



June 19, 2013 Meeting Notes
11:35 AM – 12:47 PM
Willie Hinton Neighborhood Resource Center

At 11:35 AM the sixth meeting of the LRCent Committee was called to order by presiding Co-Chair Gary Smith.

The following Committee Members were present during the meeting: Dr. Sybil Jordan Hampton, Chrystal Gray, Kyle Demilt, Mursheerah Tharpe, Donald Shellabarger, Charles Blake and Khayyam Eddings

Mr. Troy Laha arrived at the end of the meeting due to another conflict

Members Not Present: Dr. Anika Whitfield, Steve Strickland and Peter McKinney O’Conor

Also present were: City Manager Bruce Moore and other City Staff

Mr. Smith opened the meeting by introducing Finance Director Sara Lenehan to give a summary update of sales tax revenues and expenditures through May 31, 2013.

Revenue and Capital Projects as of May 31, 2013

Finance Director Sara Lenehan explained the details of a handout that was given to the committee. She highlighted that as of the end of May, \$46,442,324 in revenue had been generated from the new sales tax which was 0.22% up from the same time during the previous year and \$25,770,267 had been expended and encumbered.

Departmental Presentations:

Fire Chief Greg Summers requested to report first so that he could be excused to attend another meeting.

Little Rock Fire Department

Fire Chief Greg Summers gave a very brief update that the Department has purchased one (1) engine and the City’s legal department is working on the purchase of land for a South West Little Rock Fire Station. Mr. Smith asked what the delay was in purchasing the property. Mr. Moore

responded that there were issues with ownership and clear title, but the purchase should be finalized in 2013.

Public Works Department

City Manager Bruce Moore recognized Public Works Director Steve Beck who was present and informed the committee that he would soon be retiring. He congratulated Steve on his service to the City.

Assistant Public Works Director Ronny Loe reported to the group that most of the 2012 projects had been completed but there were a few outstanding. He then pointed to the list of capital projects to be done in the first three year cycle 2013-2015 which equates to \$2,600,000 being spent per ward. He also highlighted that 18.84 miles of streets had been resurfaced and 35,345 square feet of new sidewalk had been installed.

Ms. Gray asked what the process was for requesting speed humps. Mr. Loe explained that the City Board had approved a process which was based on speed, the number of cars that travel on the street and that the policy could be found on the City's website. Ms. Gray also asked about the next three (3) year cycle of infrastructure requests. Mr. Loe indicated that process would likely begin in 2015.

Little Rock Police Department

Police Chief Stuart Thomas gave a brief update on the public safety radio system upgrades which was initiated with the passage of an ordinance on December 20, 2011 for \$8,725,905. A change order was done reducing the cost to \$8,505,756.48. The radio system upgrades are underway as planned and should be completed by the end of the year.

He indicated that a majority of land had been purchased for the 12th Street Station but staff is still pursuing additional properties. Overall the Station is on target to have a ground breaking ceremony in July and construction could begin as early as the first of August. The Department is still actively evaluating properties along Cantrell west of Interstate 430 to have a police station located in West Little Rock.

Thirty-One (31) recruit officers graduated December 7, 2012 and recruit school #75 graduated eighteen (18) new officers on May 31, 2013. Recruit School #77 is scheduled to commence on July 29, 2013. The department continues to recruit applicants to fill twenty-two (22) 911/311 communication call taker positions.

Mr. Smith asked why more land needed to be acquired if the land for the 12th Street Station had already been purchased. Chief Thomas responded that more property was needed to deal with the parking demands for future activity. Most of the property on the site would have some landscaping and adequate parking. It is also being considered that 13th Street will eventually be closed in the block between Pine and Cedar.

Ms. Gray asked about the retail space that was planned for the station. Chief Thomas responded that actual mixed use for much of that space might be a few years off due to the fact that eventually the Main Police Headquarters and Courts Buildings downtown would be torn down to make way for a new building to accommodate both departments. Most of those operations would have to temporarily be moved into the 12th Street Station.

Ms. Gray asked what was being done to keep the 911 call center functional with so many vacancies. Chief Thomas responded that they had hired some part-time workers.

Mr. Smith asked if the overall moral had improved with the purchase of new vehicles and equipment. Chief Thomas indicated that he had seen a great increase in moral not only because of new vehicles and equipment but also because of the future of the 12th Street Station.

Dr. Hampton asked if the Chief looked at the retention rate of 911 call taker trends nationwide. He said that he does and that general improvement to their working environment helps retain them, but that the City is looking at ways to be more competitive by looking at salaries around the state and counties.

Parks and Recreation

Parks Director Truman Tolefree reported that The Centre at University Park is underway but should be completed in late July of 2013. Sales tax money is still being accumulated to make park upgrades in the near future. An architect and construction manager have been selected to begin working on a design for the West Central Community Center and Pool. Repairs to the Arkansas River Trail should begin in the next three (3) to four (4) weeks.

Ms. Gray asked how one goes about getting a park request on the list for improvements. Mr. Tolefree indicated that his department meets with the various neighborhood groups to get recommendations.

Mr. Smith commended the department on the great improvement that can be seen in park maintenance. Generally parks are mowed and cleaned every ten (10) to fourteen (14) days.

Department of Planning and Development

Planning Director Tony Bozynski gave a brief update on the number of positions that he has been able to fill out of the operational portion of the sales tax.

Department of Information and Technology

Information Technology Director Randy Foshee highlighted that a second Data Center in the Fire Training Building was nearing completion and that the Fire Suppression System for the facility is in the final stages of implementation. He also noted that a contract was

pending City Board approval on June 18, 2013 to invest \$7,700,000 for critical improvements.

Department of Human Resources

Director Don Flegal indicated that his staff, the City Attorney's Office and Consultants were working to make the transition from defined contribution to defined benefit plan and that there would be employee meeting in August and September to explain the differences. The new plan will take effect January 1, 2014. Under the new plan the employee's contribution rate would be 4.5% and the City's would be 9%.

Mr. Smith asked if employees were over all please with the switch. Mr. Flegal indicated that most employees viewed this as a very positive switch and investment.

Department of Housing and Neighborhood Programs

Assistant Director Victor Turner briefly gave an update that the last four code enforcement officers would begin in August at which time they should be fully staffed if there are no new vacancies. All Animal services officer positions have been filled.

Mr. Tuner said that the Little Rock Landbank continues to acquire properties and the department is moving forward with a marketing plan to put information on their website that will list available properties.

Ms. Gray asked if there were homestead funds available to individuals to help purchase homes. Mr. Moore in indicated that the City sales these properties at a discounted rate and that there are attempts to save homes, but when they become a safety hazard they must come down.

Mr. Shellabarger asked what the timeline was for a property to be condemned and then torn down. Mr. Turner explained that the owner is given notice and must go to court after court the property is sent to the City Board. Mr. Moore further explained that staff tries to communicate with the owner and work with them to make a structure safe, but if no progress is made the property is condemned.

Department of Community Programs

Community Programs Director Dorothy Nayles reported that most of the PIT contract had been finalized with the exception of a few. She said that it is expected that on June 18 the City Board would approval contracts for re-entry programs. The total obligation as of now for all programs stands at \$5,789,296.

Department of Fleet Services

Fleet Budget Analyst Glenda Massie briefly reviewed the list of vehicles that had been purchased for various departments from the 2012 Short Term Financing project and the 2013 Fleet Replacement Program. Mr. Moore further explained that many vehicles were

ordered before the money actually accumulated because it takes time to actually have them built to certain specifications.

Mr. Smith asked where the new Compressed Natural Gas Station (CNG) would be located. Mr. Moore responded that it would be located at 6th and Ferry Streets and that the City Board had approved the funds to move forward with equipment installation and site work.

Mr. Shellabarger asked if any of the police vehicles would be converted to CNG. Chief Thomas indicated that there were no plans to do that but some of the SUV's would be able to operate off of CNG.

Little Rock Zoo

Little Rock Zoo Director Mike Blakely gave an update on the projects that are underway which included the Tiger and Otter habitat renovations. There are also upgrades being made to the amphitheater and horticulture. The New Great Ape walkway shade structure has been completed for the public.

Dr. Hampton asked if there had been an increase in attendance. Mr. Blakely indicated that the numbers have been up compared to the same time in the previous year. She also asked if there was a target for attendance for the year. Mr. Blakely stated that their target is 600,000 visitors for 2013.

Other Items

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Moore and Mrs. Lenehan about vacancy savings within each department. Mr. Moore said that in 2012 there had been some vacancy savings due to every position not being filled, however in some cases such as the police department the savings was absorbed by overtime payments that went over budget. He said that they would have a better number after the 2012 audit was complete.

Approval of Minutes from the March 27, 2013 meeting

Dr. Hampton moved that the minutes be approved from the March 27, 2013 meeting which was seconded by Ms. Gray. The motion was carried without objection.

First Annual Presentation

Mr. Moore recommended changing the date of the first presentation to the City Board to Tuesday, July 30, 2013 due to some other scheduling conflicts. Everyone agreed with the move.

There were no further questions or comments and the meeting was adjourned at 12:47pm.