



September 18, 2013 Meeting Notes
11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Willie Hinton Neighborhood Resource Center

At 11:38 AM the sixth meeting of the LRCent Committee was called to order by presiding Co-Chair Dr. Sybil Jordan Hampton.

The following Committee Members were present during the meeting: Dr. Sybil Jordan Hampton, Gary Smith, Chrystal Gray, Dr. Anika Whitfield, Steve Strickland, Kyle Demilt, Peter McKinney O’Conor, Mursheerah Tharpe, Charles Blake and Troy Laha

Members Not Present: Donald Shellabarger and Khayyam Eddings

Also present were: City Assistant City Manager Bryan Day and other City Staff

Approval of Minutes:

Dr. Hampton opened the meeting by entertaining a motion to approve the minutes from the June 19, 2013 meeting. Mr. Laha made the motion and it was seconded by Mr. Blake. The minutes were approved without objection.

Presentations:

Website Update

Special Projects Administrator, Frederick Gentry was asked to give a brief presentation of the LRCent website. Mr. Gentry pointed out that every ordinance or resolution approved by the board to spend sales tax dollars was now available on the website as well as all of the presentations and minutes from previous meetings. This is an effort to be transparent and make sure that the public has access to the same information that the committee does.

Re-Entry Program Presentation

Interim Public Works Director, Jon Honeywell and Community Programs Director, Dorothy Nayles gave a presentation on the current status of the re-entry program. They reminded the committee that as part of the passage of the sales tax, Community Programs began developing a re-entry program in partnership with the Public Works Department which started a sidewalk replacement program.

They employed up to ten (10) individuals providing them with training that could be applied to obtaining jobs in the construction industry. These individuals helped in the construction of sidewalks as well as other duties. To date six (6) of the individuals were still in the program. The participants have completed 40,461 square feet of new sidewalks and also assisted in the city-wide cleanup of storm debris following the 2012 winter storm.

The ultimate goal is to hire some of the temporary workers full time once they have completed the program or help them transition into the private sector workforce with the skills that they have learned.

Ms. Nayles and Mr. Honeywell noted that \$500,000 had been spent on the program which included hiring four (4) individuals to oversee the ten (10).

Dr. Whitfield asked how the four (4) employees were paid. Mr. Honeywell indicated that they were paid out of prevention intervention (PIT) funds. Mr. Bryan Day explained that the goal was to get away from paying them out of PIT funds in 2014.

Mr. Smith asked how the ten (10) were selected. Ms. Nayles explained that there was an application process through Human Resources to hire individuals who had previously been incarcerated. They received multiple applications and still have a waiting list.

Dr. Hampton asked for a factsheet on what the workers have done other than sidewalks. Mr. Honeywell reiterated the slide that pointed to the fact that they had been used to pick up storm debris and the backlog of ditch cleaning request over the summer.

Revenue and Capital Projects as of August 31, 2012

Dr. Hampton introducing Finance Director Sara Lenehan to give a summary update of sales tax revenues and expenditures through the first of June 2013. Mrs. Lenehan highlighted that a total of \$22,879,589 had been brought year to date which was down by \$146,885 or -0.64% as compared to last year. Since the collection of the tax began in 2012 a total of \$69,321,913 has been collected.

Mrs. Lenehan also went over all of the projects that are currently underway and noted that most of the 2012 Public Works Projects have been completed and closed. A total of \$30,462,251 has been spent 2012-2013.

Departmental Presentations:

Little Rock Police Department

Police Chief, Stuart Thomas
Van Tilbury, East Harding Construction
Marcus Devin, Adevco Construction

Chief Thomas introduced Van Tilbury and Marcus Devine who are the construction management team for the 12th Street Station to give a status report. Mr. Tilbury explained the partnership of the two companies and Mr. Devine mentioned that they were committed to trying to hire individuals and create job opportunities within the community. Mr. Tilbury said that construction was on schedule and he hoped it would be completed in July of 2014.

Mr. Laha wanted to know why the cost of the building went from \$9 million to \$11.9 million. Chief Thomas gave a brief history explaining that several years ago thought was given to rehabbing the old thrift store or building a smaller building. Over time the decision was made to construct a new facility and the size of the building grew based on the needs. Mr. Tilbury explained that the additional funds were not coming out of the sales tax.

Mr. Strickland asked why the communications system was sole sourced and wanted to know when it would be completed. Chief Thomas explained that because of the components of the current system Motorola was the only or better provider that they felt could help make the transition and upgrades. He indicated that he felt that the upgrades would be done by the end of 2013.

Chief Thomas reported that his staff and legal are still working on a deal to place a police substation in West Little Rock. He reported that ninety-seven (97) officers had been hired since last year. Mr. Laha asked how background checks were done on recruits. Chief Thomas indicated that the checks were done in-house and that it is a very extensive process.

Public Works Department

Interim Public Works Director, Jon Honeywell reported that all but one of the 2012 projects which include resurfacing have been completed. His staff is now negotiating contracts for the design of the 2013-2015 projects that was approved by the City Board after multiple public hearings in each ward. A total of \$2.6 million in sales tax funding is allocated for each ward.

Housing and Neighborhood Programs

Director Andre Bernard, reported all twenty (20) code enforcement officer positions have now been filled. All four (4) animal services officer positions had been filled but two (2) recently resigned. Mr. Bernard also indicated that the Land Bank has a total of seventy-seven (77) properties in inventory, plus eighty-one (81) lots in Rolling Pines Subdivisions.

Mr. Laha asked what the protocol was for reporting code enforcement violations. Mr. Bernard explained that citizens should call 311 first and if the issue isn't resolved in a reasonable period of time they should call his staff.

Department of Planning and Development

Planning Director, Tony Bozynski reported that his department has been able to fill several key position. They have hired a Building Inspector, Graphics/GIS Technician, Office Assistant, Two Zoning Enforcement Officer, Two Plans Examiners and a Senior GIS Analyst.

Parks and Recreation

Assistant Parks Director, Mark Webre reported that The Centre at University Park is set to have a dedication ceremony on Saturday, September 28. An architect and construction manager have been selected to design the West Central Community Center and Pool which will be approximately 24,000 square feet with an investment of \$6 million.

Improvements are continuing to be made to implement the War Memorial Park Master Plan documents for the Coleman Creek restoration are ready for bid and staff is preparing site for improvements.

Staff is preparing documents for Phase I implementation for The Natural Steps Ball Complex and seeking partnerships for project and program development. Repairs to the Arkansas River Trail have been completed using funding to leverage as a grant match totaling \$125 million.

Department of Community Programs

Community Programs, Director Dorothy Nayles, reported all re-entry contracts had been finalized and orientation for service providers had been completed. A memorandum of Understanding between the City of Little Rock and the Arkansas Department of Corrections has been drafted and is being reviewed by the legal department.

Ms. Nayles also indicated that her staff continues to work with Human Resources to discuss a referral and hiring process for an internal training program. They are also working with other City Departments to determine if there are potential job opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals. The Department is working to develop a stakeholders group to implement a Little Rock School District career and technical education plan for students who do not plan to go to college or wish to enter the workforce after high school. These efforts are part of the Ford Motor Corporation Next Generation Learning (NGL) program.

Little Rock Fire Department

Fire Chief Greg Summers reported that one (1) Engine had been purchased and that the City Attorney's Office is in the process of negotiating the purchaser of land for a Southwest Little Rock Fire Station which is located at the corner of West Baseline and Stagecoach Rd.

Fleet Services

Fleet Director Wendell Jones gave out an attachment which reflected the number of vehicles that have been purchased for various departments (view attached presentation).

Human Resources

Human Resources Director, Don Flegal reported the City Board approved an amended defined contribution plan document on August 27, 2013. Employee meetings would were being help August- September and the plan would go into effect on January 2014. Employee contribution rates will be 4.5% and employer rate 9%. The plan design includes protections to avoid unfunded liability.

Little Rock Zoo

Little Rock Zoo Director, Mike Blakely reported that the Zoo has filled six positions as recommended by the Association of Zoos and Aquarium to maintain accreditation and is in the process of filling nine additional needed positions. Current projects underway are updates to the Chimpanzee and bear/otter habitats. A bid has gone out for the construction of a greenhouse and new signage updates are underway for visitors.

Dr. Whitfield asked if there were plans to connect the Zoo with the 12th Street area south of the I-630. Mr. Day indicated that there is a partnership and it is being taken into consideration, however it would be a costly endeavor.

Mr. Demilt asked how the Zoo obtains the animals. Mr. Blakely said that most of the animals that they have are breed at the Zoo, but they do import animals from other Zoos if necessary.

Information Technology

IT Director, Randy Foshee reported that IT continues to work with every department to make upgrades across the City for network connectivity and reliability of systems. This has included the purchase of network switches for Central Fire and Fleet Services, the construction of a second data center in the Fire Training Building. The department also recently bought 1400 Microsoft Officer 2013 Licenses and is purchasing 200 computer to replace old ones that cannot run Office 2013. Implementing an upgrade of the City's technology infrastructure, equipment and software.

Other Items

Mr. Blake requested the memo regarding the number of employees hired using sales tax dollars.

Next Meeting:

The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, December 18th 2013.

There were no further questions or comments and the meeting was adjourned at 1:00pm.