

**CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNITY BUDGET FORUM
March 23, 2022 at 6:00 PM
Electronic/virtual meeting**

Call to Order/Roll Call

The Charlottesville City Council met in an electronic meeting on Wednesday, March 23, 2022, in accordance with a local ordinance amended and re-enacted on March 7, 2022, to ensure continuity of government and prevent the spread of disease during the coronavirus State of Emergency. Mayor Lloyd Snook called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m., noting that all councilors were present: Sena Magill, Michael Brian Pinkston, Mayor Lloyd Snook and Vice Mayor Juandiego Wade.

Mayor Snook summarized the purpose of the meeting which was a time for the public to speak on any manner related to the development of the Fiscal Year 2023 budget. He reviewed budget drivers and stated that after the public hearing on April 4, Council would be able to make recommendations for changes to the proposed budget. He listed several decisions that Council would need to make in moving towards adopting the budget:

- School Reconfiguration project:
 - Sizing the project, with options \$75 Million or less;
 - Clarifying next steps. \$2.5 Million is included in the Capital Improvement Plan for FY 2023 to continue design work but decisions need to be made on what is being designed; and
 - How to fund the project.
- Tax Increases:
 - A \$0.10 real estate tax increase (revenue value \$9.2 Million) was advertised;
 - 0.5% increase on the meals tax going from 6% to 6.5% (revenue value \$1.2M)
- Other upcoming big budget issues/initiatives:
 - Collective Bargaining
 - Climate Action Planning
 - Affordable Housing initiatives
 - SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) Grant
 - Transit

Public Comment

Mayor Snook opened the floor for comments from the public.

Claire Cronmiller spoke in support of funding the Meadow Creek Trail at Michie Drive.

Elizabeth Stark spoke about police budget details, transparency and accountability.

Nancy Carpenter spoke in support of CLIHC's (Charlottesville Low Income Housing Coalition) position regarding affordable housing investment and in support of increasing rent relief.

Emily Dooley, School Board Member, spoke in support of funding school reconfiguration.

Dom Morse, School Board Member, spoke in support of funding school reconfiguration.

Cecilia Barber, city resident spoke in support of funding for PHAR (Public Housing Association of Residents) and Legal Aid Justice Center.

Barbara Myer, city resident, spoke in favor of funding for the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center (JSAAHC).

Chris Meyer, city resident, spoke in support of funding for school reconfiguration; in opposition to the recommendation of Interim City Manager Rogers to delay reconfiguration; in support of incremental real estate tax increases to support goals; in favor of funding for affordable housing; and in support of adding a gas consumption tax to pay for climate mitigation activities and ending free natural gas hook-ups.

Matthew Gillikin, city resident, spoke in support of funding school reconfiguration and finding creative ways to pay for it; in opposition to the recommendation by Mr. Rogers to delay reconfiguration; in support of funding for PHAR and JSAAHC; and in support of reduced funding for the police department.

Eric Irizarry, city resident, spoke in support of funding school reconfiguration and the JSAAHC.

Greg Weaver, Fry's Spring resident, spoke in support of funding for PHAR, the CLIHC recommendations for affordable housing, a Collective Bargaining Analyst, climate reduction initiatives, and allocating tax increases to services such as transit.

Emily Yen, city resident, spoke in support of funding for the Collective Bargaining Analyst position.

Discussion

Councilors discussed public comments.

Todd Divers, Commissioner of the Revenue, and Misty Graves, Interim Director of Human Services, provided clarification on the Charlottesville Supplemental Rental Assistance Program.

Alex Ikefuna, Interim Director of Community Solutions, provided information about the housing voucher program.

Regarding infrastructure for addressing affordable housing, Deputy City Manager Sam Sanders asked Council to clarify whether the \$10 Million per year recommendation for affordable housing was a goal or commitment, advising that there is a difference and the staffing structure or capacity for years beyond FY 2023 would depend on the intent of the program. He stated that the FY2023 budget will exceed \$10 Million in support of affordable housing. Mayor Snook stated that there is a need to build City Hall staff to where it needs to be. Councilors agreed that the \$10 Million recommendation per year for affordable housing was a commitment.

Vice Mayor Wade expressed a need to put mechanisms in place to measure activity and impact, and to be accountable for meeting the affordable housing commitment.

Krisy Hammill, Senior Budget and Management Analyst, provided context about the Capital Improvement Plan data going through 2027.

Garland Williams, Transit Director, advised that the implementation of a reliable 15-minute transit model would take time to build the infrastructure, and future funding would come on a three-year rolling average.

Council continued to discuss transit, the JSAAHC, Stribling Avenue, school reconfiguration, the Marcus Alert system, and city operations, including vacant positions and trade-offs for funding school reconfiguration.

Acting Chief Tito Durette and Financial Officer Captain Steve Knick shared information about the Charlottesville Police Department budget that is available on the city website. They advised that the department was down 27 positions and they could not provide certain services. Councilors expressed a need to support the police department, while also holding them accountable for outcomes and communication to the public.

Council provided feedback and direction to the City Manager and budget staff for continued development of the FY 2023 budget:

Mr. Rogers advised that priorities will be taken into consideration for the next budget discussion, considering what is required, what is affordable, and potential consequences for various decisions based on competing priorities.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

BY Order of City Council

BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council