

EXECUTIVE SESSION AND WORK SESSION – January 5, 2016

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On a motion duly made by Councilmember D. F. Munson and seconded by Councilmember M. E. Brubaker, the Mayor and City Council unanimously agreed by voice vote of all members present to meet in closed session to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction, #1 (Section 10-508(a)), and to consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State, #4 (Section 10-508(a)), on Tuesday, January 5, 2016 at 3:07 p.m. in Room 407, 4th floor, City Hall, Hagerstown, Maryland. Councilmember Aleshire and Councilmember Metzner arrived at the meeting after the vote. The following people were in attendance: Mayor D. S. Gysberts, Councilmember K. B. Aleshire, Councilmember M. E. Brubaker, Councilmember L. C. Metzner, Councilmember D. F. Munson, Councilmember P. M. Nigh, City Administrator Valerie Means, Michelle Hepburn, Director of Finance, Karen Paulson, Director of Human Resources, Scott Nicewarner, Director of Information Technology and Support Services, Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, and D. K. Spickler, City Clerk.

The meeting was held to discuss an appointment to the Board of Zoning Appeals, various personnel issues, and to discuss terms of a proposal for an existing business. No formal action was taken at the meeting. On a motion duly made, seconded, and passed, the Executive Session was adjourned at 3:58 p.m.

WORK SESSION – January 5, 2016

Mayor D. S. Gysberts called this Work Session and Executive Session of the Mayor and Council to order at 4:14 p.m., Tuesday, January 5, 2016, in the Council Chamber at City Hall. Present with the Mayor were Councilmembers K. B. Aleshire, M. E. Brubaker, L. C. Metzner, D. F. Munson, and P. M. Nigh; City Administrator Valerie Means, and City Clerk D. K. Spickler.

Proclamation: National Mentoring Month

Mayor Gysberts read a proclamation naming January, 2016 as National Mentoring Month. The following representatives of Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Washington County accepted the certificate: Tom Kline, CEO, Brooke Kerbs, Board President, Tracy Mumma, Match Program Coordinator, Mary Teal Mulligan, Customer Relations Specialist, Kim Sariano, and Cory Irvin (Former Little).

Dennis Miller Volunteer of the Year Award

Mayor Gysberts announced that Daniel Matonak, Historic District Commission member, is the 2015 recipient of the Dennis Miller Volunteer Award. Mr. Matonak has served on the HDC since June, 1987.

OnTrack Cradle to Career Educational Initiative

Sarah Nelson, Planning and Outreach Coordinator, was present to introduce the OnTrack initiative. The Greater Hagerstown Committee's (GHC) Education Committee along with a coalition of 28 independent community partners recently launched the OnTrack Initiative. OnTrack is focused on improving the educational attainment levels of Washington County residents in order to strengthen the local economy and improve quality of life.

James Kercheval, Jeanne Singer, and Dr. Mitesh Kothari presented the OnTrack information.

National research shows the growing need for a more educated workforce to fill tomorrow's jobs. According to Lumina Foundation, within the next ten years, 60% of U.S. citizens will need a two year college degree or higher, or an advanced vocational certificate for the United States to be competitive in a high-tech global economy. Washington County only has an estimated 32.5% of its population (age 25 and over) with these educational or vocational training levels (United States 42.1%, Maryland 48.6%, and Hagerstown 28.5%). Based on the average annual growth rate over the last five years, Washington County would have less than 40% of its population at this level by 2025.

OnTrack began in January 2015 when a variety of educational, business, philanthropic, and civic leaders began meeting. Together they are working to create a "cradle to career" support system, empowering citizens to acquire the educational or vocational training necessary for lifelong success and craft a strategy to educate the public on the need for an educational movement in the community. With significant input from community stakeholders and based on local and national research and data, the role of OnTrack is to:

1. Facilitate a community vision and agenda for college and career readiness
2. Define and articulate the educational and vocational challenges facing the community
3. Establish shared measurements and local benchmarks for college and career readiness and advance evidence-based decision making among stakeholder organizations
4. Encourage and facilitate collaborations and strategic actions designed to address local the educational and vocational challenges

The Lumina Foundation, one of the largest national foundations focused on improving educational attainment, is in the process of pushing what they call “Goal 2025.” This involves a variety of different strategies aimed at fostering a national movement to increase the proportion of Americans with high quality degrees, certificates, and other credentials to 60% by 2025. Currently it’s around 40%. According to Lumina, 65% of U.S. jobs will require some form of postsecondary education by 2020. Ninety percent of the fastest growing jobs require at least another 2 years of education or vocational training. Eighty percent of all jobs will require more than a high school diploma. At the current pace, the United States will not meet this goal, creating challenges for employers to fill the positions they need.

The OnTrack initiative is founded on the belief that there are critical benchmarks over the course of a child’s life that are strong indicators of future success. In order to increase the rates at which degreed learners are producers, a network of support must be created from cradle to career to assist students in meeting these key benchmarks. If they fall behind early in their development, their chances of being prepared for post secondary education and training greatly diminishes.

Strive Together is a national non-profit organization that helps create and nurture these community cradle to career networks. Strive Together has noted positive improvements in 40 of the 53 educational outcomes it measured.

The Strive Together model offers advice based on their work with multiple communities across the country. They break things into five main steps listed here:

1. Step 1: Bring stakeholders together to discuss how to create and “brand” this network.
2. Step 2: Create local benchmarks, goals, and strategies
3. Step 3: Educate the community on this academic movement and the value of education in their lives
4. Step 4: Work with stakeholders, public bodies, and community decision makers to pool the resources and energy needed to advance educational initiatives
5. Step 5: Create and support the community infrastructure needed to create paths for success for every child.

Mayor Gysberts mentioned he finds the soft skills, i.e. showing up for work every day, are lacking. Mr. Kercheval indicated places around the country are incorporating that training into their offerings in response to input from employers.

Dr. Kothari noted the community is progressing but not fast enough. In general, Hagerstown has a lot of good people doing a lot of good work. OnTrack is looking to create a community where communication is simultaneous. Everyone should be troubled by the stagnant trend in educational attainment and career training past high school. The community is not keeping pace creating the skilled workforce that is needed. This a major “Achilles heel” for Washington County and trend that needs to be aggressively

combated together. If Washington County is going to compete in today's knowledge-based, global economy, and attract high-tech, high paying jobs to the area, it is crucial that the shortfall is corrected. Stakeholders need to come together to start a community academic movement that proposes and supports improved educational attainment.

The "Every Man for Himself" mentality is a recipe for failure. Keeping people divided and working alone only makes it easier for the decision makers to continue throwing peanuts at the problems the community is facing. An "All for One and one for All" broad educational movement is needed in the community. The good work being done at local education institutions needs to continue and support of post-secondary education programs needs to continue.

Supporting initiatives to reduce "Brain Drain" such as downtown revitalization to retain and attract young professionals with the quality of life they desire are important. As the workforce is educated, it needs to be kept here.

The group is asking the City to help spread the word about the future workforce needs and the education and training necessary for tomorrow's jobs. An educational movement needs to be started in the community in order to give citizens the education and training necessary to thrive in a high-tech, global economy.

Councilmember Aleshire noted that the report shows there are more than 800 new people in the community each year. He asked if the community is facing an influx of less educated citizens. Ms. Singer stated as data is reviewed the reason for the growth will be apparent.

Mayor Gysberts stated this initiative is about changing the culture. Dr. Kothari noted it will not change within two years. Barriers have to be broken down and there are multiple ways to address the needs of the community.

Councilmember Metzner stated this is a good project and will impact the 75% of Hagerstown residents who do not have a high school diploma. This initiative will help make it clear to people how they can get a hand up to change their situation. He would like to find a way to provide free education for folks in this community, at least at the community college level. Dr. Kothari stated there is a scholarship available to most Hagerstown residents that people aren't aware of.

Councilmember Brubaker stated the success of this type of program is dependent on participation from the household, teachers and guidance counselors and a positive attitude is essential.

Dr. Kothari pointed out it would be a good benefit if the City would provide an incentive for assistance with tuition costs at Hagerstown Community College for City residents.

Success in Dayton, Ohio, resulted in strong support from the top elected officials across multiple school systems. Dayton Mayor Ms. Nan Whaley stated “We have to provide leadership and resources to support a new culture- a culture where all children graduate from high school and are prepared to get a college degree or earn advanced training proving that they have a skill.” It would be beneficial to have this same showing of support from a broad cross-section of public officials and community leaders. This would help send a clear message to the citizens and awaken them to the task at hand.

Information: Department of Community and Economic Development Hiring

Jill Frick, Director of Department of Community and Economic Development, was present to review the hiring of two positions for the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED): a Downtown Coordinator and a Business Development Specialist.

In early November, the City of Hagerstown implemented the reorganization of City departments resulting in the DCED focusing on building strong neighborhoods, supporting business development and celebrating community pride and culture through special events and festivals. Simultaneously, staff learned of the vacancy in the Downtown Manager position. Ms. Frick has reviewed the downtown manager position in the context of the broader departmental changes, and is recommending replacement by hiring both a Downtown Coordinator and a Business Development Specialist.

She believes the City will be well-served by this decision for a number of reasons including that this recommendation:

1. Provides a cost neutral solution.
2. Recognizes and supports the expansion of programs and services since the Downtown position was created in 2011. Many current programs did not exist at that time including Main Street Hagerstown, the BuroBox, the Artist Gallery, and many programs are now functioning at a higher level including City Center Dollars.
3. Recognizes the volume of customer interactions. Most of DCED’s efforts are reactive as a result of volume. Supports more capacity to have proactive business attraction. In 2014, DCED served 190 unique commercial customers. This is an average of 4 new commercial customers per week, and many commercial customers require multiple meetings and interactions.
4. Recognizes expected increase in customer interactions as a result of implementation of the Community
5. Hagerstown’s City Center Plan and the growth in investor confidence. Recognizes and assists in managing the City’s success.
6. Provides a level of support for City-wide economic development functions, and the demand of staff time for the implementation of the Community’s City Center Plan – 8 Catalyst Projects.

7. Addresses the concern that DCED staff are at capacity, if not over-extended. Creates a team with some capacity that contributes to ability to deliver high-level customer service, flexibility and retention of staff.

The Downtown Coordinator will manage the Main Street Hagerstown program, serve as the City's liaison to other downtown groups, oversee downtown programs, manage the Downtown BuroBox, manage the City-owned NOPO Artists' Lofts and Engine Room Art Space, maintain and continuously improve the downtown portion of the City's database of businesses and property owners, assist current and prospective downtown businesses in understanding and utilizing City, County, and State business incentive programs. Evaluate City of Hagerstown programs for quality and effectiveness in achieving goals, define gaps/inefficiencies and implement solutions. Uses creative approaches to develop and implement new strategies to assist with existing retail, and coordinate with other departments to identify barriers and assist in developing innovative solutions. Identify and evaluate trends and innovations in economic development and implement changes to current programs as required.

The Business Development Specialist will actively engage with businesses and provide closure to generate results in business retention, expansion and attraction measured by new investment, job creations and other metrics, prepare information in response to Requests for Proposals for business attraction leads in partnership with the County and State of Maryland, work to maximize business attraction through various outreach activities, develop and maintain expert-level knowledge of City, County and State business incentive programs, process applications for incentive and business support programs, and supports the City's Competitive Negotiated Sale Process.

Ms. Frick indicated the Downtown Coordinator position has been posted and closed on January 22, 2016. She is excited to stabilize the economic development team and grow the team to support future growth.

Councilmember Munson noted this is a good approach, especially since it is cost neutral.

Ms. Frick stated her approach is to create efficiencies and to have appropriate reporting but not to make it labor intensive. She wants both positions to be focused on getting the work done.

Mayor Gysberts stated this Mayor and City Council have made economic development a priority and he agrees this seems like the right approach to track and complete the necessary tasks.

Councilmember Brubaker supports these positions, but he doesn't want to find out during budget reviews that this is not affordable. He was hoping for more rearranging and additional cost savings.

Ms. Means reminded the Mayor and City Council that she was tasked to structure or restructure the department to keep moving forward. This was a difficult task, given the funding for the prior Director of Community and Economic Development position. When there is an unexpected vacancy, she will always ask the department head to review the position and determine if changes are needed. Ms. Frick reviewed the Downtown Manager position and determined this proposal was the most feasible and cost neutral. A portion of funding for the vacant Community Affairs Manager position is being used for these two positions.

Councilmember Aleshire noted the part time events assistant position is being changed to full time. He wondered if similar duties would be included for that position and the Downtown Manager position. Ms. Frick indicated the events position duties are solely for events. There is not a blending of the downtown position into special events and festivals. The downtown position has historically been programmatic, as well as business expansion and attraction responsibilities for downtown.

Councilmember Brubaker stated a recent discussion included information that the incentive programs were running out of funds. Replenishing the funding has not been discussed yet. Ms. Means indicated that is correct and if there were not incentives, the person in that position would not be working with incentives. If there are no incentives, the City will need strong people to promote the City as attracting businesses will be more challenging.

Ms. Frick stated possible alternative incentives will be discussed with businesses so that funding is covered during ebbs and flows in the funding.

Councilmember Metzner inquired if there has been discussion about how the Downtown Coordinator would work with Main Street Hagerstown and the Downtown Alliance. Ms. Frick indicated Main Street is a public/private partnership and volunteers are serving on various work groups of the organization. She is not aware of concerns about the position from either group.

Councilmember Munson supports moving quickly with filling the Downtown Coordinator position.

Councilmember Nigh agrees and supports the position. She wants to be assured there is City representation at the Main Street and Downtown Alliance meetings. The volunteers are important to events and committees.

Councilmember Aleshire was not aware funding from the Community Affairs Manager position is being used to fund these two positions. He questioned whether funding positions is more important than funding incentives. He thinks duties for the two positions are redundant in some areas.

Mayor Gysberts is looking forward to feedback from the organizations mentioned.

Update on Housing Summit

Mayor Gysberts has organized an advisory group to gather information for a housing summit. His vision for the summit is to invite anyone who deals with housing in Hagerstown. Stakeholders include (but are not limited to) Community Action Council, landlords, banks, the Housing Authority, Housing and Urban Development, Congressional representatives, and other elected officials. The goals are to share information, to focus on best practices, and to look at models for positive plans. One of the most critical issues is the old and aging housing stock in Hagerstown. This will be a jumping off point for work that will be done in the future. He anticipates an Urban Partners type of process that focuses specifically on housing in order to develop a shared vision and to be able to continue to attempt to bring stakeholders together for continuing discussions. A report scheduled for June will provide adequate time to develop a plan for a meaningful program.

Councilmember Brubaker stated any group involved with housing is relevant for this endeavor. Inventory of housing stock questionnaires must be completed.

Councilmember Nigh would find it helpful to determine the number of homes that are being turned into drug and alcohol abuse treatment centers and mental health facilities. Many of these facilities are supported with State funding.

Mayor Gysberts is compiling a list of organizations that should be involved in the discussion. He asked for input of other groups to include on the list.

Councilmember Brubaker informed the group that Secretary Volt has offered his support.

Mayor Gysberts stated staff sent out the questions based on the initial meeting that was held in December, 2015. After a recent story in the newspaper about the summit, a number of people have asked to be involved.

Councilmember Nigh is concerned that Hagerstown residents won't be able to receive the services they need if people from outside the community come to Hagerstown based on the services provided.

Councilmember Aleshire stated the article reads as though this initiative is looking for more services. The director of REACH commented that this would be purposeful planning and intentional planning to accomplish assistance. He thinks the community needs to be aware of everything that is occurring with housing and strike a balance of how to manage it.

Mayor Gysberts stated one aspect is to inventory what is available to people and where the services are located. The ultimate goal is to move from identifying the

problem to creating solutions to resolve the problem. This will lead to a healthy community.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR’S COMMENTS

Valerie Means, City Administrator pointed out the principles of the Character Counts! pillars have been added to the pillars in the Council Chamber.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember P. M. Nigh mentioned that a firefighter sustained significant injuries recently and she offered her assistance. She noticed two businesses in Hagerstown have been listed on Craig’s List. She is concerned businesses could be sold before anyone realizes they are for sale. She mentioned several areas where she has noticed graffiti and asked that it be removed. She is tired of looking at trash in bags.

Councilmember L. C. Metzner wants people to know the Mayor and City Council are concerned about the injured firefighter and appreciate his service. In connection with the comments at the December 15, 2015, he noticed there are no crosswalks on Burhans Boulevard. Crosswalks may need to be installed.

Councilmember D. F. Munson stated the building at 421 – 423 W. Franklin Street is almost completely demolished. Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, and the Hagerstown Housing Authority have been discussing the A & E Trail and finalizing the design on the HHA property. It is close to being finalized. He thanked Eric Deike, Director of Public Works, and the Council for their efforts in having the dilapidated buildings demolished on Baltimore Street.

Councilmember K. B. Aleshire had no additional comments.

Councilmember M. E. Brubaker stated visitors to Hagerstown are favorably impressed. He stated Hagerstown has a lot of potential.

Mayor D. S. Gysberts had no additional comments.

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and City Council, on a motion duly made, seconded and passed, the meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by D. K. Spickler

Donna K. Spickler
City Clerk

Approved: February 23, 2016