

**City of Alexandria
City Council Regular Meeting
Tuesday, February 23, 2021 7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting
Meeting Minutes**

Present: Mayor Justin M. Wilson, Vice Mayor Elizabeth Bennett-Parker, Members of Council Canek Aguirre, John Taylor Chapman, Amy B. Jackson, Redella S. Pepper, and Mohamed E. Seifeldein.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Mr. Jinks, City Manager; Ms. Anderson, City Attorney; Ms. Triggs, Deputy City Manager; Ms. Baker, Deputy City Manager; Ms. Collins, Deputy City Manager; Ms. Garvey, Director, Community and Human Services; Mr. Greenlief, Assistant Director, Finance; Ms. Colton, Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities; Mr. Lambert, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES); Ms. K. Taylor, Director, Finance; Ms. S. Taylor, Legislative Director; Ms. Wedeles, Special Assistant to the City Manager; Dr. Haering, Director, Alexandria Health Department; Ms. Landrum, CEO, Alexandria Economic Development Partnership; Mr. Moss, Information Technology Services; Mr. Barre, Information Technology Services; and Mr. Smith, Information Technology Services.

Recorded by: Gloria Sitton, City Clerk and Clerk of Council.

1. Calling the Roll.

Mayor Wilson called the meeting to order and the City Clerk called the roll. All the members of Council were present via Zoom webinar.

Mayor Wilson noted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, the February 23, 2021 Legislative meeting of the Alexandria City Council is being held electronically pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2.-3708.2 (A)(3), the Continuity of Government ordinance adopted by the City Council on June 20, 2020 and Section 4.0-00(g) in HB29 and HB30 to undertake essential business. All members of the City Council and staff are participating from remote locations through a video conference call on Zoom. The meeting can be accessed by the public through the live broadcast on the government channel 70, streaming on the City's website, and can be accessed via Zoom.

2. Public Comment Period.

There were no public speakers.

PROCLAMATIONS

3. Presentation of a Proclamation Declaring the Month of March as Irish American Heritage Month and March 6, 2021 as Irish Cultural Celebration Day.

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilwoman Pepper, seconded by Councilman Aguirre and carried unanimously, City Council endorsed the proclamation. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker, Councilman Aguirre, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Jackson, Councilwoman Pepper, and Councilman Seifeldein; Opposed, none.

ORAL REPORTS FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL ON BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES

***Library Board (Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker)**

Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker reported that the Board welcomed a new member and appointed a new treasurer. Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker also reported that e-borrowing was up 322% and the Library hosted a new of virtual events in honor of George Washington's birthday and for Black History Month. Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker also noted that the Board had a discussion regarding the budget. Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker also noted that the Alexandria Law Library is offering virtual notary services during the pandemic. Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker noted that the Board discussed reopening at phase 3 in March.

***Virginia Railway Express (VRE) (Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker)**

Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker reported that the Board considered a couple of task order amendments including one for the project at Alexandria Union Station related to a new emergency generator and additional soil samples. Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker noted that the project was on schedule to be completed in 2023.

***City/Schools Subcommittee (Mayor Wilson and Councilman Chapman)**

Mayor Wilson reported that Subcommittee discussed many reopening related topics and the need for City support and what types of City facilities that can be used to support reopening in the Spring and upcoming Fall school sessions. Mayor Wilson noted that there was discussion about the coordination for the potential funding coming from the Federal government. Councilman Chapman added that more discussion needed for school reopening and the discussion will continue to meet the need as schools upcoming session.

***ARHA Redevelopment Committee (Mayor Wilson and Councilman Chapman)**

Mayor Wilson reported that the Committee are in phase where they are some significant redevelopment efforts will begin to move forward and ARHA has identify Samuel Madden Homes and the Ladrey Highrise as the two beginning projects. Mayor Wilson noted that there

will be a joint work session in the future to discussion all the upcoming development with ARHA. Councilman Chapman reported that the new Lineage development will have its grand opening soon.

***COG Food and Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Ad Hoc Advisory Committee (Councilwoman Jackson)**

Councilwoman Jackson reported that the Committee discussed food security as it relates to school meals and expanding healthy food access at farmers markets in the region. Councilwoman Jackson also reported how legislation in the General Assembly is affecting access to healthy food.

***Children, Youth and Families Collaborative Commission (CYFCC) (Councilwoman Jackson and Councilman Aguirre)**

Councilwoman Jackson reported that the Commission finalized their subcommittee assignments for the overall strategic plan and discussed the Racial and Social Equity resolution and how it can be incorporated into the Commission's work.

***COG Transportation Planning Board (TPB) (Councilman Aguirre)**

Councilman Aguirre reported that the Board received a briefing on the Unified Planning Work Program and reviewed the responsibilities of the organization. Councilman Aguirre reported that there was a discussion about the commuter connection program and he would report on the Voices of the Region survey at a subsequent meeting. Councilman Aguirre reported that he was appointed as chair the Access for All Advisory Committee.

***Alexandria Transportation Commission (Councilman Aguirre and Councilman Chapman)**

Councilman Aguirre reported that the Commission received an overview of the Vision Zero year three progress update and there was an update on parking technology throughout the City, particularly in Old Town area.

***Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy (ACAP)**

Councilman Aguirre reported that the Committee approved two new officers and would periodically Council orientation for the leadership and would updating the by-laws and vision and value statements.

ORAL REPORT FROM THE CITY MANAGER

(1) COVID-19 AND VACCINATION UPDATE FROM THE ALEXANDRIA HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

Dr. Haering gave an update on the number of cases and deaths in the City and the distribution of vaccinations throughout the City. Dr. Haering reported that approximately 25,000 people have received vaccinations and there is still not demographic information

available. Dr. Haering addressed the issues with the state registration system and scheduling for second dose clinic/vaccinations.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITY MANAGER CONSENT CALENDAR (4)

(Reports and Recommendations of the City Manager)

4. Consideration of a Fiscal Year 2022 Grant Application to the Virginia Commission for the Arts for a Creative Community Partnership Grant for the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities.

(A copy of the City Manager's memorandum dated February 17, 2021, is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Item No. 4; 02/23/21, and is incorporated as part of this record by reference.)

END OF CONSENT CALENDAR

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilwoman Jackson, seconded by Councilwoman Pepper and carried unanimously, City Council: (1) authorized the submission of a grant application in the amount of \$4,500 to the Virginia Commission for the Art's Creative Community Partnership Grant Program. The grant application deadline is April 1, 2021; and (2) authorized the City Manager to execute all necessary documents that may be required. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker, Councilman Aguirre, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Jackson, Councilwoman Pepper, and Councilman Seifeldein; Opposed, none.

REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CITY MANAGER FOR DISCUSSION (60 min.)

5. Update on the 2021 Virginia General Assembly Session.

(A copy of the City Manager's memorandum dated February 22, 2021, is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Item No. 5; 02/23/21, and is incorporated as part of this record by reference.)

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilwoman Pepper, seconded by Councilwoman Jackson and carried unanimously, City Council received the staff's update on the 2021 General Assembly session. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker, Councilman Aguirre, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Jackson, Councilwoman Pepper, and Councilman Seifeldein; Opposed, none.

6. Discussion of Preliminary Framework for the Allocation of Potentially Forthcoming Federal Stimulus Funding.

(A copy of the City Manager's memorandum dated February 17, 2021, is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Item No. 6; 02/23/21, and is incorporated as part of this record by reference.)

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilwoman Jackson, seconded by Councilwoman Pepper and carried unanimously, City Council: (1) received this report regarding the proposed preliminary framework on how to allocate potentially forthcoming federal stimulus funding; (2) directed the City Manager to consult with community stakeholders and then to develop a final federal stimulus funding allocation plan for future Council consideration; and (3) allocated \$1.0 million in City funding to serve as interim bridge funding for food security and eviction prevention programs to be able to continue until such time as the federal stimulus funds become available. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker, Councilman Aguirre, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Jackson, Councilwoman Pepper, and Councilman Seifeldein; Opposed, none.

7. Work Session in Regard to Visit Alexandria Marketing Plans.

(A copy of the PowerPoint is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Item No. 7; 02/23/21, and is incorporated as part of this record by reference.)

City Council received a presentation from Visit Alexandria CEO Patricia Washington, on the marketing plans that have been used during the pandemic and plans for reviving the tourism and hospitality industry here in the City. Ms. Washington responded to questions from Council.

8. Consideration of a Two-Way to One-Way (southbound) Conversion of the Access Street in Front of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial.[ROLL-CALL VOTE]

(A copy of the City Manager's memorandum dated February 17, 2021, is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Item No. 8; 02/23/21, and is incorporated as part of this record by reference.)

This item has been deferred.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

9. Consideration of a Resolution to Subsidize the Stormwater Utility Fee as an Expenditure Grant Rather than an Exemption on Real Estate Tax Bills for Certain Low-Income and/or Disabled Property Owners. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

(A copy of the City Manager's memorandum dated February 17, 2021, is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Item No. 9; 02/23/21, and is incorporated as part of this record by reference.)

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Councilman Aguirre, seconded by Councilman Chapman and carried unanimously by roll-call vote, City Council approved the resolution to subsidize the stormwater utility fee as an expenditure grant rather than an exemption on real estate tax bills for certain low-income and/or disabled property owners. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker, Councilman Aguirre, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Jackson, Councilwoman Pepper, and Councilman Seifeldein; Opposed, none.

The resolution reads as follows:

RESOLUTION NO. 2978

RESOLUTION PROVIDING FINANCIAL RELIEF PROGRAM FOR CERTAIN HOMEOWNERS TO ASSIST WITH PAYMENT OF THE CITY'S STORMWATER UTILITY FEE

WHEREAS, the City Council has adopted an ordinance authorizing the imposition of a stormwater utility fee, in order to provide a source of revenue for the City's stormwater management enterprise fund; and

WHEREAS, in order to fairly distribute responsibility for protection of water resources among properties that contribute to stormwater runoff, the stormwater utility fee is to be calculated based on the amount of impervious area present on a developed property, including residential property; nevertheless, City Council recognizes that for certain residential homeowners, payment of the utility fee may present a special financial hardship; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Virginia Code § 63.2-314, City Council is authorized to make public grants to the City's local board of social services for the purpose of aiding needy persons, and City Council desires to make such public grants for the purpose of aiding persons in need of assistance with payment of the stormwater utility fee (Stormwater Utility Relief), namely:

- i) those persons certified by the Department of Finance as qualified for the City's Real Estate Tax Relief program for the Elderly and Disabled based income and assets means criteria, and
- ii) those persons certified by the Department of Finance as being totally and permanently disabled veterans pursuant to Virginia Code § 58.1-3219.5 who by virtue of their disability are unable to participate in gainful employment and/or their surviving spouses, and
- iii) those persons certified by the Department of Finance pursuant to Virginia Code § 58.1-3219.9 as being a qualified surviving spouse of any veteran Killed in Action; and

WHEREAS, City Council desires for staff to proceed with disbursement of the Stormwater Utility Relief funding, in accordance with criteria intended to offer assistance to the homeowners referenced above who City Council believes may be particularly vulnerable to additional fees and costs related to home ownership;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA:

- 1) The Stormwater Utility Relief funding shall be deposited in the City's treasury to the credit of the City's Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS), and shall be dispensed by DCHS to the Department of Finance as grant funding on behalf of the needy homeowners referenced herein to pay their stormwater utility fee, as authorized by this Resolution; and

- 2) The Department of Finance shall be responsible for administration of the Stormwater Utility Relief Program within the parameters established by this Resolution; in doing so, the Department of Finance shall be deemed to be performing activities directly connected with the administration of a public assistance grant program, on behalf of and in conjunction with the DCHS; and
- 3) The Director of Social Services, acting pursuant to Virginia Code § 63.2-304 as the City's local board, shall not be required to participate in the day to day administration of the Stormwater Utility Relief Program, but shall have the right and authority to inspect records pertaining to the administration and disbursement of grant funds under the Program, and to receive such information and records as the Director of Social Services deems necessary to verify that the Program funds have been and are being administered and disbursed in accordance with the parameters established by this Resolution; and
- 4) The Director of Finance and the Director of Social Services shall have the authority to coordinate and establish policies, procedures, protocols and record-keeping requirements as they collectively deem necessary for the administration and accounting of the Stormwater Utility Relief Program, consistent with the confidentiality requirements applicable to the performance of their respective duties.

ORAL REPORTS AND ORAL PRESENTATIONS BY MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

1. Councilwoman Pepper welcomed Sermaine Mclean, Executive Assistant to the City Manager, back to work.
2. Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker requested that the City Clerk return with a short memorandum on how Council received comments for meetings and methods for receipt of that information.

OTHER

10. Consideration of City Council Schedule, Including Discussion on Possible Offsite City Council Meeting Locations.

(A copy of the City Manager's memorandum dated February 17, 2021, is on file in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council, marked Item No. 10; 02/23/21, and is incorporated as part of this record by reference.)

Deputy City Manager Triggs gave a brief presentation on options for returning to in-person meetings and responded to questions from Council about the options.

WHEREUPON, upon motion by Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker, seconded by Councilwoman Jackson and carried unanimously, City Council received and adopted the FY 2021 City Council Schedule for February 2021 through July 2021. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker, Councilman Aguirre, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Jackson, Councilwoman Pepper, and Councilman Seifeldein; Opposed, none.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO BE DISCUSSED, upon motion by Councilwoman Pepper, seconded by Councilman Seifeldein and carried unanimously, City Council adjourned the regular meeting of February 23, 2021 at 10:42 p.m. The vote was as follows: In favor, Mayor Wilson, Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker, Councilman Aguirre, Councilman Chapman, Councilwoman Jackson, Councilwoman Pepper, and Councilman Seifeldein; Opposed, none.

APPROVED BY:

JUSTIN M. WILSON MAYOR

ATTEST:

Gloria A. Sitton, CMC City Clerk

Approved: May 11, 2021

Ratified: