

Salisbury, North Carolina
May 29, 2013

RECESSED MEETING OF MAY 15, 2012

Continued
May 29, 2013
10:00 a.m.

The City Council of the City of Salisbury met at 10:00 a.m., Thursday, May 29, 2013 in Council Chambers at City Hall located at 217 South Main Street pursuant to the recess of the Regular meeting of May 21, 2013, with the following members being present:

PRESENT: Mayor Paul B. Woodson, Jr., Presiding; Council Members Mayor Pro Tem Maggie A. Blackwell, Karen Kirks Alexander, William (Pete) Kennedy, and William Brian Miller; City Manager Doug Paris, City Clerk Myra B. Heard and City Attorney F. Rivers Lawther, Jr.

ABSENT: None

Mayor Woodson and members of City Council met at 10:00 a.m. in Council Chambers in City Hall located at 217 South Main Street. Councilmember Kennedy provided the invocation.

PRESENTATION OF FY2013-2014 PROPOSED BUDGET

City Manager Doug Paris presented the proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2013 and ending June 30, 2014 to City Council in accordance with State Statute 159-11.

Mr. Paris stated citizens desire a financially sound City. He pointed out during FY2011-2012 the financial ship began to turn when Council instituted quarterly financial reports, fiscal notes on agenda items, and return on investment analysis for all major capital projects. He indicated staff reviewed budget revenues and expenditures on a quarterly basis to identify challenges and develop plans to resolve them. He noted revenues were projected conservatively, and projects were reviewed for necessity and deferred when in the best interest of the City.

Mr. Paris explained during FY2012-2013 the ship continued to turn. He stated the Financial Services Team, along with department heads and division managers, invested in public safety, street paving, and street lighting. He noted debt was refinanced saving Salisbury-Rowan Utilities' (SRU) customers just under \$1 million and Fibrant customers \$2 million on broadband debt. He pointed out staff produced just under \$1 million in operational savings by operating the broadband utility more efficiently, and he added an additional \$1 million in savings was identified as broadband contracts come up for renewal.

Mr. Paris noted the FY2013-2014 budget is a culmination of Council's direction and staff's hard work.

Investments in Public Safety

Mr. Paris invited Fire Chief Bob Parnell, Police Chief Rory Collins and District Attorney Brandy Cook to address Council regarding investments in public safety.

Chief Parnell stated in 2011 the City was awarded a Department of Homeland Security Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant to fund six additional firefighters' salary and benefits for two years. He noted the additional firefighters increased the number of front line firefighters to numbers considered adequate by national standards. He explained this year the City must cover the cost of the six firefighters as part of the agreement for the grant. He indicated the cost has been covered with local funding in the proposed budget. He pointed out the City applied for the grant in the past but was denied because it did not request the adequate number of firefighters to meet national standards. Chief Parnell explained the proposed budget includes the creation of a Fire Officer Academy to increase professional development in the Fire Department at the officer level, and a new alignment of the fire department to enhance existing supervisory systems and improve accountability. He pointed out the alignment will include three new ranks: District Captain, Fire Lieutenant, and a Fire Engineer II, but will not require additional staff. Chief Parnell explained the proposed budget includes a \$50,000 pilot program to offer incentives for private investment in sprinkler systems for downtown and historic buildings. He stated the program is a result of discussions between fire personnel, utility personnel, and private building owners after the Grimes Mill fire. He pointed out sprinkler systems are critical to the protection of important historic buildings.

Ms. Cook explained the District Attorney's office applied to the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission to fund a Prosecutor and Victim/Witness/Legal Assistant to address cases involving adult and adolescent female domestic violence victims, sexual assault, teen dating violence, and stalking. She noted the grant to fund the positions began September 2012. She stated an application for second year funding was submitted but only the prosecutor position was funded. She noted the Victim/Witness/Legal Assistant position will be eliminated June 30, 2013. She pointed out there is a possibility of funding through the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission. Ms. Cook indicated the Prosecutor and Victim/Witness/Legal Assistant team enables the District Attorney's office to implement Domestic Violence Court one day per week. She noted the team also works to separate victims from offenders, expedite prosecution, develop policies to track offender compliance, assist victims with referrals, and work closely with the Family Crisis Council. She added the Prosecutor and Victim/Witness/Legal Assistant handle a case for its entirety, and it benefits law enforcement by coordinating cases and reducing the time officers spend in court. She thanked Council for its consideration to fund the Victim/Witness/Legal Assistant position.

Chief Collins stated during restructuring of the Police Department a street crime unit was implemented. He noted the street crimes unit has been proactive in problem areas of the City with tremendous success. He stated he receives requests from the community to send the street crime unit, also known as the Police Intervention Team (PIT). He indicated there was a need for a second team but funding was unavailable. He explained the proposed budget includes realignment of the Police Department to implement a second PIT. He noted two teams will be comprised of 12 officers including two supervisors. Chief Collins stated paperwork is time consuming and difficult for police officers. He indicated the proposed budget includes the creation of Police Expeditors, which are civilian part-time positions that will reduce routine paperwork allowing officers more time on patrol in the community. He explained citizen surveys are conducted in accordance with accreditation standards and citizens request additional neighborhood patrols. He noted the Police Expeditors will work to keep officers on patrol and in the community.

Mayor Woodson thanked Ms. Cook, Chief Parnell and Chief Collins for all they do for the City.

Mr. Paris stated a safe community is a strong community. He indicated the proposed budget includes six firefighter positions previously funded by a Federal Grant, a second PIT Team, Police Expeditors, and a Victim/Witness/Legal Assistant in the District Attorney's office.

Community Development

Mr. Paris explained in the previous year's budget several planning grant programs were cut including the Innes Street Grant Program and the Downtown Municipal Service District (MSD) Grant Program. He noted the proposed budget reinstates both programs. He added Downtown Salisbury, Inc. (DSI) has requested funds to complete a targeted Master Plan for the South Main Corridor, which includes the Integro Technologies Headquarters and the Rowan-Salisbury School System Central Office.

Mayor Woodson asked about the cost of the Master Plan for the South Main Corridor. Mr. Paris noted the cost is \$10,000.

Mr. Paris stated there has been discussion between the City and DSI regarding who should administer the downtown grants and lead the Master Plan for the South Main Corridor. He explained funding for these items has been placed in Council's Special Project line item. He recommended the money remain there until a consensus is reached by Council regarding who should administer the grants and lead the Master Plan. He noted this might be achieved through a Council Committee that includes liaisons to the groups interested in this funding.

Mr. Paris indicated strong neighborhoods are the building blocks to strong communities. He noted the proposed budget allows neighborhood groups to use City-owned neighborhood facilities for neighborhood building events at no charge.

Citizen Impact

Mr. Paris noted the proposed budget requires no tax or fee increase for citizens.

Employees

Mr. Paris indicated during the last several years there have been few salary increases for City employees due to the economic downturn. He noted last year the budget included a \$1,000 salary increase for City employees who exceeded satisfactory performance during their last performance review. He stated the proposed budget includes a 2.25 percent salary increase for City employees who exceed satisfactory performance during their performance review.

Broadband Fund

Mr. Paris stated the City continues to operate a Broadband Fund in extremely challenging market conditions. He added over the last year staff worked to grow the business and reduce costs. He noted a General Manager was hired with private sector experience, and the General Manager worked with the Financial Services Team to conservatively grow the customer base while lowering costs resulting in \$3 million in savings. Mr. Paris pointed out there are no budgeted interfund loans to the Broadband Fund in the proposed budget.

Mayor Woodson noted Fibrant is covering its debt and expenses without borrowing from the Water and Sewer Fund. He congratulated the Fibrant Team for 100 new customers in April and nearly 100 new customers in May.

Water and Sewer Fund

Mr. Paris reviewed the Water and Sewer Fund. He thanked Salisbury-Rowan Utilities (SRU) Director Jim Behmer and staff for working to lower the rate impact for customers while providing reinvestment through system maintenance and capital projects. He noted over the last 20 years the annual rate increase has averaged seven percent. He stated for the second consecutive year there is not be a proposed water and sewer rate increase. He pointed out this will be the second time in 22 years there has been no water or sewer rate increase.

Mr. Paris stated the last two years have been challenging, but with strong leadership by Council and collaborative management, the proposed budget makes strong investments in community and public safety.

Mayor Woodson congratulated Mr. Behmer and SRU for their work to ensure water and sewer rates are unchanged. He stated last year Council increased taxes and asked staff to present a balanced budget with no increases and staff responded. He thanked Mr. Paris and staff for its work on the proposed budget.

Mayor Woodson asked about General Fund reserves. Mr. Paris stated General Fund reserves are currently at 15.3 percent and the year-end goal is to be at 17 percent. He pointed out the long-term goal is 25 percent, but will take several years to accomplish.

Thereupon, Mr. Miller made a **motion** to set a public hearing for June 4, 2013 to receive public comment on the City of Salisbury's FY2013-2014 proposed budget. Mr. Kennedy seconded the motion. Messrs. Kennedy, Miller and Woodson and Mses. Alexander and Blackwell voted AYE. (5-0)

ARCHITECT FOR NEW OFFICE BUILDING

Assistant City Manager for Finance John Sofley presented Council with a Resolution to select Ramsay, Burgin, Smith Architects, Inc. as the City's architect for the construction of a new office building in the 300 block of South Main Street. He explained under North Carolina General Statutes when a municipality selects an architect it requires the submission of bids and a selection process. He pointed out there is an exception in the General Statutes that allows Council to exempt itself if certain findings are made. Mr. Sofley presented Council with a Resolution to exempt the City from the provisions and select Ramsay, Burgin, Smith Architects, Inc. to design the new office building in the 300 block of South Main Street. He explained to seek financing the City must follow a bid process which requires an architect.

Mr. Sofley explained the City committed to construct a parking lot in the 300 block of South Main Street. He presented Council with a Resolution to select Stout Studio Architecture as the architect for the new parking lot. He stated Stout Studio Architecture is the architect for Integro Technologies and the Resolution would exempt the City from going through the bid process which would add 60 days to the construction timeline.

Mr. Sofley explained the Resolutions will give staff authority to enter into the contracts which will be presented to Council at its June 18, 2013 meeting. He stated staff recommends approval of both Resolutions.

Thereupon, Ms. Blackwell made a **motion** to adopt a Resolution authorizing selection of Ramsay, Burgin, Smith Architects, Inc. for a new office building in the 300 block of South Main Street. Ms. Alexander seconded the motion. Messrs. Kennedy, Miller and Woodson and Meses. Alexander and Blackwell voted AYE. (5-0)

Thereupon, Ms. Alexander made a **motion** to adopt a Resolution authorizing selection of Stout Studio Architecture for a new parking lot in the 300 block of South Main Street. Mr. Miller seconded the motion. Messrs. Kennedy, Miller and Woodson and Meses. Alexander and Blackwell voted AYE. (5-0)

CITY MANAGERS COMMENTS

City Manager Doug Paris thanked the Management Team and the Financial Services Team for its work on the proposed budget.

MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) “Movies in the Park”

Mayor Woodson announced the Salisbury Parks and Recreation Department will host “Movies in the Park” at City Park Friday, May 31, 2013. Pre-movie activities begin at 8:00 p.m. The movie will begin at approximately 8:45 p.m. Bring a blanket or chair to watch the featured movie “Brave.” The free event is sponsored by Fibrant and open to the public.

(b) “Pops at the Post”

Mayor Woodson announced “Pops at the Post” will be held Saturday, June 1, 2013 at 8:00 p.m. He invited the public to attend.

PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED BUDGETS

Members of the Financial Services Team distributed copies of the proposed budget to Council.

Councilmember Alexander commended staff for its work to collaborate on projects.

Mayor Woodson agreed with Ms. Alexander and noted the City has a strong Management Team.

Councilmember Kennedy commented for the first time in 20 years there is an increase in the Fund Balance and programs are being reinstated without raising taxes or water rates. He congratulated the Management Team and staff for its work on the proposed budget.

City Manager Doug Paris pointed out the General Fund Budget is \$36 million. He added the City is spending \$6,000 more than last year and doing much more due to the diligence of the Management Team during the last year. He thanked staff for its work on the proposed budget.


Mr. Kennedy commended Mayor Woodson for his leadership and direction to the Management Team regarding the proposed budget.

Mayor Woodson stated he is proud the City is running like a business.

City Clerk Myra Heard stated there will be a public hearing regarding the proposed budget at the June 4, 2013 Council meeting at 4:00 p.m. at City Hall. She noted a budget work session is scheduled for Tuesday, June 11, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. and if necessary Wednesday, June 12, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. She stated the location will be determined at a later date.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Kennedy seconded by Ms. Alexander. All council members in attendance agreed unanimously to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 10:46 a.m.


Paul B. Woodson, Jr., Mayor


Myra B. Heard, City Clerk