

Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

WORK SESSION

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

Tuesday, June 8, 2021
4:30 p.m.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Ken Tressler, Interim City Administrator/Director of Administrative Services; Michael S. Cohen, City Solicitor; Marjorie Woodring, City Clerk; Mark Gandolfi, City Comptroller; Robert Smith, City Engineer; Matt Miller, CEDC Executive Director; Stu Czapski, Economic Development Specialist

I. AGENDA REVIEW – JUNE 15, 2021

Mayor Morriss reviewed the Reports and Minutes on the agenda and called for any questions or comments. Being none, Mr. Tressler reviewed all items on the Consent Agenda:

Order 26,812 - approving the sole source purchase of a new Ford F-250 Regular Cab Pickup Truck with Plow from Keystone Ford (truck) and Stephenson Equipment (up-fit of plow) in an amount not to exceed \$40,470, as obtained through CoStar pricing.

Mr. Tressler explained that this purchase is taking advantage of the PA co-op CoStar, which competitively bids vehicles

Order 26,813 - approving the sole source purchase of a new Ford F-350 Super Cab Service Body Truck with lift gate from Keystone Ford (truck chassis) and Stephenson Equipment (up-fit of service body and lift gate) in an amount not to exceed \$54,271 as obtained through CoStar pricing.

Mr. Tressler advised this is the same competitive process as Order 26,812, and explained that these vehicle purchases were budgeted.

Order 26,814 - approving the sole source contract with AquaLaw in the estimated cost of \$47,500 to provide consultation to determine what steps are needed to extend the 1998 Consent Order issued by MDE to address Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO's) by October, 2023.

Mr. Smith advised that this will allow the City to negotiate an extension with the state and said AquaLaw is currently under contract with the City to help navigate the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit at the WWTP, which is the permit that allows the City to discharge water. He said this speaks to the City's long-term control plan, and said this Order is asking M&CC to consider a joint agreement with Allegany County, City of Frostburg, and the LaVale Sanitary Commission since these 3 entities and the City are all part of the consent order and all need to be a party to the extension. Mr. Smith also advised that the extension is partly due to Covid and partly due to the size of the projects the City is currently doing, and added that this will

help determine what future performance metrics will be. He advised that all 4 entities will pay their share.

Order 26,815 - approving the price modification to the current contract with Burgmeier's Hauling for "Municipal Solid Waste Hauling Services for Curbside Garbage and Recycling Collection (22-18-M)" to a reduced annual cost of \$1,227,800.64 effective July 1, 2021, due to the recent commercial revenue reduction as a result of 155 units switching to private dumpster service.

Mr. Tressler advised that this will save the City approximately \$20K per year, and added that this goes into effect July 1, 2021.

Order 26,816 - appointing Mason R. Reed as the student representative to the Parks and Recreation Board.

Order 26,817 - accepting the sole source proposal from Wycliffe Technologies to provide additional Milestone XProtect Camera System licenses, network video recorder, cameras, and related equipment and software to add to the city's existing Milestone camera systems located at City Hall, the Public Safety Building, and the Municipal Services Center for the amount not to exceed \$74,461.

Mr. Tressler advised that this system was bid last year with the cameras for the parking garage, with the intent to expand cameras to City Hall, the Public Safety building, and the Municipal Service Center, which is why this is a sole source.

Order 26,818 - authorizing the assignment of the tax sale certificate for 501 Regina Avenue to the City for the amount of \$7,165; authorizing the City Solicitor to complete the tax sale foreclosure so the City can take title and record the deed; and authorizing the abatement of City real estate taxes, contingent upon recordation of the deed.

Mr. Tressler advised that this property has received numerous complaints, has draining problems, has been vacant for a few years, and said the City has an agreement with the previous tax certificate holder to take the property. He added that it is a commercial building in a residential zone and said the City may be able to convert that through the "floating zone" to another commercial property.

Order 26,819 - accepting the report from the City Administrator pertaining to the closure of a portion of a street known as Riverside Avenue, advising that there is no basis for assessing damages and awarding benefits to abutting property owners resulting from the aforesaid closing.

Mr. Tressler advised that the City Solicitor had noted there was no basis for assessing damages for this property, but said it had been visited and looked at anyway and there was found no reason for damages.

Mr. Tressler advised that there will be another Order added which will be for 3 City-owned surplus properties and said they are all vacant lots that adjacent owners have expressed interest in. He stated that they will be included on the next Surplus Property Sale. The properties don't have an address, but the areas are Quebec Avenue, the corner of Kentucky and New Hampshire Avenues, and Blackiston Avenue. He added that he hopes to have the next Surplus Property Sale ready by the end of the month.

II. CEDC – BALTIMORE STREET ACCESS PROJECT UPDATE

Mr. Miller advised that on May 25, 2021 they received notification that the City was awarded \$250K through the DHCD's Strategic Demolition fund, which will go toward the sprinkler tap project. He said they also received notification that the funding request for \$125K for the FY21 broadband demonstration program has been approved, contingent upon the execution of an M.O.U. between the M&CC and the DHCD. He advised that City staff is investigating the stipulations attached to that money, which is a dollar for dollar match. He added though, that they have another grant application they feel confident about which will fund similar infrastructure, and doesn't need a City match; however, they want to keep the other possibility on the back burner. Mr. Smith explained the stipulations with the \$125K, and went over procurement requirements of the DHCD.

Mr. Miller advised that as part of their ongoing downtown business mitigation efforts the CEDC partnered with the DDC and the Western Maryland IT Center of Excellence and launched the registration portal for Re-Imagine Your Business, with registration now open, going through the month of June. Mr. Miller provided handouts, and advised that the program is a free series of virtual courses to assist any business in the downtown district, and Canal Place with developing or enhancing their online presence. He explained that the program will be divided into 4 courses and that participants will learn to build online marketing strategies, develop and maintain websites, create and manage social media accounts, etc., and said that each course will be 3-4 weeks long, running from July 5th through October of this year. He added that this program was funded totally by the EARN grant, through the IT Center of Excellence at Allegany College of Maryland.

Mr. Miller advised that they have reached out to municipalities with similar situations, and said that Ms. Kelliher, the DDC, and the CEDC are working closely together to put together a strategic program to help with mitigation efforts and to provide tools and resources for businesses. He also mentioned they are looking at creating access through Merchants' Alley and creating facades on the back sides of buildings. Mr. Miller added that they have a marketing subcommittee that is focused on getting large print-outs of the renderings and placing them at high traffic corners as tourism picks up, to show what is planned for downtown.

Mr. Miller advised that they have received correspondence from State Highway and said they expect to get comments back "shortly", and are cautiously optimistic. He stated that the State Highway review is not happening concurrently with the federal process, and added that they are getting some support from the local delegation to help expedite things.

City Engineer Robert Smith went over the timeline of the project, which is 2 phases, with Phase I being Columbia Gas replacing all their plastic piping. He said as soon as they get a number in, probably around mid-October, and M&CC decide to move forward, then he will need a month to assemble all the paperwork for State Highway, and they will about 3-6 months to approve to go out for bid. He advised that during this waiting period, Columbia Gas will be downtown working, and said as soon as M&CC gives the word to move forward, the project starts, and the wheels don't stop. He also discussed waivers needed, what comments will be returned from State Highway, and said a lot has already been reviewed.

Mr. Smith advised that there is some concern about the Liberty Street parklet, and said he received a memo from Central Services today. He said it's not a structural concern, but if M&CC are open to it, the plan is to install plywood on top of the existing pavilion deck, due to some deck boards that have rotted. He said it would be treated plywood, and can be painted in a month or so if they want, but said it will be torn down in a year with the construction project beginning. He

added that it should be done in a month or so if Council is in agreement. No objections were raised.

IV. CEDC STRATEGIC PLAN RE-ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Mr. Czapski advised that they received official notification that their ARC grant request was approved, and they are working through the acceptance process. He said he will be talking with the consultant on Friday on the next steps. He added that once he is available and engaged, they expect it to take about six months to complete the Plan.

In answer to a question from Mr. Gandolfi, Mr. Miller advised that the Plan will typically cover 5-7 years. He stated that it's been 6 years since the initial Strategic Plan, but with Covid and the economy disruption, he said it seemed like a good time to do it again.

V. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie A. Woodring
City Clerk

Minutes approved on September 7, 2021