



**COMMITTEE AS A WHOLE SESSION
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS
TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2016; 5:30 P.M.**

1. Call to Order

Mayor Renner called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM and asked City Clerk Lawson to call the roll.

2. Roll Call

Aldermen: Jim Fruin, David Sage, Mboka Mwilambwe, Joni Painter, Karen Schmidt, Scott Black, Diana Hauman, Kevin Lower

Absent: Aldermen: Amelia Buragas

3. Public Comment

Mayor Renner opened the meeting to receive Public Comment. The following individuals provided comments during the meeting.

Jesse Smart
Alton Franklin
Jim Thompson
Charles Kline
Harry Lovell

4. Consideration of approving the Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes of October 19, 2015. *(Recommend that the reading of the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Proceeding of October 19, 2015 be dispensed with and the minutes approved as printed.*

Motion by Alderwoman Painter, second by Alderwoman Schmidt that the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of October 19, 2015 be dispensed with and approved as printed.

Motion carried.

5. Presentation of the Budget Task Force Committee Recommendations

David Hales, City Manager, introduced continued discussion on recommendations for topics as prioritized by the City Council. He stated Staff had been pursuing action on the top priorities voted on by Council.

Golf operational changes. Mr. Hales stated results of soliciting proposals from

professionals and experienced, qualified firms would be available by May or June. Comparison between outsourcing against current status quo with existing personnel would be made.

Sick Leave Buy Back. Staff was compiling a detailed inventory of benefits currently provided to employees, prioritized these to bring back to Council. Mr. Hales stated Council was looking at a comprehensive compensation policy or philosophy as no definitive written approved policy on where we want to go in the future on compensation for public or private sector employees exists. More information on this would be compiled within the next sixty (60) days.

Downtown Hireback Program. Mr. Hales recommended options three (3), Late Hours Liquor License and four (4), Fee Increase for Liquor License City-wide, be given further attention.

Solid Waste. Mr. Hales stated that an Ordinance could be forthcoming to institute a fee of \$20 for bulk waste for one (1) bucket, \$40 for additional.

Mr. Hales further commented on other items: Audits for Information Services and Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts (BCPA). The Coliseum Contract was a major endeavor with a lot of staff time and effort. Five (5) year Capitol Improvement budget plan is a work in progress. Storm Water and Sanitary Sewer proposals as well as City Facilities and Fire proposals are under review for the Operating budget next year with a draft proposal to the Council in March. Fee and service charge study would require much time and policy decisions for the Council. Long term financial sustainability plan was ongoing.

Mr. Hales mentioned five (5) high level goals where important information and detail were provided as drafts. 1.) Economic Development; 2.) Infrastructure; 3.) Financial Planning; 4.) Reduced Emergency Response Time and 5.) Downtown Implementation Plan.

6. Council discussion regarding Budget Priorities

Mayor Renner directed the Council to start with comments on Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts (BCPA); specifically what direction should we give staff, keep it status quo, gain more efficiencies, dramatic cuts, or elimination entirely of the BCPA.

Alderman Painter recused herself from voting on the BCPA as she is on the Community Foundation Board. She commented that the BCPA is broadly supported by the community and should be supported by the Council. She expressed her opposition to elimination of the BCPA.

Alderman Mwilambwe expressed support for maintaining the BCPA in the community. He recommended that we be more creative with funds to come up with better ways to manage funds and be more efficient. He advised that the Golf Courses, BCPA and other amenities were not intended to bring in huge revenue, but were more for enjoyment and improvement of our quality of life, to promote tourism and help others to experience what the community has to offer. Mr. Mwilambwe recommended bringing in someone from outside BCPA to provide additional experience in finding some efficiencies for BCPA. He mentioned a breakfast

meeting with OSF/St. Joseph's and BroMenn where the executives mentioned the need to have quality of life venues to attract top notch doctors to the community.

Alderman Sage recommended having a more targeted and specific conversation about the five (5) items to provide direction to staff, to figure out what has council support and what doesn't. These include: 1.) Sell BCPA; 2.) Sell Creativity Center; 3.) Convert BCPA to enterprise fund; 4.) Reduce BCPA budget and 5.) BCPA audit with 501c3 impact considered.

Mayor Renner, another option would be to continue status quo.

Alderman Painter expressed agreement with the audit.

Alderman Sage expressed interest in the outcome of the audit as well as reducing the BCPA budget.

Alderman Black mentioned the difficulty in trying to measure where the revenue was coming from when other establishments are involved in the same venue. He stated that he is not in favor of selling. If selling is not an option, then Council needs to review the budget to consider options in handling expenses. Let's stop talking about it and start promoting it. Let's get more people there, let's get more things happening. Mr. Black stated he would like to understand the tax audit.

Mr. Hales, the history of the tax stating about three (3) or four (4) years ago, Council capped the amount of the quarter percent sales tax that would go to the BCPA. Prior to that, it had been about one point nine (1.9%) percent. The Council at that time indicated that the cap would be one point seven percent (1.7%) to the BCPA and challenged the BCPA to hire a development manager to start to raise additional revenue to help offset some of the costs of the BCPA.

Alderman Schmidt, it was intended that other revenues would continue to be provided to the BCPA to keep them going. However, the funds then got dispersed to other projects as time went on.

Alderman Black, the next step would be for staff to draft an Ordinance to be considered by Council relating to sales tax money distributed to the BCPA with potential options.

Mr. Hales explained, Alderman Schmidt was referring pre-Recession when funding for BCPA was capped. At the time of the great Recession, about 100 full-time positions had to be cut. It was felt that due to the expanding cost of Police and Fire and other high priority services the city couldn't afford to allocate as much money as before.

Mayor Renner recommended going back to the five (5) or six (6) points of referral with the sixth as not reducing any funding.

Alderman Black recommended going back to the Ordinance to determine whether funds would be reallocated back to the BCPA to negate the funding challenge that they have.

Mayor Renner explained that was the past and in today's budget they would have to figure out where that money would come from.

Mr. Hales, the FY budget for 2017 incorporated \$1.7million in sales tax revenue going to the BCPA. It is up to the Council to look at providing greater or less funding. These recommendations came before the sales tax vote. Since that vote, a quarter percent of the tax is going to mental health, a quarter percent to street resurfacing and the other half percent is to help offset the need to eliminate personnel. Without the other half percent of the tax the City was looking at significant potential for layoffs and elimination of personnel. Mr. Hales stated that FY 2017 has the potential for a good, strong balanced budget.

Alderman Black, he would favor the audit with the 501c3 impact to get the public engaged and he would be open to having a conversation about selling the Creativity Center. He stated that he would welcome conversations to understand what it would mean to reduce the budget, what those numbers would be.

Alderman Hauman, she was in favor of investing in the BCPA to promote downtown. She questioned the possibility of selling naming rights to the BCPA as was done with the Coliseum. The Creativity Center could be a possible revenue producer. Combining management from the Coliseum and the BCPA should go forward, as it appeared to have full support from Council. In order to promote downtown, she encouraged the Council to have the courage to start to develop the strategic plan for downtown.

Alderman Lower thanked the Budget Task Force (BTF) for their time reviewing the budget, stating it has narrowed the vision on what cuts might be available. There should be more conversations beyond what was outlined as options by the BTF. He offered further history on the purchase of the BCPA and purpose of the City at that time. At that time, the City had not intended to fund the programs and take care of expenses to run the entity. Entertainment is not a primary function of government. Repair of roads, sewers, having fresh water should be a higher priority for the City than entertainment. He questioned what it would take to have the City maintain the building, paying for the heating and cooling; however, let the BCPA fund their programs separately, whether with an enterprise fund, privately, etc. The Creativity Center needs some major work to be done to it.

Alderman Schmidt, she was not in favor of reducing the budget for the BCPA. She is interested in seeing the results of the audit. She is in favor of the Council supporting the entity and letting the staff at BCPA do what they do best.

Alderman Fruin, he was very supportive of the BCPA as it is critical to our community, to downtown and our diversity. A consensus on how the Council views entertainment, not limited to BCPA, but including Golf, the Zoo, quality of life to get a council philosophy on what to subsidize, is needed.

Alderman Sage, asked whether the City Manager had a sense of what option had the most support from the Council. He acknowledged that the audit seems to have the majority of support.

Mr. Hales, his impression was the majority has no interest in or support of moving ahead with any of the other items that would involve reduction of the current level of funding, the \$1.7 million. There has been a majority of interest in findings of the audit. Beyond that, he has not heard privately that any of the Council wishes to address any of the other options at this time.

Alderman Sage, he is in favor of reducing the BCPA budget in addition to the audit as well as selling the Creativity Center.

Alderman Black asked for the Council to weigh in on the Creativity Center and the thought of selling it.

Mayor Renner inquired whether more than three (3) Council members were interested in selling the Creativity Center. No other Aldermen agreed.

Alderman Fruin, he does not have enough information on the Creativity Center, its usage and cost, to make that decision.

Mr. Hales stated, some analysis of operating expenses of the Creativity Center had been done by the previous director. The management of the BCPA as well as any Fundraisers would want a definitive policy statement by the Council, maybe in the form of a Resolution, which would indicate support for the Creativity Center, including assistance with operating expenses, subject to private donations being raised to complete the remodeling. Council will need to make it public that the majority supports this, to move forward with the Creativity Center.

Mayor Renner, more information needs to be gathered and to bring back to a future meeting for further discussion. He agreed that the audit would need to be reviewed at that time, also.

Alderman Black was in favor of having a presentation done by the current management of the BCPA, along with having a resolution of Council support that speaks to the concerns and then vote at that time.

Mayor Renner asked Council to move on to the next topic, Downtown Hireback.

Mr. Hales suggested that the focus be narrowed, such as looking at the Late Hour Liquor license including some liquor license fees citywide.

Mayor Renner highlighted the items Mr. Hales was referring to. Items three (3) and four (4). 3.) Establishing Late Hour Liquor License and 4.) Increase Liquor License Fees Citywide

to support the Police department. Mayor Renner clarified the entire city has some residual benefits from the Downtown Hireback. He mentioned some of the worst violations for liquor license issues or problems had not been from the downtown businesses but other parts of the City. The last time liquor licenses were increased was 1983, and all the increased costs of liquor enforcement have been paid for by taxpayers.

Mr. Hales agreed with the Mayor and added that the police force had to cut back on liquor related enforcement citywide due to budget constraints. He recommended that staff do more research so they can bring back specific recommendations to get the fees to where they need to be.

Mayor Renner, questioned the fee study being done would include this.

Mr. Hales stated only the policy would be updated with that study. The policy would identify the purpose for each fee or service charge. A recovery of the cost for the hire back is what items three (3) and four (4) above would accomplish.

Alderman Black stated he would like to see a Resolution or an Ordinance adjustment for option three (3) A, which puts the late hours liquor license for the downtown owners proportional to the occupancy and how that cost plays out. He stated he would vote on it and support it.

Alderman Schmidt mentioned that downtown tavern owners raised a question as to why monies collected for ordinance violations do not contribute to costs.

Mr. Hales, violation fees cannot be counted on as a constant source of revenue. Fines are designed to change behavior and that fee may not be available the next year. It comes back into the General Fund as do other sales tax revenue.

Alderman Painter stated she is in favor of a citywide two o'clock (2:00) a.m. special liquor license and did not think it unreasonable for them to pay for this service. She is in favor of raising the liquor fees across the whole city.

Alderman Lower, agreed; however, expressed concern for smaller entities that have not seen disruptions and violations and still must experience the increased fees. He does not have a big problem with raising the fees if done incrementally at a small amount so the market will bear it, over a period of ten (10) years. He commented on the plan to see a diminished force downtown as behavior is changed; and therefore, would prefer to see fines instead of increased fees.

Alderman Sage voiced support for option three (3) A, as downtown entities are consuming the services of the downtown police hire back. Option four (4) should be a separate conversation as the topic was Downtown Police Hireback and option four (4) relates to a citywide fee increase.

Alderman Hauman, she is in favor of continuing the Downtown Hireback as the police officers do deter unwanted activity. She questioned the taxes generated by the downtown taverns. The downtown establishments were paying a two percent (2%) tax over and above the regular sales tax, and the tax was already covering expenses for the Downtown Hire back.

Mayor Renner commented on separating the two (2) options or blend them to pay for the cost of the Downtown Hire back.

Alderman Hauman commented on the number of violations downtown dealing with public urination to suggest needing a public washroom downtown. She stated that making downtown a destination to generate more revenue through the BCPA or the Coliseum or whatever, Council would need to develop a strategy to encompass all aspects. She is not in favor of the downtown taverns footing the bill for the Hireback.

Alderman Mwilambwe stated, he favored the blended approach of increasing the liquor license fees citywide and three (3) A, but would not want to put anyone out of business. He favored increases in increments over a period of time.

Alderman Fruin, the issues are 1.) downtown and 2.) late hours. He was not in favor of spreading the cost citywide, and questioned continuing the culture that currently exists downtown causing the need for the Hireback.

Alderman Schmidt stated she favored a blended system, increases in increments, and encouraged Council to have a meeting with the license holders to get their feedback and ideas.

Mayor Renner emphasized that these conversations have been heard, and this item is a Council decision for a broader budget process. A hearing at the Liquor Commission could be had to hear feedback from the license holders.

Mayor Renner mentioned Golf and Solid Waste were two more subjects to be discussed.

Mr. Hales asked whether Council was ready to consider an Ordinance in one of the next meetings on a Solid Waste proposal of \$20 for the first bucket of bulk waste, and \$40 for the second bucket as a majority had shown support for this.

Mayor Renner asked for comments from the Council on this proposal.

Alderman Sage asked whether the cost would be \$40 for each bucket after the first bucket.

Mr. Hales stated yes.

Alderman Sage stated his support for the proposal.

Alderman Haumann inquired whether a person is charged if they took bulk waste to the transfer site themselves. She stated she was in favor of the increase.

Mr. Hales, there is no charge for taking bulk waste to the transfer site themselves.

Alderman Black, inquired whether there would be three (3) or four (4) free pickups per year, such as Spring cleanup. He is in favor of the increase.

Mr. Hales suggested keeping the idea of free pickups separate from the administrative proposal as that had not been thoroughly discussed.

Alderman Fruin stated he was not in favor of the increase.

Alderman Lower stated he was not in favor of the increase.

Alderman Mwilambwe stated he was not in favor of the increase.

Alderman Painter stated she was not in favor of the increase.

Alderman Schmidt stated she was in favor of the increase but agreed with the need to have one (1) or two (2) days a year for free pickup.

Mayor Renner noted the concensus of Council and added Alderman Buragas would be given an opportunity to express her thoughts on this item.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Alderman Schmidt, seconded by Alderman Fruin to adjourn Committee as a Whole Session. Time: 7:37 p.m.

Motion carried. (viva voce)

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

ATTEST

Tari Renner, Mayor

Cherry L. Lawson, City Clerk