Mayor and City Council of Cumberland

Mayor Raymond M. Morriss
Councilman Richard J. "Rock" Cioni
Councilman Eugene T. Frazier
Councilman Joseph P. George
Councilwoman Laurie P. Marchini

City Administrator Jeffrey F. Silka
City Solicitor Michael S. Cohen
City Clerk Allison K. Layton

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WORK SESSION

City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room
57 N. Liberty Street
Cumberland, MD 21502

Tuesday, December 6, 2022, 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Raymond M. Morriss, President; Council Members: Richard Cioni (by phone), Eugene Frazier, Joe George, and Laurie Marchini.

ALSO PRESENT: Jeff Silka, City Administrator; Michael Cohen, City Solicitor; Allison Layton, City Clerk; Mark Gandolfi, City Comptroller

Media: Greg Larry, Cumberland Times-News
Bryan Gowans, WCBC Radio

I. AGENDA REVIEW – DECEMBER 6, 2022

Mayor Morriss opened the floor for comments or questions about tonight's agenda. There was discussion about Order 27,137 titled Splash Pad/Constitution Park Pool Renovations. Mr. Silka advised that this is a CDBG program and there was no way to eliminate Splash Pad from the name. He stated that the money will be spend for pool renovations, not a splash pad project.

Mr. Gandolfi discussed budget amendments, saying that each year as they finalize the audit, they true-up the budget to actual expenditures, and said it has to be done by M&CC. He added that the variances are largely due to COVID, and are rather small. He also discussed the Messick Road acquisition, and said being $4M under budget in capital expenditures is what caused the transfers, which he stated were largely due to delays in the Baltimore Street project.

There was discussion about Order 27,143. Mr. Silka advised that the CEDC got a $420K grant for the Baltimore Street area and the City is putting cash into it because the grant didn't cover everything. He said DGS has given them permission to give cash in exchange for funding.

Mr. Gandolfi added that one of the things they've done is assign $3.5M for capital expenditures to the unassigned fund balance.

Greg Larry inquired about improvements to the Constitution Park amphitheater. Mr. Silka advised that there will be upgrades on the stage and seating, and said there have already been some electrical upgrades to keep the lights and sound system working.

II. CARVER CENTER DISCUSSION

Mr. Silka advised that the Carver Center is now 501(c)3 statis. He explained that they have some outstanding grant funds, and said in order to keep things moving there needs to be upgrades done to the building; however, they need D&O insurance but Carver has no money to fund this right now. He stated that about $25K is needed from M&CC to get things rolling, and advised that they have a grant they need to spend soon, but can't do it without electricity. He added that there needs to be an order from M&CC since this is not a City entity.

There was discussion about uses of grant money, and money that the City set aside for a match. Mr. Silka proposed a 6-month allocation to get the board empowered to start bringing in tenants. It was noted now that Carver is 501(c)3 status, the board can fundraise. Mr. Silka explained that $25K will be enough to get the board moving, but said the City does not want to be the de facto owners of this project. He said this start-up capital gets us in the door and gets utilities on. He advised that a million in D&O coverage will cost $1100 a year, and added that the elevator will be the first project.

III. ARPA GRANT FOR YMCA BUSES DISCUSSION

Mr. Gandolfi advised that this grant previously allocated $210K for the purchase of 3 microbuses for $70K each, and explained that with supply chain issues, the price has gone much higher, with each bus now coming in at $90K each. He stated that the YMCA would like to purchase 2 microbuses, leaving $25K in grant money to come back at a later date and possibly put that towards refurbishing an old bus.

Mayor Morriss advised to let the YMCA proceed, and said M&CC will look at a future date and see what the City can do for them then.

Mr. Gandolfi advised that he personally called around looking for microbuses. He explained that the City is earning about $30K per month on ARPA funds that haven't been used yet, so another program could benefit from the interest.

IV. MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL UPDATES

Council Members Frazier and George had nothing new to report from their respective commissions.

Council Member Cioni discussed the LBC Christmas Luncheon and passed along thanks to City staff and M&CC for support. He noted that Parks and Rec had a new Director, Ryan Mackey, following Diane Johnson's retirement.

Council Member Marchini advised on the DDC and HPC meetings. She stated that she asked incoming MD Comptroller, Brooke Lehrman, to sit on her transition board, Elected Officials Committee. Values and goals, as well as policy platforms were discussed.

Mayor Morriss advised that the tree lighting went very well and drew a big crowd downtown. He added that Shop Small Business Saturday the next day got a good crowd as well. He advised on the Bob Kirk Invitational coming this weekend, which is sponsored by the City and County, and said this event brings in more visitors.

The Mayor noted that Fort Hill won a state championship in football, with the game going down to the wire, and said both schools represented themselves well.

There was discussion on the recent Governor Hogan ban of the platform TikTok, and whether it would impact the City. Mr. Silka advised that he believes that app is already blocked.

Greg Larry inquired about any potential tenants for the Carver Center. Mayor Morriss explained that there will be community-based tenants and organizations such as public services, job training, a community center, etc.

V. Adjournment

With no further business at hand, the meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Allison K. Layton
City Clerk
Minutes approved on April 4, 2023