

Worksession

Present: Mayor Charles R. Worley, Presiding; Vice-Mayor Terry M. Bellamy; Councilman Joseph C. Dunn; Councilman James E. Ellis; Councilwoman Diana Hollis Jones; and Councilman R. Carl Mumpower; City Attorney Robert W. Oast Jr.; City Manager James L. Westbrook Jr.; and City Clerk Magdalen Burleson

Absent: Councilman Brian L. Peterson

CONTINUANCE OF UPDATE ON MINIMUM HOUSING CODE

Vice-Mayor Bellamy asked that Council delay discussion on the update on Minimum Housing Code until Councilman Peterson is present. She felt the issue affects buildings and lives of individuals in the future and it is important for him to hear the discussion and get as much information as possible.

Councilman Mumpower was supportive of other members of Council, but under the circumstances, he was not happy with seeing us step aside from important business and inconveniencing people and staff who attended this meeting to hear this update. Councilman Dunn agreed.

After a brief discussion about whether to postpone this update for two weeks or a month, Vice-Mayor Bellamy moved to postpone the update on the Minimum Housing Code until June 17, 2003. This motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones and carried unanimously.

CONSENT:

Intent to Close Unnamed Alley off Catawba Street

Summary: The consideration of setting a public hearing on June 10, 2003, to close a portion of an unopened alley off Catawba Street.

According to N. C. Gen. Stat. sec. 160-299, a City has the authority to permanently close a street or alley without regard to whether it has actually been opened.

To proceed with this process the adjoining property owners have requested to close a portion of the alley off Catawba Street.

Currently there is a structure that exists in the middle of the alley. The request is being made in an effort to correct this situation and get the structure onto private property.

Public Works Department staff has determined that the portion of the alley off Catawba Street running north to south between PIN Nos. 9649-09-05-4276 and 9649-09-05-3233. The portion for which closure is requested extends from Catawba Street to the rear of the lots stated above. Lots bordering the portion of the unopened alley are PIN Nos. 9649-09-05-4276 and 9649-09-05-3233.

Contract to Audit City Accounts

Summary: The consideration of a resolution authorizing the Mayor to execute a contract with Crisp Hughes Evans LLP, Certified Public Accountants, for auditing services for Fiscal Year 2002-2003.

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N.C. General Statutes 159-34 requires that local governments of North Carolina have their accounts audited each fiscal year and submit a copy of the audit to the Local Government Commission.

In 1998 the City solicited proposals from 36 accounting firms to perform the City's annual audit. City Council selected Crisp Hughes Evans LLP to conduct the Fiscal Year 1997-98 audit and has re-engaged them annually through Fiscal Year 2001-2002. They completed all of those engagements in a satisfactory manner and have now submitted an engagement letter for the Fiscal Year 2002-2003 audit. The base fee has been proposed at \$54,000 (the fee has remained the same or decreased each of the past three consecutive years). Funds are appropriated in the budget of the Accounting Division of the Finance Department.

City staff recommends City Council adopt the resolution which authorizes the Mayor to execute a contract with Crisp Hughes Evans LLP for auditing services for Fiscal Year 2002-2003.

Finance Director Bill Schafer responded to a question from Councilman Dunn on the firm of Crisp Hughes Evans LLP.

Grant for a COPS in Schools

Summary: The consideration of a resolution to apply for and enter into an agreement with the United States Department of Justice for personnel funds to hire a Supervisor for the current School Resource Officers in the Asheville Police Department.

The COPS in Schools grant program has been an excellent way to provide a quality community service to our city schools through the assigning of School Resource Officers. The Asheville Police Department currently provides 3 officers to our schools. This program has been well received in the school system and has given them the support they need in the areas of safety of the school children and the premises in general; investigation of fights, thefts, and vandalism; and in identifying and mentoring problem students.

The COPS in Schools grant program offers a three-year grant for a maximum of \$125,000 for the three-year period. The Asheville Police Department is requesting \$184,587.43 in grants from the Department of Justice COPS in Schools Program with a local match of \$59,587.43 over the three years, which will be paid for by Asheville City Schools. The grant funds will be used to add an additional sergeant position as a supervisor for the current COPS in Schools officers.

- City staff recommends the City of Asheville apply for and enter into an agreement for grant funds to hire one supervisor for the current COPS in Schools officers to enhance cooperation with Asheville City Schools.

Grant for a Police Overtime Funding

- Summary: The consideration of a resolution to apply for and enter into an agreement with the United States Dept. of Justice for overtime funds to enable the Asheville Police Department to assign a police unit to the public housing communities.

Almost a year ago, the Asheville Police Department lost funding for a police unit dedicated to our public housing communities when the Housing Authority had their funding from the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development reduced. The overtime grant funding from the Dept. of Justice will allow the Asheville Police Department to restore that unit. There has been a noticeable increase in calls for service and crimes committed in the public housing communities

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since the elimination of their dedicated police unit. This unit will help to address the concerns voiced by the public housing communities to the Housing Authority and Police Department.

The Dept. of Justice Overtime Program offers a one-year grant to support community policing and homeland security efforts. There is a 25% match required for these funds. The Asheville Police Department is requesting the maximum amount of federal share allowed based on our population, which is \$100,000 with a match requirement of \$25,000. The matching funds will come from the Housing Authority. No financial resources will be required from the City of Asheville. The total grant request will be \$125,000.

- City staff recommends the City of Asheville apply for and enter into an agreement for grant funds to assign a police unit to the public housing communities using overtime funding from the Dept. of Justice.

Minority Business Commission

Summary: The consideration of a resolution confirming the appointment of a member of the Minority Business Commission.

- On May 26, 1998, City Council adopted Resolution No. 98-63 adopting a City-County Minority Business Plan.

The Minority Business Commission consists of 11 members, 9 of whom are nominated by various groups and two (2) of whom are minority business owners nominated by the Minority Business Commission. All nominees are considered and appointed by both the City Council and County Board of Commissioners.

Ms. Connie Mitchell has been named by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) to represent them on the Minority Business Commission. Ms. Mitchell has been nominated to fill the position left vacant by Ms. Jacquelyn A. Schauer who resigned effective May 8, 2003. Ms. Mitchell's term will run through August 2004 to complete the current term of Ms. Schauer.

City staff recommends City Council adopt the resolution confirming the appointment of Ms. Connie Mitchell as the AIA representative on the Minority Business Commission.

Grant for National Register District Nomination Report

Summary: The consideration of a resolution to enter into an agreement with the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office for and in consideration of a federal grant from the US Department of Interior, National Park Service in the amount of \$2,000 for the purpose of the preparation of the Clingman/Riverside Industrial and Commercial Historic District National Register Nomination Report.

The project is to prepare a National Register nomination form for the Clingman/Riverside Industrial and Commercial Historic District. The proposed district encompasses approximately 20-25 properties on 2 ½ acres located to the west of downtown Asheville in the area north of Lyman Street and east of Riverside Drive. The proposed district, along with two other identified sub-districts was approved for inclusion in the North Carolina Study List in 1999. This nomination will include only the historic and commercial area within the larger West/End Clingman Avenue Neighborhood as identified in the grant application unless modifications are determined necessary through field observation efforts. A consultant who meets the qualifications outlined in 36 CFR 61 will be hired to prepare the nomination according to the guidelines outlined in National Register Bulletin 16A. The complete and final draft will be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office no later than August 30, 2004.

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The total cost for the project is \$3,380. The grant is for \$2,000 and the remaining local match of \$1,380 will be provided by the property owners within the district as indicated on the application. The City will not be responsible for the local match. The grant period is from 6/1/2003-9/30/2004.

City staff recommends that the City of Asheville enter into an agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office to receive grant funds to hire a consultant to complete the nomination report for the Clingman/Riverside Industrial Historic District.

Ms. Stacy Merten, Director of the Historic Resources Commission, responded to questions from Vice-Mayor Bellamy.

Vice-Mayor Bellamy asked staff to make sure that they communicate with the area residents about the process.

Grant for Police Department Traffic Unit

Summary: The consideration of a resolution to apply for and enter into an agreement with the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program for personnel and equipment funds for an Asheville Police Department traffic unit.

On March 25, 2003, City Council adopted Resolution No. 03-42 authorizing the City to apply for and enter into an agreement with the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program for personnel and equipment funds for an Asheville Police Department traffic unit. Following a meeting with the Grant Program Coordinator for the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program, the amount of the grant has increased to \$498,747.54, while the City's local match has decreased to \$67,765.89.

To remind Council, the Governor's Highway Safety Program offers a four-year grant with graduated match requirements in the personnel, equipment and additional costs categories. The Asheville Police Department is requesting \$498,747.54 in grants from the Governor's Highway Safety Program to hire and train four officers and one supervisor, and to purchase five vehicles and computer equipment for the unit in the first year. The first year of the grant there is a 25% match on equipment and training, but there is no match for personnel. The match is \$67,765.89 for the first year, which will require an appropriation of \$67,765.89 from the Contingency account. Upon notification of grant award, a budget amendment will be brought to Council for the full amount of the grant award, including the City's local match. The original grant amount was for \$474,438 and the original local match was \$71,365.82. The formal grant application requires that the Mayor sign a pre-formatted resolution created by the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program.

City staff recommends the City of Asheville apply for and enter into an agreement for grant funds to hire and train a traffic unit with four officers and one supervisor to reduce the incidence of aggressive driving in the City of Asheville and allow the Mayor to sign the GHSP-02 Local Governmental Resolution from the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

Mayor Worley asked that the record show that City Council has received this information and instructs the City Manager to place these items on the next formal City Council agenda.

UDO AMENDMENT REVIEW

City Attorney Oast said that these Unified Development Ordinance amendments are being brought before City Council in order that staff may respond to questions Council may have prior to the public hearings, which have been scheduled on June 10, 2003. He advised Council

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that it would be inappropriate for Council to receive comments from the public at this worksession.

More Standard Minimum Lot Sizes in all Residential Zoning Districts and to Clarify Lot Width Requirements for Cul-De-Sac Development and for Flag Lots

Planning & Development Director Scott Shuford said that this is the consideration of an amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance to provide for more standard minimum lot sizes in all residential zoning districts and to clarify lot width requirements for cul-de-sac development and for flag lots.

This code amendment provides for more standard minimum lot sizes in all residential zoning districts and clarifies lot width requirements for cul-de-sac development and for flag lots. This amendment was requested by the City-County Housing Task Force and is summarized below.

Minimum Lot Size

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
RS-2	21,780	20,000
RS-4	10,890	10,000
RS-8	5,445	5,000
RM-6	7,260	7,000
RM-8	5,445	5,000
RM-16	5,445	5,000 for multifamily*
	or	2,500 for single family attached (townhomes)
	2,722.5/unit	3,500 for single family detached

Lot Widths for Cul-de-Sac Developments

New Language: Lots on a cul-de-sac shall be a minimum of 25 feet wide at the right-of-way line and 75% of minimum at the front setback line and shall average the minimum lot width over the entirety of the lot

Flag Lots

Added Language (incorporates an interpretation):

- No more than one lot in a subdivision of less than 8 units shall be a flag lot
- No more than 2 lots or 10% of the total lots, whichever is greater, shall be flag lots in subdivisions of 8 or more lots

Also included are two "housekeeping" amendments. First, the reference to residential lots having public street access has been corrected to allow for private streets built to public street standards as another option. Second, a correction to an incorrect reference is made.

* Since the adoption of the Urban Residential District, staff reconsidered the multi-family minimum lot size for the RM-16 district. We recommended a 10,000 square foot minimum to the Planning and Zoning Commission, but are now suggesting a 5,000 square foot minimum lot size to accommodate smaller-scale multifamily development; this would be slightly smaller than the current provision of 5,445 square feet.

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On May 7, 2003, the Planning & Zoning Commission recommended approval of the proposed code amendment by a vote of 7-0. City staff recommends approval of the proposed code amendment as well, with the change in the RM-16 multifamily lot area to 5,000 square feet.

Revise the Approval Authority and Process for Modifications to the Subdivision Regulations

Mr. Carter Pettibone, Urban Planner II, said that this is the consideration of an amendment to the Code of Ordinances of the City of Asheville to change the approval authority for subdivision modification requests.

Currently, both the Technical Review Committee (TRC) and Planning and Zoning Commission review requests for modifications to the subdivision ordinance prior to review and approval by the City Council. The typical timeframe for review and approval of these requests is about 2 months. These are technical modifications that address such issues as lots that don't front on a public right-of-way and similar matters.

This ordinance amendment will help streamline the review process for subdivision modifications by allowing their review and approval by the Technical Review Committee. All applicable city departments would still review these requests as part of the TRC review process. The ordinance amendment would also provide for a more equitable treatment of subdivision issues since the TRC is the review and approval authority for major subdivisions.

The review process would be reduced from 2 months to about 14 days. Staff believes this ordinance amendment provides a more streamlined and equitable alternative for subdivision modifications.

At its May 7, 2003, meeting, the Planning and Zoning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposed ordinance amendment. The Planning and Development staff also recommends approval of the amendment.

Upon inquiry of Vice-Mayor Bellamy, Mr. Pettibone explained the appeal process.

Councilman Mumpower was concerned about deleting Planning & Zoning Commission review and City Council review with having no additional input from the public.

Mayor Worley asked that the record show that City Council has received this information and instructs the City Manager to place these public hearings on the June 10, 2003, formal City Council agenda.

EARLY ACTION COMPACT INITIATIVES

City Engineer Cathy Ball said that this is an update to City Council on the status of potential measures the City may take in meeting the requirements of the Early Action Compact to improve air quality and the first step in the process of developing the Early Action Compact Plan

In December 2002, City Council adopted a resolution to enter into an Early Action Compact (EAC) along with Buncombe County and other local governments. The first step in the process is to develop a list of measures that can be taken by each of the local governments to reduce air pollution. In an effort to develop this list, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommended that a group of stakeholders be created to make recommendations to local governments. City Council reviewed and approved the list of stakeholders in March 2003.

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The Mountain Area Compact is a diverse region of five Western North Carolina counties comprising more than 2400 square miles. According to 2002 estimates, County populations range from 212,907 in Buncombe County to 20,192 in Madison County. Henderson County (93,033), Haywood County (55,299) and Transylvania County (29,997) fall within those extremes. Population density, total workforce and infrastructure development exhibit similar county to county variation. Services and retail trade are strong factors in each local economy. This reflects the area's popularity for retirement living and for travel and tourism.

Due to the differences in size and economic base, it was agreed that each county would identify local control measures individually. This process allows greater stakeholder participation and allows each jurisdiction to evaluate local resources and determine if county-specific control measures can reasonably be implemented.

All counties are targeting implementation dates of April 2005 in order to coincide with the beginning of that year's ozone season. As planning continues, that date may change for some measures.

This group of stakeholders representing the City of Asheville and Buncombe County met every Thursday in April 2003.

Mr. Jan Davis, Chairman of the Stakeholders Group, outlined the list of measures, as well as the process used to develop the measures, developed by the Stakeholders. The deadline for submission of this list is June 16, 2003.

Actions the public can take on an ongoing basis to reduce ozone include: keep your car tuned up, keep tires properly inflated, carpool or vanpool, ride your bike, take a walk, take the bus, use an electric powered mower or a push mower, conserve energy and reduce pollution at home, practice appropriate vehicle operating tips and purchase products that meet the Environmental Protection Agency Energy Star Program.

On ozone action days the public and businesses should: spread the word about Ozone Action Days; delay errands until late in the day; don't mow your lawn until late in the day; bring your lunch or walk to lunch; bus, bike or walk; practice appropriate vehicle operating tips; do not use drive-through services; telecommute; and participate in Ozone Action Day Program.

On ozone action days, the local, state and federal governments should seek participation of state and federal agencies in the following measures: limit morning meetings; practice appropriate vehicle operating tips; limit vehicle/equipment use; reschedule nonessential operations under direct control of the city; reschedule nonessential paving activities; explore the use of alternative fuels; track statewide initiatives to bring clearer burning fuels to area retailers; increase enforcement of smoking vehicles; tree planting program; hybrid-electric car pilot program; retrofit technology; purchase and service contracts should specify energy-efficient equipment and maintenance practices; annual in-house training; Ozone Action Day Coordinators; and telecommute.

Ongoing actions to reduce ozone include: clean burning fuels; WNC Regional Air Quality Agency; public education campaigns; outreach; themes; cultural outreach; community outreach; business involvement; conserve energy and reduce pollution at work; land use; conversion to alternative fuels; low sulfur fuels; ride the bus; Energy Star Program; and Advisory Group to address air quality and other environmental issues.

City staff has been involved in this process and supports the recommendations of the Stakeholders. No action by City Council is necessary at this time.

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Mr. Davis responded to various questions and comments from Council regarding the initiatives.

On behalf of City Council, Mayor Worley thanked Mr. Davis and the Stakeholders for working on this very important issue for our entire region.

ALTERNATIVE FUELED VEHICLES GRANT

Public Works Director Mark Combs explained the Alternative Fueled Vehicles Program. He explained that on November 14, 2000, City Council adopted a resolution supporting an alternative fuel vehicle program and authorized staff to submit grant applications to support it. In April 2001, the City received a \$400,000 grant from NC Division of Air Quality (DAQ) to construct a compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling station in the City. The two primary reasons for the award were:

- a. To complete a State-wide fueling "corridor" master plan along I-40 which would accommodate CNG-powered vehicles from coast-to-coast;
- b. To provide a fast-fill source for locally owned/operated CNG vehicles.

Unfortunately, due to State budget challenges in 2001, the grant was not funded as planned.

Last month DAQ staff contacted the City and expressed interest in re-funding the construction of a CNG fueling station.

If City Council wishes to move forward and accept the grant if received, a resolution authorizing the City to accept the grant and entering into an agreement with the N.C. Division of Air Quality, and a budget amendment will be brought before Council.

City staff recommends City Council (1) accept the Mobile Source Emissions Reduction Grant; (2) construct CNG fuel station; (3) fund/develop a Citywide AFV program; (4) maintain partnership(s) for clean air; and (5) research and implement new AFV technology, as available.

Mr. Combs responded to various questions from Council regarding alternative fuel.

Mayor Worley asked that the record show that City Council has received this information and instructs the City Manager to place this item on the next formal City Council agenda.

ORDINANCE NO. 3029 - BUDGET AMENDMENT TO CONSIDER REQUEST FROM ASHEVILLE REGIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY

Director of Economic Development Mac Williams said that this is the consideration of a request from the Asheville Regional Airport for \$10,000 from the City of Asheville to support a matching federal grant they have received.

The Asheville Regional Airport Authority (ARAA) recently received a \$500,000 grant from the U.S. Dept. of Transportation (USDOT) (1 of only 40 such grants made nationwide and the only one in NC). The purpose of the grant program is to help small airports like Asheville enhance air service by addressing service deficiencies such as limited commercial jet service and high fares. After receiving the grant, the USDOT advised the ARAA that monies it had committed, from its own internal sources, as the local match would not be an appropriate source for all the match and that at least \$100,000 cash from outside local sources would be required. Further, the ARAA anticipates such commitments will be needed by July 1, or perhaps, sooner.

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The funds are intended to support the recently announced Continental Airlines direct service to Houston (beginning June 12th). Additionally, funding will be used to support other existing carriers with advertising and marketing initiatives to increase competition, upgrade service, and lower fares.

The ARAA is currently undertaking an aggressive fundraising campaign among local private and public sectors and has commitments for \$75,000. The ARAA is requesting \$10,000 from the City of Asheville in support of this effort.

Staff recommends City Council adopt a budget amendment to provide \$10,000 to the Asheville Regional Airport in support of their efforts to leverage a \$500,000 federal grant and authorize the City Manager to transfer \$10,000 from the general fund contingency account to fund the request.

Councilman Ellis spoke in support of the request and noted that Buncombe County has committed \$10,000.

Ms. Susan Phyllis, Marketing and Public Relations Director of the Asheville Regional Airport, said that the Airport has commitments to receive \$25,000 from the Grove Park, \$25,000 from the Biltmore people, \$10,000 from the Tourism Development Authority and \$10,000 from Buncombe County.

Mayor Worley said that members of Council have been previously furnished with a copy of the ordinance and it would not be read.

Vice-Mayor Bellamy moved to waive the rules and take formal action at this meeting. This motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones and carried unanimously.

Councilman Ellis moved for the adoption of Ordinance No. 3029. This motion was seconded by Councilwoman Jones and carried unanimously.

ORDINANCE BOOK NO. 20 – PAGE

AMENDMENT REGARDING METHOD OF DESIGNATING PARKING METER ZONES AND PARKING IN DOUBLE METER SPACES

Transit Services Director Bruce Black said that this is the consideration of an ordinance changing the method of designating meter zones and the method of parking in double meter spaces.

Due to economic expansion and construction in the Central Business District and the ever-changing traffic patterns, there are frequent and continual changes in the layout of parking. Appendix E requires a change by City Council to add meters in these new areas when changes take place. By repealing Appendix E and amending Section 19-162, we will be able to install meters immediately as the traffic engineer designates through expansion, contraction, or alteration, new parking spaces in the Central Business District.

An amendment is also necessary to Section 19-164 regarding the parking at double sided parking meters. As a person parks their vehicle there is no way they can be in compliance with the current ordinance if they park in the forward parking space of a double meter. This amendment will reflect the new meters.

City staff requests City Council approve the ordinance.

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Mayor Worley asked that the record show that City Council has received this information and instructs the City Manager to place this item on the next formal City Council agenda.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANSWERING POINT

Police Chief Will Annarino and Fire Chief Greg Grayson said that staff is requesting formal confirmation that City Council desires to participate with Buncombe County in a joint 911 emergency communications center in approximately three years. In the interim period, staff requests direction on whether to proceed with establishing a City of Asheville primary 911 public safety answering point for all 911 calls originating in the City of Asheville or to contract with Buncombe County to provide fire/rescue dispatch services and continue processing police 911 emergency calls as we are currently doing.

During the 2003-04 City Council Budget Retreat in January, 2003, City staff presented Council with concerns about the delays that were occurring with over 32,849 911 emergency fire/rescue and police calls that are being transferred to the City of Asheville from Buncombe County. At that time, staff recommended to City Council that the City of Asheville create it's own primary 911 Public Safety Answering Point (or PSAP) in order to provide more rapid response to all emergencies occurring in the City of Asheville.

Council requested more information on the subject and most Council members toured the Buncombe County 911 emergency communications center and the City of Asheville emergency communications center. Some Council members toured the Sheriff's communications center. In the past five months, Council has had much discussion about the 911 dispatch situation. In addition, Buncombe County Commission Chairman Nathan Ramsey has recently stepped forward with a written proposal on behalf of Buncombe County Government to construct a joint emergency communications center that should be built and operational in approximately three years.

The operational benefits of a joint emergency communications center are significant. Most importantly, all 911 callers will experience the most minimal delay possible in receiving emergency services. However, Council needs to take action affirming support to participate in a joint emergency communications center when it is built by Buncombe County Government. Council's commitment to this joint venture will allow Buncombe County to properly design a joint center. In addition, city and county staff can begin working together in planning and facilitating the joint operation.

During this three-year interim period, Council needs to provide direction to staff on which one of three options the City of Asheville will take for the next three years, until the joint communications facility is constructed and becomes operational. The three interim options are:

1. Leave operations as they are with the delays on all 32,849+ 911 emergency calls transferred to the City of Asheville.
2. Create a City of Asheville primary 911 PSAP and receive and process all 911 calls originating within the Asheville corporate limits, or
3. Authorize the City Manager to execute a performance contract with Buncombe County Government for dispatch of fire/rescue calls (approximately 11,389 calls annually) and continue dispatching police emergency calls as we are doing currently (approximately 21,460 calls annually).

Police Chief Annarino explained the staff issue of improving the dispatch of emergency services responding to incidents by minimizing delays.

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Deputy Police Chief Ross Robinson summarized how the currently 911 calls are routed to the Asheville Police Department from the Buncombe County Emergency Operation Center (EOC). He explained the delay being the current Buncombe County to City of Asheville transfer generates an approximate 15-85 second delay in our police officers and firefighters responding to emergency situations.

Police Chief Annarino said the long term solution is the consolidated communication center.

Fire Chief Greg Grayson feels we should move toward a consolidated communications center. The advantages for a consolidated center include: less delay, more personnel working together, better efficiency, and joint dispatch of multiple agencies.

Police Chief Annarino said that a consolidated center construction will require 2.5 to 3 years. He explained if there is no change, there are no "pros." "Cons" include a 15-85 second delay remains for 32,849 police and fire calls; 911 surcharge unavailable to upgrade city infrastructure; and not addressing staff's dispatch delay concern.

Police Chief Annarino then explained that if the City has a PSAP, the "pros" are: no delay of 32,849 emergency calls for city emergency responders; \$312,000 in annual 911 surcharge revenues available to upgrade infrastructure; best Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating for Asheville Fire & Rescue (+2-1/2 points); and independent accountability for the city. "Cons" include: creates delays for 11,365 ambulance dispatches, prompting more fire/rescue responses; startup costs of \$869,879; all equipment costs borne by city - \$564,000; and additional ongoing costs.

Deputy Police Chief Robinson then explained the projected City call load.

Fire Chief Grayson then explained the Buncombe County offer during this interim period. The "pros" include: contract with Buncombe County for consolidated center; no delays for 11,389 fire calls for service; and improved ISO rating for fire (+2 points).

Police Chief Annarino explained that the "con" is that the staff issue is not addressed for 21,460 police calls per year. These calls will still experience some delay.

Fire Chief Grayson explained that the County's offer includes the following costs to be borne by the County: \$148,780 annual staffing costs paid during interim (2.5 years = \$371,950); approximately \$75,000 start-up cost; and cost of new equipment \$564,000 in consolidated center. The County's funding offer totals \$1,010,950.

Police Chief Annarino and Fire Chief Grayson recommended City Council give their formal endorsement and commitment to participate in a joint 911 emergency communications center with Buncombe County Government. In the interim period, city staff recommends that if Council wants to address all 911 calls within the corporate limits, that the city proceed with implementing a City of Asheville PSAP. If City Council does want to take this step during the interim period, Council can authorize the City Manager to execute a performance contract with Buncombe County to dispatch all fire/rescue calls.

Police Chief Annarino and Fire Chief Grayson, along with Buncombe County's Emergency Operations Manager Jerry VeHaun, answered several questions from Council, regarding start-up costs, equipment, training, personnel, availability of homeland security monies, and 911 fees.

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Mr. VeHaun said that the joint consolidated communication center would be completed by December of 2005.

After discussion, it was the consensus of City Council to (1) formally endorse and commit to participate in a joint 911 emergency communications center with Buncombe County Government; and (2) authorize the City Manager to execute a performance contract with Buncombe County to dispatch all fire/rescue calls and continue dispatching police emergency calls as we are doing currently.

CANDIDATE INFORMATION SESSION

City Manager Jim Westbrook said that several months ago City Council asked him to develop a program of information for members of the public who run for City Council. The feeling was that in the past, if there had been general information sessions about City government and specific programs, misinformation would have been less likely to develop during the election process. In preparing the proposed agenda, all City departments were consulted, as well as the City Attorney, the City Clerk and the Institute of Government.

As you know, City staff could literally take hours going into detail on various programs that would be of interest. However, he felt it most important to allow potential candidates to ask questions so they could decide what is important. In talking with staff at the Institute of Government about this particular initiative, they indicated that they were changing their program for new council members to include processes for working as a group, the need for personal time commitment, and taking a long-term view of both issues and relationships, among other things. Therefore, he included that in the agenda, too.

He would ask that Mayor Worley or a similar elected official act as the leader of the meeting, setting up the ground rules,

as well as keeping time and moderating as necessary. After a brief welcome and introduction, he would present some information concerning the City's relationship to the state, as well as the council-manager form of government. He would be followed by the City Attorney who would present information on state law, local law, conflicts of interest, Open Meetings law, etc. The Finance Director and the Budget Director would follow with brief explanations of the budget and financial condition. This general information would be followed by a question and answer session with all candidates, moderated by Mayor Worley.

The last session would be led by a former Mayor and Council Members. The purpose is to follow up on the Institute of Government's suggestion about the need to hear and discuss the democratic process, personal commitments, working as a group, the need for public trust, etc. This would allow persons who are running for Council to hear from a previous Mayor and Council Members who are no longer in elected office their views on these important facets of being an elected Council Member.

The City Manager recommends that City Council approve moving forward with the Candidate Information Session.

Mayor Worley asked that the record show that City Council has received this information and instructs the City Manager to place this item on the next formal City Council agenda.

BOARD/COMMISSION VACANCIES

It was the consensus of City Council to readvertise for the vacancies on the Civic Center Commission and the Regional Water Authority.

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It was the consensus of City Council to have the City Clerk prepare the proper paperwork to reappoint Mr. Gene Bell to the Civil Service Board to serve an additional two-year term.

OTHER BUSINESS

City Attorney Oast responded to Councilman Dunn when he asked what if the property owner who has to give the right-of-way for the entrance at Richmond Hill Drive would not give the right-of-way. Mr. Oast said that Richmond Hill Drive is a state road and the State has the option of condemnation for building roads. He did note that negotiations are still occurring with the property owner.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Worley adjourned the meeting at 5:42 p.m.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR