

CITY COUNCIL RETREAT
with Virginia Institute of Government – Part 1
April 1, 2022 at 4:00 PM
CitySpace, 100 5th Street NE

Call to Order

The Charlottesville City Council met on Friday, April 1, 2022 for the first of a two-part retreat with the purpose of determining and discussing Council priorities. This was the first time the sitting Council met in-person during the locally declared coronavirus State of Emergency. In accordance with a local ordinance amended and re-enacted on March 7, 2022 to ensure continuity of government and prevent the spread of disease during the coronavirus State of Emergency, the meeting was hybrid with Council and select staff in-person and electronic broadcast to the public on Zoom, TV10, Boxcast and the city's social media streaming platforms.

Mayor Lloyd Snook called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. noting all councilors present: Sena Magill, Michael Payne, Brian Pinkston, Lloyd Snook (Mayor) and Juandiego Wade (Vice Mayor).

The following staff were also in attendance and provided input throughout the meeting: Interim City Manager Michael Rogers, Deputy City Managers Ashley Marshall and Sam Sanders, Clerk of Council Kyna Thomas, City Attorney Lisa Robertson, and Senior Budget and Management Analyst Krisy Hammill.

Welcome and Introductions

Charles Hartgrove, Virginia Institute of Government Director was joined by colleagues Natalie Miller Moore and Claire Downey from the Weldon Cooper Center at the University of Virginia. As an introduction, councilors were asked to tell about their favorite place in the city.

Check In

Mr. Hartgrove reviewed responses to a pre-meeting survey, where the following questions were asked:

1. What does the city council do well? Which organizational assets help achieve these successes?
2. What should be the top five priorities for the city council to focus on over the next two years?
3. What internal and external challenges and/or barriers could limit the city council's ability to accomplish its priorities?
4. What results do you hope to achieve in the retreat?

Councilor Pinkston added a request to benchmark metrics on a range of topics.

Facilitated Discussion: City Council Goals and Strategies

Mr. Hartgrove began the facilitated discussion with a high-level focus for the next 90 days. Some themes that emerged were:

- Building capacity and finding stability in the organization
- Ensuring clear lines of communication among Council and senior staff
- Staff - compensation, capacity, in-house ability for civic engagement
- Transit
- Climate action plan
- Reviewing decisions through an equity lens
- Using one-time funding for the most impact

For big picture items, Council was tasked with considering how each decision lines up with a priority, goal or commitment. Building consensus on themes by which to filter agenda items that come before Council, there was general agreement in the following areas:

- Staff explaining how certain actions relate to a goal in the strategic plan
- Reviewing information with an equity lens
- Budgeting for priorities
- Using benchmarks and clear definitions
- Defining what success looks like

Some areas where Council acknowledged a need to invest in capacity to meet goals were:

- staff training and professional development
- equity
- budget staff
- analytics and data
- Master Social Worker

Mr. Rogers advised that in his experience with another locality, he deployed a Productivity Team to help departments analyze data.

Council recessed for a meal break at 5:15 p.m. and reconvened at 5:44 p.m.

Mr. Rogers shared that data analytics can be fulfilled by having a good pipeline for university interns throughout the year, getting public policy students to work with the city, as well as hosting an ICMA Fellow.

Councilors shared ideas about areas for strategic planning:

- funding for youth programs
- Capital Improvement Plan project regular status reports
- planning focus for month-to-month agenda topics for the upcoming year
- address the unhoused population

- getting police out of the business of mental health crisis response
- gathering and sharing metrics and using the city's Clearpoint data system
- civic engagement
- discussions prior to budget season
- integrated and long-term strategy for affordable housing
- care of staff, strengthen workforce, hear from staff
- ensuring that city plans are interconnected and have a champion/subject matter expert to follow through
- Economic development strategy - community wealth building. Consider who has access to benefit.

Mr. Rogers agreed that staff stability and resilience is critical and stated that an employee survey will be reinstated near the end of April as a best practice, with feedback being available in June.

Regarding action items, Council expressed interest in restarting Town Halls to rebuild trust, communication and transparency with the community; working from the same definitions to have an understanding; defining timelines for reaching goals as Charlottesville continues to grow; a presentation on economic development strategy; building relationships with Downtown Mall businesses and UVA.

Day 1 Wrap Up

In preparation for Day 2 of the retreat, Mr. Hartgrove asked Council to think about regional partnerships, nonprofit partnerships, and the relationship with Albemarle County, UVA and contracted agencies.

Vision, Mission, and Values were recognized as topics important to City Council and the City organization, but not yet discussed.

The meeting recessed at 7:51 p.m. to reconvene at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 2, 2022.

BY Order of City Council

BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council