Assistance Plan & Procedures (J. Freeman) 4:45- 5:15 P.M.

Mr. Freeman introduced the CDBG Housing Assistance Project, and Corbett Alday, Guardian CRM Inc.

Corbett Alday, spoke on the necessary steps and procedures to qualify for the Housing Assistance program. This program is to help Low to Moderate Income, LMI, homes. He highlighted the required documents that are needed by the applicants to apply. Mr. Alday explained the process from start to finish. They will work on 3-5 houses at a time. At least 11 homes will have to be done to satisfy the grant. There will be a lien put on the property after completion for 5-10 years. The homeowner cannot sell the house in that time, or they will have to pay the grant back. The average amount spent will be \$60,000/house. Just under \$700,000 will be available.

Commissioner Cornwell had questions regarding page 4, Program Administrator (PA), who shall be the City's designee for oversight of the program. It was quoted that "The PA alone shall approve all HSA work." Commissioner Cornwell asked for clarification. Mr. Alday responded that the Program Administrator would be the designee of the City, meaning the point of contact for the grant consultant to come to. The applications will be brought to a volunteer board, CATF, who will then make a recommendation to the City Commission for approval. Commissioner Cornwell would like the wording to be changed. She also questioned the definition of relatives in the document. Mr. Alday explained that a relative could be on the Board, but they would need a waiver, approved by the State, to apply for the program. The CATF may consist of one City employee, but no Commissioners are allowed on the Board. Commissioner Cornwell then asked for clarification on the amount of time for the lien, 5 or 10 years. Mr. Alday stated that it depends on the amount of money that was given. The question was asked; What if the member passes away? Mr. Alday hoped the relative who inherited the home, would be able to transfer the lien. If not, the lien would be paid off when the house is sold.

The City's employees can apply for the program, as long as they are not in the decision-making tree. For example, someone in Finance would need a waiver to qualify.

Commissioner Varnadore questioned if the CDBG application is open City wide. Mr. Alday responded it was. She stated that it may be problematic to have the PA as a member of the CRA, because they would be working outside of the CRA capacity.

Commissioner Smith asked how much one would have to pay back after 9 years if they defaulted on the grant. Mr. Alday explained that it goes down every year for ten years.

Commissioner Jones suggested advertising for the volunteer Board.

There will be five members on the CATF Board. The Board members must live within City limits. Three of the members must be LMI. Commissioner Jones questioned if the City needed an Affordable Housing Committee. Mr. Alday responded that it is not required, but it is required for the County.

Mr. Freeman clarified that he would make the correction in the document to strike the language on page 4 regarding the PA. The old language states "The PA makes all final recommendations and decisions as to awards." The new language will read, "The PA will make recommendations as to monitoring reports, policies, and other work generated by contractors or consultants."

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Staff's recommendation is to opt out of the County's Entitlement CDBG Program. They recommended applying for the small City's program. This would allow the City to receive more funding for the citizens. The Commissioners were in agreeance. Mr. Freeman will notify the County that the City will opt out of the County CDBG Entitlement Program. Mr. Alday will be there at the 7:00 meeting, for the 2nd Public Hearing. The change referenced in the Workshop will be reflected in the motion for approval.

3. ARPA Project List (C. Miller/ J. Freeman)

5:15 – 6:00 P.M.

Mr. Freeman introduced the ARPA Project List. The purpose of today's discussion was to go over the list and get feedback from the Commission.

Cheryl Miller, Finance Director, gave a brief presentation that was included in the Agenda. Ms. Miller oversees the grants for the City. She gave a brief background on ARPA, American Rescue Plan Act, which is a Federal Grant. All the projects must be fully completed and closed by 12/31/2026. She went through the proposed project list and explained that each must meet the requirements of the grant.

Commissioner Cornwell opined the possibility of adding the following items:

- Large Event Rentals- for Meetings in case additional spacing is needed
- Protective gear (ex. Masks) for Public Works/Police Department
- Communication Devices/Technology- to communicate with officials during meetings
- Outdoor Mental Health Activities

Commissioner Jones expressed his interest in public safety projects, particularly sidewalks. He questioned if the sidewalks referenced on the list were only for Ward 1. Mr. Freeman responded that it did not have to be. He clarified that he is interested in adding sidewalks, not just repairing them.

Commissioner Varnadore asked for clarification on which playground the document was referencing. Mr. Freeman answered that it was not designated for one park in particular. She asked if they could spread out the equability across all the projects. She feels it is disproportionate to Ward 1. Mr. Freeman responded that they may be able to use other areas of the budget to fund the Ward 1 Phase III project.

Mr. Freeman suggested adding the three Police Department items to the 7:00 meeting for approval. There was consensus from the Commission to add those to the 7:00 meeting Agenda. Mr. Rayan asked for the generator to be added to the 7:00 Agenda as well. The Commissioners agreed. The four projects that will be added to the Agenda are: GETAC-in car and body camera, P25 Compliant Radios and Generator for the WWTP.

Commissioner Williams would like to have a better understanding of what the IT department needs. He opined that more would need to be added to keep the City running effectively. He stated that the City may need updated hardware, not just software. Mr. Freeman clarified that they meet with all the departments to identify their needs every year. Commissioner Williams re-iterated that he wanted there to be more than \$175,000 allocated to IT.

Commissioner Smith thinks this is a great thing they are proposing for Ward 1. He does not think any of the money should be moved elsewhere.

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Commissioner Williams asked Mr. Rayan if there is a lot of old piping in Ward one. Mr. Rayan responded that the intention of this project is to replace the sewer lines, water lines, and storm water. Commissioner Williams believes that the infrastructure, water & sewer are the priority.

Commissioner Jones wants everything done in Ward 1 that can be done. However, there are other resources that can help Ward 1. He stated that Ward 2 does not have those same fund sources, therefore, they may need to use some of this grant to put into Ward 2 projects.

Commissioner Varnadore appreciated Commissioner Jones sentiments. She stated that the paving that has been done has been done in Ward 3, not Ward 2.

Mr. Freeman clarified that the City is in a really good spot, funding wise. He understands that the Commission wants the staff to use these funds and funds in general, to be efficient as possible with the monies and the projects that they want to accomplish.

Major Bryant Adjourned the Workshop at 5:54 P.M.

MINUTES APPROVED: JUNE 27, 2022

JAMES R. FREEMAN

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CITY CLERK