

**City Council of the City of Greenville  
Work Session**

**Monday, April 24, 2023  
4:00 p.m.**

**Meeting Location:  
Greenville City Hall, 206 S. Main Street**

**MINUTES**

**CITY COUNCIL:** Councilmembers John M. DeWorken, Lillian B. Flemming, Kenneth C. Gibson, Wil Brasington, Russell H. Stall, and Dorothy H. Dowe; Absent: Mayor Knox White

**CITY STAFF:** City Manager John F. McDonough; City Attorney Leigh B. Paoletti; City Clerk Camilla G. Pitman

Mayor Pro Tem Flemming called the meeting to order for the purpose of discussing the following matters.

**Zoo Consultants**

Deputy City Manager Brandon Madden introduced Kathy Williams and John Walczak with Relevant Strategies who are serving as consultants for the Greenville Zoo evaluating its governance and structure. Mr. Walczak thanked Council for its foresight in evaluating the Zoo in advance and recognizing its economic impact. Mr. Walczak stated he and Ms. Williams visited the Zoo today and that they anticipate at least two more trips to Greenville for further work. Mr. Walczak provided an overview of the process and stated out of 242 accredited institutions, approximately 75% percent or more are managed by a 501(c)3 organization and 95% percent or more receive public funding. Mr. Walczak offered to answer any questions and stated he hopes to have a report to Council in the summer.

Councilmember Flemming asked if the public funding is federal funding. Mr. Walczak stated it is mostly local public funding which comes from different funding models. Mr. Walczak referred to the St. Louis Zoo as an example. Councilmember DeWorken asked what percentage of public funding is provided to the Greenville Zoo, and Budget Administrator Kristina Junker responded approximately 10% percent. City Manager John McDonough referenced to providing a \$200,000 subsidy for next year. Councilmember Dowe asked if there are any zoos in the area that have transitioned from public ownership to a 501(c)(3) operation. Mr. Walczak referred to Chattanooga as an example of transition over the past few years.

Councilmember Brasington asked if Council will receive not only an optimal governance structure but also an optimal revenue mix, SWOT analysis (i.e. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) and the like as part of the scope of the project. Mr. Walczak responded yes and stated he already has a SWOT analysis which will become more detailed as additional information is received. Mr. Walczak stated that the Zoo is currently raising most of the revenue itself and is doing well. Councilmember Dowe shared that there has been a big infusion over the past ten years in the Zoo. Mr. McDonough added the Zoo has come along way in the last four years and the City continues to make capital investments outside of the operating support. Councilmember Stall asked when the next accreditation process will occur, and Mr. Walczak responded sometime in the Spring of 2024.

Councilmember Brasington referred to the current 501(c)(3) being a foundation and stated he will be eager to see the continuing role of the non-profit. Councilmember Stall asked if the Zoo can be world class with the constraints of the acreage and location. Mr. Walczak responded that it can be done and provided suggestions in developing a world class facility.

### **Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee**

Ms. Junker introduced ATAX Chair Joe Hindman who provided an overview presentation of the FY2024 ATAX funding recommendations as located in Council's Agenda packet.

Mr. Hindman advised that the amount available for FY2023-24 is \$3 million and the ATAX Committee received a total application request of \$3,111,128. Mr. Hindman provided an explanation of how funding recommendations are determined by the Committee and advised that the Committee gives consideration to new, diverse, and culturally impactful applicants which provide an impact on heads and beds and attendance, among other things. Mr. Hindman also advised that a total of \$264,800 of the \$3 million and \$50,000 from last year's budget is currently in reserves as contingency funding for future projects. Mr. Hindman stated that every applicant received a funding award.

Councilmember Stall asked if the amount listed includes the required funding for VisitGreenvilleSC (VGSC), and Ms. Junker responded it does not. Mr. McDonough stated the required funding amount given to VGSC is approximately \$1.3 million.

Ms. Junker provided an overview of the annual application process and the local ATAX Committee's review process. Ms. Junker advised that City Council may adjust the numbers and once approved, the City reports the awarded information to the State. Ms. Junker provided information regarding the expenditure process, as included in the presentation. Ms. Junker advised that the City has more funds available because it has been built up in reserves and the City was conservative during COVID.

Councilmember Stall requested an update from VGSC sharing the impact of the funding provided to them, and other Council members supported the request. Mr. McDonough offered to extend an invitation to them. Mr. Hindman stated VGSC received \$1.2 million out of the \$3 million recommended by the ATAX Committee and \$1.3 million as required funding.

Councilmember Dowe raised questions regarding certain applicants meeting the award criteria, and Mr. Hindman explained how those requests meet the required criteria. Ms. Junker stated the funding is a reimbursement whereby each applicant receiving funds must report out on use of the funds.

Councilmember Stall asked if there is any policy in funding religious organizations. Ms. Junker responded that most of those organizations go through VGSC with funding requests and the event being supported must be open to the public.

### **Motion - Executive Session**

During the open Work Session, Mayor Pro Tem Flemming asked for a motion to go into Executive Session. City Attorney Leigh Paoletti recommended going into executive session under S.C. Code §30-4-70(a)(2) to discuss the following: (a) contract negotiations regarding the acquisition of property in the West End adjacent to Fluor Field, (b) economic development matter and proposed agreement relating to Augusta Plaza in the West End adjacent to Fluor Field, (c) legal advice regarding regulations proposed by the South Carolina Aeronautics Commission and

development of property surrounding downtown airport, and (d) contract negotiations regarding disposition of city property in the Unity Park area.

Councilmember Gibson moved, seconded by Councilmember Dowe, to go into Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously.

(Executive Session)

There being no further discussions, Councilmember Brasington moved, seconded by Councilmember Stall, to go out of Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously. No action was taken.

With no further discussions, the meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Camilla G. Pitman, MMC, Certified PLS  
City Clerk

Meeting notice posted on April 21, 2023.