

EXECUTIVE SESSION – September 10, 2019

On a motion duly made by Councilmember L. C. Metzner and seconded by Councilmember S. McIntire, 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 3-305(b)), on Tuesday, September 10, 2019 at 3:30 p.m. in Room 407, 4th floor, City Hall, Hagerstown, Maryland. Councilmember K. B. Aleshire was not present.

The following people were in attendance: Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II, Councilmember A. Heffernan, Councilmember E. Keller, Councilmember S. McIntire, Councilmember L. C. Metzner, City Administrator Scott Nicewarner, Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, Jonathan Kerns, Community Development Manager, Lauren Metz, Planning and Outreach Coordinator, and Donna K. Spickler, City Clerk.

The meeting was held to discuss appointments to the Hagerstown Youth Advisory Council, the Board of Traffic and Parking, and the Hagerstown Housing Authority. No formal action was taken at the meeting. On a motion duly made, seconded, and passed, the meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

WORK SESSION – September 10, 2019

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II called this Work Session of the Mayor and City Council to order at 4:01 p.m., Tuesday, September 10, 2019 in the Council Chamber at City Hall. Present with the Mayor were Councilmembers K. B. Aleshire, A. Heffernan, E. Keller, S. McIntire, and L. C. Metzner, City Administrator Scott A. Nicewarner, and City Clerk D. K. Spickler.

Support Services and Utility Billing Departments' Staffing

Scott Nicewarner, City Administrator, and Michelle Hepburn, Director of Finance, were present to discuss staffing changes in support services and changes in processes between the Utility Billing and Customer Service divisions. The changes are being made to increase customer service services and make the processes more efficient.

Ms. Hepburn indicated staff is requesting authorization to move toward strengthening internal controls as recommended during a recent audit. In order to achieve a more optimal level of internal control procedures, the addition of two fulltime staff for the areas of Support Services and Utility Billing is requested. With this addition of staff, the Support Services Department would go from five to six full time positions and the Utility Billing Department would go from two to three full time positions. Both of these additional positions would be a supervisory level.

The addition of one Support Services Supervisor and one Utility Billing Supervisor provides the following:

1. Enables vital segregation of duties that is currently unable to be met in current operations
2. Expands level of service to include a better collections process across the City
3. Creates better treasury and tax functionality since the elimination of the old Treasurer position
4. Assists with implementation of potential Stormwater Management

While neither of these positions were included in the FY20 approved budget, the cost would be split across the General Fund, Electric Fund, Water Fund and Wastewater Fund. The slight increase within the General Fund is anticipated to be absorbed within the overall approved FY20 budget with other organizational changes that have happened over the past several months.

Councilmember Heffernan inquired if the total cost for two positions could be allocated to utilities. Ms. Hepburn pointed out there are some General Fund functions included in the job functions that need to be allocated to the General Fund.

A thorough review of the billing process, including the number of bills generated, collection practices, and billing adjustment procedures, will be completed over the next several months for auditing purposes.

Mr. Nicewarner stated this is the same process that was used in 2008, before the City started generating property tax bills. Due to staffing levels, he completed the tax bills, and Nelia Tidler, ???, efficiently completed the utility billing tasks. There are the same number of employees as in 2008; however, payments and collections have significantly increased. This is creating a strain on the department and the deficiencies are costing more.

Councilmember Heffernan stated he has experience as an auditor and agrees that the duties have to be segregated.

Ms. Hepburn stated a finite number of costs won't be available until the job descriptions are finalized. There is adequate funding in the approved FY20 budget to cover additional costs.

It was the general consensus to approve the addition of two full time positions as discussed. Formal approval will be scheduled for September 17, 2019.

2020 Imagine Hagerstown Discussion

Kitty Clark, Community Events Coordinator, was present to continue the discussion about the future of the 2020 Imagine Hagerstown event.

At the August 6, 2019 Work Session, staff provided a summary report on the 2019 Imagine Hagerstown event, and at that time, a discussion was started about how to continue to evolve the event for its second year in 2020.

Staff have identified the following four related purposes of a downtown signature event:

1. Bring people downtown
2. Attract outsiders to the City
3. Drive people to patronize downtown businesses
4. Provide arts and entertainment in the A & E District

In order to meet these goals, staff recommend the creation of two distinct events. The first would be a music series on four Friday evenings in the University Plaza. The music would be provided by an opening act, followed by a band with a following. A suggestion was made to create a Cover Band series. The second event would be held on one Saturday for an afternoon and evening of music and arts. This event could be held on South Potomac Street with both music and art events throughout the day.

Staff recommends two separate names – one for the Friday night music series and one for the Saturday afternoon/night event. Saturday would retain the name Imagine Hagerstown, building on the ideas and graphic look that was developed in 2019.

Councilmember Keller pointed out it would be easier to keep everything under one name from a marketing standpoint.

Councilmember McIntire stated one of the problems with the event was that no one knew what Imagine Hagerstown meant. A name like “Fourth Friday on the Plaza” is something people would know. A possibility to consider is incorporating a new name into Imagine Hagerstown and use it on all the advertising.

Councilmember Metzner clarified Imagine Hagerstown could be similar to a corporate name, with descriptive names for the individual events.

Councilmember Heffernan was disappointed with attendance at the event. A citizen recently suggested ways to promote Hagerstown, including giving away free t-shirts. He likes the idea. It might be possible to have the logo for Imagine Hagerstown on the t-shirts.

It was the general consensus to move forward with Imagine Hagerstown 2020 with the event changes of a Friday night concert series and a one day Saturday event.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR’S COMMENTS

Scott A. Nicewarner, City Administrator, congratulated Brian Thomas and Danny Rice, groundskeepers at The Greens at Hamilton Run, for receiving the High Impact

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND

Performance Award (HIP) from the City of Hagerstown. Mr. Thomas and Mr. Rice do an excellent job of maintaining the golf course. There is a vacancy on the Board of Traffic and Parking. Citizens are encouraged to apply by contacting the City Clerk. The annual Remembrance in the Park will be held today at 6:00 p.m. A program called "Combating Racism" is being held on Saturday, September 14, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. at the Robert W. Johnson Center. The annual Hispanic Festival is taking place on Sunday, September 15, 2019 at Fairgrounds Park. The Longest Table event, sponsored by the Washington County Free Library, will be held on Saturday, September 14, 2019.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember E. Keller had no additional comments.

Councilmember K. B. Aleshire had no additional comments.

Councilmember A. Heffernan urged people to attend the Remembrance in the Park event.

Councilmember L. C. Metzner had no additional comments.

Councilmember S. McIntire reported there are many events happening in Hagerstown. On September 12, 2019, 23 service providers in Washington County will be offering assistance to 12 people who need help with substance abuse recovery. The providers will be in one location, making it easier to start the treatment and recovery process.

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II 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 4:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by D. K. Spickler

Donna K. Spickler
City Clerk

Approved: October 22, 2019