

City of Harrington
MINUTES
City Council Workshop
August 15, 2012

A workshop with the Harrington City Council was held on August 15, 2012 and was attended by the following: Mayor Robert E. Price, Jr.; Vice Mayor Cheryl Lahman; Council Member Duane E. Bivans; Council Member Fonda Coleman; Council Member Amy Minner; Council Member Wayne Porter; Council Member Kenneth Stubbs; Teresa Tieman, City Manager; and Kelly Blanchies, Clerk of Council.

Also in attendance: Chris Fazio, City Engineer, and Tom Carroll, Code Enforcement Officer.

Mayor Price called the meeting to order.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

Budget & Finance Committee

Presentation on water projects

The City Engineer stated that the potable water system includes an underground pipe system, above ground water storage tank, pumping wells, and water treatment. The issues with the current system are aging, no growth with the increase in development, lack of looping, inadequate pressure, and inadequate volume once maximum build-out is established.

The City Engineer stated that a study was conducted by the previous City Engineer that concluded that to continue developing and upgrading then some mains need to be replaced, a new above ground water storage tank constructed, and a new well with chemical treatment and housing constructed. The cost of the main replacement is approximately \$1.4 million, and the cost of the water storage tank and well is approximately \$2.8 million dollars. Vice Mayor Lahman asked how much the cost estimate has gone up since the original study was conducted. The City Engineer replied approximately ten percent. Vice Mayor Lahman asked if the cost would go up an additional ten percent if the City waited a few more years. The City Engineer stated it could, and the economy could turn and build-outs could be completed before adequate capacity is available.

The City Engineer stated that a plan of action is to find some grants and low interest loans. The Delaware Office of Drinking Water has funding

available. With City Council's approval, the City Engineer will start pursuing options.

Council Member Stubbs stated that nearly all the pipes are undersized. The City Engineer stated that the largest trunk lines should be addressed first then the smaller ones. The Public Works Department is able to do some water main work, but the larger ones should be done by a contractor.

Vice Mayor Lahman stated that there were previous discussions about where to locate the storage tank; right now we are not sure that we have the land to put one and that cost is not included in the estimates. The City Engineer stated that the previous City Engineer gave general recommendations on where to place the well but nothing specific. There are aquifers throughout the City.

Vice Mayor Lahman stated that this issue has been discussed before and needs to be acted on. The City Manager stated that the slowdown in development has given the City more time to catch-up, but it takes time to secure such a large amount of financing. Originally the CIP was broken up into two years, but it would be easier and save money to get all of the financing at once.

Council Member Bivans asked how long until there is an improvement in issues with brown water. The City Engineer stated that from finding funding to completing construction probably over a year. Council Member Stubbs stated that the hydrants will still need to be flushed. The City Engineer stated that residents will probably get better water pressure and less brown water.

Council Member Bivans asked if Liberty Street will be wait to be paved until the water main work is complete. The City Engineer stated that DeIDOT will accommodate the City if there is a committed plan to put the pipe in. The City Manager stated that DeIDOT does not want a newly paved road cut into for five years. A streets program would coordinate infrastructure and paving projects.

Council Member Minner asked if new subdivisions could have their own pump station. The City Engineer stated that the City is a water/sewer authority and must provide the service; it would be difficult to ask someone to go on their own.

Clarification on salary increases

Mayor Price stated that clarification is needed on whether the Council would like to continue with the precedence that was set in the past of not

giving a raise until an employee's first anniversary. The City Manager stated that it was not discussed this year.

Council Member Bivans asked if employees are given raises after their ninety day probationary period. Mayor Price stated that some employees were started at a lower rate then increased to their full salary at ninety days. The City Manager stated that is outlined in a letter when the employee starts; the issue is regarding annual increases. Vice Mayor Lahman stated that after a year, employees are all given raises on July 1.

Council Member Porter stated that pay scales would eliminate this issue. Everyone should be at max pay in five years. Mayor Price stated that it would not necessarily fix this problem. It should be brought up annually. Vice Mayor Lahman stated that basically the City Council gives cost of living increases.

Council Member Minner asked about the amount of money listed on the action form. The City Manager stated that it is the differential of money that would be spent if the City Council chooses to give a raise to everyone regardless of when they started. Vice Mayor Lahman stated that is more of a policy issue than about the money.

Ordinance Review Committee

Proposed changes to Chapter 16, Elections

The Clerk of Council stated that the only part of the election that is handled in the Code rather than the Charter is absentee ballots. The Department of Elections advised at the last election that absentee ballots can be turned in up until the close of the polls. The current Code states that they must be returned by noon the day before the election.

Mayor Price asked if this affects the hours that the polls are open. The Clerk of Council stated that City Councils must pass a resolution each year that sets the rules for the election including if absentee ballots will be accepted and the hours the polls will be open. The Charter states that the polls must be open for at least seven hours but does not specify what the hours should be. Mayor Price stated that this year the polls were open for thirteen hours and that is a long time. The Clerk of Council stated that the election workers kept track of how many people voted each hour so that it could be discussed when setting the hours next year.

Proposed changes to Chapter 120, Business Licenses

The City Manager read through the proposed changes. She stated the Standard Industrial Classification is old and not used often and

exemptions for charitable organizations, yard sales, and those under the age of eighteen were added. The requirement for an affidavit on the application was removed.

Mayor Price stated that the City requires a copy of the State business license to be turned in with the application, but they are often not received from the State by then. The City Manager stated that it is a lot of extra work for the Administrative Assistant. The Clerk of Council stated that the Business License Chapter does not state that a Delaware business license must be provided, but it does say that on the City's application. Mayor Price stated that it is not a bad idea to require it.

The City Manager stated that she would like the business licenses due in July and the rental licenses due in January because inspections should be conducted on rental properties for safety reasons, and the Code Enforcement Officer has more time available in the winter.

Council Member Porter asked how many people in town have full time yard sales. The Code Enforcement Officer stated that he has not seen a yard sale on the Saturdays that he has worked. The City Manager stated that neighbors will probably report issues.

Vice Mayor Lahman stated that yard sales are usually all weekend long and asked if that that would count as one sale or each day as a separate sale. The City Manager stated that would be considered one occurrence.

Council Member Bivans asked why the limit is two yard sales. The City Manager stated that generally someone might have one in the spring and the fall.

Council Member Minner asked about the definition of Gaming Position. The City Manager stated that each machine and each table has a business license in Dover. The City Manager stated that it may affect Harrington because a law was passed that football machines can be anywhere. Council Member Bivans asked what impact there would be on places like VFWs. The City Manager stated that she will check to see if those organizations are exempt. Vice Mayor Lahman stated that the slots cost the City a lot of resources that are not recouped like ambulance and police services. Dover really benefits from that revenue.

Council Member Minner stated that she is concerned that the wording would indicated that each business has to get a license from the State and the City and that employees have to get a business license as well. Mayor Price stated that the definitions are a clarification, and every business is already getting a license. The Code Enforcement Officer stated that it would depend on if the business had employees or contractors working

there. The City Manager stated that maybe the City Council should consider the number of employees when assessing business license fees. The City Manager stated that the wording states every person operating a business and not every person working at a business must obtain a license.

Mayor Price stated that it needs to be reviewed by the City Solicitor and made clearer.

The City Manager stated that an implementation schedule would be included in the ordinance if changing the due date to July is approved by the City Council.

Council Member Porter stated that ordinances should be reviewed at an Ordinance Review Committee meeting with the City Solicitor. The City Manager stated that she will ask the City Solicitor to attend the next workshop. Mayor Price stated that the committee meetings were combined into one workshop a month.

Proposed changes to Chapter 314, Rental Properties

Council Member Porter stated that landlords should be required to attend the training from the Attorney General's Office. The City Manager stated that the first year or so the landlord training is offered, it should be voluntary. Council Member Porter stated that there is a reason the Attorney General is offering the class and problems need to be kept under control. The Code Enforcement Officer asked if a representative would be allowed to attend in place of the landlord.

Proposed changes to Chapter 410, Vehicles and Traffic

The Clerk of Council stated that changes for Chapter 410 are still being reviewed and not available at this time.

There being no further business, the Council Workshop adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Blanchies
Clerk of Council