



**Mayor and Council Meeting  
Work Session Minutes  
January 28, 2013 6:00PM**

The Riverdale Mayor and City Council met on January 28, 2013 at 6:00PM for the purpose of conducting a regular work session. The meeting was held in the conference room on the second floor at City Hall, located at 7200 Church Street, Riverdale, Georgia 30274.

**Call to Order and Welcome**

With a quorum present, Mayor Evelyn Wynn-Dixon called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

**Roll Call**

All members of the governing body were present for the meeting.

**Approval of the Agenda**

The following amendments were made to the agenda:

**Addition(s):** None.

**Deletion(s):** None.

**Postponement(s):** None.

**Tabled Item(s):** None.

The Agenda was approved by general consensus.

**City Manager's Report:**

City Manager, Iris Jessie, introduced new city employees: Jacquette Jackson, Interim Human Resources Manager; Brian Carroll, Athletic Coordinator.

Each member of the Board introduced themselves to the new employees and welcomed them to the City.

Ms. Jessie advised that she had previously provided the Board with a draft volunteer handbook. She said that the City has begun to concentrate its youth activities on programs that are both sport and non-sport related. She further advised that the City had been revisiting its insurance coverage. She said that given the current litigious climate, the City's insurance brokers have advised that it obtain coverage in the advent of a lawsuit involving molestation and other allegations across the country. In order to get the coverage, Ms. Jessie advised that the City needed a structured volunteer program. Most of the volunteers are located in the Cultural Affairs Department, she advised.

Ms. Jessie indicated that employees/volunteers in that department have the highest instances of adult/minor interaction. She told the Board that the volunteer program would need to be formally adopted by resolution, so that in the event the City encounters a claim of that nature it can rely upon official documents to identify where the program was established.

Mayor Dixon asked if everyone in the volunteer program would be required to undergo and pass and criminal background check.

Ms. Jessie affirmed. She stated that a requirement for the undergoing of a criminal background check was in the policy; this would be conducted by the Riverdale Police Department. She asked the Board to review the volunteer program materials it was issued and to provide her with feedback before the council meeting in February. She advised that Legal was in possession of a copy of the program and was reviewing it for legal correctness.

Mayor Dixon called for questions and concerns from members of the governing body.

Council Member Wanda Wallace asked if there was a catalyst for the development of volunteer handbooks.

Ms. Jessie advised that there were already guidelines in place in each respective departments, but that it did not require criminal background checks. She said that there were people that would volunteer for special events that did not involve minors.

Council Member Wallace asked if the City would require background checks on all volunteers.

Ms. Jessie affirmed and stated that it would include City-sponsored *Signature* events. She further stated that the current volunteer handbook outlined the kinds of volunteers needed at for Cultural Affairs events.

Council Member Ruffin said that he approved of the program.

Council Member Stamps-Jones asked who would provide the background check.

Ms. Jessie advised that the Riverdale Police Department (RPD) would conduct it.

Council Member Stamps-Jones asked what would be looked for in the background checks to determine what capacity a volunteer could work.

Ms. Jessie said that it depends on the activity. She said that it would be up to the sponsoring department to determine how the volunteers would be used.

Council Member Davis approved.

Mayor Dixon said that the policies were mainly put in place to protect children. She said it depends on the scenario and circumstances.

Council Member Wallace asked Assistant Police Chief Todd Spivey what his professional recommendation would be for vetting volunteers.

Chief Spivey advised that there are criminal background checks conducted on all employees. He said all criminal history checks tell the charge and the outcome of the case. He advised that if the charges were alarming the arresting agency could be contacted to discover the facts of the case.

Council Member Wallace said the safety concern should be for both adults and minors.

Ms. Jessie said that reason she presented the handbook to the Board was to have a policy discussion. She asked the Board to review the handbook and then make any recommendations they deem necessary.

Mayor Dixon advised that the Board should review the handbook and then come back to discuss it.

Deputy Attorney, Sharonda Boyce, advised that the people do not have a right to volunteer and the policy would therefore be held to a different legal standard than an employee policy. She said that the City would need to structure the policy and program in such a way that it is not discriminatory in nature. Ms. Boyce further stated that there would be different standards for different activities.

Council Member Wallace asked if RPD had worked with the administrative department to develop the program.

Ms. Jessie advised that all of the departments received drafts and were able to make recommendations.

Council Member Wallace asked which part of the program had the RPD contributed.

Ms. Boyce advised that the RPD would need to be asked to identify it's contribution.

Ms. Jessie said that she did not recall receiving any comments from RPD.

Council Member Wallace asked Ms. Boyce if they had contributed to the authorship of the program.

Ms. Boyce said that Legal acted in the capacity of legal oversight.

Mayor Dixon said that the Board would review the program and make its recommendation at the next session.

Ms. Jessie advised that a citizen who had made a request that the City erect a privacy fence that would separate his property from Riverdale Regional Park, in order to keep park patrons from passing through his property, had constructed a fence himself. She informed the Board of the estimated costs of building a fence from two vendors, covering the length of the entire field.

There was a brief discussion regarding the alternatives to building a fence. Staff and Board discussed the factors that needed to be considered to buffer the sound coming from the field, unwanted foot traffic, as well as the safety concerns.

Mayor Dixon asked City Clerk, Stephanie Thomas, to put the item on the agenda for the next meeting.

Ms. Jessie advised the Board that the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application is now being considered at this time. She said that the City was previously unsure of its eligibility to receive the grant, but that there was an extension of the SDS negotiation. This, she said, would allow the City time to apply for the CDBG. She said the application would be to receive funds for phases two and three of Riverdale Regional Park.

Mayor Dixon said that the municipalities were allowed to apply for the grant after the extension was granted.

Director of Planning and Zoning, Camilla Moore, said that the City was applying for \$2.5M in funding for five years, through 2017. She said that it included some additional requests with regard to the potential for expansion.

Mayor Dixon called for questions and concerns from members of the governing body.

Ms. Thomas advised that the request for the CDBG was on the business session agenda to follow the work session.

Council Member Davis asked Ms. Moore when Planning and Zoning was aware of the deadline to submit the application.

Ms. Moore advised that Planning and Zoning found out that normally there is a six month window to apply, but because of the negotiation extension, there was only a two week deadline to complete the application.

Council Member Davis said that he did not like the short notice, but does not want that to impede the application process.

Council Member Stamps-Jones agreed to move forward.

Council Member Ruffin asked if there was a hearing wherein lobbyists from each municipality advocate for the interests of their cities. He said that the County needs to put together a list of specific CDBG products. He advised that the City speak with County commissioners.

Ms. Moore stated that the Cities have asked the County to issue a formula allocation like some other metro counties administer to their municipalities. Based on the allocation, she said, the City would be able to receive the amount of funds due to it, free of negotiation. She said that in discussions with the County they have agreed to set up a meeting with the Cities. If the County can agree to a formula allocation that is structured based on the percentage of low to moderate income for the City and other municipalities, respectively, the allocation amounts will be set in perpetuity.

Council Member Ruffin said that he hopes the formula allocation will be structured the way Ms. Moore described. He gave his support to move forward.

Council Member Wallace asked how much funds the City had to raise.

Ms. Moore advised that there were no funds required by the Cities and that the Counties were responsible for a forty five percent match.

Council Member Wallace said that she agreed to move forward, but that there needed to be greater attention given to time sensitive matters.

Ms. Moore advised that the County stated that the Cities needed to pass a resolution in order apply for CDBG. She said that she was aware that the Board needs a reasonable amount of time to review information before making a decision to act on it. She said that the County gave a four day window for turnaround on the application.

Ms. Jessie stated that the City was not aware that there was a possibility for the CDBG application to be filed, but that the SDS negotiation extensions allowed the opportunity.

Ms. Moore said that they were still learning the process of applying for grants in the County. She stated that there were personnel changes in the County and that a new set of guidelines were being implemented to set forth application schedules.

Mayor Dixon thanked Ms. Moore for her efforts.

Council Member Wallace advised that she was ready to move forward.

**Discussion about Designating An Elected Official to Authorize Leave Time for Appointed Officials by Stephanie L. Thomas, City Clerk**

Mayor Dixon said that she would take on the responsibility of monitoring the leave of appointed officials since she has the more accessibility, when compared to the other members of the Board.

Mayor Dixon called for questions and concerns from members of the governing body.

Council Member Davis gave his support.

Council Member Ruffin asked what the purpose of bringing the matter to the Board.

Ms. Thomas said that in November 2012 when there was a change in the City Clerk's direct report, there was a concern by the Board regarding the management of time and leave request of the City Clerk. She said that there was a request by the Board for the City Clerk's time and leave report from the former director of Human Resources. She said that the information had been disseminated to the Board and that they would designate someone from among them that Ms. Thomas would report to with requests for leave/vacation.

Council Member Wallace said that she feels there should be two people to sign off on leave. She asked Ms. Jessie what the amount of time was that an employee had to request leave.

Ms. Jessie advised that the a week's notice was the normal timeframe for requesting vacation leave; that there was no notice required for taking a day of annual leave.

Council Member Wallace asked what was stated in the City's handbook.

Ms. Jessie said that she does not recall a policy being in the handbook.

Ms. Thomas advised that each department has the autonomy of setting its respective leave request policy as long as it does not conflict with the City's overall attendance policy. She further advised that the departments of City Clerk and Court Services have vacation leave policies requiring two weeks' notice.

Council Member Wallace advised that a policy should be in place to monitor the leave of all appointed officials.

Mayor Dixon stated that she does not think the Board should oversee the leave of judges and solicitor.

Ms. Thomas said that the judges and solicitor generally report their leave to Director of Court Services, Nathaniel Mingo.

Council Member Wallace stated that she feels the judges and solicitors should still report leave to Mayor/Council.

Ms. Thomas advised that a policy of that nature could possibly become a liability for the City.

Mayor Dixon advised that when there is an existing and working organizational structure the Board should not have dealings with Human Resource matters. She further stated that the Board should, conversely, oversee the City Clerk and City Manager because those are positions appointed by the governing body. She asked the Board if having two members sign off to approve leave was appropriate.

Council Member Davis agreed that one person plus an alternate.

Council Member Stamps-Jones agreed that there should be two members of the Board to sign off, with one serving as an alternate. She said that if there was leave for employees in Court Services, that should be left under the purview of the director of Court Services.

Council Member Ruffin said that the Board should not be involved with Human Resource matters regarding leave because it opens up the possibility of selective enforcement of the policy.

Mayor Dixon said that Ms. Thomas and Ms. Jessie have been diligent about giving proper notice for leave.

Council Member Wallace agreed that there would be two signatures required for leave, with one serving as an alternative.

The Board reached general consensus to designate Mayor Dixon and Council Member Wallace as the two the signees to oversee leave requests; Council Member Wallace will serve as the alternate.

**Discussion about Council Requests by Councilman Kenny Ruffin.**

Council Member Ruffin advised all department heads that if a request is made by the Board and the request does not have his name or signature, then the request did not come directly from him.

Council Member Stamps-Jones asked for clarity.

Council Member Ruffin restated that if someone approaches a department head with a request on behalf of Mayor/Council they are not to assume Council Member Ruffin is in support of the request if his name or signature is not on it. He reminded Council Member Wallace of a policy that was enacted a number of years ago regarding the handling of Mayor and Council requests as it relates to money.

**Questions about items scheduled to appear on the business session agenda:**

Mayor/Council did not make any amendments to the Business Session Agenda.

**Discussion about items that appear on the agenda for subsequent meetings:**

Council Member Stamps-Jones asked to add the Archway Project and asked Ms. Jessie to speak about the new signs created by Archway. She asked for a package from Planning and Zoning to attract new businesses. She stated that she wanted to follow up on a customer service matter regarding collections by Tax Collector, Anne Smith, and the Finance department.

She called for an Executive Session at the next meeting to discuss a legal matter, pending litigation and ante litem notices.

Ms. Boyce advised that on the revised agenda there was an updated letter regarding outstanding judgments against the City.

Ms. Jessie said that the City has a code of conduct and reentry policy matter regarding the Town Center and violators of the code of conduct. She advised that the City needed to effectuate a mechanism determining responses to varying degrees on violations.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before Mayor and Council, Council Member Wanda Wallace motioned to adjourn into the Business Session. Council Member An'cel Davis seconded. The time was 7:00pm.