



**Wednesday, February 22, 2017, Minutes
11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Centre at University Park**

At 11:32 AM the seventeenth meeting of the LR CENT Committee was called to order by Peter McKinney O'Connor, co-chair. He welcomed new Ward 4 member June Matheny.

Committee Members present during the meeting were: Dr. Sybil Hampton, Peter McKinney O'Connor, Denise Jones Ennett, Steve Strickland, June Matheny, Musheerah Tharpe, Donald Shellabarger, and Troy Laha.

Committee Members Not Present were: Kenneth Gill, Kristi Lambert, and Rep. Charles Blake.

Also present were: City Manager Bruce Moore, LR CENT staff member Scott Whiteley Carter, and other City Staff.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the September 21, 2016, meeting were approved.

General Financial Report

Sara Lenehan, Finance Director presented the General Financial Report. The city is still awaiting the December receipts. Year to date, the City collected 0.63% more than in 2015. Amazon's announcement that they will voluntarily collect sales tax may have a positive impact on collections. There are two bills currently before the General Assembly which could aid in internet sales tax collection if adopted.

The Southwest Fire Station is the last short-term note which will be issued. It was received in December. The Board of Directors has authorized \$1.4 million for the research park. In addition the Little Rock Port Authority has expansion projects underway.

Department of Community Programs

Dana Dossett, Director of Community Programs made the presentation. Since October 1, 2015, over 800 Little Rock residents have enrolled in the reentry program. In March, the department will begin a collaboration with The Good Grid, an employment placement service. In addition, an RFQ has been issued for Youth in Transition Skills Training. This would be focused on residents between the ages of 18 and 30. The deadline for agencies to apply is March 17.

Little Rock Police Department

Mr. Strickland asked Chief Kenton Buckner about the progress on filling the retail space in the 12th Street Station. Chief Buckner and Mr. Moore reported that Citadel Real Estate was working to market the space. Ads had been placed in the newspaper and there had been media stories on the availability. A parking lot is being developed and 13th and Cedar Streets in conjunction with Hoover United Methodist Church. The additional parking spaces should make the space more desirable.

Mr. Strickland then asked about the Pankey Station costs. Mr. Moore noted that the original plan in the proposal had been to move into an existing finished out space. Once the decision was made to move to the Pankey property, there were items which were discovered which added to the cost. Mold remediation was an unanticipated cost, as was the location of the sewer and water lines.

Recruit School #85 began August 5 with ten (10) recruits. Eight (8) graduated on February 3. Recruit School #86 began with 18 recruits. At the February 3 graduation, the City Manager announced a \$5,000 bonus for completing graduation. It is anticipated that will help with recruitment and retention.

The Police Department and Human Resources Department are wrapping up the assessment of the hiring process. The two departments are also reviewing applications for calltakers.

Department of Public Works

Public Works Director Jon Honeywell reported that there were 106 projects in the first three years of LR CENT. Of those, 98 are finished or under construction, five (5) are in the design phase and one is being worked on with the Highway Department. Public Works has completed 8.5 miles of sidewalks since 2012. The department is nearing completion of the 2012 needs list. Since that list was finalized, Public Works has started compiling a new sidewalks list.

All of the second phase projects are proceeding to the design phase. The department has started the right-of-way acquisition necessary.

Regarding resurfacing, all of the streets have been identified for this phase. The 2016 overlay streets are 75% complete. The 2017 bids came in during February. Those projects will be started in the spring.

Little Rock Zoo

City Manager Moore introduced that new Zoo Director Susan Altrui. Ms. Altrui noted that the Zoo was experiencing growth in positive responses on social media. She attributed that to the projects funded by LR CENT. She reported that the upgrades to the Lion Exhibit were under-budget. The Zoo is working with Parks on a point-of-sale system that will be comprehensive. Because this is more involved than originally planned, it is taking longer to implement.

Housing and Neighborhood Programs Department

Mr. Moore introduced the new Director of Housing and Neighborhood Programs, Victor Turner. Mr. Turner reported that currently 34 of 38 authorized code officer positions are filled. The Department is in the process of backfilling vacant positions due to promotions and attrition.

Animal Services has five (5) out of seven (7) officer positions currently filled. The other two have been approved to fill and are currently in the process of being filled.

A new crematorium for the Animal Village has been ordered. The Department has received the Air Permit from the State of Arkansas and is waiting for delivery of the new unit.

Other

Mr. Strickland inquired about the turnover rate of employees. Mr. Moore responded that it varied by department and position. The HR staff will conduct an analysis and present it at a future meeting. The City has recently negotiated a step and grade system with AFSCME, the union for non-uniform employees. It should help reduce attrition in the employees who participate.

Ms. Tharpe expressed concern that senior citizens were being denied the chance to sign up for senior programs at the West Central Community Center because they were being told the program was full. Mr. Tolefree replied that he would visit with staff to make sure they were not turning people away. Ms. Tharpe also noted that the Optimist Club room at West Central was often locked. Mr. Moore responded that the City was in negotiations with the Optimist Club over use of the room.

The meeting was adjourned at 1.06 pm.