

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II called this Work Session of the Mayor and City Council to order at 4:02 p.m., Tuesday, November 29, 2016, in the Council Chamber at City Hall. Present with the Mayor were Councilmembers K. B. Aleshire, P. D. Corderman, E. Keller, and D. F. Munson, City Administrator Valerie Means, City Attorney Jennifer Keefer, City Attorney Jason Morton, and City Clerk D. K. Spickler.

Establish Meeting Schedule, Agenda Process, and Seating Arrangement

It was the consensus of the Mayor and City Council to continue to hold meetings on Tuesdays. The Regular Session will typically be on the fourth Tuesday of each month, beginning at 7:00 p.m. Work Sessions will be held on the first, second, and third Tuesdays, beginning at 4:00 p.m.

The Rules of Procedure includes a section about the weekly meeting agenda preparation. Currently, the agendas are established by the City Administrator using information for agenda items from City Department Heads. Language to define the process will be included in the Rules of Procedure.

Discussion with Jason Morton and Jennifer Keefer, City Attorneys

Jason Morton and Jennifer Keefer, City Attorneys, were present to provide an overview of municipal government and general practices for the City of Hagerstown.

The City of Hagerstown is a Council/Administrator form of government. The Charter establishes the form of government and how the City operates. The Mayor and City Council determine policy and pass legislation to implement the policy and laws. The City Administrator is responsible for carrying out the day to day operation of the government. The Mayor and Council do not direct the City Administrator as individuals, but as a body. Mayor and Council members do not direct individual staff members, as stipulated in Section 603 of the Charter.

The Mayor and Council would make a directive and it would be the City Administrator's responsibility to implement the directive. The Mayor is the presiding officer and presides over all Mayor and City Council meetings.

Responsibilities of the Council are found in Article 2 of the Charter. Responsibilities for the Mayor are found in Article 3 of the Charter. If a vote on an action, except for the passage of ordinances or filling vacancies, ends with a tie, the Mayor has the right to cast the deciding vote. The Mayor also has the right to veto any ordinance passed by the Council, according to the City Charter.

The City of Hagerstown, as well as all Maryland municipalities, must adhere to the regulations in the State of Maryland Open Meetings Act and the Maryland Public Information Act.

The City Attorney's responsibilities are included in Article 8 of the City Charter. The City Attorney only carries out tasks requested by the Mayor and City Council. They do not advise individuals.

The Ethics Code is found in Chapter 33 of the City Code. These regulations have been established to ensure public confidence in the government and to provide transparency of the actions of the Mayor and City Council. The Ethics Code is reviewed annually by the State of Maryland. The City Ethics Commission meets quarterly to discuss requested opinions and to review the Code and recommend amendments, as necessary. Specific questions about the regulations of the Ethics Code should be addressed to the City Ethics Commission.

Orientation Book Review

Valerie Means, City Administrator, provided copies of an Orientation Notebook to each Mayor and Councilmember. In the welcome letter from Ms. Means, she encourages the Mayor and Council to develop a strategic plan to establish a unified vision by setting priorities and goals. Other topics in the notebook include community information, City department information, the budget message, and Boards and Commissions information.

Discussion Regarding Rules of Procedure

The Mayor and City Council reviewed draft Rules of Procedure. Ms. Keefer mentioned there is an 11th Edition of Roberts Rules of Order. Clarification will be included to establish the procedure for preparation of weekly agendas.

Board and Commission Interest

A listing of the Boards and Commissions that include Mayor and Council representation were provided. Detailed information regarding each board will be provided to the Mayor and City Council.

Discussion of Mayor and City Council Top Priorities

Mayor Bruchey, II noted that goals and priorities were discussed during the recent campaign.

Councilmember Munson stated the City Center Plan is vitally important. He does not think the City has a way forward with progress without the components of that plan. He hopes the new administration is willing to reaffirm the plan and the commitment to the plan. The plan is workable and affordable as outlined.

Mayor Bruchey stated parts of the plan will be discussed in coming work sessions. He noted a convention center is a large ticket item. Timing of the various components needs to be reviewed. He pointed out a Strategic Plan was developed in 2009 by the Mayor and City Council.

Councilmember Munson stated 100 new jobs will be created soon by Pinnacle Foods. Their plan fit well with the City Center Plan.

Councilmember Aleshire stated he would like the referendum for the Charter Amendment concluded within this administration's first six months in office. The voters approved the Charter Amendment. The next step is for the City to establish the process for binding arbitration. Having the process established will help in completing the budget. He stated the term "being made whole" will have to be defined and the potential costs estimated. The issues related to candidates during the election regarding code regulations and property conditions need to be addressed. He noted the codes apply to vacant structures as well. There are 8 catalyst projects in the City Center plan. Each one is in process and in different stages. The full Mayor and Council need to have a good understanding of the progress made to date for each. Even though he knows the subject of a new stadium will be brought up at some point, he is still very interested in an indoor turf facility.

Councilmember Keller stated she thinks the City Center Plan is a priority. Public Safety is the first priority many people want to discuss. She noted this area lacks a detox center and it is greatly needed. She would like the City to partner with whatever agency necessary to make sure there is a detox center in the community so residents can get help when they need it.

Mayor Bruchey stated he anticipates discussing a detox center with Senator Andrew Serafini and Delegate Brett Wilson this week.

Councilmember Corderman noted the referendum for binding arbitration passed. He believes the Mayor and City Council's goal should be to have open negotiations so that binding arbitration is not needed. It is important to increase the tax base. The candidates heard the same concerns about the tax base from different sources. He stated he believes this administration will continue building on the successes of the previous administration and do great things for Hagerstown.

Mayor Bruchey stated his top priority is the budget. He would like funding information for making employees whole as well. It is important to treat the City budget like a personal household budget. The group needs to concentrate on priorities. He plans to meet with some department heads to talk about priorities as soon as tomorrow.

WORK SESSION
2016

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

NOVEMBER 29,

HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND

Valerie Means, City Administrator, had no additional comments.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember E. Keller is looking forward to serving the citizens of Hagerstown. She commended the Hagerstown Police Department's efforts in holding community meetings.

Councilmember K. B. Aleshire thanked the Downtown Movement for their work with the pop-up shop events. He participated as a vendor during the last two weeks at the City Farmers Market.

Councilmember P. D. Corderman had no additional comments.

Councilmember D. F. Munson welcomed the new members to the Mayor and City Council. Serving as a City elected official is exciting and provides an opportunity to do a lot of good for a lot of people. The Maryland flags are at half staff in recognition of the passing of Lt. General James F. Fedderd. He worked with Lt. Fedderd for many years. He thanked the Herald Mail for the recent article about the Hagerstown Cultural Trail mural. He thinks the trail will draw people downtown and will help businesses and produce jobs. He thanked voters for re-electing him. It takes resources to run a City and the property tax base in Hagerstown is an issue. He attended the Fit Room at Fairgrounds Park grand opening last week.

Mayor R. E. Bruchey, II reminded everyone the City Park Tree Lighting will be held on Friday, December 2, 2016.

There being no further business to come before the Mayor and City Council, on a motion duly made, seconded, and passed, the meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by D. K. Spickler

Donna K. Spickler
City Clerk

Approved: January 31, 2017