

CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL

Budget Work Session

March 4, 2021

Virtual/electronic meeting via Zoom

4:00 PM WORK SESSION

The Charlottesville City Council met in an electronic meeting on Thursday, March 4, 2021, in accordance with local ordinances to ensure continuity of government and prevent the spread of disease. The purpose of the meeting was a work session to discuss the Fiscal Year 2022 City Budget.

Mayor Walker called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. with the following members present: Mayor Nikuyah Walker, Vice Mayor Sena Magill, Councilors Heather Hill, Michael Payne and Lloyd Snook.

Mayor Walker turned the meeting over to City Manager Chip Boyles, who advised that the meeting would focus on General Fund revenues and expenditures. He also advised that new initiatives discussed during FY2022 budget sessions would be the starting point for developing the FY 2023 budget.

Senior Budget and Management Analysts Ryan Davidson and Krisy Hammill reviewed FY 2022 revenue drivers, proposed investments in Council budget priorities and expenditures not included in the proposal. The Council priorities identified for the FY 2022 City Budget included:

- Affordable housing
- Racial equity
- Safety and security
- Workforce and economic development, and
- Investment in employees.

Council engaged in discussion about the Schools budget request, the potential merger of housing and rental relief programs, employee compensation, how departments infuse equity into their budgets, and communication across all resources to meet needs. Councilors also expressed a desire to earmark funding priorities should actual revenues exceed current projections. Some priorities mentioned were funding for staff to address climate action and broadening eligibility for housing and real estate tax assistance.

Commissioner of the Revenue Todd Divers shared details of the conflicts with running multiple assistance programs, and the benefits of merging the programs.

Council expressed interest in having a full open meeting with Charlottesville City Schools to discuss more details of the budget request.

The presentation included upcoming meeting dates:

March 11: Work Session, 6:00pm – 8:00pm, Zoom Webinar, Outside and Non-profit Agencies (Public invited. Opportunity for Council discussion with staff. Public comment at end.)

March 15: Public Hearings, 6:30pm, Zoom Webinar – Tax Rates and Proposed Budget (Smaller presentation with opportunity for public feedback and Council discussion)

March 17: Community Budget Forum, 6:00pm, Zoom Webinar (Opportunity for public to speak one on one with City Council and staff after short presentation by the Interim City Manager.)

March 25: Work Session, 6pm – 8pm, Zoom Webinar, Capital Improvement Program (Public invited. Opportunity for Council discussion with staff. Public comment at end.)

April 5: Second Public Hearing on Budget/First Reading, 6:30pm, Zoom Webinar (Smaller presentation with opportunity for Public feedback and Council discussion)

TENTATIVE - April 8: Work Session, 6pm – 8pm, Zoom Webinar, Remaining budget issues and wrap up (Public invited. Opportunity for Council discussion with staff. Public comment at end.)

April 13: Budget Approval by City Council, 5:30pm, Zoom Webinar

City Manager Boyles summarized action steps.

Mayor Walker opened the floor for public comment. The following people spoke:

Jason Halbert, President of the Fry's Spring neighborhood, asked about the status of the computer systems that were to be put in place for management of the Capital Improvement Plan process. He also advised against dependency on CARES Act funds for salary positions. He shared that all schools should be outfitted with solar power, and he agreed with Councilors about climate action support.

William Milone spoke about delaying parts of the West Main Streetscape project and taking advantage of funds available for parts of the project while they're still available.

Jeff Fogel, city resident, spoke in support of increasing taxes, fully utilizing the Charlottesville Housing Assistance Program, and re-distributing funds from the police department budget to other support programs.

Matthew Gillikin, city resident, spoke about employee compensation for School and City staff.

Mayor Walker adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

BY Order of City Council

BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council