Council-Manager Memo #38
Friday, May 27, 2011

CHARLOTTE.

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WEEK IN REVIEW:

Mon (May 30)	Tues (May 31)	Wed (June 1)	Thurs (June 2)	Fri (June 3)	Sat (June 4)
MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY		12:00 PM Budget Adjustments and Straw Votes, Room 267	12:00 PM Community Safety Committee, Room 280		9:00 AM District 4 Document Shredding and Safety, Smokey Bones BBQ and Grill parking lot, 8760 J.M. Keynes Blvd.

CALENDAR DETAILS:

Monday, May 30
MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY

Wednesday, June 1
12:00 pm Budget Adjustments and Straw Votes, Room 267

Thursday, June 2
12:00 pm Community Safety Committee, Room 280
AGENDA: PVH ordinance

Saturday, June 4
9:00 am District 4 Document Shredding and Safety, Smokey Bones BBQ and Grill parking long, 8760 J.M. Keynes Blvd.

May and June calendars are attached (SEE TABLE OF CONTENTS ON LEFT).

INFORMATION:

CMU Interactive Voice Response Replacement Project
Staff Resources: Janice Quintana, CharMeck 311, 704-432-4001, jquintana@charlottenc.gov
Mark Maliszewski, CharMeck 311, 704-432-2847, mmaliszewski@charlottenc.gov

On Wednesday, May 25 at 7:00 a.m., CharMeck 311 launched a new Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system using GetABBY technology. The new system replaces the current Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities IVR system which handles calls from the Utilities main number of 336-2211 and is approaching end of life and maintenance support. Citizens will be able to obtain the same services received today with enhancements for account information look-up, paying bills through Western Union, payment information, payment locations and other services. GetABBY uses an avatar called Margaret that uses artificial intelligence / natural language processing to interact with the caller in a conversational, rather than menu driven process. The Margaret system will speak in both English and Spanish. In addition, with the hold system customers who paid their bill via Western Union were required to know and enter their 16 digit account number. This requirement was a common customer complaint. GetABBY eliminates this step as it will identify and authenticate this information automatically and pass it to Western Union.

The application, system, scripts and integration points have been extensively tested by staff from 311, CMU, Finance, BSS and the OCIO, along with GetABBY personnel. Early customer and 311 agent feedback has been generally positive, and it is expected that this implementation will enhance the citizen experience and increase self-service opportunities. City staff will continually monitor the workflows and scripting to drive even better customer satisfaction and reduce cost

per resolution. This implementation is an important milestone in the integration of GetABBY and multiple City of Charlotte systems. Additional plans are underway to leverage this technology by migrating similar 311 processes, where appropriate, to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of citizen and partner service delivery.

Synthetic Tax Increment Financing
Staff Resource: Peter Zeiler, N&BS, 704-432-2989, pzeiler@charlottenc.gov

On May 12 the Economic Development Committee requested an update on the City's Synthetic Tax Increment Financing (STIF) program, an economic development financing tool for public-private development projects. Under the STIF program, a developer typically agrees to pay for infrastructure or other public improvements that enhance the development, and the City agrees to reimburse the developer for the public improvements through grants based upon a portion of incremental new property taxes generated by the project. Terms are outlined in a Council-approved development agreement that sets a defined grant percentage and term. Council-approved STIF policy limits total STIF obligations to no more than 3% of the City's annual property tax revenue, and staff from Finance and Neighborhood & Business Services regularly monitors STIF utilization and estimates of future STIF capacity.

To date, Council has approved eleven STIF agreements, three of which include participation from the County (First Ward Park, Metropolitan at Midtown and Elizabeth Avenue). Payments to two of the eleven projects have begun (Metropolitan at Midtown and Levine Center for the Arts) with the remaining nine in various stages of development.

Attached (SEE TABLE OF CONTENTS ON LEFT) is a copy of the Council-approved STIF policy, along with details of the eleven STIF projects (as shown in the FY12 Budget Book) and a projection of STIF expenses through
FY 2026.

May 27 State Legislative Update
Staff Resource: Dana Fenton, City Manager's Office, 704-336-2009, dfenton@charlottenc.gov

Attached (SEE TABLE OF CONTENTS ON LEFT) is the weekly State Legislative Update. Changes from the last update are denoted in **bold face** type.

May 25 Metropolitan Transit Commission Meeting Summary
Staff Resource: Carolyn Flowers, CATS, 704-336-3855, cflowers@charlottenc.gov

At its meeting on Wednesday, May 25, 2011, MTC took action on one item and heard one information item:

Comments from NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT)
Eugene A. Conti, Jr., NC Secretary of Transportation, said the NC House and Senate will continue to work on the state budget for the Governor's approval. NCDOT remains very

supportive of the Blue Line Extension (BLE) and Red Line projects so that mobility options for the region's people may be creative. He said the projects are critical to the region's development and quality of life. Secretary Conti reviewed NCDOT's plans in the region, including rail modernization projects such as the Charlotte Rail Improvement and Safety Program (CRISP). NCDOT continues to work with the City on High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lane issues, particularly I-77 north of Charlotte. NCDOT has also been involved with the City on Independence Boulevard and the effort underway through ULI and other partners to create a workable mobility corridor.

NCDDOT is updating its 2040 Plan to identify the state's transportation needs for the next 30 years. Extensive meetings and a strong online effort are underway to solicit the public's input on the plan. Secretary Conti encouraged everyone to look at the 2040 Plan online to provide input on how to improve transportation in North Carolina.

State Transportation Demand Management

CATS has received a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) grant from the state for over 14 years. The state has revised its procedures, and Board approval is now required as part of the grant application. MTC members unanimously approved CATS' application for a TDM grant.

Special Transportation Service / ADA Report

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 requires entities that provide fixed route service to provide paratransit services within ¾ mile of the local bus route system. STS ridership has increased yearly, and increased markedly as clients who formerly used the DSS service migrated to STS following recent reductions in DSS service. STS continues to meet federal requirements by providing trips within the required ADA ¾ mile buffer area, but the service is nearing capacity. Increased demand within the required area means that STS will not continue to be able to provide service at previous levels outside the required area.

CATS CEO Report

Under the CEO's report, Carolyn Flowers discussed:

a. **Security Update**:
   Staff reported that following bin Laden's death, federal transportation officials reached out to transit agencies with rail operations to evaluate their security systems. CATS is audited regularly for safety standards and security measures and meets regularly with internal and external partners to evaluate current security measures and identify areas for improvement. Safety and Security is working with operators to heighten their safety awareness, as well as increasing safety awareness with the public. Staff holds full-scale exercises yearly with other emergency responders to test the system under various scenarios. Ms. Flowers added that security will be a key initiative in planning for the Democratic National Convention (DNC).

b. **Recycling Program**:
   Staff has identified a $30,000 grant through the NC Department of Environment and

Natural Resources (DENR) that may fund half of a recycling program. Staff is evaluating other areas of funding and partnership opportunities with other City departments.

c. Budget Process:

Budget Process – The Charlotte City Council approved CATS' budget at its meeting on Monday, May 23. If the City approves a one percent payment to employees, CATS has identified funding areas to allow a payment to CATS employees as well from FY11 savings.

d. Other Updates:

Major Procurements – Staff is working through the Gold Rush contract renewal agreement with Center City Partners, which should be ready in June. Staff will discuss potential Homeland Security procurements in June, based on grants from Homeland Security and TSA. Secretary Conti covered the state budget, which CATS will continue to monitor. Dana Fenton, the City's Intergovernmental Relations Manager, is in Raleigh now working on the budget issue as well. CATS hopes to see negotiations between the House and the Senate to reconcile budget differences.

Sales Tax Revenue – Revenue was $4.33 million for the current month, $9.6 thousand over the amount budgeted, indicating recovery in sales tax receipts. CATS is on target to meet budgeted sales tax revenue projections of about $56 million, back at the 2005 level.

Ridership – April ridership was .4 % higher than last April. Total year to date ridership is up 1.8 % higher than projected.

Labor Negotiations – Negotiations with the Teamsters were suspended after UTU won the right to hold elections to represent bus operators. Elections will be held June 3. If negotiations are not complete by June 30, CATS anticipates a side letter agreement to extend the contract and allow time to complete negotiations.

Bus Operations Update – Route 94 – Matthews/Mint Hill Shuttle, CATS' new shopper service, will start June 7. The route will serve area senior centers, a park and ride, and shopping centers. The new route is for all transit customers, and will be a vital service for seniors and disabled members of the community.

Roadeo winners went to Wilmington to compete in the NC State Bus Roadeo this past weekend. Henry Minnet won first place in the state for STS. The team from STS won the team trophy for the first in the state. STS won the award for the safest small bus system in the state. The Bus Operations Division won the safest large bus system in the state.

Ms. Flowers noted that the American Bus Transportation System is holding its International Bus Roadeo competition in Memphis, TN. Lonny Earnhardt, who has

won first place in CATS' Roadeo for 13 years, is competing in the international competition, as is the CATS Bus Maintenance Roadeo team. MTC members will be updated later on Charlotte's status in the international competition.

The next MTC meeting will be June 22, 2011 at 5:30 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS (SEE TABLE OF CONTENTS ON LEFT):

Policy Calendar: June 2011 – August 2011