

Salisbury, North Carolina  
September 5, 2023

## **SPECIAL MEETING**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Karen K. Alexander, Presiding; Mayor Pro Tem Tamara Sheffield, Council Members Harry McLaughlin, David Post, and Anthony Smith; City Manager Jim Greene, Jr., City Clerk Connie B. Snyder; and City Attorney J. Graham Corriher.

**ABSENT:** None.

Salisbury City Council met in Council Chambers in City Hall located at 217 South Main Street. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Alexander at 5:00 p.m. A moment of silence was taken.

## **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

Thereupon, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield made a **motion** to adopt the Agenda as presented. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield, Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post, and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

## **UPDATE – STRATEGIC PLAN**

City Manager Jim Greene noted at its Retreat in January, Council discussed a strategic plan for the City. He explained a strategic plan is a vision of where Council wants to go over the next three to five years. He asked Budget Manager Tracey Keyes and Raftelis Senior Manager Catherine Carter to provide an update on the City's Strategic Plan.

Ms. Keyes stated a strategic plan was one of Council's priorities for FY2023-2024 and it has a budget of \$75,000. She indicated a Request for Proposals was posted on the City's website, the North Carolina Interactive Purchasing site, and the North Carolina HUB site. She added the City received 16 proposals and a City-wide team of employees selected two firms for interviews and ultimately chose to contract with Raftelis.

Ms. Carter stated Raftelis is working with the City to answer three questions:

- What do we know to be true today
- What do we hope will be true in the future
- What needs to go well in order to make that preferred future a reality

Ms. Carter pointed out many components go into a strategic planning process. She explained an engagement process will take place which includes staff interviews, listening sessions with Board and Commission Chairs, and an employee survey. She stated the information gathered is used to create a community profile or environmental scan. She added community and employee input will be used as a context for decisions Council will be asked to make regarding its vision for the strategic plan over the next three to five years. She indicated once the overarching vision is determined Raftelis will work with staff to create an implementation plan that will help the City achieve its vision.

Ms. Carter stated a strategic plan exists in the larger context of other work the City is doing including the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Master Plans. She pointed out the strategic plan is a tool to help implement the comprehensive plan, and she explained the strategic plan includes elements that are not included in the comprehensive plan. She indicated strategic planning exists between long range comprehensive plans and annual budget cycles.

Ms. Carter pointed out the goal is to develop a three to five-year City-wide strategic plan and to combine goals, objectives, and strategies into existing work plans throughout the organization. She stated many organizations struggle to tell their story, and she noted the strategic plan and the implementation plan provide ways to communicate progress and to hold the City accountable.

Ms. Carter explained the strategic plan will produce two documents with overlapping contents, a brochure that will share the strategic plan with internal and external stakeholders and the implementation plan that includes specifics such as who is responsible for specific tasks and a timeline for completion.

Ms. Carter noted the kick-off meeting with the Management Team and Project Lead Team and the listening sessions with Board and Commission Chairs have been conducted. She added a draft of the employee survey has been completed, individual interviews with Councilmembers have been scheduled and the information collected will be used for the environmental scan that will be introduced to Council on October 6, 2023.

Mayor Alexander stated it is important to have a link between studies and plans that have been completed throughout the City and to make sure the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan is used in combination with the strategic plan. Ms. Carter agreed.

Councilmember Post asked for an example of a strategic plan completed for another City. Ms. Keyes noted staff will provide the information. Mr. Post asked if the anticipated time line is

four to five months. Ms. Clark noted it will take four to five months to get to the plan stage and it will take years to implement the plan.

Mr. Greene commented the City has gone through changes, and this is a good time to look at its vision and strategy. He indicated with the coming growth it is important to look at Council's vision for the City. He noted the goal is to at least have a draft to Council at its annual Retreat. He stated the strategic plan is Council's plan that provides direction for staff, a vision for the community, and serves as the foundation for programs and capital investment for future budgets.

Councilmember Smith asked how equity conversations will be included in the strategic planning processes. Ms. Clark stated the goal is to have broad and deep engagement at the beginning of the process so as many voices as possible are included in the conversation. She pointed out the work and public engagement from the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan is recent and transferable to the strategic process. Mr. Smith then asked about the challenges in implementing this kind of project. Ms. Carter explained the surveys and public engagement asked broad questions to allow issues including diversity, equity, and inclusion issues to come to the forefront.

Mr. Greene stated as strategies and performance indicators are developed staff will look intentionally through the equity lens and ask questions such as who is benefiting and what are the unintended consequences.

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield referenced the employee survey, and she asked how the survey will be executed. Ms. Carter noted she meet with the Management Team and the Project Lead Team and the goal is to have ambassadors for the survey. She noted staff will have multiple ways to access the online survey, and she indicated the survey format ensures everyone has an opportunity to participate. She commented it is important to leverage the enthusiasm of the leadership team to get employees to take the survey and take it seriously. Ms. Clark stated 30% to 40% of employee participation throughout the organization is considered healthy participation. She commented the goal is for employees to feel ownership of the mission and values.

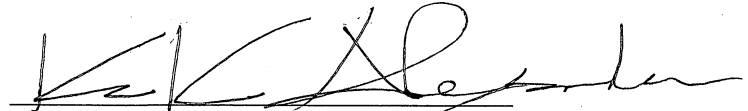
Councilmember McLaughlin pointed out it can be difficult to get citizen participation, and he asked what measures will be taken to ensure participation within the community and what is a success rate for community involvement. Ms. Carter explained direct community involvement is fairly limited, and she pointed out the community engagement from the Forward 2040 Comprehensive Plan will be leveraged and used as a starting point.

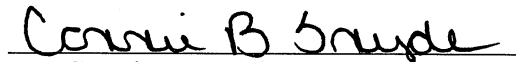
Mayor Alexander thanked Ms. Clark and Ms. Keyes for their presentation.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilmember Post. Mayor Alexander, Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield and Councilmembers McLaughlin, Post and Smith voted AYE. (5-0)

The meeting was adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

  
Karen Alexander, Mayor

  
Connie B. Snyder, City Clerk