

**City Council Retreat – July 31, 2019**  
Jefferson School African American Heritage Center

City Council met in retreat on Wednesday, July 31, 2019, at the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center, 233 4th Street NW, Charlottesville, Virginia, with the following members present: Mayor Nikuyah Walker, Vice Mayor Heather Hill, Dr. Wes Bellamy, Ms. Kathy Galvin, and Mr. Mike Signer.

Various department leaders and staff were present to provide information as needed.

Mayor Walker called the meeting to order at 9:18 a.m.

Ms. Hill suggested having someone in the meeting take notes besides the Clerk who would be taking minutes. Ms. Walker advised that Councilors could take notes and recap later. She turned the meeting over to City Manager Tarron Richardson.

**City Manager’s Recap of the Past 80 Days**

Dr. Richardson gave the City Manager’s Recap of the Past 80 Days. He advised that he has met with members of the public, members of various boards and commissions, citizens who attend City Council meetings, members of the business community, and neighborhood associations. He has walked through public housing areas and talked to residents, as well as citizens along the Downtown Mall. Dr. Richardson advised that he has spoken about small-scale and larger capital project with citizens. He has also met with all five City Councilors and School administrators. He advised that he has met with City department leadership to discuss operations and needs to achieve success in departments in day to day operations.

Dr. Richardson advised that his discussions with Constitutional Officers centered around how to work collectively to move the City forward.

Dr. Richardson discussed results of a questionnaire to describe the culture of the City and morale. He advised that succession planning came up in several departments as an area for improvement.

The following items were proposed as items to address moving forward:

- Re-engineering organization structure
- Hires for key leadership positions
- Succession planning
- Compensation study
- Vacancy report for all departments
- HR policies & procedures
- Building improvements
- Centralized fleet services
- Centralize IT services
- Zero-based budgeting methodology

Dr. Richardson reviewed the previous organization structure and explained that the new structure allows for more efficient operations, a more centralized span of control, and the ability to answer inquiries in a timelier manner. Performance improvements would be more easily

managed with the Deputy of Public Utilities. He advised of the need to put all financial components together. He also advised that public safety departments as well as the Communications Department would report directly to the City Manager. The Chief Operating Officer will be able to work to identify deficiencies, outcomes from various studies, and work to make improvements.

Dr. Richardson reviewed recent new hires in leadership positions for Information Technology (internal candidate Sunny Hwang), Charlottesville Area Transit (Garland Williams), and the Deputy City Manager/Chief Operating Officer (Letitia Shelton), noting the still vacant Human Resources Director position, and the application process recently closed.

The proposal for Succession Planning included: investing in the growth and development of future leaders; providing opportunities for cross-training within and across departments; and creating organization structures with either Deputy Directors or Assistant Directors, creating layers for fully functioning departments.

Regarding the Compensation Study, the proposed approach is that each position would have steps with annual increases; employees would be able to reach the highest point on salary scale for their respective positions; positions would be correctly categorized and named; and new employee salaries would not exceed tenured staff members.

Dr. Richardson advised that he would review all funded position vacancies and the length of time that they have been unfilled, evaluate the vacant positions to determine if they are still relevant, and evaluate all City positions for future funding.

Regarding the Human Resources Policies and Procedures Manual, Dr. Richardson shared that it had not been updated since the late 1990s. His plan would include making the manual accessible on the City website for applicants. The first completely revised version is expected to be forwarded to the City Attorney Office for review in mid-August. He advised that going forward, the committee would meet quarterly and provide annual updates.

Building improvements were another area of concern as several City buildings are old and in poor condition. Dr. Richardson expressed the need to consider building improvements for the following areas in Capital Projects: City Hall; City Hall Annex; Police Department; off-site buildings; and employee parking. He advised that there should be FY2020 funding for a Design and Feasibility Study to consider consolidating departments, budget considerations for FY 2021, and centralizing Fleet Services and Information Technology Services.

Dr. Richardson gave an overview of Zero-based budgeting, explaining that all expenses must be justified and approved for each new period. He advised that this budgeting approach would improve accuracy and efficiency, reduce wasteful spending, and increase coordination and communication.

Ms. Hill asked about the timeline for going to zero-based budgeting. Dr. Richardson advised by next fiscal year budget.

Ms. Walker asked about how he would determine departments with too many employees. Dr. Richardson advised that the goal would be to reduce duplication of services.

Ms. Galvin asked whether staff was aware of changes. Dr. Richardson advised that emails were sent to Department leaders and all staff.

### **Overview of Existing Data Sources & Discussion**

Deputy City Manager, Mr. Mike Murphy, reviewed Sources of Input of information to the City: phone calls, email, website, social media, and the MyCville app. He shared data and advised that the vision is to increase usage of MyCville and enhance the app for ease of use, directing workflow, and tracking. Mr. Murphy reviewed various surveys and reports that have been conducted over the years for public and employee input.

Councilors discussed the need to implement action plans from the studies and have more frequent updates. Mr. Murphy reminded Council that some reports such as the Police Department “stop & frisk” data are reported to the public monthly.

Ms. Walker asked about the MyCville app and about the approach of having a department dedicated to service calls, specifically referencing 332 unique users who have submitted 2,131 tickets (41% entered by City staff). She encouraged trying to get more citizens to use the MyCville app. Mr. Murphy advised that the app has not been widely marketed. Ms. Walker asked if there is a way to segment an area in the app for Transit complaints. Mr. Murphy advised that the request type could be built, and that there is a need to better track resolution of complaints.

Dr. Richardson advised that many of the complaints could be reduced by code enforcement and management.

Mr. Signer asked about strategically communicating to the public all of the work that is being done by City employees. Dr. Richardson advised of various dashboards that could be used, including use of the website. Mr. Signer shared that the City Manager could hold press conferences on a regular basis. Dr. Richardson advised that his approach so far is to go directly to the citizens and groups. Ms. Hill mentioned an annual colorful insert in the local paper.

Ms. Walker mentioned the customer service system from France, which had a 24-hour deadline and the commitment was signed by leadership. She suggested that possibly the City Manager signature could go on follow-up correspondence. She suggested figuring a way to get diverse participation in future surveys.

Ms. Hill suggested leveraging systems of input to work together and tracking to gather concerns, giving equity to concerns whether brought to a Council meeting or sent in by other means.

Dr. Bellamy guarded against sensationalizing surveys, and encouraged being more plugged in to the community.

Ms. Walker encouraged Council to be mindful of equity in input and who has access to systems and technology.

Mr. Signer suggested that a staff person could be copied on emails to Council and respond. Mr. Wheeler advised that there is technology that could track that email correspondence, but it is not currently in place. Mr. Murphy advised that auto-responses would not address the specifics of each email.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Mayor, Councilors, and City Manager - Revisiting/Refining Inter-Council Protocols**

Ms. Galvin reviewed the Local Elected Leadership Model. She reviewed the list of roles and responsibilities that was developed by a previous Council from five years ago for City Council, the City Manager, and the Mayor. This list was intended to serve as a springboard for discussion of current roles.

Dr. Richardson advised that the City Attorney is reviewing the City Charter for necessary updates. He also advised that the Vision, Goals and Mission need to be reviewed annually in order to provide direction to the City Manager for priorities.

Ms. Walker suggested a half-day retreat with the current Council to give the next Council a base.

Dr. Richardson suggested doing a pre-Council and post-Council session with Council-elect officials. Mr. Blair advised that Councilors-elect are treated as any citizen until they take office on January 1, and may attend meetings without the bounds of FOIA.

Dr. Bellamy suggested removing items from the list that cannot be defined, that are subjective, or that are just character traits. Ms. Galvin suggested creating a separate category regarding Value Traits for Councilors.

Ms. Hill suggested leveraging the Compass program for Councilor onboarding.

Ms. Galvin reviewed Council Operating Guidelines.

Dr. Richardson asked Council whether they were accepting recommendations from professional staff, task forces and committees. If not, then why delegate to committees? He suggested that involving so many entities prolongs the process for making decisions. Ms. Hill advised that the groups fill the gap for areas where staff capacity is lacking.

Dr. Bellamy expressed concern with how the Operating Guidelines were written.

Council discussed needs for policy analysis and research.

Dr. Richardson advised Council to consider annual planning, fiscal year budget, and staff need for prioritization.

Some Councilors expressed the desire to work directly with staff to develop policy ideas, while other Councilors expressed that staff should take direction from a majority Council vote.

Mr. Signer asked what would be the formal process for Councilors to get help developing ideas when there is no majority formed.

Mr. Blair suggested that Council consider monthly topic-driven work sessions with staff. Mr. Signer suggested open topic quarterly or regular work sessions. Other Councilors agreed.

Council took an abbreviated lunch and reconvened to discuss Councilor budgets. Dr. Bellamy and Ms. Walker expressed the need for a more flexible budget rather than limiting the dollar amount. Mr. Signer recommended the use of what Council considers as a reasonable budget, and suggested a \$5,000 limit per Councilor. Councilors discussed having report-outs from Councilors after conferences. Transparency was discussed, as well as the need for the mayor to have a higher threshold. Council directed the City Manager to provide analysis before they set a travel budget amount.

The credit card policy was discussed, and being mindful of how taxpayer money is used. Mr. Blair reviewed the Code of Virginia referencing the verbiage of expending public funds for a public purpose, the second part of that Code section referencing that the funds should be budgeted.

Dr. Richardson advised that the City Credit Card policy was being reviewed and would be a part of the Employee Policies and Procedures Manual.

Regarding work sessions, Mayor Walker asked to have a level of flexibility, and Ms. Hill suggested designating a time of month for work sessions so that staff could block off time. Dr. Richardson shared his experience from Richmond and DeSoto, and advised that planning would be helpful in order for staff to be prepared for those meetings.

### **Council Meetings - Collective Meeting Management**

Mr. Signer referenced prior meeting management goal/rules set by Council in February 2018. He advised that fairness to the public is an issue as well as Council and staff ability to focus after 11:00 p.m. He asked if Council was interested in enforcing the established time limits for making motions, debating, and moving forward with agenda items. He also stated that addressing the presiding officer to be recognized to speak prevents cross-talking.

Dr. Bellamy brought up community engagement time as a factor.

Ms. Hill suggested being disciplined about break time and a different handling of the public comment period, where Council listens, but does not engage.

Dr. Bellamy asked about having separate Town Hall meetings to avoid spending that time at the City Council meeting.

Ms. Galvin suggested waiting until after Community Matters to address concerns or ask clarifying questions.

Ms. Walker suggested that discussion of agenda items at the Council meetings is more transparent for the public to feel engaged and informed.

Councilors discussed the handling of personal attacks.

Ms. Walker advised that when people feel that they have been heard, they are less likely to come back before Council.

Ms. Walker and Dr. Bellamy advised that the environment is different because voices that have traditionally not been heard are now empowered to speak.

Council agreed to move toward enforcing the meeting rules adopted in February 2018, and voting to extend meetings if they go past 11:00 p.m.

Dr. Bellamy advised that he is not in favor of removing people from Council Chamber. With different communication styles, consequences could be different.

Mr. Blair advised that people who sign up for public hearings have to be heard.

### **Council/City Manager/Staff Engagement & Communication Protocols**

Dr. Richardson advised that the information provided was sufficient.

Ms. Hill clarified that Dr. Richardson would be copied on email from Councilors to staff to keep him informed. Dr. Richardson advised that keeping him in the loop will help with workflow.

### **Role and Scope of Boards/Commissions/Task Forces -Council/Staff Representation on Boards/Commissions/Task Forces**

Ms. Galvin reviewed the types of Council committees – ongoing and ad hoc. Councilors reviewed the list of current boards and commissions, reviewed mandated boards for Council membership, and areas where staff members could attend, noting that certain committees do not particularly need Council direct participation such as LEAP and Historic Resources Committee.

Mr. Blair advised of challenges with addressing term limits, citizen engagement to get more applicants, and the ongoing need for certain boards. He suggested holding a future work session to address Boards and Commissions. Clerk staff, liaisons and department leaders will begin evaluating boards and commissions to make proposals for consolidation. It was noted that boards and commissions should help and not hinder operations.

### **Short-term Goals**

Dr. Bellamy asked about creating a City Council meeting YouTube recap, and suggested that the Council Outreach Coordinator be involved in the effort.

Ms. Walker asked Dr. Richardson to make the hiring of a Director of Equity and Inclusion a priority, with this person reporting directly to the City Manager – looking at everything through an equity lens. This position would look internally and externally.

Mr. Murphy advised that the City Manager equity and inclusion group that was convened will be presenting its recommendation in the near future.

Regarding the Efficiency Study, Dr. Richardson advised that Deputy City Manager Letitia Shelton is reviewing the Efficiency Study and will try to report the approach for evaluating the study to Council on August 19. Ms. Hill advised that the Efficiency Study does not always line up with the recommendations.

It was noted that the Request for Proposal (RFP) period closes on August 16 for the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Rewrite. Ms. Hill asked about a realistic timeline.

The Future Budget Approach was discussed earlier in the meeting as the Zero-based budget approach.

Dr. Richardson advised that I.T. is working on finding a new vendor to overhaul the City website.

Customer Services & Responsiveness continue to be areas that will be addressed for improvement, and will benefit from enhancements to the City website and the MyCville app. Dr. Richardson advised that from his experience with the Civic Plus web platform and design, departments would have more control over information and it would be easier to access.

Council discussed a six-month operating plan for the City Manager.

Ms. Galvin asked about having an onboarding document for new Councilors. Mr. Blair and other staff have been working on putting together this information.

The meeting adjourned at 3:53 p.m.