

# Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

## WORK SESSION

City Hall Council Chambers  
57 N. Liberty Street  
Cumberland, MD 21502

Tuesday, February 15, 2022  
5:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Raymond M. Morriss, President; Council Members: Richard Cioni, Eugene Frazier, Joseph George (via Zoom), and Laurie Marchini.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jeffrey Silka, City Administrator; Marjorie Woodring, City Clerk; Mark Gandolfi, City Comptroller; Chuck Ternent, Chief of Police

Media: Greg Larry, Cumberland Times-News; Brian Gowan, WCBC Radio

### **I. AGENDA REVIEW – FEBRUARY 15, 2022**

Mr. Silka called on Mr. Gandolfi to review Ordinance 3909, amending the City’s purchasing policy, saying that the Comptroller was more well-versed in this topic.

Mr. Gandolfi handed out and presented a detailed overview regarding changes to the purchasing policy and reviewed the highlights:

- No change to concept of \$25K or greater needing a M&CC order
- Lower thresholds changed, lowest being \$2500; if under, Department head can do due diligence in-house and verify fair price – no more need to vet everything through Finance
- Award of bid can now go to lowest “responsible” bidder

Mr. Gandolfi reviewed commodities and services which are exempt from competitive bidding and quotes:

- Adding express authorization to use piggyback contracts
- Sole Source over \$25K with requisition from Department head, funding approval of the Comptroller, and approval by the City Administrator with final approval by Council

Mr. Gandolfi reviewed equipment leases, and clarified as to what capital lease procedure looks like in terms of dollar vs. rent, and said leases should be authorized and made in the same manner as purchases of supplies, contracts, service, etc.

Regarding construction contracts, Mr. Gandolfi advised that there will be a revision enhancement to emergency procedures to better define a public emergency, while removing a component regarding City workforce and competitive bids that was not needed. He added that for commission-based contracts there are no substantive changes.

Mr. Gandolfi advised on the bidding procedure for preparing Public Works contracts, saying that the City Administrator becomes the responsible party for all bidding documents. He advised that the time frame to advertise bids was a little ambiguous, so it was revised to say that all bids will be advertised at least one time for no less than five days, and removes the maximum days for advertising.

Mr. Gandolfi advised that there are revisions to advertising procedures regarding bid qualifications on the City website, to enhance and clarify the procedures for being qualified or disqualified within the award, and states that all mandates must be met. Mr. Gandolfi stated that there is a revision to the acceptance of lowest and best bid to better define if a bid is in the best interest of the City.

Mr. Gandolfi advised that there are no changes to Local Preference. He also advised that there is a new section entitled Change Orders, that addresses one area that has not been addressed regarding how the City deals with Change Orders. He added that there are limitations on the Department head regarding costs.

Councilman George inquired about the committee that determined the changes. Mr. Gandolfi advised that it consisted of himself, City Management led by the “then” City Administrator, and the City Solicitor.

In answer to a question from Councilwoman Marchini, Mr. Gandolfi reviewed commodities and services that are exempt from competitive bidding and quotes from at least three suppliers, which are all listed in Section 2-171(e).

Mr. Silka asked if anyone had any questions about the rest of the agenda, other than ARPA funds. There were no questions, but Council commented on Order No. 26,956 regarding a GOCCP grant, and the good track record of staff in obtaining grants.

## **II. ARPA DISCUSSION – PROJECT PRIORITIZATION**

Mr. Silka advised that there had been feedback that Council wanted to discuss allocations, and turned it over to Mr. Gandolfi.

Mr. Gandolfi advised that a key component is regarding the \$10M revenue loss and how the Treasury would like folks to be good stewards of the funding. He advised that restoring government services is a very critical piece, and said the \$10M threshold ensures the health of the local government.

Mr. Gandolfi advised on the funds for provision of government services, and explained the valuation dates and the funding amounts over four years, saying it is audited each year. He also

advised that this is primarily General Fund wages. He also discussed surplus, unassigned fund balance, and the flexibility to spend the funds in the best interest of the City.

Mr. Silka discussed public art not being placed in funding, and said they looked at the greatest impact and best benefit upon the whole community. He discussed the Baltimore Street renovation, saying it is already a \$12M public art project going on, and said that other projects had a better bang for the buck and more benefit to the community.

Mr. Gandolfi explained that each department head's recommendations were taken into consideration and ranked, looking at sustainability, greatest impact, and how well it fits within ARPA and what the government has asked the City to do.

Council discussed the DDC's and the CEDC's need for grants for public art with possibly matching funding from the City. There was discussion about the beautiful art in Frederick's downtown and about how it attracts tourism and gives civic pride, with the opportunity for public and private partnerships to help make it happen. There was a question about the \$12M estimate for the Baltimore Street project, with Mr. Silka advising that amount is for construction only, not the aesthetics of the public art section. It was noted that below-ground, trees, fountains, etc. were part of the original streetscape.

### **III. HABITAT FOR HUMANITY**

Mr. Silka discussed requests for permit and utility connection waiver fees pertaining to Habitat Humanity's construction of a home at 22 Maple Street. He advised that this is approximately a \$150K project, with \$640 in permit fees, and \$3370 in water and sewer tap fees. He advised that in the past the City has waived these for Habitat for Humanity projects. Mayor Morriss advised that he could see no reason to not waive the fees for a 501c3 organization that is making a good investment.

### **IV. CUMBERLAND HOUSING GROUP – JFK APARTMENTS**

Mr. Silka discussed water permit and utility connection fee waiver requests pertaining to the renovation of JFK Apartments at 135 N. Mechanic Street, saying that this is a \$15.8M project, with \$30 plus \$95,177 for permits with no water or sewer tap fees. There was discussion by Council about other housing projects requesting waivers and wanting to be consistent. They also discussed River Bend Court, and there was a suggestion to look into that to see if that project received the waiver.

### **V. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL UPDATES**

Councilman Cioni discussed Let's Beautify Cumberland, and the upcoming Day of Caring and Sharing.

There was discussion about Parks and Recreation and the focus of the last meeting being the skateboard park. Mr. Silka advised that they will bring their recommendation to the next work session, and said the survey will have a compilation of comments.

Mayor Morriss advised that he had spoken with the B.O.E. and said they want to have a conversation with M&CC about using their fields and scheduling to make sure leagues are using all the parks.

Councilwoman Marchini advised about the Baltimore Street Committee, and said the mitigation plan is nearing completion. She said they would like to have a town hall meeting when the plan is printed and handed out to set the tone for businesses and building owners. She added that there will be quarterly virtual meetings during construction. The Councilwoman also spoke about the DDC, and advised about the Windows Contest using empty storefronts for non-profits and schools, and said there will be a public vote on the winners, with cash prizes from grants. She also noted that the Groundhog Day event went well, and said that seven prizes were handed out, and said the DDC is working on promoting Black businesses downtown. She also advised that the final plan for Baltimore Street was submitted to MDOT for the final review, and said the response should come within the next six weeks, then it goes to Federal Highway. Ms. Marchini provided information about the HPC, saying that Larry Jackson is the new Chair, and added that Ruth Davis-Rogers is running things well.

Councilman Frazier advised that the HRC will meet this coming Monday, so he will report on that at the next work session. He added that the HRDC meets next month, and said he could not make the last WMSR meeting.

Mayor Morriss advised that Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup> is the Hooley Plunge, and said it's going to be a tremendous event this year with the focus being on the late Dr. McCagh and all the good work that he did in the community. The Mayor said he hopes everyone comes out and shows their support. He also stated that all is going well with the WMSR, and stated that tickets for the next Polar Express are up now and selling. He mentioned the different events coming for the scenic railroad, including the Ice Cream Train, Dinner Train, Murder Mysteries, etc.

On the Economic Development front, Mayor Morriss stated that he believes there is a renaissance taking place in the community, and said he believes the foundation of that is the Baltimore Street Access Project and opening up the downtown mall. He said he believes there is a lot of really good work being done both for Baltimore Street and the Maryland Avenue Project, and some other things he will talk about in the future. The Mayor added that there was some good news today on a potential housing investment, which will be made public in the near future.

Councilman Frazier wanted to remind everyone about a meeting at the Salvation Army Board, and said that the plan is to do kettles as a group in different locations next year during the winter holidays.

There was discussion about having someone that works with boys and girls clubs to come in and give M&CC an update, and it was mentioned as being a good idea for a presentation. Additionally, they discussed plans for a fundraiser to get musical

instruments and a paid music instructor for the kids. A proclamation to thank them was suggested.

Chief Ternent advised that the Hooley Pub Crawl will be March 23<sup>rd</sup>, and advised that an Order will be needed.

Mayor Morriss noted some construction going on downtown, and wanted to remind everyone that you can still get to wherever you want to go, and mentioned LOFT 129, Embassy Theatre and the Cumberland Theatre all having events downtown.

Councilman George advised that Planning and Zoning did not meet.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie A. Woodring  
City Clerk

Minutes approved on June 21, 2022