



Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

Mayor Raymond M. Morriss
Councilman Richard J. "Rock" Cioni
Councilman Eugene T. Frazier
Councilman James L. Furstenberg
Councilwoman Laurie P. Marchini

City Administrator Jeffrey F. Silka
City Solicitor Michael S. Cohen
City Clerk Allison K. Layton

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WORK SESSION

City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room
57 N. Liberty Street
Cumberland, MD 21502

Tuesday, October 17, 2023, 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Raymond M. Morriss; Council Members: Richard Cioni, Eugene Frazier, Jimmy Furstenberg, Laurie Marchini.

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey F. Silka, City Administrator; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Michael Cohen, City Solicitor; Ken Tressler, Director of Administrative Services; Chip Watkins, Information Security Officer; Robert Smith, Director-Engineering and Utilities; Chuck Ternent, Chief of Police; Dave Biser, Retired CPD

Media: Teresa McMinn, Cumberland Times-News
Kathy Cornwell, WCBC Radio

I. CYBERSECURITY STATUS UPDATE

Mr. Chip Watkins, Information Security Officer, provided background on his 35 years of experience in IT, saying that most of those years he built and managed federal data centers for the DOD. He advised on cybersecurity efforts in the City.

Mr. Watkins discussed scam email that asks for gift cards, money, etc. He stated that those kind of emails amount to about \$2.7B of extorted money each year. He said that these data breaches can happen at all levels, and said the government is a target due to its amount of information, citizen data, social security numbers; credit card numbers, and internal data. He added that limited funding is associated with cybersecurity at the City government level, making it an easier target, saying people can even purchase attackers to breach security.

Mr. Watkins reviewed the multitudes of data the City is protecting, from blueprints in the Engineering Department for the water reclamation facility and water distribution, the plant Scada systems, City Wi-Fi, computer systems, etc., to Criminal Justice Information Systems (CJIS), police records, Fire Department emergency response data, and personal data on citizens and employees.

Mr. Watkins advised on what the City has done so far to alleviate these threats. He stated that they've had the CISA, a government agency, do an audit on the dam and wastewater systems. He said the agency produced a report, which can be made available to Council. He added that IT has established relationships with the MD State and National Cybersecurity Organizations, and said they have enhanced their internal physical data center space. He also added that recently they've procured equipment to start making things redundant, and have upgraded parts of the base infrastructure and equipment.

Mr. Watkins advised on things that still need to be done. He said that legislation requires the City to have an audit done by an external party; however, he said that there are not a lot of details regarding funding for that. He added that more requirements are starting to be put in place at the State level.

Mr. Watkins advised that there needs to be better documentation of all City systems in place, and talked about the recently purchase Tenable system which will start that process. He said there are not a lot of formal IT policies, so those will need to be created, and discussed updates to the internal networks and systems, as well as instituting a broader use of Cloud systems. He stated that October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, which is why he wanted to provide an update, and advised everyone to remember that cybersecurity is not a single person, it's everyone's responsibility. In closing, Mr. Watkins provided a video from Governor Wes Moore about Cybersecurity Awareness Month. He then opened the floor for questions.

Council Member Marchini asked about the City's evaluation, with Mr. Watkins responding that it was a little lower than average, but said average for water systems is bad. He talked about several attacks on several water systems, and said in Georgia, it was just luck that someone happened to be looking at the right monitor at the right time when an attacker hacked in and changed the mixture going into the water. He added that there is a huge amount of direct cyber-attacks that have hit municipalities – Baltimore, Pittsburgh, DC – and said “brute force” attacks are a constant barrage against the City, explaining that in one 24-hour period, he had almost 2700 failed attempts from people trying to log-in.

Council Member Cioni asked about the price of top-of-the-line systems to protect the City. Mr. Tressler noted that they could cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Mr. Watkins advised that the firewalls IT has just purchased are one of the top-of-the-line systems, which allows for additional monitoring. He also mentioned that system life expectancy is roughly 7-10 years, but said it is upgraded often.

Mr. Watkins explained that the average cost of a data breach is \$2.6M, but a lot of it is reputation because of bad press and people not wanting to continue to deal with you. There was further discussion about identity theft, and the City being liable for the water system, in someone hacks in to create havoc with the chemicals. Mr. Watkins warned that all it takes is one disgruntled employee, or someone mad about the water rate going up. He added that there are entire systems on the dark web; there's constantly people looking for a breach – sometimes people just proving they can do it.

Mr. Watkins explained that individually, people need to be aware of where you're going, emails you're opening, devices you are attached to – like being in public sharing an establishment's Wi-Fi. He said to use Virtual Private Network (VPN) when attaching to a public Wi-Fi. He added to be careful when browsing, and don't click on links in text messages.

Dave Biser advised to use common sense, and said hackers are engineers that will appeal to you, having researched you, found charities you like, and will craft an email to look like something that interests you. Mr. Watkins agreed, adding especially in an environment such as this when all contact info is out there. He discussed that through CISA, there's a public scan that occurs weekly to see if there's anything open that shouldn't be. He added that he's looking into penetration testing, as well as signing up for services that send around emails to test companies and see who responds. He also mentioned having more training for employees.

II. ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Mr. Smith discussed hurdles needed to get over soon. He advised that the Baltimore Street Bridge will be reduced to one-way traffic from Mechanic Street to Greene Street, which he stated was designed to have two-way traffic during the whole construction period, but issues arose and there's not enough room. He discussed Phase III work – sidewalk, replacing the water line next week, and said coming out of that there will tentatively be two days of bridge closures. He said he will keep M&CC informed.

Mr. Smith stated that the bridge will be back in full service around June of 2024, depending on weather, advising that some of the time there will be little or no work being done, while waiting for temperatures to be good enough to pour concrete.

As for the Baltimore Street Access Project, Mr. Smith stated that there are lots of updates shared with Council constantly, so didn't go into that in detail.

Next, Mr. Brown discussed the McMullen Street Bridge, saying the contract has been awarded to Harbel, Inc., and said work will be ongoing beginning in November, and will go forward until temperatures get too low. He stated that after that there will be no major work going on there until Spring. He added that this project will probably result in 3-4 weeks total of closures – shutting one side of the bridge down at a time, to move all traffic over to the other side.

Mr. Smith also advised that he's waiting for MDOT approval to repair the Marion Street Bridge, which he said is relatively minor in scope, the biggest expense being shifting traffic away. He's also waiting on State approval of maintenance of the traffic plan.

Mr. Brown discussed the Constitution Park Trails Project, which utilizes CDBG funds, and said bids are expected back in late October for design and build proposals. He added that they will solicit public input to gather information on what people want to see in the project.

Mr. Brown advised that they are advertising the Municipal Service Center fuel service replacement, and are changing over to Beacon Bid, an online bid service.

He went on to the South End Water Main Project, which is funded by ARPA monies. He stated that drawings will be done by next week for internal review, and said every water line that has not been replaced in the last 15 years, will be replaced.

Mr. Brown also discussed the City Hall HVAC Project, which will also be funded through ARPA, and said the intention is to bid in November, with bids coming in mid to late December, when they will make a decision on what they will be able to do. He advised that construction will start in the Spring when there is less of a demand, and said the new system will be both heat and AC, with there being some split units throughout City Hall to give more functionality.

Mr. Smith stated that they awarded the Water Tank Maintenance contract, which he said will be a huge help for Water Filtration by having an expected cost every year instead of putting tanks out for bid. He added that in the next 10 years all water towers will be painted.

Mr. Smith talked about the next major thing on his list, which he stated was a federal requirement to generate a lead service inventory list, and said this is stemming from the Flint, MI situation. He said the list must be generated by October 2024, showing addresses and of what material the pipes are made, adding that they have to document galvanized pipes as well. He advised that they have to generate a database, and said a website will be set up for the public to input their own information. He stated that the feds want everything – all roughly 8000 properties, plus the 45 in PA. He said homes that were built after 1973 when the lead ban came into effect should not contain lead – that removes about 800 homes from the list.

Mr. Smith moved on to a street repair ordinance he is working on with the City Solicitor, and discussed a road restoration guide, never doing curb-to-curb, and said the code right now is not clear.

Mr. Smith advised that the elevator repair at the Public Safety Building is complete, and said the City Hall elevator renovation will begin in January. He also mentioned the Fort Hill Reservoir cover repair is complete, and said 99% of the influent screen job at the Water Reclamation Facility is complete, with the new system working out well.

Mr. Smith stated that the biggest thing is the paving going on. He said the intention is to have Greene Street permanently patched in the Winter, and in the Spring do a paving contract from Smallwood Avenue, to the Baltimore Street Bridge, to the downtown mall construction. He said they are shooting for May 2024. He added that they will also be concentrating on paving the Massachusetts and New Hampshire Avenues area. He also mentioned that there will be the occasional Columbia Gas project that pops up from time to time.

Mr. Smith advised that his departments are fully-staffed, and said the new Project Engineer is working out well. He stated that as things come up, he will keep M&CC informed. Lastly, he mentioned that the intention is to have the Cumberland Street Bridge in construction next Summer, depending on approvals.

III. AGENDA REVIEW OCTOBER 17, 2023

Mr. Silka reviewed the public meeting agenda. Marchini questioned Orders 27345 – 27347. Mr. Silka explained they are keeping the City's supply of water meters up, and getting inventory that's needed throughout the year. Council Member Cioni questioned Order 27342. Mr. Silka explained that all were lots.

Mr. Silka discussed Order 27348, explaining it was an agreement with the City and the CEDC, and said that a leased room at 81 Baltimore Street would provide storage for the server of the surveillance cameras.

Mr. Silka also discussed Order 27350, saying that electric rates are doing down, and change daily. He said this will allow the City to extend its contract without calling an emergency meeting.

IV. MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL UPDATES

Council Member Furstenberg stated that he called Mr. Smith last week to talk about Maryland Avenue having overgrown trees. He stated that the next day the crew cleaned up everything, and it all looks good, so kudos to Brooke Cassell and Robert Smith for the quick response.

Council Members Cioni and Furstenberg had nothing to update.

Council Member Marchini stated that they are working on the Silva Cells on Baltimore Street, and are starting on the parklets. She mentioned that there has been 99% positive comments about the lights. She also said cameras are going up, new businesses continue to open, and the local historic district has received \$2M in tax credits. Regarding grants, the Councilwoman stated that they had received a grant for \$30K for connectivity, while work continues on Main Street subcommittees. There will also be active shooter training for local businesses from the Police and Fire Departments. She also reminded everyone to purchase a DDC Discount Card.

There was discussion about the Winter Festival on 12/2/23 and 12/9/23. Council Member Marchini stated that you can go online to volunteer to work at the event. She mentioned that the last Friday After Five is October 27th, and advised that she has been asked to serve on the Comptrollers Work and Advisory Committee, which will meet on Thursday.

Council Member Frazier advised that he had been to the Embassy Theatre to see Deathtrap, which he enjoyed. He talked about the Portland Loo that was installed at that end of the downtown mall. He said it's usable, but not a place to hang out, and said that anyone that's complaining about it needs to go see it.

Mayor Morriss stated that he took a tour through Constitution Park with Ryan Mackey last week, and said he likes the enthusiasm that he brings to Parks and Rec. Council Member Cioni mentioned that the new signs in the park look great.

The Mayor discussed the MML Fall Conference that he and Mr. Silka attended. He stated that they took classes that were very educational. He said the Governor was there this morning, and it was good to see his energy. He stated that the state is getting ready to create a Municipal Tourism Fund. The Mayor stated that he talked with the Governor's staff about a potential visit, maybe to ride on the Polar Express. He said the staff was very approachable; they had good conversations.

V. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Allison K. Layton
City Clerk

Minutes approved on: November 7, 2023