Council-Manager Memo #90
Friday, December 3, 2010

CHARLOTTE.

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WEEK IN REVIEW:

Mon (Dec 6)	Tues (Dec 7)	Wed (Dec 8)	Thurs (Dec 9)	Friday (Dec 10)
4:00 PM Governmental Affairs Committee, Room 280 5:00 PM Council Workshop 7:30 PM Citizens' Forum	10:00 AM Mayor's State of the City Address, Meeting Chamber 6:30 PM District 2 Community Meeting, Stonewall AME Zion Church, 1729 Griers Grove Rd.	12:00 PM Housing and Neighborhood Development Committee, Room CH-14 3:30 PM Environment Committee, Room 280	3:30 PM Economic Development Committee, Room 280	

CALENDAR DETAILS:

Monday, December 6

4:00 pm Governmental Affairs Committee, Room 280
AGENDA: Federal update; Preview of proposed 2011 Federal Legislative Agenda; December 13 legislative breakfast

5:00 pm Council Workshop, Room 267

7:30 pm Citizens' Forum, Room 267

Tuesday, December 7

10:00 am Mayor's State of the City Address, Meeting Chamber

6:30 pm District 2 Community Meeting, Stonewall AME Zion Church, 1729 Griers Grove Rd.

Wednesday, December 8

12:00 pm Housing and Neighborhood Development Committee, Room CH-14
AGENDA: Housing Locational Policy Dinner briefing follow-up and next steps; FY12 Focus Area Plan; 2011 meeting schedule

3:30 pm Environment Committee, Room 280
AGENDA: FY12 Focus Area Plan

Thursday, December 9

3:30 pm Economic Development Committee, Room 280
AGENDA: ReVenture, Approve 2011 meeting schedule

December and January calendars are attached. ***(see 'DecJan 120310', left side table of contents for attachment)***

AGENDA NOTES:

Fiscal Year 2010 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and Report of the External Auditor

Staff Resource: Greg Gaskins, Finance, 704-336-5885, ggaskins@charlottenc.gov

The fiscal year 2010 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) is attached for your information and review. On December 6, 2010 a formal presentation of these financial statements will be made during the City Council Workshop Meeting. The presentation will be made by Finance staff and the external auditor, Ronald Lamberth from Cherry, Bekaert & Holland, LLC. The report will also be available online at www.charlottenc.gov the following day.

(see 'FY2010 CAFR', left side table of contents for attachment)

INFORMATION:

Utilities Customer Service Update

Staff Resource: Barry Gullet, Utilities, 704-391-5060, bgullet@charlottenc.gov

A City Manager-sponsored evaluation of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities customer service was completed in September 2010, resulting in a 40-point plan that improves business processes, equipment maintenance and upgrades, and staff training. The plan also initiates procedures that increase efficiency, and it adjusts existing resources to better serve water/sewer customers. To date, Utilities has begun to notice positive results upon completion of several action items, including:

- A 45 percent reduction in duplicate staff visits to customer homes after adding new handheld field equipment and making upgrades to the billing system. These ongoing improvements help field staff fulfill service work orders more thoroughly and consistently with information that is electronically accessible by field, office and phone staff. The improvements convey results via a faster, more uniform and paperless system.
- Ninety-seven percent of Utilities telephone requests coming in to CharMeck 311 are resolved within the first call, thanks to the creation of a 311 'Escalation Team' (E-Team) dedicated to addressing more complicated Utilities requests. This move has strengthened the relationship and connectivity between Utilities and 311 staff.
- Payment arrangement and bill adjustment policies have been updated (and procedures enhanced) to prevent service cut-off of accounts with disputed charges until high bill investigations are completed. The recently implemented one-time dispute resolution policy for qualified accounts has also helped resolve complex account issues.

Additionally, Utilities has enhanced its pre-billing quality control and high bill inspection processes with more in-depth field investigation and better communication with the customer. To address lingering concerns and dozens of outstanding and unresolved bill disputes, Utilities held a special on-site community event at the invitation of the River Run Property Owners Association on Saturday, November 20. This first-ever pilot program allowed for expedited one-on-one account reviews and field inspections to resolve outstanding issues, and provided citizens with information on meters, irrigation, billing and leak detection.

As a follow-up to the independent meter equipment audit conducted last summer, Utilities has started its own ongoing meter audit program to enhance equipment maintenance and inventory control. Staff is also working to improve customer bill messages, and strengthen communication with Crisis Assistance Ministry, which assists customers who face shut-off due to delinquency.

Utilities staff will continue listening and responding to customers, and are committed to releasing frequent, widely distributed customer service improvement progress updates as they occur. More details are available at www.cmutilities.com.

Neighborhood Matching Grants Program Update

Staff Resource: Aisha Alexander, N&BS, 704-336-2175, valexander@charlottenc.gov

The Neighborhood Matching Grant (NMG) program was established by City Council on December 14, 1992. The program was established to build the capacity of and participation in neighborhood-based residential and business associations, allow neighborhoods to determine improvement priorities, leverage citizen involvement and stimulate development of community partnerships. Since its inception, the NMG Program has issued 496 matching grants to neighborhoods in the amount of $3,534,167.05. There is currently a $507,427.39 balance in the grant program fund, which is funded through an annual Capital Investment Plan allocation. Current NMG grant categories and potential projects include: Neighborhood Improvement - physical improvements to public areas such as landscaping and beautification; Organizational Development - leadership or board training and development; Crime and Public Safety - neighborhood watch signs, citizens' patrols, National Night Out activities, crime prevention and fire safety programs; Recreational, Educational, and Cultural Initiatives - after school and tutorial programs, programs for senior citizens, music or art enrichment.

Based on feedback from neighborhood residents, Council and staff, administrative updates are being made to the NMG program in order to improve the application process and effectively use available technology. Updates include:

- Making the Pre-Application Workshop available in an online webinar format, and making the application available to complete and submit online. In-person workshops and paper applications are also available for residents who do not have computer access.
- The addition of a new February application cycle to provide year-round access to grants. The application due dates are: September 15, February 15, April 15, and June 15.
- Adjustment of the volunteer labor value for meeting the neighborhood's match to coincide with the current Department of Labor assigned value of volunteer labor of $20.85 per hour (has been $13.00 per hour since 2001).
- Addition of two new grant categories: A Neighborhood School Outreach category to encourage neighborhood involvement and collaboration with schools; and an Energy Conservation & Natural Preservation category which funds minor private residential

improvements that will restore and preserve Charlotte's tree canopy and curb energy consumption.

- Adjustment of the grant threshold reviewed by the staff-led Interdepartmental Team from "$3,000 and under" to "$10,000 and under". The Community Review Team, appointed by Council, will review any grants over $10,000. This change allows for better distribution of workload between the two review teams.

Staff recommends Council appoint two private sector philanthropic representatives to the Community Review Team. This new appointment category will allow the City and the private sector to better align its community giving. Staff will place this on a future Council agenda for consideration.

Upcoming Dates:

- December 3, 2010 – Community Review Team meeting
- February 15, 2010 – Application Deadline

ATTACHMENTS:

October 28 Restructuring Government Committee Summary
(see 'RG Committee Summary Package 1', left side table of contents for attachment)

November 22 Environment Committee Summary
(see 'ENV 112210 Complete Meeting Package', left side table of contents for attachment)