

The Washington City Council met in a continued session on Monday, September 8, 2008 at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Municipal Building. Present were: Judy Jennette, Mayor; Doug Mercer, Mayor Pro tem; Richard Brooks, Councilman; Darwin Woolard, Councilman; Gil Davis, Councilman; Jim Smith, City Manager; Reatha Johnson, Acting City Clerk; and Franz Holscher, City Attorney.

Councilman Archie Jennings was absent.

Also present were: Anita Radcliffe, Acting Finance Director; Allen Lewis, Public Works Director; Mick Reed, Police Chief; Bobby Roberson, Planning and Community Development Director; Philip Mobley, Parks & Recreation Director; Keith Hardt, Electric Director; Ray Midgett, IT Director; and Mike Voss, of the Washington Daily News.

Mayor Jennette called the meeting to order and Councilman Brooks delivered the invocation.

APPROVAL/AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA

James C. Smith, City Manager, added one item to the agenda: Vehicle Energy Conservation Demonstration Proposal.

On motion of Councilman Davis, seconded by Councilman Brooks, Council unanimously approved the agenda, as amended.

DISCUSSION – LAPTOP COMPUTERS FOR CITY COUNCIL

Mayor Jennette stated this item was requested by Councilman Jennings to gain some understanding of what it would cost to go to a paperless Council meeting. Mr. Midgett has some numbers to present tonight for information only. Ray Midgett, IT Director, stated that in accordance with the Council's request we have developed a plan that will allow Council to have access to information electronically. Mr. Midgett said the type of information that is currently available from the City website includes Council minutes and past agenda's. Hopefully in the near future, once the project is completed by the City Clerk's office, the City Code will be added. Mr. Midgett stated the plan includes the purchase of 6 laptops with software necessary for the networking of the equipment.

To minimize support cost, it is recommended the laptops remain at City Hall, and be used exclusively by City Council for City Council meetings. Mr. Midgett shared how the process would work. The City Clerk's office would generate the agenda and those agenda items would be saved electronically. They would then be loaded onto a USB drive and delivered to Council members so they may review the agenda. Council members will be able to edit and make notations to the documents electronically as well as be able to retrieve them from the laptop at the meeting. One assumption is that each Council member has access to a computer at home to be able to review and make changes. Mr. Midgett stated each Council member would be provided with any type of instructions that would be necessary to install the software.

The total cost for the plan:

6 Laptops @ \$1800 each	\$ 10,800
6 USB Thumb Drives @ \$30 each	\$180
1 Wireless Access Point	\$470
Cabling	\$350
Total	\$ 11,800

Mr. Midgett entertained a question at this time. Mayor Pro tem Mercer inquired why in the budget session when asked about the cost of laptops he was given the figure of \$2,000. Mayor Pro tem Mercer asked which figure was correct, \$1,800 or \$2,000. Mr. Midgett stated the last quote they received a couple of months ago was \$1,800.

Mayor Jennette inquired if Mr. Midgett had considered how much training Council would need to come up to speed. Mr. Midgett stated there would be some training issues involved in terms of how to use the software and how to make notations. When this issue has been addressed, then we will need to develop a training plan. Mr. Midgett said one of the things that the City could consider is to make those files available on the City web-site, so they could be downloaded as opposed to using a USB drive. Also, if he had to, they could be loaded on a CD.

Mayor Jennette asked have we estimated how much the City would save on paper, man power, and printing cost. Mr. Smith and Mr. Midgett said they have not and Mr. Smith deferred the question to Reatha Johnson, Acting City Clerk as to the man power it takes now. Ms. Johnson stated the new way of doing the agenda takes approximately 3-4 hrs for a regular meeting and 1 hour for a Committee of the Whole meeting.

Mayor Jennette inquired as to the pleasure of the Council regarding this information; if Council wants to pursue it this fiscal year or if they were incline to wait until next fiscal year? Mayor Pro tem Mercer stated we did not budget this item and we are now eight weeks into the budget. He does not like to look at information on a flash drive or a CD, he prefers a hard copy where he can turn back and look at different pages. Mayor Jennette reminded Council this was not an idea from staff, but a request from Councilman Jennings. Councilman Woolard, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Brooks were agreeable to the idea of laptops, and Councilman Woolard stated maybe it can be pursued if our ship comes in. Mayor Jennette said the money has probably been spent, but it can be added to the wish list. Councilman Woolard likes the idea of having the laptop, being able to view it, and being able to flip back and forth on a disk drive. Council agreed that since it wasn't budgeted, it should be looked at when the funds are available. This will not be placed on the October agenda, but it was requested to keep information at hand.

DISCUSSION – RUNYON CREEK BRIDGE WALKWAY

Phil Mobley, Parks and Recreation Director, reported on last Tuesday (9-2-08) he met with DOT engineers, CAMA representative, and Mr. Allen Lewis. Mr. Mobley stated DOT engineers assured him they would not be able to put a walkway under the Bridge, even though it is going up 18 inches. He asked the representative if it would be possible to put in a walkway in the water and CAMA saw no real issue. You would be required to get a CAMA permit, encroachment agreement from DOT, and those kinds of things. There should be enough room to put a walkway, and the kind they are looking at is much like the one at the Wetlands; about 300-350 feet long from one side to the other. Mr. Mobley said they would need engineering drawings in order to go for the encroachment agreement with DOT. Mr. Mobley spoke with the District Engineer and was told if the City waited for the bridge to be built; it would be an easier process because it could then be approved on the local level. If you try to get the encroachment while building the bridge, it would then need to go through Raleigh.

Mayor Jennette asked Mr. Mobley if he had passed this concept by the Recreation Advisory Board. Mr. Mobley said they haven't met yet, but he had two members of the board with him at the meeting. Mr. Joe Taylor (a member of the Recreation Board) was at the meeting and was supposed to be here tonight in support of the idea. Mayor Jennette inquired if the CAMA permit would take the same amount of time it typically takes. Mr. Mobley suggested a major CAMA

permit normally takes about six months; they are not doing an Environmental Assessment (EA) down there. Mayor Jennette asked then why is it taking two years at the waterfront. Mr. Mobley stated because they are doing the EA down at the waterfront, which takes one year. Mayor Jennette asked the likelihood of finding grant money to build the walkway. Mr. Mobley said that was another issue, but was hoping to be able to use Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) money. Mr. Mobley stated the next level is getting a handle on cost and this would involve an engineer. The City may be able to wait until the next budget to do the engineering study and he agrees they should because it will take a year to build the bridge. Once we have the engineering study, we can apply for PARTF (in January). Mr. Mobley informed Council that he had spoken with Ms. Susan Suggs today and she is still waiting for the survey. The surveying company had a major issue with one of their employees (kidney stones). Mayor Jennette stated Ms. Suggs would only provide a rough sketch and would not do the engineering for this.

Mayor Jennette asked how close it would be to the channel. Mr. Mobley stated the bridge will have an arch in the middle and it is about ten foot from the normal water level to bottom of the bridge. This is a good ways from the middle of the bridge where they are trying to build. Mr. Mobley feels it is so shallow there and boats would have a problem if they can to the edge of Runyon Creek.

Council was comfortable for Mr. Mobley to proceed.

Mr. Mobley asked to speak about the boat ramp area that is down there. Mr. Mobley met with two employees of The Wildlife Commission this morning and asked them of the possibility of The Wildlife Commission taking over the boat ramp area, remodeling, and maintaining it. The employees implied it looked like something they would like to do, but would need to take it back to the Commission. Mr. Mobley stated the City would have to enter into a twenty-five lease agreement with The Wildlife Commission and is asking Council's approval to move in that direction.

Mayor Jennette asked Mr. Mobley how much control would they require or want for the parking area. Would they tell Backwater Jack's that they can't park the restaurant clientele in the parking area for the boat ramp? Mr. Mobley did not have an answer for that, but said there is street parking there and assumes people use it for Backwater Jack's. Mayor Jennette tasked Mr. Mobley with double checking on this issue and making sure the City doesn't run into something unexpected. Mr. Mobley suggested looking at what we are getting, twenty five years of maintenance on something that has been a drain on the City.

Council was comfortable with Mr. Mobley proceeding.

REPORT – UNIFORM CRIME REPORT OVERVIEW (UCR)

Mick Reed, Chief of Police, presented an overview of the Uniform Crime Report for 2006. Chief Reed stated the Uniform Crime Report (UCR) is a data collection from every law enforcement agency in North Carolina that has sent to Raleigh and then sent on to DOJ. At the end of every year the data is compiled and sent back to everyone and each department can see where they are.

Chief Reed stated in August of 2007, he received the 2006 UCR crime reports. Serious issued has been identified, both in the number of crimes that were reported and the clearance rate. When speaking of a clearance rate you are talking of solvability, not necessarily an arrest but the incident was solved. The Chief stated in 2006 they received a clearance rate of 19%, by revamping their reporting system and the clearance (which is the ability to clear). Chief Reed asked Council indulgence while he walks through the report.

Chief Reed indicated that UCR compile stats on part 1 and part 2 crimes. They are listed below:

Violent Crimes:

- Murder
- Forcible Rape
- Robbery
- Aggravated Assault

Property Crimes:

- Burglary
- Larceny
- Motor Vehicle Theft

Chief Reed stated they would identify a lot of activity that was known about but was not documented. There were a lot of incidents in which the officer would offer advice to the victim, but would not necessarily write a report; therefore, at the end of the year they didn't have that information. Chief Reed was concerned and addressed making sure there was a clear picture and that a report was written on the activity within our community. Accountability was attached to those reports; when a report of a crime came in, it was assigned to someone and mechanism was put in place where the officer worked through each case and documented it.

As a result, in 2006, 538 index crimes were reported resulting in a 105 (19%) clearance rate. In 2007, 750 index crimes were reported resulting in a 230 (31%) clearance rate; the overall State average for clearance rate is 24%. Chief Reed said that more crimes were reported with 15% less officers. However, the Washington Police Department filed 29% more crime reports, solve 55% more often, and with 15% less man power.

Mayor Pro tem Mercer inquired if this was 15% of officer's hours or number of people. Chief Reed stated number of people and Councilman Mercer questioned the arithmetic. Chief Reed asked Mayor Pro tem Mercer which portion was in question and Mayor Pro Mercer explain how he arrived at his percent.

Chief Reed informed Council one of the things the next step will do is produce accurate and timely intelligence. Technology has caught up with the needs of the Police and now the officer will be able to do their reports in the car. The new technology will allow them to create and gather data quicker. Also, identify trends, crime reports to see red flags, access to data State wide, and better follow up. Mayor Pro tem Mercer asked if they are now following up with the victim of the crime and Chief responded yes. Chief Reed said they now have a command staff in place to oversee this, and to make sure a better job is being done.

Councilman Woolard inquired if something could be done with the houses in this area on Market Street (maybe condemn that block). Mayor Jennette stated it wasn't a bad idea. Mayor Jennette suggested it is unlikely you could tear down every house, but maybe we can the key houses in that area.

Mr. Smith added the City has developed a good working relationship with Housing Authority and Housing has provided additional protection to residence in the 7th and 9th street neighborhood. Hopefully, the City will have support from the Federal program that was approved by Congress last month providing 40 billion dollars to communities around the country and distributed through the CDBG grant system. Maybe we can work with the Housing Authority to acquire those houses through this grant. Options will need to be explored as to what to do with them to make the neighborhood safer. Mayor Jennette asked Mr. Smith

who was going to make sure we will have a plan in hand when that grant becomes available; Mr. Smith said probably his office.

Councilman Davis asked Chief Reed if he was pursuing the State Gang Violence Funding and Chief Reed said he will check with Captain Pollard, but he doesn't believe the City will qualify because of the Project Next Step Grant we have just received.

Councilman Woolard and Mayor Jennette commented the Chief on a job well done.

DISCUSSION – VEHICLE ENERGY CONSERVATION DEMONSTRATION PROPOSAL

Mr. Smith informed Council of the draft they have in front of them where they have looked at three elements. The three elements are:

- Original purchase proposal
- Replace with
- Vehicles eliminated/combined use

Mr. Smith stated there is now \$81,000 (roughly) in the budget that has been set aside for vehicles that could be replaced with hybrids. The City does not have the State bid list yet but it looks like the hybrids, similar vehicles, cost would be about \$104,000 and we would need about \$23,000 in order to go with the hybrids.

Mayor Pro tem Mercer questioned if a cost benefit ratio had been performed, if so, did we save any money. Mr. Smith stated it was very difficult to determine because we don't have a good understanding of what the cost would be to maintain them. Mr. Smith said we don't have in house personnel for maintenance of the vehicles and the life cycle of the vehicle is unknown. Mayor Pro tem Mercer said he agrees but in essence we can estimate the miles per gallon between a hybrid and an S10. Will the ratio mileage wise save the City money? Mr. Smith felt you could do the mileage ratio, but the big problem as they were told would be the life cycle. The cost to replace the battery pack and the disposal of the battery pack could be substantial.

Mr. Smith recommended considering some hybrids vehicles to set a good example, but he is not sure it can be justified through a financial standpoint.

Mr. Smith also felt that combining the vehicles in Finance/Planning and Warehouse/Safety, the City could reduce the fleet by two vehicles.

Mayor Pro tem Mercer questioned reducing fleet. Mayor Pro tem Mercer asked if it was cheaper to rent an undercover car than to maintain it. Chief Reed responded yes but two of the vehicles in question had been removed from his inventory because of this reason.

Mr. Smith suggested Council wait until the State bids come out in October, and have this on the November Agenda.

REPORT – HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CDBG

Mr. Bobby Roberson, Community and Planning Director, spoke on the four programs they are actually running which are listed below.

1. First Time Home Buyers - Northgate
2. Property on Keysville Road
3. CR Program
4. The George

Mr. Roberson updated Council on the status of all four programs listed. (1.) In the First Time Home Buyers program and individual will need to take a course, set up a saving account, save \$1000, and the program will match \$3,000. This program is handled by Gina Amaxopulos through Washington Housing Authority. (2.) The Keysville Road program has been ongoing for approximately 16 months is under Reverend David Moore. There was a problem with the acquisition of the property. The location of the site had to be changed to further North on Keysville Road. Rivers and Associates has been hired to do the preliminary subdivision plat and both water and sewer is available. (3.) The CR program is \$850,000 set up and is in the process of detailing the water and sewer plan on 6th and 7th Street. The rehabilitation side they had to go through led base paint, which is both a Federal and State requirement. Mr. Roberson stated they will also need to have all twenty houses appraised. (4.) The George program has closed out and the only thing missing is the final audit report, which in speaking with the Acting Finance Director and the City Manager, we should have by November or December.

REPORT – CLEAN WATER TRUST FUND – BARGER TRACT

Mr. Roberson stated the Mr. Holscher, the City Attorney, has been working on the Clean Water Trust Fund – Barger Tract agreement and had summarized the information. After Mr. Holscher explains, we will need direction from Council. This item will require action, and will properly come back to Council in the October meeting.

Mr. Holscher stated he did not realize this item would come before Council until last week. Mr. Holscher recalls Council talk about this item in June or July and have an inter relationship with the old grant and the potential with a new grant with the Wetland's Reserve Project. Mr. Holscher stated he passed out a summary note page and a copy of the grant agreement. The direction Mr. Holscher felt he was hearing from Council was to slow down the Clean Water Management process and to let the Wetland Reserve process catch up. This way the City could see if the two programs could interrelate. This information is being provided for Council to understand the history of the Clean Water fund project. Mr. Holscher called Council's attention to the 5th paragraph of what the State would require and if Council is considering acting on this in October, he suggest that a copy of this agreement be provided to the contact representative with the Wetland Reserve Program. Mr. Holscher called Council's attention to different things that would need to be provided by City staff.

Mayor Jennette asked Mr. Roberson how soon the agencies would need this information. Mr. Roberson deferred this question to the City Attorney since he had negotiated an extension on the date. Mr. Holscher informed Council that the agreement was August of 2008 and now the expiration date is August of 2010. Mr. Holscher counseled once entered you would need to have a six month cushion. Also, Mr. Holscher asked Council to look at page 8, 9, and 10, the gray areas are the areas that had been revised since the last agreement that he had passed out to Council. On page 9 paragraph 3 he put his understanding of Council vision in the future of what they would want to put on that property.

Mayor Jennette asked if the reason we were doing this would make the City eligible for more potential grant funding from various agencies. Mr. Holscher responded no.

Mayor Pro tem Mercer suggested this be tabled and Mr. Roberson stated this material was being provided for Council tonight because it is very intensive and he would like to have it in Council hands to study before the October meeting, this is just advance notification that it will be coming. Mr. Holscher stated his objective was so the interrelationship could be explored.

Mayor Jennette, Mayor Pro tem Mercer asked did we spend \$40,000 for the property and Mr. Roberson responded yes. Now do we have to give them a perpetual easement not only on the Barger Tract but the McMullan and restricted of what we can do, in order to get that \$40,000 we will have to spend an additional \$30,000. Mr. Roberson said the \$30,000 is for the survey, legal expenses, environmental report, and the actual information required by the Clean Water Trust Fund the City Attorney mentioned in order to receive the grant amount. The City offered up the McMullan Tract because they did not have funds at the time to match the Clean Water Trust fund. They were willing to take the easement in exchange for the match. Councilman Davis stipulated they did not offer all of the McMullan Tract and Mr. Roberson said that was correct.

Mr. Holscher said it is his understanding that the Federal folks are going to want to use potentially the same or some of the same acreage that we are using through the Clean Water Grant and he would like to get those two things to mesh. If the changes of success are better with the Federal folks then the recommendation would be not to go through with the Clean Water Grant, but we need more information to make a knowledgeable decision.

DISCUSSION – WATERFRONT BATHROOM FACILITIES-LOCATION

Mr. Roberson stated they had forwarded a recommendation from DWOW and the Planning Board about four locations for the bathroom. Mr. Roberson said they are getting close on the grant cycle for bathroom facilities and would request a decision be made on where to put the bathrooms on Stewart Parkway. The last four recommendations that came up from the citizen's participation: (1) use the existing site, (2) the gray area in close proximity between the former Evans Seafood and the Estuarium, (3) Washington/Beaufort County Chamber of Commerce, (4) Walkers Cleaners. DWOW representatives recommended the restrooms be located between the NC Estuarium and the former Evans Seafood site.

Mayor Jennette inquired if any of these locations came with cost estimates. Mr. Roberson stated all the property belongs to the City.

Mayor Jennette assign Mr. Roberson with making sure which site was the most recommended and bring back to Council.

Mr. Roberson stated the program he is applying for is the CAMA grant and not using the PARTF grant. The reason is if you do the PARTF grant, then you will have a 50% match and a lot of money is coming down. The CAMA grant is good for at least \$100,000, but he will make a call to make sure. Mr. Roberson stated they engineering estimate from Rivers would be about \$150,000, if we use the existing bathroom facilities.

At this point, Major Jennette assigned Mr. Roberson with bringing back the preferred site and the dollar amount too. Also, will this be phrase starting with bathroom and then add Dock Masters facilities.

REPORT – TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE PROCESS AND PRIORITIES

Mr. Roberson stated we have two issues under the Transportation Plan that needs to be discussed. (1) We are required by State law to have a mutually adopted Thoroughfare Plan that is current every ten years. Mr. Roberson said we are in the ten year rotation for this current year. The first thing that needs to be done is contact DOT on its Advanced Planning Session and have an Origin and Destination (O&D) set up. This will have to be contracted with NCDOT and Mr. Roberson will have those numbers for the next fiscal year. In addition, after you do the O&D study, you will go into the Thoroughfare Plan setup. The current Thoroughfare Plan includes the Town of Washington Park and Chocowinity. Council will need to adopt a resolution and go into that process. (2)

Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) make a presentation on an annual basis to the District Office through their political process to actually get the priorities setup for Washington and Beaufort County. At the next meeting, Council will be provided with the thoroughfare and improvements that were included in the plan and Council will select the top three priorities they would like to see.

Mayor Jennette inquired if we need to go into this new cycle or wait when the bypass is completed. Mr. Roberson said he thinks they have a good idea about the alignment. Mayor Jennette asked how much would need to be budgeted and Mr. Roberson said he will have that at the October meeting.

OVER LAY DISTRICT – US 17 CORRIDOR AND OLD US 17 CORRIDORS

Mr. Roberson stated they will begin the Public Hearing process on the design guidelines and is on schedule to meet the moratorium estimated completion date. In addition, all the data has been collected on the Old US 17 Corridor and hope they will be able to come up with some design guidelines for that as well. Mr. Roberson said they are ready to move forward.

**CLOSED SESSION – UNDER G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3)
ATTORNEY/CLIENT PRIVILEGE**

On motion of Councilman Davis, seconded by Councilman Woolard, Council unanimously agreed to go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) Attorney/Client Privilege.

On motion of Councilman Woolard, seconded by Councilman Brooks, Council unanimously agreed to come out of closed session.

On motion of Councilman Woolard, seconded by Councilman Brooks, Council unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting until September, 29, 2008 at 4:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

**Reatha B. Johnson
Acting City Clerk**