

BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES CHATTANOOGA CITY COUNCIL September 8, 2020

In Attendance

Councilwoman Carol Berz, Committee Chair, called the electronic-conducted (virtual) meeting to order at 4:13 p.m. A quorum was present including Council Chairman Chip Henderson, Vice-Chairman Ken Smith and Council members Anthony Byrd, Demetrus Coonrod, Russell Gilbert, Darrin Ledford, Jerry Mitchell, and Erskine Oglesby, Jr. Other panelists also present via electronic means: Phil Noblett, City Attorney; Lydia Christoph, Administrative Support; and Keren Campbell, Council Support Specialist.

Others in Attendance

Mayor's Office: Maura Sullivan, Chief Operating Officer, and Jermaine Freeman, Deputy Chief of Staff; Finance: Daisy Madison, Chief Finance Officer; Hamilton County Schools: Jill Levine, Director of Innovation; EPB: Evann Freeman, Director of Government Relations; CBID / Downtown Chattanooga Alliance: Steve Brooks, Executive Director, and Gordon Stalans, Treasurer; DCA Board of Directors: R. Steve Hunt, Chairman

Proposed FY21 Budget Amendment and CBID Report

Councilwoman Berz introduced the presentation coming before the Council and informed the Council of corrections in the documentation. She then turned the presentation over to Jermaine Freeman, who introduced Evann Freeman and Jill Levine. They gave a presentation on the HCS EdConnect: Bridging the Digital Divide that included information on the following:

- HCS EdConnect Announcement
- EPB's Extensive Fiber Network
- Need for distance learning and Digital Equity
- Launch of Baby University in 2014
- Refocusing the Enterprise Center in 2014
- Supporting Programs
- COVID-19's Immediate Impact on Schools
- Collaboration Among Partner's
- Date and Digital Access Mapping
- EPB Quick Connect Locations
- HCS EdConnect
- Gig City

A discussion ensued, wherein the Council had questions on the following topics:

- Service Provided (Councilwoman Berz)
- Computers (Councilwoman Berz)
- Funding in Place (Councilwoman Berz)
- Funding Commitments (Councilwoman Berz)
- Benefits (Councilman Ledford)

- Reserve Fund (Councilman Ledford)
- Hardware (Councilman Henderson)
- \$8.2 Million Commitment (Councilman Henderson)
- Timeline/Timeframe for all services (Councilman Henderson)
- K-2 Cost (Councilman Mitchell)

Councilwoman Berz asked Ms. Madison to join the panel and discuss the appropriation of \$1.5 million from reserves.

Councilwoman Berz then introduced Mr. Brooks, Mr. Stalans, and Mr. Hunt, who responded to questions from the Council regarding the Chattanooga Business Improvement District, aka the “Downtown Chattanooga Alliance”:

- Process of resolving/joining Resolutions (Councilman Henderson)
- Employees off of Fees (Councilman Henderson)
- BID Fee Enough (Councilman Henderson)
- Amount collected thus far (Councilwoman Berz)
- Cost to design new program (Councilwoman Berz)
- Charging Non-Profits (Councilman Gilbert)
- Timeline for Non-Profits (Councilman Gilbert)
- Adjusting Fees due to COVID-19 (Councilman Gilbert)
- BID Map Boundaries Changes (Councilwoman Coonrod)
- Current Non-Profits still wanting to be a part of Boundaries (Councilwoman Coonrod)
- Hiring Process for ambassadors (Councilman Byrd)

Councilwoman Berz asked Ms. Sullivan to join the panel and discuss the proposed FY21 Operations Budget Amendment. A discussion ensued in which the following question from Council were addressed:

- Reconciling (Councilwoman Berz)
- Hiring Freeze(Councilman Ledford)
- Pay Increase (Councilman Ledford)
- Furloughed Employees (Councilman Ledford)
- Retroactive pay (Councilman Gilbert)
- Notifying Employees of Increase (Councilman Gilbert)
- Rest of Budget (Councilman Gilbert)
- Plan should furlough be needed (Councilman Byrd)
- Working Documents (Councilman Henderson)

Public Hearing

Councilwoman Berz announced that the public hearing on the FY21 Operations and Capital budget amendments will be held September 15th, with the first vote taking place on September 22nd and, if passed, the second vote would take place on September 29th. She asked Chairman Henderson on time limits for those wanting to address the Council. Chairman Henderson confirmed that there would be a 2-hour limit on the hearing, allowing speakers two minutes each person.

- Councilman Gilbert asked for clarification of subjects to be discussed during the public hearing.
- Councilman Byrd inquired about the body having a discussion pertaining to these amendments which Councilwoman Berz addressed.
- Councilwoman Coonrod requested Ms. Sullivan to explain the transfer from the capital budget and the amendments process so that she is better able to explain to Constituents.

- Mr. Noblett spoke to the legality of time limits for the public hearing.

Upon no further questions or comments, the issues were closed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Councilwoman Berz adjourned the meeting at 5:34 p.m.

[Editor's Note: Any person may join the electronic-conducted meetings of the Chattanooga City Council at the scheduled time by visiting online at council.chattanooga.gov.]