



**CHESTER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CITY HALL**

January 22, 2018, 5:30 p.m.

Minutes

Council Work Session – 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. – Public Forum – Strategic Planning

Present: Mayor Pro Tempore Annie Reid; Council Members Betty Bagley, Angela Douglas, Carlos Williams, and Susan Kovas; Interim City Administrator Carla Roof and Payroll Clerk/Interim Clerk to Council Sylvia Young.

Absent: Mayor George Caldwell and Council Members Linda Tinker, William Killian and William King.

Call to Order: Mayor Pro Tempore Reid called Council Work Session meeting to order at 5:50 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tempore request that Council brainstorm ideas and/or topics for discussion at Strategic Planning. Mayor Pro Tempore open floor to public for recommendation of items to add to the agenda for Council discussion at Strategic Planning Sessions.

Jeremy Clark, Chairperson for CCEG, Chester Citizens for Ethical Government. Mr. Clark spoke in detail about funding, accounts, FOIA, leadership, ordinances and budget. Mr. Clark requested that his statements be entered in the minutes. Insert statements are as follows:

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My name is Jeremy Clark and I'm the Chairperson for CCEG, Chester Citizens for Ethical Government. I'm here today to point out what is about to be another mistake.

You're about to waste more time with what appears to be the creation of a wish list, with no real data on your resources, abilities, or projections to base that wish list on. You're again, putting the cart in front of the horse.

You have no updated budget. You have no way to even remotely come up with a projection of funds you may have available, since you haven't budgeted in years. You can't even account for funds received for projects that should be in a strategic plan.

I was in a Finance Committee Meeting recently in which the subject of the \$70,000 for the Fairgrounds was brought up. It should have been kept in a separate account for that project in the first place, but apparently should have at least been in the hospitality fund account. It's not there. After the HVAC payment for the community kitchen there's what, between four and five thousand dollars left in there? It was stated that it is "probably in the general funds". Then the Finance Director stated that after payroll that fund will be depleted. So where is it? Well, I believe that the grant money was, or is about to be spent in areas that it wasn't intended for.

That's not surprising though with no actual budgeting or enforcement of a budget. The City has been run similar to the irresponsible family that never balances their checking account, but just writes checks and hopes to have the money to cover everything. That's no way to run a government of any size, in any form. I don't believe that the city government can really account for even a good portion of the money it has taken in from grants. Now I don't believe at this time that money was stolen, but the real problem is that we can't say for 100% certainty it wasn't, since we can't account for tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of dollars. That's the real problem.

It has even been said during a council meeting that we can see where the deductions were made, but don't know who money went to in a numerous instances. So you can't even really say how much money is missing, was misallocated, wasn't spent where it was supposed to be, and it doesn't appear that this issue will be fixed any time soon, although in order to progress with any program that costs any amount of money, this issue must be fixed first.

You don't have your key management and leadership position filled. The City Administrator position is a key position for the day to day operations of the city, and is required by ordinance. You can't do a budget without one. You can't manage departments on a part time basis successfully. You can't coordinate and provide oversight to all the moving parts that make up the city without this position. Trying to manage the city on a part time basis will never work. It simply can't.

You don't even have a City Attorney. This position is also required for a variety of actions, by our

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own ordinances.

The City of Chester is anything but transparent, which has led to suspicion and a lack of accountability, as well as an us versus them appearance. The city appears to routinely deny access to public documents and attempts to charge fees that are contrary to the Freedom of Information Act. One example is the excuse of denying me the audit, because the council has not yet reviewed it, as well as the state response. It is still a government document and members of the public have a right to see that. You tend to go into Executive session, not just when it should be done, in order to protect the identity of individuals or to protect information that if released too soon might cause harm to someone's ability to complete an action, such as a contract proposal, but you go into executive session whenever you feel you can. Why is it that you went into executive session in regards to the audit, which had, as mentioned in past City Council Meetings, been completed? Why were the past years audits removed from the city's website? In order to build confidence in the government here people need to feel they can trust you, but when you hide information needlessly and appear to promote an us versus them mentality, this will never happen.

The people of Chester City deserve more than motion and lip service, without any tangible measurable progress. They are out of patience. There is little hope by anyone that I've spoken with, that the city of Chester can be worked with or that any progress can be made when working with the City of Chester, although this legal entity is of the people, in theory. You may forget who you work for, but there will be reminders very soon. You have been allowed to fill leadership positions of great responsibility, which require integrity and diligence, but after asking for this responsibility, and being granted it, that did not automatically give you the leadership and management skills you need. That comes with diligence, study, and experience. You have a responsibility to follow the law, follow our ordinances, perform diligently and competently, to not be negligent or be derelict in your duties. When I was in the Army we used to occasionally use a phrase that is appropriate here. Lead, Follow, or get out of the way. I strongly suggest every member of council think about what it means to lead, study the principles of leadership, and practice them, take this opportunity to follow the rules, enforce the rules, to admit its mistakes, fix those mistakes, and then after tangible measurable results are there, to highlight those, as well as fixes that are being worked on at that time. A list of attempts or someone else's successes here will not suffice either. You need to account for all money spent and all money in your possession, follow the law, follow our ordinances, perform ethically and openly, and work together efficiently in order to change the current atmosphere and the perspective the Citizens of Chester have in regards to the City.

Simply throwing together a dream sheet, with no way of knowing if any of it is even possible, so that you can get more funds from the state, to mismanage, is not going to fix anything. It is simply more time and money wasted, and the Citizens of Chester have run out of patience and time. We have people living in shacks and chicken coupes that aren't fit for anyone. To anyone

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who walks around downtown it appears that we have more empty stores than ones performing business. We have a City that hasn't managed to recover from an economic collapse that started over 35 years ago. The people of this council may not have been in charge at that time, but they haven't done anything that has made that any better. We need to see tangible measurable results. Lip service and motion with no real progress is not going to cut it anymore.

Thank you and I hope you take this as an opportunity to fix issues, rather than going on the defensive and disregarding my statements. I also ask that this statement be entered into the minutes.

After a brief discussion, Mrs. Roof informed Council that Strategic Planning Session is scheduled on February 10, 2018. Mayor Pro Tempore Reid informed Mr. Clark that Council will take his comments under consideration, informational and they plan to take necessary corrective actions. No action was taken. With no further discussion, Mayor Pro Tempore Reid closed Public Forum at 6:00 p.m.

Chester City Council Meeting, January 22, 2018, 6:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Pro Tempore Annie Reid; Council Members Betty Bagley, Angela Douglas, Carlos Williams, William Killian, William King and Susan Kovas; Interim City Administrator Carla Roof and Payroll Clerk/Interim Clerk to Council Sylvia Young.

Absent: Mayor George Caldwell and Council Member Linda Tinker.

Call to Order: Mayor Pro Tempore Reid called meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Prayer: Councilwoman Kovas led in prayer.

Pledge of Allegiance: Mayor Pro Tempore Reid and Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilman Killian request that Council have a moment of silence for police officer killed in line of duty at York County. Council had a moment of silence for Detective Michael R. Doty that was killed in line of duty on January 17, 2018.

Citizens Forum: Raymond Carter – Mr. Carter stated the following: on November 13th he came before Council and made a comment about a sheriff with no point intended; from November 13th until November 17th there was an incident that happened on Saluda Street. He said, “Let me start off by saying and I will make it very quick. I will not intend to call names but one of you called a family member and called my house to ask questions about what I have been saying. So, let’s take into consideration, I’m getting the people. The Chester Fire Department, Chester Library, Chester Ambulance, and Chester Family Court, which are county buildings, people are being barred from entering buildings because of what I have been saying. So now I guess some peoples conscious must be kicking in! Remember what I told you in November before these years, I’m in it until the end.” No action was taken.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Administrative – Councilwoman Douglas asked Mrs. Roof for the dates for the City Administrator interviews. Mrs. Roof responded that administrator applications will be forwarded to Council per drop box. City Administrator interviews will begin on Monday, February 5, 2018 at 4:30 p.m.

Councilwoman Bagley asked about City Attorney applicants. Councilman King made a motion to hire Attorney Latonya Edwards as City Attorney. Councilman Killian seconded the motion. Councilwoman Douglas stated that Council have not collectively reviewed the agreement as a body. Councilman King amended motion to hire Attorney Latonya Edwards as City Attorney upon collective review of agreement. The motion carried with Councilwoman Bagley opposing motion.

Fire – Report included within Council package.

Human Resources – Report included within Administrative Report in Council package.

Police Department – Report included in Council package.

Public Works – Chapter 9, Building Codes in Council package.

Recreation – Report included in Council package.

Councilman King made a motion to accept reports as presented in Council packages. Councilwoman Bagley seconded motion. The motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Public Safety – Mayor Pro Tempore Reid informed Council that the Public Safety Committee had a meeting on Friday, January 19, 2018. She gave Council a detailed report from meeting including the following:

- First meeting with Chief of Police Eric Williams
- Budget
- Police Department uniforms changing to all black.
- Figures available for the purchase of new vehicles.
- Chief Williams seeking grants to purchase equipment for vehicles.
- Going to electronic citations no more paper police citations be issued.
- Street signs corrections, working with DOT.

Public Works – October 18, 2017, December 6, 2017 and January 18, 2018 Minutes included in Council package. Councilman Williams reported to Council that the Public Works Committee had a meeting on January 18, 2018. Councilman Williams informed Council that the following items were discussed at January 18, 2018 meeting:

- The State Building and Zoning Ordinances, non-profits do not have to have a permit to demolish and build homes (SC Code of Laws Section 40-59-30 and Section 40-59-260).
- Harvest Call Ministries has compensated the City for the debris which was taken to the landfill.
- List of street locations of properties located in City and Chester Count that Harvest Call Ministries is working on to demolish and rebuild.
- Working on Fee Schedule for service that will be provided to Council upon completion.
- Reginald McBeth, Public Works Director is in process of revising the current job description for the Public Works Director and Assistant Public Works Director.
- Improvements to the Public Works facility.
- Replacement of Chester County mobile homes at 564 Darby Road and Pinckney Road.
- Chester County waived fees to help Harvest Call Ministries with projects.
- Request that Council lift hiring freeze to fill three vacant job positions.

Councilman King gave accolades to Councilwoman Douglas, Councilman Williams and Reginald McBeth for work well done.

Recreation – Ad-Hoc Committee Reports – Councilwoman Kovas stated that the Kitchen Committee met on January 8, 2018. The following items were discussed at January 8th meeting:

- HVOC installed
- Concrete pad
- Plumber corrected technical plumbing issues
- Reginald McBeth moving forward with project renovations.
- Bathroom and floor renovations

Councilman Killian reported to Council that the next Recreation Committee meeting is scheduled on February 9, 2018 at 4 p.m.

Councilman King made a motion to accept Committee Reports as presented in Council package. Councilman Killian seconded motion. The motion carried unanimously.

COMISSION REPORTS:

Evergreen Cemetery - Councilwoman Douglas request that Mr. McBeth call an Evergreen Cemetery Commission meeting.

Historic Preservation - December 7, 2017 and January 4, 2018 Minutes included in Council package.

Councilwoman Kovas made a motion to accept Commission Reports as presented in Council package. Councilman Killian seconded motion. The motion carried unanimously. Councilman Killian commended Mrs. Roof for getting flowers

for Kim Grafton for the bereavement of his father. He expressed to Department Heads to notify Mrs. Roof of employee's bereavement.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Commission Appointments – Councilwoman Douglas made a motion to appoint Matthew Alexander to the Historic Preservation Commission. Councilwoman Bagley seconded motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Second Reading Ordinance 2018-01 Rezone 197 Columbia Street from Neighborhood Commercial (NC) to Residential R-10 – Mayor Pro Tempore Reid read aloud the Second Reading Ordinance 2018-01 Rezone 197 Columbia Street from NC to R-10 to Council. Councilwoman Bagley made a motion to accept Second Reading Ordinance 2018-01. Councilwoman Douglas seconded motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ladarius Wylie a National Hero – Councilman Williams – Councilman Williams recommended that the City needs to honor Ladarius Wylie a National Hero, and he asked Council to come up with ideas on how to honor Mr. Wylie a hero of the City of Chester.

Harvest Call Ministries – Councilman Williams – No more discussion.

NEW BUSINESS:

Approval to hire (Hiring Freeze) – 1 CDL Driver and 2 General Laborers – Public Works Committee – Councilman Williams made a motion to give Reginald McBeth, Public Works Director permission to hire one CDL Driver and two general laborers. Councilman King seconded the motion. Council and Mr. McBeth had much discussion about staffing. Councilwoman Bagley expressed her concerns about budget and finances. Oscar Baker, Finance Director stated that one CDL Driver would be alright to hire but uncertain about hiring two general laborers. The motion carried unanimously.

Audit – Councilman Killian – Councilman Killian expressed his concerns about city budget and the need to bring someone in to help get books straight. Council took Councilman Killian concerns as information.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mayor Pro Tempore Reid entertained a motion that Council go into Executive Session to discuss a Contractual Matter – Public Works Department, Contractual Matter – Council, and Contractual Matter – Police Department. Councilman King made a motion that Council convene into Executive Session. Councilman Killian seconded motion. The motion carried with Councilwoman Douglas opposing motion. Council convene into Executive Session at 7:20 p.m.

At 8:20 p.m. Councilman King made a motion that Council reconvene from Executive Session. Councilwoman Bagley seconded motion. The motion carried unanimously. Mayor Pro Tempore Reid announced that while Council was in Executive Session they discussed a Contractual Matter – Public Works Department, Contractual Matter – Council, and Contractual Matter – Police Department. No action was taken. Councilwoman Bagley made a motion that Council authorize Mrs. Roof to terminate contract with Jay's Lawncare Service and Palmetto Lawncare Service. Councilman King seconded motion. The motion carried unanimously.

With no further discussion, Councilman King made a motion that meeting adjourn. Councilman Killian seconded motion. The motion carried unanimously. Council meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sylvia Young