



Charlotte City Council
Budget and Effectiveness Committee
Meeting Summary
September 18, 2018

COMMITTEE AGENDA TOPICS

- I. Overview of Agenda
- II. Efficiencies in Government
- III. Public Forum Format Update
- IV. Mayor and Council Term Dates

COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Committee Members Present: Greg Phipps (Chair), Ed Driggs (Vice Chair), and Tariq Bokhari

Committee Guest: Braxton Winston
Julie Eiselt

Staff Resources: Sabrina Joy-Hogg, City Manager's Office
Phil Reiger, Strategy and Budget Office
Bob Hagemann, City Attorney's Office
Greg McDowell, Internal Audit

Meeting Duration: 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Information Packet- Public Forum and Mayor and Council Terms

DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

Efficiencies in Government

Staff: Greg McDowell, City Auditor

Council member Phipps opened the meeting and reiterated previous committee discussions regarding creating more efficiency in the Council review process through increasing thresholds. Phipps stated his intent to make the motion to move the threshold item up to \$500,000 and submit the action for full Council review at the next scheduled Strategy session. Council members engaged in a discussion about implementing qualitative guidance rules, operational legalities, and adopting a policy statement for the threshold review process. Council member Bokhari questioned the differences between consent and business items, and how it aligns with the budget process. Deputy City Manager Joy-Hogg responded by overviewing the types of agenda items that are found in consent, policy, and business. Joy-Hogg highlighted recent improvements to agenda items and procurement process to better differentiate Council agenda items and remove ambiguity from the agenda items that require Council action. Joy-Hogg stated that above ninety percent of city transactions are reviewed by Council and the increasing number of staff hours dedicated to developing and reviewing the Council agenda. Council member Driggs and Bokhari emphasized the need to have a conversation with Council regarding important

initiatives that are of high public interest and developing a checks and balancing system for such items.

Motion and Vote.

Motion made by Council member Phipps and seconded by Council member Bokhari to recommend that City Council review and authorize the City Manager to increase the threshold up to \$500,000 with situational terms for items that must be reviewed and voted on by Council. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Public Forum Format

Staff: Bob Hagemann, City Attorney

Deputy City Manager Joy-Hogg provided a brief overview of the Public Forum timeline and the public forum policies and procedures comparisons of benchmark cities. Budget Director, Phil Reiger, provided a description of the statistical method and variables used to identify twenty benchmark cities that cluster with City of Charlotte. Council member Winston questioned if the city benchmarked other cities that have experienced similar civil unrest. Reiger responded that it was not a specific factor but that economic variables were considered and Joy-Hogg stated that the breakdown of benchmark cities would be provided at a later committee meeting. Council engaged in a discussion about the public speaker time limits and Joy-Hogg stated the data showed that 74.5 percent of all speakers were able to speak during public forums which means that most speakers are allowed to speak and also have the prerogative to sign up speak to any agenda item in addition to the general public forum. Bob Hagemann explained that the why the City conducts the meeting, essentially all items are public hearing items while the State only requires a public hearing on specific item types. Council member Phipps inquired about the speaking term limit and was advised by Hagemann that Council rules are considerably generous towards public speakers. Joy-Hogg reiterated that according State law, Council is required to facilitate one monthly public forum meeting but Council holds two public forums. Council members engaged in a discussion about the number of speakers, time limits, and educating the public on forum rules. Council member Phipps asked City Clerk, Stephanie Kelly, if there were any complaints regarding the current public forum format and Kelly responded that the Clerk's Office has not received any public complaints. Council member Bokhari recommended that Council dedicate thirty minutes to public forum for up to thirty speakers and having flexibility to increase time and number of speakers at will. Council member Driggs recommended having a lower limit of two minutes scaled to the number of speakers. Bokhari expressed wanting to have a tracking system of speakers for follow-up purposes and Joy-Hogg responded stating that public forum follow- up actions are found in the Council/Manager memorandums. Council member Winston added to the conversation that Council should consider structuring the forum from a public-centric view. Council member Eiselt expressed wanting to ensure people are aware of the expectations. Bob Hagemann stated that he would prepare an amendment to the language of the motion to allow for 3 minutes per speaker when 1-10 speakers sign up and then transition to 2 minutes per speaker if more than 10 sign up, with a waiting list to then start after the first 15 speakers.

Motion and Vote.

Motion made by Council member Phipps and seconded by Council member Bokhari to adjust time of public speakers and move it forward for the full Council review during the next Strategy Session. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Mayor and Council Term Dates

Staff: Bob Hagemann, City Attorney

Bob Hagemann opened by stating that State law allows for flexibility to the structure of Mayor and Council term dates. Hagemann reviewed the various structures, how to change the current structure, and the process for a change by Council. Hagemann emphasized the need for Council to identify the desired option for changes to Mayor and Council term dates and develop a process schedule to meet elections, public hearing, petitions, and referendum requirements. Hagemann reviewed the options for Charter Amendment Referendum in 2019. Council member Eiselt stated her support for four year Mayor Terms and recommended separating Council from Mayor Terms. Council members engaged in review of the data and information provided and decided to suspend the conversation until the full committee was present to engage in the discussion before forwarding the topic to the full Council.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30pm.