

Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

WORK SESSION

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

Tuesday, February 23, 2021
5:00 p.m.

This meeting was held via Video-Conference

PRESENT: Raymond M. Morriss, President; Council Members: Seth Bernard, Richard Cioni, and Laurie Marchini. Councilman Eugene Frazier was absent.

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey D. Rhodes, City Administrator; Marjorie Woodring, City Clerk; Ken Tressler, Director of Administrative Services; Mark Gandolfi, City Comptroller; ClearGov Representative Anna Balcora

I. AGENDA REVIEW – MARCH 2, 2021

Mr. Rhodes reviewed the Agenda for the March 2, 2021 Public Meeting, going over the Reports and Minutes up for approval. Mr. Tressler reviewed **Resolution R2021-02** on the Agenda, advising that this is a resolution to issue new debt refunding bonds to refund certain portions of CDA 2012, 2013, 2015 and General Obligation Bonds of 2013. He stated that refunding is expected to save the City more than \$1.5M, and at the same time, the City is issuing new debt that was approved in the 2021 budget.

Mr. Rhodes advised that he, Mr. Tressler, and Mr. Gandolfi will be on calls this Thursday with rating agencies leading up to this action. Mr. Gandolfi advised that the total, counting the refunding, is \$17.7M.

Mr. Rhodes reviewed the four Orders on the Consent Agenda:

Order 26,758 - authorizing the Chief of Police to accept the Allegany County Health Department's Overdose Follow-Up Grant in the amount of \$3,500.00 which will allow CPD officers to partner with UPMC Western Maryland and the Allegany County Parole and Probation Unit to perform follow-ups with non-fatal overdose victims within 24-48 hours after release from hospital.

Order 26,759 - approving policies regarding the reinstatement of COVID-related sick leave to an employee's sick leave balance.

Mr. Rhodes advised that staff is proposing the reinstatement of Covid-related sick leave, whereby when documentation is provided on a Covid-related absence, up to 80 hours of sick leave will be placed back into those employees' sick leave "banks". As to how many employees this includes, Mr. Rhodes advised that some employees actually had the virus, and some just had symptoms where they were told not to come in. Mr. Tressler said he will have the exact number of employees for the Public Meeting, and advised that there are 3,145 total Covid-related hours of sick leave, and of that, almost 2,200 are in the Police and Fire Departments combined.

Order 26,760 - approving the re-appointment of Bruce Irons to the Housing Authority of the City of Cumberland for a five-year term effective retroactive to 11/1/20 through 10/31/25.

Order 26,761 - authorizing the Mayor to execute a Cooperation Agreement with the Housing Authority of the City of Cumberland providing for aid and cooperation in the development of 1034 Frederick Street, owned by the Housing Authority, as a Scattered Site Housing project.

Mr. Rhodes advised that the City has Cooperation Agreements with the Housing Authority for property that they own in the City that are tax-exempt, and they pay payments in lieu of taxes to the City (PILOT) to cover public safety costs. He stated that this property will also have a PILOT agreement. Mr. Rhodes added that the property will have renovations done to it, and said Friends Aware will be using it.

II. PRESENTATION OF CLEARGOV SOFTWARE SYSTEM PROPOSAL

Mr. Gandolfi introduced Anna Balcora from ClearGov, the City's software that provides financial transparency to the public. Mr. Gandolfi said it allows the public direct access to levels deeper than what the financial report provides. He said that once they have the consent to go live, it will be accessible from a banner hyperlink on the City's website. He said the ClearGov page will provide demographic information and financial data. He said that data from FY2015 to the current FY budget is already loaded and verified.

Ms. Balcora provided a web demonstration of the Homepage and described the software's capabilities. She advised that all ClearGov websites are compatible with multiple devices, and stated there will be links for the different sections: Overview, Revenues, Expenditures, and Demographics (which comes from the US Census). She added that the financial overview will always present the current adopted information.

Ms. Balcora advised that citizens will be able to view all funds and graphic representations of revenues and expenses, including budgeted, over-budgeted, actual expenditures, etc. She mentioned that there are several options on how the data can be displayed, and advised that the "more detail" link will provide a breakdown of information. Ms. Balcora also noted that all information on the Revenue and Expenditure pages can be downloaded and noted that a feature on the Expenditure page allows the resident to enter their annual property tax bill so they can see a breakdown of where their tax dollars go. She added that information breakdown buttons were also available on the Police and Fire Department Expenditure pages, and said one of their goals is to make the software as interactive and easy for citizens to navigate and understand as possible. Mr. Gandolfi stated that this will be a great interactive tool that allows citizens to access important information. Mayor Morriss agreed that this is very transparent. Mr. Gandolfi stated that this software will be \$5,550 annually – very affordable – and has additional features beyond what was just demonstrated. He mentioned that Morgantown, WV is a user, and said there are many other users in the state of Maryland and in the US. Mr. Gandolfi also advised that there is an internal feature available called Benchmarking that allows the City to compare our data with other ClearGov users' data and get benchmarks. He stated that if M&CC is interested, he will get more information to them.

III. BOARD AND COMMISSION UPDATES FROM COUNCIL

Mayor Morriss advised on his latest meeting of the WMSR Board, and stated that Delegate Mike McKay will be the new Board President. He said it was a good meeting, and said they are working their way through possibilities of opening up. He advised that it may be as soon as July of this year, depending on Covid and ongoing restrictions. He said the 1309 steam engine should be ready by May, and noted that the Scenic Railroad has always been one of the major contributors for the City's tourism, and stated that now there is so much more, including the GAP Trail, Rocky Gap Resort and Casino, etc., and said it's critical that all these pieces of the pie get back up and running.

Councilwoman Marchini advised on the latest with the DDC and Baltimore Street design, saying that they have 95% of the drawings with EADS, and mentioned that the BSA workgroup meets every Wednesday at 10:00 AM. She stated that last week they received an additional \$500K from the Governor's capital budget, and said their budget total now stands at \$8.2M. Ms. Marchini stated that Mr. Cochran is working on the renderings, and said they recently purchased the "HistoricCumberlandCenterCity.com" URL and said Doug Schwab is working on it. She mentioned that the hope is for this to eventually be the DDC's website. She also stated that they met today with the Marketing group, and said they are doing an article for Allegany Magazine. Mayor Morriss stated that Council and staff very much appreciate the tremendous effort and hard work done by this group.

Councilman Cioni advised that they will be hearing more rumblings on the youth initiative, and stated that Renee Knisley has come on board to coordinate a meeting of the various youth organizations. He also noted that Captain Smith from the Salvation Army is working diligently with them, and said that at their next meeting they will be discussing taking on a chapter of the Boys and Girls Club of America. Mr. Cioni assured the support of the Council and City Hall to bring a lot of services so there's not redundancy, and so that as many kids as possible can be served.

Mayor Morriss commented on all the groups that are starting to come on board and work together, and said that in addition to the Salvation Army there are the AYPS Group, the Robotics Team, Carver Community Center, etc., and Councilman Cioni noted that they have four buildings available to provide activities for the City's youth.

Councilwoman Marchini wanted to mention that May is Historic Preservation month, and advised that the HPC will be having a summit and will focus on the basics to inform the public on the how's and why's of historic preservation. She added that they are also having a logo contest for local and regional artists to submit mock-ups for the new logo for the downtown historic Cumberland area.

Mayor and Council reminded everyone that Covid is not over, but to keep shopping locally to support the City's small businesses, while remembering to continue to limit contact with people, wear masks, and to socially distance.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie A. Woodring
City Clerk

Minutes approved March 16, 2021