

WORK SESSION – February 21, 2023

Mayor T. Martinez called this Work Session of the Mayor and City Council to order at 4:02 p.m., Tuesday, February 21, 2023 in the Council Chamber at City Hall. Participating with the Mayor were Councilmembers K. B. Aleshire, T. Burnett, and S. McIntire, City Administrator Scott A. Nicewarner, and City Clerk D. K. Spickler. Councilmember R. E. Bruchey, II was not present.

Western Maryland Consortium

Damien Myers, Program Manager, and Debora Gilbert, Western Maryland Consortium, were present to provide information about the Consortium. Many residents don't realize what services are provided by the Consortium.

The Consortium is a regional workforce development agency that strives to help workers improve their skills and find employment. Services are funded under Title 1. The main function is training for career change. They work with businesses to re-employ and re-hire incumbent workers. They can assist businesses and participants through their programs.

Mr. Myers stated they need help with marketing, so people know what they offer. The funding they receive does not permit spending money on advertising. People hear about the Consortium mostly through word of mouth.

Councilmember Aleshire stated he is familiar with the services provided by the Consortium. His first professional job was in 1998 and at that time the Consortium was offering assistance with the trucking trade. The big thing today is warehouse employers. He asked if any of these employers have contacted the Consortium to assist with potential employees. The Consortium should be one of the first contacts for new business/employments center to talk to.

The office at 33 W. Washington Street is not highly visible. They are looking for first floor space. Renting the second floor of the Elizabeth Hager Center may be an option. This location would put them in the same building as the State American Job Center and the Department of Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS). They have toured the space but have not discussed it further with City staff.

Councilmember Burnett asked if they have a social media presence. They do, but it is difficult to maintain with limited staff.

Mayor Martinez wondered if information about the Consortium could also be included in the Main Street email blasts.

Mr. Nicewarner will have staff reach out to Mr. Myers and Ms. Gilbert to discuss possible locations and additional marketing.

Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and Rural Maryland Funding – Water Division

Nancy Hausrath, Director of Utilities, was present to discuss MDE and Rural Maryland Funding for the City's Water Division.

Staff submitted funding applications to MDE in January 2022 for numerous Water and Wastewater projects including Phase 1C Collection System Lining, Reconstruction of Pump Station 13, Pump Station 33, and the Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvement Project within the Wastewater Division. The Water Division projects included Edgemont Reservoir Rehabilitation, R. C. Willson (RCW) Water Transmission Main Replacement, and Mack Tank Replacement.

Staff also submitted a Rural Maryland Economic Development Grant Proposal as a result of a request from Meritus Medical Center to complete the planning study (including tank location), acquire permits, complete the tank and infrastructure design, prepare a project construction estimate, and prepare bid ready contract documents. Funding had not been identified in the Water Division Capital Budget. Staff has included this project in the FY24 Capital Budget (draft) and is preparing a MDE Funding Application.

All Water Department projects were favorably ranked and a table showing the funding sources and dollar amounts for each project was provided. It was noted that MDE did not fully fund any project but did note the final funding amount could be increased or decreased based on available funding when the projects moved to construction. The projects need to be bid-ready by December 2024 (unless MDE grants an extension). The funding applications were provided for reference for the projects in the table. Projects not included in this project summary include RCW Plant Upgrades to increase the hydraulic treatment capacity and clear-well limitations to enable 20MGD production. These upgrades are estimated to be at least \$ 50 million.

The assumptions made to calculate the impact of each project on user fees and on loan funding were 20-year debt service, 0.5% annual loan service and interest fees, 30,000 water accounts, and estimated user fee revenue for FY24. Restoration of Water Fund Restricted cash assumption was 12 years. If all five projects are funded as indicated in the charts, customers would see an increase of approximately \$ 45.00 per quarter. Projected rate increases don't include increases for day-to-day operations. In the last several years, costs have increased 5-15%. The RCW transmission main project does not address system growth – just reliability.

While staff recognizes the importance of each project and the individual and collective benefits to the water system, the Water Department would see the greatest benefit to the water system from an operations and maintenance perspective with assigning the highest priority to the RCW Transmissions Mains. The Zone 5 Water System Improvements would be the second priority. The Mack Tank is the third priority followed by Edgemont and Breichner.

Staff suggests moving forward with the following projects, in priority order:

1. RC Willson Transmission Main Project - Phase 2 and Phase 3
2. Zone 5 Water System Improvements
3. Mack Tank Replacement
4. Edgemont Reservoir and Breichner Plant

Ms. Hausrath pointed out the RC Willson plant provides a majority of the water for the system.

Councilmember Aleshire asked if the noted principal forgiveness in the charts mean the funding is a grant. Ms. Hausrath stated not necessarily, it is tied to the bipartisan infrastructure loan.

Councilmember Aleshire asked if staff is hoping to receive a grant for the anticipated \$ 2 million from MDE for the Mack Tank Replacement. Ms. Hausrath stated it would be bond funded. Typically, MDE will forgive the principal after 5-10 years.

Councilmember Aleshire asked if the objective of the RC Willson Transmission Main project is to not only stabilize the water source but to also double the delivery capacity. Ms. Hausrath indicated completing all the phases would accomplish both.

Councilmember Aleshire pointed out the impetus for doing this project is the expectation that it will only provide a limited amount of water. The County Commissioners seem to have the expectation they can provide water to a large portion of an area. He doesn't want to start the path of transmission repair and have MDE make a determination to increase the capacity of the plant. A lot of money will be spent based on the full faith and credit of the taxpayers of Hagerstown to provide water to areas way outside the City limits and current service area.

Councilmember Aleshire noted 10 years ago, the City negotiated service areas with the assumption that the requested area had a large customer base. Now, the line is being extended to large warehouses and the taxpayer is paying for the extension. There is not a high return of investment on these properties.

Mr. Nicewarner stated this epitomizes what he and John Martirano, County Administrator, have been discussing. It is important to get both elected bodies together at the RC Willson plant to tour the facility and understand how the improvements and extensions impact the budget and the base rate.

Michelle Hepburn, Chief Financial Officer, noted the customers of the system would be paying for the cost of the improvements. General Fund tax dollars would not be used.

The priority list was acknowledged. Councilmember Aleshire stated he has no preference on how the projects are ranked. He is more interested in who will be paying for the projects.

Preliminary Agenda Review

Mayor Martinez announced that Citizen Comments for the February 28, 2023 Regular Session will be welcome either in person or by submitting comments by email to councilcmmnts@hagerstownmd.org by 5:00 p.m. that day. If by email, the submitter's name, address, and a summary of the comments will be announced during the Citizen Comments portion of the meeting. The email will not be read in its entirety, but it will be included in the public record for the meeting and may be viewed by the public at any time.

- A. Engineering:
 - 1. Change Order for Fairgrounds Park Police Athletic League Roof Replacement – Dynamic General Contracting, LLC (Millersville, MD) \$ 30,332.00

- B. Information Technology:
 - 1. Cisco “Duo” Two-Factor Authentication Software – SHI (Somerset, NJ) \$ 26,675.00
 - 2. VxRail Hardware Support Renewal – Mavenspire, Inc. (Annapolis, MD) \$ 31,156.52

- C. Public Works:
 - 1. Street Closure for St. Patrick’s Day 5k – March 18, 2023

- D. Utilities:
 - 1. Light: Blanket Contract for Underground Utility Locating Service – USIC Locating Services, LLC (Indianapolis, IN) \$ 25,000.00
 - 2. Light: Substation Surveillance Equipment – Spichers Security Services (Hagerstown, MD) \$ 28,819.18
 - 3. Light: Bucket Truck Replacements – Altec Industries, Inc. (Birmingham, AL) \$ 560,374.00
 - a) 55’ Bucket Truck - \$ 370,269.00
 - b) 41’ Bucket Truck - \$ 190,105.00
 - 4. Light: Emergency Procurement – Compressed Air Supply Line Replacement – Quad-State Air Compressor Sales and Service (Greencastle, PA) \$ 22,837.50
 - 5. Water: Annual Service Contract for Hach Analytical Equipment – Hach Company (Loveland, CO) \$ 19,456.00.

This completed the Preliminary Agenda Review. There were no additional questions about any items. All items, unless noted, are scheduled for approval on February 28, 2023.

Chesapeake Bay Trust Tree Planting Grant

Jim Bender, Assistant City Engineer, was present seeking authorization to apply for an Urban Tree Grant Program.

In 2022, the City was awarded a grant of \$ 66,619 from the Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust) to plant 175 trees at various locations around the City. This grant is part of the Tree Solutions Now Act of 2021 that allocated funds to attempt to meet the goal of planting 5 million trees in Maryland by 2031. The Trust has re-opened the grant program for the next fiscal year, and Staff would like to apply again for funding.

For more than two decades, the City has had an ongoing program to plant trees along streets and other locations in the City's public parks, and to increase the overall canopy coverage. Unfortunately, as some of the larger residential, commercial, and industrial developments have been completed, the City has lost a significant number of trees (e.g. the NorthPoint development along Wesel Boulevard.). The City has used funds collected through the Forest Conservation program to do some planting to make up for these losses, but it's becoming more and more difficult to find suitable planting areas. Staff sees this Urban Tree grant as a tool to help increase canopy coverage.

With the City's NPDES MS4 stormwater permit, planting trees can qualify as a means to meet the restoration requirement. Each tree planted reduces the number of acres of impervious area that the City must treat. In the budget for the Stormwater Fund, a minimum of \$ 25,000 has been set aside annually to plant trees to help the City meet the permit requirements. Staff intends to use that money to serve as the local match to the Trust's grant. Staff anticipate requiring approximately \$ 75,000 in grant funds from the Trust to plant another 175 trees in FY24.

The Mayor and City Council directed staff to apply for this grant as requested.

Pool Rates for 2023 Season

Eric Deike, Director of Public Works, was present to discuss new rental rates at the Potterfield Pool for the 2023 season. The new rates only affect the full rental of the pool for private parties and not the individual/family daily rates or season pass rates.

The pool can be rented for private parties and events on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings. The pool closes its public swim at 6:00 p.m. on Fridays and at 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. The events need to end before dusk due to pool regulations that specify lighting requirements which Potterfield currently does not meet.

The current rental fee is an hourly rate based on the number of swimmers. The longer the rental; the higher the fee. It was determined in the 2022 season the majority of the rentals were only two hours long.

The pool could be rented for one 2-hour block of time or one 3-hour block of time. This would be possible for Friday, Saturdays and Sunday rentals. Staff propose rental rates from \$ 300 to \$ 500 for a two-hour party, depending on the number of people. A three-hour rental would be an additional \$ 100.

Requests for pool rentals are not accepted until after April 1st of each year and staff is already fielding calls for rentals for the 2023 pool season. Therefore, the request is to have these new rates in place by April 1, 2023.

Revenues from 22 pool rentals equated to \$ 6,050 in the 2022 pool season. Five scheduled rentals were canceled due to weather. This small change to the fees would only increase revenue by 2% - 3%. This is more about clarifying the rates and rental times than about increases to revenue at this time.

The potential does exist to increase the number of pool rentals in the future if the lighting around the pool is modified. When the lights are upgraded, 2 rentals per evening on Saturdays and Sundays could potentially be programmed, thus increasing the pool revenues even more.

It was the general consensus to set the new pool rental rates now so the new rates can be advertised and entered into the Parks & Recreation Spring/Summer Program and Events Guide.

Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Funding Request for FY 2024

Kathleen Maher, Director of Planning and Code Administration, was present to review and rank the staff recommendations for FY 2024 project funding requests to the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

The Tri-County Council of Western Maryland is seeking local project funding requests to the ARC for FY2024. The deadline for submittal of Preliminary Project Descriptions to Washington County is Thursday, March 16, 2023. The County Commissioners will prioritize all requests submitted within the county and will forward the requests with their recommendations to the Tri-County Council for review and action. The Tri-County Council then invite top-ranking proposals to submit a full grant application to the ARC, usually sometime in the fall. The matching requirement is 50% and federal funds cannot be used to match the ARC request. Projects must meet one or more ARC program goals and State objectives.

Staff recommend submitting the following projects:

1. Update Community's City Center Plan – \$ 100,000 ARC Request, \$ 100,000 match from future operating budget
2. Upgrade Hager House Visitor Center – \$ 200,000 ARC Request, \$ 100,000 match from MHA and \$ 125,000 City CIP
3. CDL Training for City Staff - \$ 35,400 ARC Request, matched with City payroll for attendees for period of attendance

Councilmember McIntire asked if the Consortium could assist with the CDL training. Ms. Hepburn stated she doesn't think they have a program in place yet. Human Resources staff has looked at several places for better pricing. There are multiple departments with staff that need the upgraded training.

The Mayor and City Council agreed with the priority listing as noted above. Formal approval of the application and list will be included on the February 28, 2023 Regular Session agenda.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

Scott A. Nicewarner, City Administrator, thanked the people who helped someone in need last week. A city resident's EBT card was hacked. The State of Maryland indicated it would be several weeks before this person would receive any emergency assistance. The school community stepped in and raised \$ 350 for this family. Ashley Roush, Community Liaison, Brittany Wedd, Children in Need, and Jerry at Trinity Lutheran Church for the Maryland Food Bank, were able to coordinate services to get food and clothing to this family. There needs to be a better response from the State for a situation of this type.

On behalf of City staff, Mr. Nicewarner offered deepest condolences to the family of Retired Fire Chief Gary Hawbaker who passed away recently. Thoughts and prayers are with his family.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember S. McIntire and Mayor Martinez visited the Frederick Manor Boys and Girls Club and talked with second grade students there. The things they would like to see in Hagerstown are reducing homelessness and transportation for them to get to after school activities. It is scary that children see the problems the adults do and aren't able to do anything to make things better. She thanked the former Youth Council president for inviting them to the meeting.

Councilmember T. Burnett announced there will be a Neighborhoods First Community Clean-Up workshop at the library to discuss ideas for neighborhoods on Wednesday, February 22, 2023.

Councilmember K. B. Aleshire offered condolences to Gary Hawbaker's family. Gary taught him how to play soccer and they remained friends throughout the years. He will be missed.

Mayor T. Martinez was moved when a little girl at the Boys and Girls Club meeting pointed out the Mayor has hair that looks like hers. She thanked Councilmember McIntire for inviting her to attend the meeting. The questions the kids asked were amazing. They also said sidewalks are needed so they can walk to the mall. They want a safe way to get to the mall.

She attended the Maryland Mayor's Association reception at the Governor's House recently. Governor Moore said many nice things about Hagerstown during the evening.

Mayor Martinez also thanked the group that assisted the family with the hacked EBT card.

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 5:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by D. K. Spickler

Donna K. Spickler
City Clerk

Approved: March 26, 2024