

Minutes of the Work Session meeting of the Syracuse City Council held on October 28, 2014, at 6:04 p.m., in the Council Work Session Room, 1979 West 1900 South, Syracuse City, Davis County, Utah.

Present: Councilmembers: Brian Duncan (arrived at 6:21 p.m.)
Mike Gailey
Craig A. Johnson
Karianne Lisonbee (arrived at 6:09 p.m.)
Douglas Peterson

Mayor Terry Palmer
City Manager Brody Bovero
City Recorder Cassie Z. Brown

City Employees Present:
Public Works Director Robert Whiteley
City Attorney Clint Drake
Police Chief Garret Atkin
Community Development Director Sherrie Christensen
Parks and Recreation Director Kresta Robinson

The purpose of the Work Session was to discuss the proposed financial hardship ordinance; discuss the position of City Forester and the Tree Board; discuss staff and Council communication and Information Technology (IT) issues; review the general management and operational performance study RFI; and discuss Council business.

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Public Comments

There were no public comments.

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Discuss proposed financial hardship ordinance

A staff memo from Fire Chief Froerer explained Occasionally Syracuse Fire Department Ambulance will receive a fee reduction/write off request from a party with financial responsibility and financial distress for the transport of themselves or their family member/dependent. These are reviewed and addressed case-by-case. In an effort to be consistent on the approach to these requests, our Ambulance Billing Service, First Professional Services (usually the first point of contact for the request) has a Financial Hardship Consideration Form that must be completed by the requestor and submitted to Syracuse Fire Department complete with a signed copy of the requestors most recent Federal Tax Return, and payroll check stubs (for income verification) from the previous three months. Using this information and the current year Federal Poverty Guidelines <http://familiesusa.org/product/federal-poverty-guidelines>, a determination is made for eligibility of reduced ambulance bill, using a standardized formula accepted by Syracuse City, with a minimum amount accepted being \$100.

Example 1: Patient transport with Ambulance invoice of \$1749.25.
Family of three with income verified at \$22,792.
Federal Poverty Guidelines chart = Family of three is at 100% of poverty level with an income of \$19,790.
Formula: $\$22,792 / \$19,790 = 1.15$ (Income is 115% of poverty)
Ambulance Invoice (\$1749.25) divided by 1.15 = \$1521.08 = amount subtracted from invoice.
 $\$1749.25 - \$1521.08 = \$228.17$ (amount due based on financial hardship)

Example 2: Patient transport with Ambulance invoice of \$2124.16.
Family of five with income verified at \$47,166.
FPG chart = Family of five is at 100% poverty level with an income of \$27,910.
Formula: $\$47,166 / \$27,910 = 1.69$. (Income is 169% of poverty level)
Ambulance Invoice (\$2124.16) divided by 1.69 = \$1256.90 = amount subtracted from invoice.
 $\$2124.16 - \$1256.90 = \$867.26$ (amount due based on financial hardship)

Example 3: Patient transport with Ambulance invoice of \$1410.11.

Family of four with income verified at \$20,572.
FPG chart = Family of four is at 100% poverty level with an income of \$23,850.
Formula: $\$20,572 / \$23,850 = .86$ (Income is 86% of poverty level)
Ambulance Invoice (\$1410.11) divided by .86 = \$1639.66.
 $\$1410.11 - \$1639.66 = \$-229.55$ (amount owed reduced to the minimum \$100 based on financial hardship)

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Chief Froerer reviewed his staff memo.

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Council discussion regarding the issue began with a focus on payment plan options for people requesting hardship waivers. There was also a brief discussion regarding whether the billing amount is the amount left after a patient's insurance company pays a portion of the invoice, with the Council concluding they are comfortable with the hardship waiver formula that has been proposed by Chief Froerer. Mayor Palmer concluded it will be necessary for the Council to take formal action on the policy during an upcoming business meeting before the formula can be put into effect.

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Discuss City Forester position and Tree Board

A staff memo from Community and Economic Development Director Christensen explained previously, Ben Liegert served as the City Forester. Since his departure, those duties have gone unfilled. Given the requirements and necessary training to be a City Forester, staff has been exploring alternates to having a member of staff trained and contracting with a private firm for services. The City currently also has a Tree Board established, with no members to our knowledge. This board would meet to develop with the City Forester a tree maintenance plan for City owned trees in parks and other city properties. It could also develop best practices recommendations for home owners with street trees. Staff would like to discuss the matter with the Council to determine if volunteers should be sought out to serve on the tree board and if we can hire on an as needed basis an arborist to serve as the City Forester. Any fees incurred could be paid for under professional and technical services.

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Ms. Christensen reviewed her staff memo.

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There was a general discussion regarding the makeup of the Tree Board, with Councilmember Johnson suggesting that the City can tap into the network of landscaping companies in the City to seek members for the Tree Board. The Council also discussed qualifications of a City Forester.

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Councilmember Lisonbee inquired as to the frequency with which the City condemns trees and needs the services of a Forester. Public Works Director Whiteley stated he has been forced to condemn two trees with in the past year due to extreme circumstances. According to City ordinance the City Forester is responsible to order the condemnation or removal of dangerous trees. Ms. Christensen reiterated it is her recommendation that the City contract with someone to serve as the City Forester on an as-needed basis and they will charge the City an hourly rate for their services. There was a general discussion regarding the need to name a member of City staff as the Forester according to City ordinance, with Ms. Christensen stating she would prefer that the Forester title be assigned to an employment position rather than a person so that it is not necessary to assign the title to another employee in the event of the departure of a Forester.

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Councilmember Duncan stated he would like to allow citizens the freedom to select the trees to be planted on their property and then maintain them with advice from other outlets. Ms. Christensen stated residents will be allowed to do that; a Forester is only needed when the City needs advice regarding the health of a tree. Mr. Bovero agreed and added the Forester could also be used to provide the City with a maintenance and care schedule for trees located on City property. The Council concluded to advertise the vacancies on the Tree Board.

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Staff-Council Communication and IT Issues

A staff memo from City Manager Bovero provided a brief overview of several staff and City Council communication and Information Technology (IT) issues:

City Issued Data Devices and Mobile Services

Attached you will find the City's policy on City-issued data devices and mobile services. The policy allows the City to provide these devices to employees for city business. The policy specifically addresses cell phone usage, however there may need to be updates to this section to include other data devices as technology changes. Also attached is the policy for iPad usage by city employees, which also includes council members and planning commission members.

Council Email Response to Citizen Inquiries

The Council frequently receives emails that have been addressed to the entire Council. A proper protocol for responding to citizens should be implemented by the Council to ensure the resident knows their issue has been heard and receives the information requested.

Clarification of Council Email Addresses for Official Communication

Members of the Council typically have a city email address, as well as a personal address. The City should establish which addresses will be used for official communication from staff and the public, and which addresses should be published on the website and newsletters.

Interruption in Email Service on iPad

It has been brought to our attention that email service has been periodically interrupted on council members' iPad. The purpose of this discussion item is to clarify the issues and possible resolve any problems.

Response Times for Staff – Council Communication

On occasion, staff has sent emails to the Council regarding availability of special meetings being called by the Mayor. There has been slow response at times, and no response at other times. This is not the norm, but has happened enough to discuss in order to resolve any miscommunication.

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Mr. Bovero reviewed his staff memo and the City Council had a general discussion regarding each item referenced in the memo.

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There was a discussion regarding the subject of Council responses to citizen inquiries, with the Council ultimately concluding they would not change the practice they have been using to respond to citizen inquiries, with one exception: when a Councilmember receives an email from a citizen with a question about a topic that another Councilmember may be better qualified to answer, they will respond to the citizen directing them to the other Councilmember and copy that Councilmember on the email.

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The Council also focused on the item regarding which email address the Councilmembers would like to use for official communication, with each Councilmember directing Mr. Bovero regarding the email address that should be used for official communication.

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The Council then discussed the issue of email service interruption on their City issued iPads, with IT Director Peace reporting that he will no longer require Councilmembers to reset their passwords, which should resolve the problem of email service interruption.

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There was also a discussion regarding response time to for staff and Council communication, with the Council resolving they are comfortable receiving a text message when an item is urgent.

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The Council then discussed the iPad use policy and directed staff to update the draft policy for consideration at a future meeting.

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General Management and Operational Performance Study RFI

A staff memo from City Manager Bovero explained an RFI will first be sent out to all available consultants. The RFI asks for specific areas of study that each firm provides, and whether they use in-house staff or partner with another firm to perform the study. The RFI will also lay out expected price ranges. This will allow the City to combine the desired areas of study into a formal Request for Proposal (RFP). After reviewing the RFI, the City will compose an RFP that will outline a specific scope of work. Currently, the plan is to send the RFP out to those companies that responded to the RFI to get a proposal and price for the specific scope of work. The Selection Panel, which would include the Mayor, City Manager, and

one or more members of the City Council would review the proposals, conduct interviews, and recommend a selected consultant for the study. Upon recommendation of the selection panel, the City Council would award the contract in a public meeting.

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Mr. Bovero reviewed his staff memo. The Mayor and Councilmembers Lisonbee and Peterson volunteered to serve on the selection panel that will review the RFI responses. Councilmember Duncan disclosed that his cousin may respond to the RFI and he does not feel it would be appropriate for him to serve on the panel.

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Council business

At each meeting the Councilmembers and Mayor provide reports regarding the meetings and events they have participated in since the last City Council meeting. Councilmember Lisonbee's report began at [7:18:32 PM](#). She was followed by Councilmembers Peterson and Gailey. Councilmembers Duncan and Johnson indicated they had nothing to report.

Mayor Palmer's report began at [7:24:02 PM](#).

[7:26:08 PM](#)

Mr. Bovero and Parks and Recreation Director Robinson then used the aid of a PowerPoint presentation to provide the Council with an update regarding the Chloe's Park project.

The meeting adjourned at [7:39:45 PM](#) p.m.

Terry Palmer
Mayor

Cassie Z. Brown, CMC
City Recorder

Date approved: November 19, 2014