



CITY OF LOWELL
COUNCIL RETREAT WORK SESSION
TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2022, 8:30-1:00 P.M.
GASTON BUSINESS ASSOCIATION – 601 W. Franklin Blvd. Gastonia, NC

I. CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Sandy Railey at 8:44a.m.

Attendance:

Mayor Sandy Railey
Mayor Pro-Temp Travis Smith
Councilmember Phil Bonham
Councilmember Candy Funderburk
Councilmember Thomas Gillespie (remote)
City Manager Scott Attaway
City Clerk Cheryl Ramsey
Finance Director Lisa Nolen
Planning Director Alex Blackburn
Public Works Director Thomas Shrewsbury (remote)
Parks and Recreation Director Cristy Cummings (remote)
City Attorney John Russell
Interim Police Chief Carl Moore
Sergeant Jeff Harrison
City Engineer Bonnie Fisher came to the meeting during the second half
Centralina Regional Council of Governments (CCOG) Executive Director, Geraldine Gardner
CCOG Government Affairs & Member Engagement Coordinator, Kelly Weston

II. WELCOME REMARKS

Mayor Railey made opening remarks and well wishes for the upcoming meeting. Introductions were made for all attending.

III. PRE-SESSION: COUNCIL MEMBER APPOINTMENT PROCESS Q&A

City Manager Scott Attaway opened with the announcement of Councilmember Ken Ervin retiring from the City Council effective immediately. John Russell explained the Charter and Rules of Procedure to appointing a new member to serve the remainder of the unexpired term. The main points to consider were:

- a. State Statute 160a-63 states the appointment is done by City Council to avoid conflict of interest issues and discussions of appointments have to be in an open session or a gathering of the majority of the council. A majority of the current council is considered three or more people. Less than three people discussing the appointment is against the statute.
- b. Voting – Should be a nomination process in an open meeting with majority rules. Any City Council member can make a nomination where all members can then discuss and debate and finally vote. The person with the majority vote will seal the nomination. There are two rules that consider the mayor voting. Rule #31 in the Rules of Procedures regarding appointments says the mayor does not vote on



CITY OF LOWELL
COUNCIL RETREAT WORK SESSION
TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2022, 8:30-1:00 P.M.
GASTON BUSINESS ASSOCIATION – 601 W. Franklin Blvd. Gastonia, NC

- c. appointments and Rule #7 for the role of the mayor which says the mayor will vote only in the case of breaking a tie. Mr. Russell will contact the School of Government to get more guidance and suggested council members review policies to see if it is stated the mayor is not allowed to vote in this situation. If so, that would take precedence over Rule #7. Mr. Russell stated there is no time limit to fill the seat but recommended not to delay the process past March.
- d. Mayor Railey asked how long the newly appointed council member would serve. Mr. Attaway stated he spoke with Adam Reagan with the Board of Electors and was informed the new member will serve until the 2023 elections. The question becomes if the appointed council member decides to run in 2023 then serve for two years and get back on the original rotation.
- e. Ballots need to be open, and they can be done during the regular meeting. They can be orally or written.
- f. Each council can nominate one person. In addition, each council member can only vote for one person.
- g. Rules require each nomination shall be debated, even if it is as minimal as council members giving the name and stating why they would be a good candidate.

IV. AGENDA REVIEW AND GROUND RULES

The retreat objectives were to: (1) Continue to build Council relationships to aid decision-making; (2) affirm the City's strategic framework and goals; (3) provide guidance on priorities for ARPA and FY23 budget development; and (4) discuss the growth and change coming to Lowell.

V. REVIEW AND AFFIRM THE CITY'S VISION, MISSION, VALUES AND GOALS

Facilitators Geraldine Gardner and Kelly Weston reviewed the agenda and started the group with warm-up activities on how the council is progressing towards the City's goals, vision, mission and values.

VI. MANAGER'S REPORT: FY22 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FY23 OUTLOOK

City manager Scott Attaway discussed the FY22-FY24 Goals:

- a. Continuously improve and expand water and sewer infrastructure. Includes the completion of the AIA Mapping Grant; updates to Wastewater Treatment Plant



CITY OF LOWELL
COUNCIL RETREAT WORK SESSION
TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2022, 8:30-1:00 P.M.

GASTON BUSINESS ASSOCIATION – 601 W. Franklin Blvd. Gastonia, NC

- (WWTP); the CDBG-I Project and continuous repairs to water line and dry water inspections. Councilmember Bonham recommended adding Stormwater to this goal.
- b. Continuously improve and expand city streets and sidewalks. Includes the completion of the paving contract, implementing the new Lowell Development Ordinance (LDO); NCDOT widening efforts; participation of Connect Beyond. A brief discussion was held regarding the use of a 3rd party to rate the priorities of paving streets vs. whether it will be done in-house. City Engineer Bonnie Fisher discussed the cost analysis and the way the ranking of streets is performed.
 - c. Develop and update public facilities including new Public Works Facility; Crompton and Knowles Property and Conceptual Master Plan; better use of space and remodeling of City Hall, the Police Department and the CDBG Community Center.
 - d. Enhance multi-generational parks and recreational activities including completing the first Citizens Academy; increased communication via social media, website, and mailers; increased recreational opportunities; Parks and Recreational master Plan (this will be presented at the February 11, 2022 retreat); and seasonal events.
 - e. Develop land use master plans for undeveloped areas including the Main St. master Plan Proposal; other small area plans; Future land Use Plan Adopted in 2021. It was agreed during the meeting to change the word from “undeveloped” to “targeted”.
 - f. Fiscal Highlights and Fund Balance including a new tax rate; stormwater fee in place; growth of the fund balance; sales tax increase (relative to the tax rate).

VII. FINANCIAL OUTLOOK & ARPA SPENDING PRIORITIES

City Manager Scott Attaway and Bonnie Fisher discussed the FY23 fiscal outlook and fund balance

VIII. AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (ARPA): PANDEMIC RECOVERY AND RESPONSE

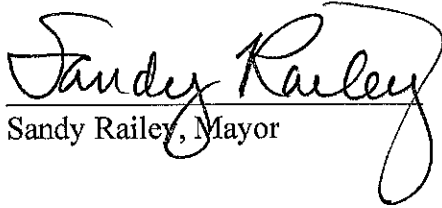
Geraldine Gardner of CCOG discussed the Federal bill approved in May 2021 (effective April 1, 2022) setting aside funds to states, counties, communities over 50 thousand and communities under 50 thousand designed to help mitigate the negative impacts caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic. It can be used more broadly to provide government services affected by revenue reduction, provide premium pay to eligible workers, and make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure. Creativity in encouraged to think about strategic use of funds that will benefit the community.


The facilitators wrapped up the planning session and discussed items to be discussed at the next retreat planned for February 11, 2022. The meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.



CITY OF LOWELL
COUNCIL RETREAT WORK SESSION
TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2022, 8:30-1:00 P.M.
GASTON BUSINESS ASSOCIATION – 601 W. Franklin Blvd. Gastonia, NC

ATTEST:


Sandy Railey, Mayor


Cheryl Ramsey, City Clerk