

WORK SESSION – April 29, 2005

Mayor William M. Breichner called this Work Session of the Mayor and City Council to order at 2:00 p.m., Friday, April 29, 2005 in the Council Chambers at the City Hall. Present was Mayor Breichner; City Council Members K. B. Aleshire, N. L. Hendershot, L. C. Metzner, C. N. Moller, and P. M. Nigh, City Administrator Bruce Zimmerman, and City Clerk D. K. Spickler.

Community Development Block Grant

Lauren Bayer, Director of Community Development, was present to discuss the proposed budget for the Community Development Block Grant.

Councilmember Metzner stated that a workforce housing program will help first time homeowners the most. Another thing that will help is a lower interest rate.

Mr. Bayer stated the City needs to put some amount of money aside each year for specific neighborhoods and do what they can to improve the neighborhood, i.e. tot lots, pocket parks, and street lighting.

The direction provided by the Mayor and City Council was used to determine funding for organizations under the Block Grant program. No organization received more funding than what they requested.

Some of the projects included under the Public Facilities are as follows:

City Park Restrooms	\$ 200,000
A & E Parking Deck (testing and toll equipment)	\$ 265,000
Memorial Recreation Center	\$ 75,000
Hope VI Streetscape	\$ 90,000

Councilmember Nigh asked how Community Development got involved in financing for the parking deck. She thought this was included in the bond financing request. Mr. Bayer indicated Community Development has always been involved in the financing package for the A & E Parking Deck.

Councilmember Nigh asked where the parks will be for the Hope VI project. Mr. Bayer indicated one will be on Vickie Drive and possibly one other location.

Mr. Bayer indicated there are two new funds included in this year's budget. They are the Community Opportunity Fund and the Neighborhood Development Fund. Mr. Bayer stated the Community Opportunity Fund has been included in case a need develops in the community. This fund will ensure money is available to meet that need. The Neighborhood Development Fund is

seed money to improve a neighborhood.

Councilmember Aleshire stated he received a call of concern about the planting of trees in front of South High at the baseball field. He asked what happens to money left over when a project is completed. Mr. Bayer stated the funding could be reprogrammed to another project.

The following list shows some of the items funded under Public Services:

Washington County Food Resources	\$ 8,150
CAC Housing Crisis Intervention	\$ 32,250
Senior Living Alternative	\$ 50,000
REACH Shelter Security	\$ 29,115
Community Free Clinic	\$ 15,250

Mr. Bayer stated the amount listed for REACH is just for the security. Councilmember Nigh asked about the status of the day facility. Mr. Bayer stated the request was for security for the night and day facility.

Councilmember Moller stated she understood they would be using the new building for the day shelter. She stated if this is not the case, someone needs to explain that. Mr. Bayer indicated the application did not specify where the facility would be located.

Councilmember Aleshire stated the REACH funding was over budget last year and more is included in the proposed funding this year. He would like to have a limit set for the amount a facility receives if they have been funded for several years.

Councilmember Metzner stated the Mayor and City Council need to find out what is going on at Holly Place. He fully supports Holly Place but he is concerned that if money is included in the City's budget it will be an ongoing obligation.

Mr. Bayer stated if they Mayor and City Council wished to set a cap on funding they could add a clause in the subrecipient agreement.

Mayor Breichner stated there have been several meetings regarding the future of Holly Place. Holly Place will need the City's support through next year. There is a good chance they will be open next year, but it is still tenuous.

Councilmember Metzner stated Holly Place provides a roof over someone's head and food on the table and he supports programs that provide these needs.

Additional funding for the Free Clinic is included in a different section of the budget also.

It was the general consensus of the Mayor and City Council to include the cost of the night

security for REACH in a reserve fund for future use.

Mr. Bayer stated some of the increases in funding are due to including city staff time in the donation. The organization will still receive the full amount of funding.

Councilmember Aleshire asked how many programs were transferred out of the CDBG funding. Mr. Bayer stated only C Safe was moved. There are no new programs being funded. Councilmember Aleshire asked what was in the request from Brothers United Who Dare to Care. Mr. Bayer stated the request included computer training and heritage recognition. It appeared to be similar to what might be used for a public access channel.

Councilmember Aleshire asked if anyone had objections to adding Children in Need on the list for \$ 5,000. It was the general consensus of the Mayor and City Council to include Children in Need.

Councilmember Hendershot asked who operates the Children in Need program. He also asked how many children are served.

Councilmember Metzner asked about the status of the two grant funded police positions.

Councilmember Nigh asked what happened to the funding for C Safe. Mr. Zimmerman reported C Safe is being funded in the general fund.

There was discussion about the Citizens on Patrol program. The participants should have walkie-talkies and radios available.

The CDC is looking to do a project that will provide housing. There is \$ 250,000 included in the proposed budget for the CDC.

The following funding was adjusted:

REACH	only the amount for night security
Citizens on Patrol	funding for communication equipment
Children in Need	\$ 5,000

Mayor Breichner stated he had an item to discuss that is not related to the budget. One of the Election Board members has resigned due to health reasons. Sharon Washington has been recommended as a member. Councilmember Hendershot made this recommendation. It was the general consensus of the Mayor and City Council to approve the appointment of Sharon Washington to the City's Board of Election Supervisors.

Councilmember Nigh stated she has been receiving complaints about Girls, Inc., especially about the air conditioner. Mayor Breichner stated this would be look into.

Water and Sewer Capital Improvement Projects

David Shindle, Water and Sewer Department Manager, Donnie Barton, Water Pollution Control Plant Superintendent and William Luhn, Water Production/Operations Superintendent, were present to discuss the Capital Improvement Projects planned for the Water and Sewer Department.

Mr. Barton stated \$ 16,000,000 has been included for projects in the sewer division.

Councilmember Metzner asked if it would be appropriate to say that these are basic improvements that have to be done. Mr. Zimmerman stated there are some large dollar amounts here and some of are tied directly to the Inflow/Infiltration (I/I) program. Councilmember Metzner and Councilmember Aleshire agreed that these projects need to be included in order to address the capacity and I/I issues.

The list of projects include: continuing with the Phase II projects, work for Phase III of the improvements, which include ENR and engineering work; electrical improvements and switchgear. A large part of the electrical project will be completed by the end of May.

Mr. Luhn stated the two largest projects in the water division are replacing the west end tank reservoir and the Phase IV improvements to the Wilson Treatment Plant. This will take care of the problems with cleaning the lagoons out. Improvements are planned for the Breichner Plant to make it more reliable. They are trying to build redundancy, in case of breakdowns.

Mr. Shindle stated there are main line replacement projects scheduled for Northern Avenue and Van Lear Drive.

Councilmember Aleshire stated he has some questions about the operating expenses in Section 6 of the budget.

Councilmember Metzner stated it is necessary to say that the overflows into the Antietam Creek are something we want to avoid, at any expense. He stated if the capital expenditures budget is not adequate enough to keep it from happening, they should be increased. He doesn't want staff to be pinching pennies or worrying about the checkbook in this situation.

General Fund Capital Improvement Projects

Eric Deike, Public Works Manager, stated some of the Capital Improvement Projects for Public Works are: traffic signal upgrades (including installation of the Opticom system), funding for vehicle purchases (including a street sweeper and dump trucks), roof repairs at City Hall, improvements to 51 W. Memorial Boulevard and the use of LED traffic signals. These signals

will use less electricity and he stated they are hoping to reduce the costs for electric significantly over the next several years. The fire alarm system at City Hall will be replaced, a software package that details parts for many vehicles will be purchased, and chairs will be replaced in the Council Chamber.

Mayor Breichner stated he thought the Council wanted to look at a different process for snow removal and they realized it may take more equipment. He asked if that equipment is included in the budget. Mr. Deike indicated it is not, but they are purchasing two trucks this year and one next year, which will help with snow removal. He stated they have talked about purchasing a loader that would help remove some of the snow downtown. The cost of a loader is approximately \$ 125,000. The City has been able to rent the equipment when needed. Mr. Zimmerman stated what has been included is snow blowers and other pieces of equipment to assist in removal. He stated he understands the City had a conveyor at one time.

Mayor Breichner stated he thought the Council wanted to make sure the parking spaces were free from snow. Councilmember Hendershot stated they use jet engines to dry the pavement of racing drag strips. He stated one problem with snow removal is once it's loaded, what do you do with it.

Mr. Deike stated there is a snow melter but it is expensive. The amount of snow that falls here doesn't justify the expense. Councilmember Hendershot stated the downtown needs to be clear. Mr. Zimmerman stated Staff understands that from the earlier discussions.

Councilmember Aleshire asked if the bonded debt, in future years, could be shown as a general expense so it is paid sooner.

Councilmember Metzner asked if drivers would see a difference in the LED signal lights. Mr. Deike indicated the LED is a series of lights and the driver should not notice a difference.

Councilmember Aleshire stated he fully supports the purchase of the vehicle replacement parts software.

The CIP projects for engineering were then discussed.

Rodney Tissue, City Engineer, stated there are a number of general government items on the project list. The list includes improvements to the third floor at City Hall, funding to purchase radios for the inspectors (for safety), and timing of signals (which optimizes the flow of traffic).

Mr. Tissue stated money for Edgewood Drive at US 40 is included in the list. The project is still three to four years away, mainly because it takes a long time to obtain the necessary right of ways. The estimated cost to improve just the intersection is between \$ 8,000,000 and \$ 9,000,000. The City has only agreed to paying for one third of the design cost for Edgewood

Drive. The City has not agreed to pay any other costs.

It was pointed out that City taxpayers will be paying for improvements to Edgewood Drive three times – through City taxes, County taxes and State taxes.

Mr. Tissue stated two bids were received for the widening of Wilson Boulevard and both were far higher than anticipated. Staff is reviewing the scope of the project and will present other options to the Mayor and City Council.

Funding is included for repairs to City curbs and sidewalks. Mr. Tissue stated when street trees are planted, the City has assumed the responsibility that damage to sidewalks will occur and it will be the City's responsibility to repair them.

Installation of sidewalks on Manor Drive is being fully funded by the State of Maryland.

It is expected that Eastern Boulevard will be widened to four lanes. Mr. Zimmerman reminded the Mayor and City Council that there is a highway improvement fee set up for new construction on Eastern Boulevard.

Councilmember Hendershot asked that installation of sidewalks on Dual Highway be included in a budget. Mr. Tissue stated a large amount of sidewalk installation is included in the Eastern Boulevard project costs.

The Jonathan Street Streetscape project was then discussed. Mr. Tissue stated this is a large project and everything will be replaced. He expects this will be presented to the Mayor and City Council in June or July.

Mr. Tissue stated funding is included to improve the road from Prospect Avenue to Virginia Avenue. Councilmember Aleshire asked why this road is kept open. Mr. Tissue stated the residents in that area have asked that it be kept open. Councilmember Metzner asked if the road should be kept as a gravel road so that people don't go too fast down the hill. Steps would be very pedestrian friendly. He would like to know how many people actually use the road. Mr. Tissue will get that information. The Mayor and City Council agreed to leave it in the budget now and bring back some traffic counts and other options.

Mr. Tissue stated the design work of the signal from Home Depot to Walmart has been started. This will be totally funded by the developers. A signal will soon be installed on Garland Groh Street and Bartow.

The Staley Park wall, Pangborn Park and City Park restrooms projects are being actively worked on at this time.

Councilmember Nigh asked if anyone has checked to see if the walls at Staley Park can be saved. Mr. Tissue stated they looked and some can be saved, but not all of it. She stated she is concerned that the bank will erode away without the walls. Mr. Tissue stated one good thing is that the area does not flood very often. He stated they will do the best they can with the amount of money that is available.

Councilmember Aleshire stated the benefits of GIS technology are extensive. He stated anything the Mayor and City Council can do to make sure the system is state of the art and utilized is imperative. He suggested working in partnership with the County to share resources.

Councilmember Aleshire asked for an explanation of the \$ 525,000 included in the budget in year three for the Stadium. Mr. Tissue stated the amount in the current budget is for the plaza work that was approved by the Mayor and City Council. The amount included in the next budget year is for Phase 2 of the project.

Councilmember Aleshire stated he had a prior commitment and had to leave at this time. However, he stated he will be reviewing the budget.

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and City Council, on a motion duly made by Councilmember L. C. Metzner and seconded by Councilmember C. N. Moller, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna K. Spickler, City Clerk

Approved: May 24, 2005