

## **BUDGET AND FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

**April 16, 2002**

**4:45 P.M.**

The Budget and Finance/Personnel Committee was called to order by Councilman Littlefield, in the absence of Chairman Taylor, with Councilmen Franklin, Page, Robinson, Pierce, Benson, Lively, and Hakeem present. City Attorneys Randall Nelson and Mike McMahan and Shirley Crownover, Assistant Clerk to the Council, were also present. Management Analyst Randy Burns joined the meeting later.

Others present included Mayor Corker, Phillip Lynn, Adm. McDonald, Mike Compton, Adm. Boney, Beverly Johnson, Todd Womack and Sarah Todd. Rayburn Traugher joined the meeting later.

### **INTERIM CAPITAL BUDGET**

Councilman Littlefield stated that the purpose of this meeting was to discuss the Interim Capital Budget and turned the meeting over to Mayor Corker.

Mayor Corker stated that he and the Council had spent a year working together, and it had been a great year for everyone and the City and that he appreciated the way the Council had worked with his office. He stated that all kinds of initiatives were underway and that this was an outstanding Council.

He stated that the question might be asked "Why are we doing the Interim Capital Budget this way?" He explained that it takes care of needs in the Fire and Police Departments with new police cars and fire equipment and other necessary items; that it does not delve into roads and infrastructure except at Enterprise South (formerly VAAP); that capital money is available for the Volunteer site, and we have gotten a Grant from federal money to pay for infrastructure and asked for money to build out the infrastructure.

Mayor Corker went on to explain the Citizen Relationship Management or Call Center, explaining that citizens call and do not know where to ask for help; that we are looking at a Call Center to direct people around City Government. The Call Center will be located on the first floor of City Hall. A person will be able to personally come to the Call Center, use the phone or the internet and will be able to track the status of their request. He explained that we have three to four companies on a final list to look at handling the software; that Council members will be able to see which inquiries are coming from their districts and to track them. He stated that he thought this would be something that would greatly benefit citizens, noting that he would be at Ferger Place tonight and citizens have expressed to him that they don't know where to go; that it is hard when they don't have access to phones and is extremely difficult to "track" their way through City Government.

Mayor Corker explained that another component we were looking at was using the Stormwater Building for Neighborhood Services; that right now we were spending \$81,000 in rent for Neighborhood Services to locate at Warehouse Row; that we will be moving people back into City Hall and use the Stormwater Building for Neighborhood Services. He mentioned that City Hall had been upgraded with a cooling tower and boiler and there are other safety and code upgrades that are issues in City Hall. He explained that the last mayor did not have time to finish all of this. He explained that we had brought in a firm to look at the Stormwater Building; that we also have the Annex Building and are concerned about the constructional integrity of this building and will possibly speed up the annex occupancy into City Hall itself.

He went on to say that we had been notified by TVA of the availability of the building next door, but we don't see any use for this building in the near future; that Bankruptcy Court will move eventually and free up this historic building. He reiterated that we wanted to finish what we had started at City Hall, and we knew that the Annex Building will eventually have to be demolished. Part of the Capital Budget is to finish the architectural work at City Hall.

Mayor Corker explained that they had reviewed and re-assessed the past planning processes and had established a joint team led by Public Works to review and prioritize long-term needs, and they will be assisted by the Regional Planning Agency. He noted that RPA would be involved in the budget process, and they are very excited about this. All City Departments will be involved, and we are going to look out several years so that the community will know the direction we are going in. He added that nothing was slowing down on Shallowford Rd. He stated that he hoped they would have a Capital Budget to the Council by mid-summer.

He explained that they were looking at debt service for four years and were going through a real thorough process, and he thought the Council would greatly appreciate this in the summer; that if there are things we cannot take care of this year, there will be a plan for future years, and he thought this would be great for city government. He mentioned that Jeff Phitzer would be joining us to help manage the process of the Capital Budget. He explained that we don't have people in all departments who have the background for these projects.

Councilman Page asked if the budget presented in the summer would be for three years. Mayor Corker explained that it would be larger than the typical annual capital budget; that it would just lay out a plan for the future. At this point he turned the meeting over to Adm. Boney.

Mr. Boney presented a hand-out, which is made a part of the minute material. The first page dealt with Capital Investment Needs and listed economic development considerations, relocation of Neighborhood Services and City Hall safety and code upgrades, and public safety requirements. He re-emphasized the strategic plan where a joint team led by Public Works will be assisted by the Regional Planning Agency and all city departments. He next discussed short term issues where timing is critical and the immediate need is clear. These issues will not be impacted by the planning process. He explained that the Interim Capital Budget would meet immediate needs on projects that are ready to go and facing deadlines. We do not want these critical projects to be delayed.

Some of these time urgent projects are CARTA, where we need matching funds for new buses which are now being delivered; EPB/Butcher Block, where there is a complete land transfer agreement and site remediation which will be funded out of a State fund dealing with dry cleaners (Mayor Corker added that this was per our agreement that we entered into 18 months ago); and Human Services, where we need to appropriate a grant to finalize expenditures on the Avondale Head Start Center.

Mr. Boney continued with time urgent projects, mentioning FireHall #1, where we will be paid money for the structure and in essence it is a donation of the Fire Hall.

The money in the budget allocated for the Call Center (Citizen Relationship Management) is to cover the initial start-up costs such as software, training, hardware, furniture, etc.

Enterprise South Development appropriated funds for initial consulting, engineering and demolition contracts including expenses incurred to date.

Councilman Hakeem asked what Department the Call Center would fall under. Mayor Corker explained that the Council had allowed them to fill the Internal Auditor position; that they had worked with Personnel and changed the title, and this position had gained national interest; that they had advertised for the job all over, and the position will be called Performance Audit Manager, which is a combination of Internal Auditor and Performance. The added function is performance—this position will not just be an auditor, and this person will look at what we are doing to make sure that we are getting the most out of our dollars. They will also coordinate grant functions. They will report to the Internal Audit Dept., and we will see where complaints are coming from and will do a Performance Audit; they will be armed with the data that will cause city government to function at an entirely different level. He explained that this was on the “cutting edge” and had attracted sharp people who were excited about this. He explained that we were combining the job into one pro-active effort and grants will also be combined into this one position. He added that Gene Settles, with the Finance Dept., is upgrading the software and that Neighborhood Services will be across the street; that we need to keep going with this.

Mayor Corker went on to explain that the Treasurer's Office was downsizing and the Finance Office would be moving over to City Hall.

Councilman Pierce asked if Neighborhood Services would occupy the whole Stormwater Building, and the answer was "yes". Councilman Littlefield added that it was an odd building. Mayor Corker agreed that it was an inefficient building and that was the most prudent thing to do with it; that they had looked at lots of options.

Mr. Boney went on with time urgent projects, mentioning the Police Department that was buying \$750,000 worth of cars and there would be more later on. The Fire Department will be purchasing two new fire apparatus—a Quint and Hazardous Material Truck.

He next went over a Summary of the Projects, which are as follows: CARTA--\$500,000 out of local funds; EPB/City--\$2,800,000 local and \$400,000 state funds; Call Center--\$246,350 local; Enterprise South--\$725,000 local; Purchasing Software--\$65,000 local; City Hall Design--\$775,000 local; Police Fleet--\$750,000 local; Police software/hardware--\$2,500,000 federal and \$333,333 local; Fire Department--\$809,000 local and \$141,000 state; Human Services--\$355,004 federal; Firehall #1--\$300,000 CHA.

Mayor Corker mentioned that we are in the final throes of an EDA Grant, and he was 99.9% sure that it would be approved; that federal dollars are coming in to lower costs.

Councilman Page asked if the Call Center amount included personnel. Mayor Corker responded "no"—just their training. Adm. Boney added that we would be using employees that we already have.

Councilman Benson questioned how a Call Center would fit under a Time Urgent Project. Mayor Corker responded that this did not mean "rush". It is time urgent because we have gotten RFP's, and it takes six months to put this in place; that we want to make it happen in a timely fashion, and he would like to start it now; that they had been working on it eight months. Councilman Benson still questioned if it was that serious. Councilman Littlefield added that Randy Burns had been working on this; that people call, and we will be able to track their requests by computer. Councilman Benson asked if we had a City to use as a model, and Mayor Corker responded "Baltimore". Councilman Littlefield added that a person could call one number and make their wishes known, and we would be able to track it. Councilman Benson stated that he did not want to de-humanize this. Councilman Littlefield stated that he thought this process would "humanize" requests.

Councilman Hakeem added that in thinking about the Department of the Call Center and looking at the intricate details that he would suggest that we don't just take people who don't want to be in their present position and "dump" them there; that we need to give this consideration.

Mayor Corker agreed that this was a great point; that this department needs to be handled as well, or better, than any other department—that it needs to be handled with ease and professionalism; that there will be a Performance Auditor and some added positions. He added that we were easily going to reach the reduction of 200 people by the end of December.

Councilman Benson asked the annual operating cost of the Call Center. Mayor Corker responded that we were not there yet; that we are buying software and the \$246,350 will cover the cost of implementing it; that they would continue with what they were doing and make a major presentation to the Council when the time is right. Councilman Benson noted that if we could not afford the operating cost that we would be losing ¼ of a million dollars. Mayor Corker added that this would be staffed by 4-5 people and some would come from other departments.

Councilman Littlefield stated that he had seen this done in Birmingham a year ago, and it had made people in Birmingham feel confident that they could get government's attention; that Randy Burns knew he was interested in this and had given him some information, and he would be glad to share what he had on compact discs. He stated that the costs would be varied and would be something people can afford.

Councilman Page stated that he thought it was important to make government responsive and efficient, and he wholeheartedly supported this; however, he added, that the Council needed to know at some point what this will cost.

Mayor Corker stated that we needed the capital set aside; that we had two models; that Councilwoman Robinson had brought to their attention the frustrations she was having, and this had spurred them on to look at this; that a Performance Auditor is a great service to the community and will cost us less at the end of the day.

Councilman Lively indicated that he thought we needed a Performance Auditor; that we never know "what bang we are getting for our buck"; that it could save us a lot of money.

Adm. Boney stated that the Ordinance was prepared. **On motion of Councilman Lively, seconded by Councilwoman Robinson, this Ordinance will be put on next week's agenda for first reading.**

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

