

A work session of the Beaufort City Council was held on May 28, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, 1901 Boundary Street. In attendance were Mayor Billy Keyserling, Council members Donnie Ann Beer, Mike Sutton, Mike McFee, and George O'Kelley, and City Manager Scott Dadson.

In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d) as amended, all local media were duly notified of the time, date, place, and agenda of this meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

DISCUSSION WITH REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION CHAIRS

Wendy Zara discussed housing efforts on behalf of the Redevelopment Commission. **Shirley Wilkins** and **Martin Goodman** are working together, she said. Additionally, the Lowcountry Housing Trust has put out an electronic handbook for developers. They work with governments, not-for-profits, etc., not with individuals. Councilman Sutton asked if these not-for-profits have been engaged with using the Lowcountry Housing Trust, and Ms. Zara said she knows that Habitat For Humanity hasn't.

Ms. Zara said that **Angela Childers** and she will discuss how the Redevelopment Commission and the Housing Authority will work together through the Housing Authority's 501(c)3. They want to approach the housing problem more comprehensively. In addition to a weak market, there's no coordinated entity working with all aspects of housing. Habitat For Humanity works with the low-income employed workforce; Housing Authority does lower income rentals; EOC gives small loans; and the COG is involved indirectly through a federal program called Home Funds.

Ms. Zara said to establish a more comprehensive entity, they need a staffing person who can cover a lot of ground and coordinate. A needs assessment study also would be valuable, she said.

Angela Childers described the coordination with the Redevelopment Commission that's planned on the website; it would refer any interested people to the right entity to answer their housing-related question. Mayor Keyserling asked what would be in the database in regard to commercial property. **Keith Waldrop** would like that, Ms. Childers said, and it would have resources for those interested in developing. It will track data, she said, and will know where the most hits are, so they can know which aspects of housing are getting the most interest.

Mr. Dadson explained how the improved information bank would work for those seeking to do things with "lots of linkage." He said this represents a coordinated effort that council has wanted for many years. The Lowcountry Housing Trust, he said, is a financing mechanism that the Redevelopment Commission has a relationship with, and they want to build relationships

with other groups who have an interest in housing as well. Ms. Zara said they have put together a list of a whole range of groups that have an interest in housing. These can all link together, Ms. Zara said, and to Main Street Beaufort, the Chamber of Commerce, and the city, for example.

Ms. Zara said that **Shirley Wilkins** is having classes in July on preparing for home ownership and consumer credit counseling for getting loans. Ms. Zara said when someone wants to buy a house, Ms. Wilkins calls the community development lenders in Columbia who then put her in touch with someone who will work locally with homebuyers.

Councilman Sutton asked who the web site is for, as it doesn't seem to be for someone looking for a rental. The housing options are in poor condition for those at a low level of income or are new development outside of the city with no services. The Housing Authority has a 600 person list, he said. Ms. Childers said that the Housing Authority "brought several houses online recently for low-income buyers, and they went quickly." Councilman Sutton said the best use for the 501(c)3 needs to be established. The mission of the Housing Authority was to tackle housing needs. When the economy was great and investors were investing, they were looking at where to put housing initiatives, "but now it sits there today with no thought as to how to make that affordable for the market base."

Ms. Zara said they "are talking about a lot more than websites." They want the not-for-profit to have a full range of housing services, from workforce housing to very low-income housing. Mayor Keyserling said this is an effort to work between the city and the Housing Authority. They are picking up where they were before he became mayor, he said. The Greenlawn disagreements derailed the effort. The Housing Authority maintains and manages affordable and subsidized housing. They work with developers now, among other things. Ms. Zara said also a credible needs assessment would give everyone a better idea about what's possible.

Councilman Sutton said they can't keep going down this path without doing a needs assessment. He asked if it's the normal business of the Housing Authority to do a needs assessment, and Ms. Zara said, no, it's normally the business of the COG. Councilman Sutton asked how they "push the COG to do what we need." Mr. Dadson said **Michelle Mapp** has made a suggestion that a tailored needs assessment study for Beaufort "might be worth doing." The Redevelopment Commission and the Housing Authority are working together with the Lowcountry Housing Trust and the COG to get the best, most specific information.

Mayor Keyserling said this is a terrific time to be buying lots; Councilman McFee said "cash is king." Beaufort County was an anomaly because the prices shot up so fast. Councilman Sutton said some of the partners were listed but not **Larry Holman's** group which is lending start-up money to small businesses.

Mayor Keyserling said if he owns land in the Northwest Quadrant and wants to build a spec house, if he would be considered a developer. Councilman McFee said he didn't know if the

development guidelines would let him do that. Ms. Zara said she doesn't know of a source for downpayment assistance in Beaufort, and it's a critical part of that market. There are entities with funds, she said, but the players who do that aren't known. "Charleston has it," she said, "because it's bigger and has departments to do that stuff." The signs point to needing a full-time coordinator who can know how to do all that is needed, Ms. Zara said. There are so many layers that come together to make a project work.

Mayor Keyserling said the COG has "several bundles of money in community development and housing assistance." For the few months he's gone as the Beaufort representative, the small counties seem to have a better idea about how to get the money than Beaufort does. Ms. Childers said she's used the money for the 3 houses she mentioned before. Mayor Keyserling said "there's still more there."

Councilman Sutton asked Ms. Childers to come back and give an overview of properties they have in the city and projects they have, as well as issues they have had in getting projects done. He gave her examples of questions he would like to have answered. Ms. Childers said they are very modern, up-to-date and energy efficient homes, 2 of which are on Park Avenue. Councilman Sutton said if they remodel, he would like to have a conversation about what the changes might be. He feels a more pro-active voice from the Housing Authority would be better, and Ms. Childers said she would be happy to be at council whenever they like.

Mayor Keyserling noted that the project in Yemassee looks "almost brand-new."

Alice Howard said when the MPC last met, they did "housekeeping" in regard to sidewalks, and the county had a project last week. "Nothing too exciting has happened lately," she said. **Steve Tully's** Marsh View map was wrong and was corrected, to Rural Residential from Rural.

DEPARTMENT BUDGETS PRESENTATION: MUNICIPAL COURT

Linda Roper shared the municipal court's mission statement. She then showed the impact on municipal courts in regard to the disposition of criminal cases. Expungement orders are difficult, she said, and if a defendant has been fingerprinted and was found not guilty, dismissed, or nolle prosequi, it must be expunged in 45 days after the court date; it's difficult for them to do in a timely manner because there is a lot of paperwork involved, she said.

There's been an increase in background checks for defendants seeking employment, housing, gun permits, etc., which is time-intensive research for staff for cases disposed of 5 years or more before. Ms. Roper said if they have the records, they have to do the research. Mr. Dadson asked if they can charge for it, and Ms. Roper said no, if it's there, they have to provide it.

Councilman Sutton asked for an example of a defendant seeking employment; Ms. Roper said they were defendants in the court at some time in the last 20 years. Councilman Sutton asked how they weed out which agencies are entitled to the information, and Ms. Roper said they

have to research to determine if the request is legitimate. Everything in their office is public record except for expungements. She said she foresees at some point being able to say, "I don't have that record; it's been destroyed," but if they aren't out there and published, they have to provide it.

In regard to the fiscal year in review, they hired a Court Clerk 2 to help with expungement; implemented online fine payment; increased jury terms to about every 4-5 weeks to comply with the case disposal orders; disposed of 5,701 cases year-to-date with 6,225 projected for fiscal year 2013. 6,735 cases have been processed, and they project a year-to-date total of 7350 to be processed. They have processed 154 jury trial cases; the City of Beaufort conducts bond hearings for the towns of Hilton Head Island, Bluffton and Port Royal. They have processed 3,222 cases in Bond Court to date and collected and disbursed \$226,000.

Ms. Roper went on to discuss revenue collection year-to-date in comparison to in FY2012. For the recommended budget, it's up a little more this year from last because of having the Court Clerk 2 position for a full year, and a \$5000 increase in the operations budget. Included in the recommended budget are implementation of scanning in the case management system to improve auditing of cases, attaching digital copies to cases, and using current equipment to install informational digital signs in the lobby; mandatory training recommended for all staff members; annual maintenance of security portal; and additional July jury terms for compliance with the order.

Mayor Keyserling asked if the income covers about half the budget, and Ms. Roper said yes. Ms. Roper said she monitors monthly to ensure that they are getting their money back.

Councilman O'Kelley asked about the number of people who skip out on fines; Ms. Roper said about 50% of fines aren't collected, but they might be serving time in jail or have some other reason. Unpaid traffic tickets out of state get two notices before their license is taken when they are pulled over for another time. Ms. Roper said the state of South Carolina now has a 10-year license, and they get 6 or 7 calls a week from people who had traffic violations where their license was suspended, and they want it unsuspended. They are collecting 5 or 6 weekly, she said.

Councilman Sutton said the municipal court wants council to provide an 11% increase, and it's mostly personnel costs. He said the Clerk 2 hire is to keep the process moving, and Ms. Roper said yes. He asked if it's a fair value to pay \$40,000 more for that position. He wondered how they can pass on that cost elsewhere as much as possible. Mayor Keyserling asked if the court system is allowed to have a processing fee on every case. Ms. Roper said at this moment, it is not; state law prevents it.

Councilman O'Kelley followed up on Councilman Sutton's comment and asked if there was a way to show how many bond proceedings there are and how many were from Beaufort and Port Royal. Mr. Dadson said they get that report monthly. Ms. Roper said she breaks it down by

hours. Councilman O'Kelley said he'd like to see if Hilton Head Island and Bluffton are being charged the right amount if the judge is there for a majority of cases from elsewhere than Beaufort. Ms. Roper said she can provide that information, and they have reviewed it and feel the right amounts are being charged. They do a lot for bond court, she said, but the constraints in the administrative office are labor intensive, etc. Follow-up takes time and effort.

Councilman O'Kelley asked about the need to wait 30 days to begin expungement, and Ms. Roper said that's if there's an objection by the prosecution, so they have to wait 30 days. Councilman Sutton said they may need to build a state service fee and not send them the check. Councilman O'Kelley said someone would be put in jail and funding withheld. Mr. Dadson said they have to think of the court as being 60% fixed costs. Mayor Keyserling said if they are thinking of the option of an auto fee or a fee against someone who's broken the law, he's more comfortable with the latter. Mr. Dadson said there's advocacy to try to change some of these things. Ms. Roper said they have suggested and asked for several fees.

DEPARTMENT BUDGETS PRESENTATION: FIRE

Chief **Sammy Negrón** presented the mission of the fire department. He went on to show the year in review. He showed emergency response data in Beaufort (1,893) and the Town of Port Royal (685). There were ten fires this year, six in Port Royal and four in Beaufort; the structure fires have been the same for five years.

Chief Negrón went on to show the 2500 calls this year for fire and medical. Councilman Sutton pointed out that 60% of the calls were for medical services, but the fire department is "not funded for that at all." He asked if that's due to socio-economic issues or the elderly. Chief Negrón said they can tie demographics to response for any fire department: socio-economic issues come into play because people in different areas of the city may call 911 whereas people in a different area wouldn't call 911. Councilman Sutton said public awareness and education might be helpful for the population as to the appropriate time to call. Councilman Sutton said the typical home may not know when and when not to call. Mayor Keyserling said they would like information on the degrees of seriousness of the calls; he said he's "thinking of a fee." Mayor Keyserling said they have enabled it over the years and people expect it.

Councilman Sutton asked about the placement of the next fire station and said this diagram shows the importance of a fire station in the zone of Bellamy Curve, Boundary Street Jr., area.

Chief Negrón went on to show the percentage of customers for every type of call they get, and where they come from. 68% are residents of the City of Beaufort. Mayor Keyserling said, if they want a contract with the City of Beaufort, that's one way, but there's a county agency set up to do it, and the city should be compensated. He thinks they should discuss it with the county within the municipalities. It should be able to be done for less money than the county and done right.

Councilman Sutton asked about the relative levels of skill in terms of emergency personnel certification. It was agreed that this needs to be looked at with all the players present. Chief Negrón said he has discussed this with other municipalities' fire chiefs and emergency service directors and though it wasn't very popular, "it's a reality they understand."

Chief Negrón showed fire prevention data: inspections, violations, corrections, fire plans reviewed, burn permits requested, and burn permits issued. In regard to fire information data, they had 91 public education events last year vs. 155 this year. For fire education for adults, they went from 424 to 3,199 and for children they went from 2,619 to 6,664. Chief Negrón agreed with Councilman Sutton that they could incorporate 911 education with their other information to groups that they educate. They have fire extinguishers available but have only given out one this year.

In regard to training, Chief Negrón showed the breakdown for 14,000+ hours. He went on to show the five-year trend budget analysis for budget, personnel services, and O&M. The increase request for O&M is up \$133,782, and personnel is down \$4,181 for a total increase of \$102,601. This is because FY2013 O&M was not approved and workers' comp is now required, Chief Negrón said. The 2% COLA and one job vacancy is included for the overall increase.

Chief Negrón showed O&M and workers' comp that were not approved in the last budget. The fire budget is \$2.9 million; the City of Beaufort is 76% and 24% for the Town of Port Royal. The City of Beaufort request is for is \$2,254,375 and the Town of Port Royal request is 711,908.

Capital projects, Chief Negrón said, are the replacement of the Mossy Oaks fire station, which "is still marching along," and the replacement of a engine damaged in the incident on Ribaut Road by the Town of Port Royal.

Kathy Todd said that the workers' comp amount has gone up for high risk areas like police and fire, so the budget was increased by what they are being charged for higher risk. That accounted for a \$25,000 in the fire department budget, she said. Workers' comp is factored into FY2012 – 2014. Prior to that, it was included in personnel services, and they are using a salary projection system; workers' comp is not a benefit factored in.

Councilman Sutton asked Chief Negrón if there was anything they could live without again this year of the things that need to be replaced that weren't approved last year, either. Chief Negrón said they can if they have to, but they keep putting it off, and that's especially problematic with uniforms, which are very expensive – \$50,000 of the amount. The "yearly replacement has been postponed over and over for the dress shirts or whatever." Councilman Sutton said in the military, they have to maintain the clothes they are given, but if the fire department has to have it, council will approve it.

Councilman O'Kelley asked what furniture needed to be replaced. Chief Negrón said last year they had removed furniture from their budget and were able to obtain it from the 1% they

were given for the lounges: sofas, tables, etc. The state told them they could not buy beds, mattresses, etc. The ones they have are "just old."

The Southside park development update, an ordinance language change to the Tree Board's makeup, and tree evaluations in Waterfront Park were postponed due to time constraints until the first council meeting in June.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

A regular meeting of the Beaufort City Council was held on May 28, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the Beaufort Municipal Complex, 1901 Boundary Street. In attendance were Mayor Billy Keyserling and council members Donnie Ann Beer, Mike Sutton, Mike McFee, and George O'Kelley, and City Manager Scott Dadson.

In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d) as amended, all local media were duly notified of the time, date, place, and agenda of this meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Keyserling called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The invocation was led by Councilwoman Beer and the Pledge of Allegiance by Mayor Keyserling.

MINUTES

The minutes of the work session and regular meeting May 14, 2013 were presented to council for review. **Councilwoman Beer made a motion, second by Councilman McFee, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed 4-1.** Councilman Sutton abstained from voting because he was not present at the meeting.

AMENDMENT TO fiscal year 2013 BUDGET

Councilwoman Beer made a motion, seconded by Councilman Sutton to approve the amendment on second reading. The motion was approved unanimously.

MOTION AUTHORIZING CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT FOR DESIGN SERVICES FOR THE FIRE STATION

Councilwoman Beer made a motion, seconded by Councilman Sutton to authorize the city manager to enter into the contract. Mr. Dadson said it's a fixed cost contract; a lot of preliminary work has been done with the Master Plan. This engages the design, construction and engineering services. Mr. Dadson said the city wanted to "keep it simple and straight up" and "this is firm that can do that."

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Keyserling asked for the community to vote for "Bark for the Park" to begin a dog park in Southside Park.

REPORTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilman O'Kelley said notice of this council meeting did not appear in *The Beaufort Gazette*.

Councilman Sutton asked that Mr. Dadson continue to update council on the status of the mooring fields. Mayor Keyserling asked "if they had to go back to engineering or something." Mr. Dadson said not that he knows of. Ms. Todd said she knows the costs are below the grant

award and what the matching money covers, so they are looking to maximize the full grant and the matching, so they “don’t leave money on the table.”

Councilman McFee congratulated the combined youth and adult symphonies’ concert a couple of weeks ago and said he had talked with **Jane Upshaw** about the impact of the arts, particularly at USCB, on real estate and economics in Beaufort.

Councilman Sutton said they may have one of the largest sandbars on the Beaufort River for the Water Festival this year.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before City Council, **Councilwoman Beer made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman McFee. The motion was approved unanimously,** and the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
IVETTE BURGESS, CITY CLERK