

**DURHAM CITY COUNCIL VIRTUAL BUDGET RETREAT
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2021 @ 9:00 am
VIA ZOOM**

Present: Mayor Steve Schewel, Mayor Pro Tempore Jillian Johnson and Council Members Javiera Caballero, Pierce Freelon, DeDreana Freeman, Mark-Anthony Middleton, and Charlie Reece.

Also present: Interim City Manager Thomas J. Wanda Page, City Attorney Kim Rehberg, City Clerk Diana Schreiber; and Department Heads were in attendance.

[CALL TO ORDER]

Mayor Schewel called the meeting to order and thanked everyone in attendance.

Bertha Johnson, Director of Budget and Management services, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the layout for the meeting and gave an overview of the content.

Wanda Page, Interim City Manager gave a short presentation to the council regarding the timeline of the budget items; thanked staff, council, and the residents for the development of the FY 21-22 budget. She also highlighted specific topics such as pay recommendation increases for city staff, racial equity, the success of the Durham civil rights mural, and other city priorities.

Mayor Schewel thanked both Ms. Page and Ms. Johnson for their introductory comments and for setting the tone and direction for the course of the day.

Council Member Freelon also thanked Ms. Page for lifting up the racial equity cause and also expressed excitement for attending his first budget retreat.

Mayor Pro Tempore Johnson noted how different the current budget retreat was compared to the budget retreat of 2020 since the COVID-19 pandemic hit and changed the course of where the city had to prioritize funding and felt confident the city would be able to get more done in the future.

Council Member Reece stated that he looked forward to the resident survey and commended Interim City Manager Page for stepping into that role so well.

Council Member Middleton echoed the comments made by his council colleagues regarding the City Manager's remarks and suggested that the City was prepared for upcoming challenges.

[AGENDA ITEMS]

Shari Metcalfe, Strategic Manager of Budget Management Services, introduced the upcoming presentations and gave a snap shot of the resident survey.

PRESENTATION: RESIDENT SURVEY

Jason Marado, Director of Community Research at ETC provided a presentation on the City-County resident survey that measured resident responses to services they received and outlined the key findings of the survey. He spoke to the difference in responses by Black, Hispanic and White residents in Durham county on street maintenance, equitable engagement with the city, affordable housing, and interactions with law enforcement.

Council Member Freeman asked if it would be more beneficial to do separate surveys for the city and county and if future surveys could include income questions.

Mr. Marado responded that an income question was asked on the survey and they could break out the data by group. He also stated that the surveys could be separated for the city and county, but they would not be as cost effective as doing them together.

Council Member Caballero thanked all city staff for keeping city services operating at a high standard during such a challenging year and noted that the survey reflected that sentiment.

Council Member Middleton noted that a lot of the information in the survey regarding street maintenance and police services corresponded with things that he had been hearing from residents.

Council Member Freeman asked if there was a threshold for age in the survey and if youth were included as participants.

Mr. Marado stated that the survey was only intended for respondents 18 and older.

Council Member Reece appreciated the work in the survey and the focus that all racial groups had on affordable housing and COVID testing. He thanked staff for not slowing down on those issues.

Mayor Schewel also appreciated that the survey acknowledged the work the city was doing regarding racial equity, affordable housing, and street maintenance. He said that street maintenance was consistently at the top of priorities for residents over the 10 budget retreats that he had attended on Council.

Council Member Reece highlighted community engagement by the city with black and brown residents as an area of improvement. However, he did thank staff for implementing the language access plan for the Spanish speaking communities.

Council Member Freeman echoed the comments made by Council Member Reece and reiterated a call for desegregating the data by racial groups in order to make better decisions rooted in racial equity.

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Council Member Middleton underscored that there was still more race equity work that needed to be done and urged for more earnest conversations on the subject.

PRESENTATION: STRATEGIC PLAN

Shari Metcalfe, Strategic Manager of Budget Management Services, gave a presentation on the 2021 Strategic Plan. She provided an overview of what a strategic plan was and likened it to a map that would give the city direction on things that were related to the core values of Durham; goal setting timelines; and noted the performance measures and objectives.

No questions by council.

PRESENTATION: CONNECTED, ENGAGED, AND DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Goal champions Jason Jones of Parks and Recreation and James Davis of NIS gave a presentation and highlighted the following: affordable housing, community outreach, quality of life, increased transit options, and community cohesion.

Council Member Freelon thanked staff for the presentation and for keeping the tone light and energetic.

Council Member Caballero echoed the comments made by Council Member Freelon and uplifted the city's language access plan.

Council Member Reece thanked staff for their work on the presentation.

PRESENTATION: SHARED ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Goal champions Andre Pettigrew of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development and Bo Dobrzanski of Planning gave a presentation and highlighted the following: community outreach, assessing local businesses to determine issues, minority and women owned businesses; input from the small business coalition, preserving the African American Legacy program, and the status of training infrastructure.

Mayor Schewel thanked staff for their presentation and expressed a positive outlook on items in the presentation that he was unaware of.

Council Member Middleton asked how Minority and Women owned businesses were doing overall.

Mr. Pettigrew stated that Deborah Giles of the Equity and Inclusion department could provide a specific measurement.

Council Member Freeman asked how the built2last program was doing.

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Mr. Pettrigew stated that the program had many elements and that the work in his department had a broader role to play. He did suggest that the equity and inclusion department would be better equipped to speak to the immediate needs of specific programs.

Council Member Freeman acknowledged the hard work of staff, but expressed frustration. She expected to see more suggestions on how to combat racial disparities as it pertained to shared economic prosperity.

Deborah Giles, Director of the Equity and Inclusion Department, stated that there were a multitude of factors that limited the city contracts that went to minority and women owned businesses such as COVID-19 and having financial constraints.

PRESENTATION: CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES

Goal champions Deputy Chief Ianuzzi of the Fire Department and Major Bishop of the Police Department gave a presentation and highlighted the following: heightened presence in the community, various outreach efforts and programs, and a collaboration with North Carolina Central University.

Council Member Reece thanked staff for their presentation and uplifted the program encouraging students at North Carolina Central University to choose careers in firefighting science.

Council Member Middleton also expressed appreciation on the outreach efforts made by the fire department.

Council Member Freeman asked if there was a newsletter regarding all of the community activities from the Police Department.

Major Bishop stated that all of the community activities were advertised on the police social media page.

PRESENTATION: SUSTAINABLE, NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Goal Champion Vicki Westbrook of Water Management gave a presentation and highlighted the following: ongoing initiatives in the city, cross goal collaboration, inclusivity, reduction of energy usage, building infrastructure, and monitoring and predicting energy consumption.

Council Member Freeman asked if there was a way to receive some language to provide to legislatures on how to hold conversations in outdoor spaces due to covid-19.

Staff stated that they could put something together to provide to council.

Council Member Reece thanked staff for their work on the item.

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PRESENTATION: INNOVATIVE AND HIGH PERFORMING ORGANIZATION

Goal champions Anise Vance of Technology Solutions and J.J Scott of Human Resources gave a presentation and highlighted the following: internal assessments, implementation of workforce management solutions to better target staffing levels, trainings for city and county employees, and a data academy.

Council Member Freeman asked for a separation of the data and to revisit how the data is collected for future needs.

PRESENTATION: IDEA STARTER

Shannon Delaney of BMS, Muriel Klein of the City Manager's Office and Tonya Dudlick of General Services, spoke to the progress of idea starter; composting initiatives; making city hall sustainable; reducing waste among employees in break rooms; and encouraged those interested to look for more information on the website.

Mayor Schewel appreciated the staff's work in being able to make the virtual transition regarding the sustainability initiative.

[CLOSING REMARKS]

Ms. Johnson thanked everyone for their participation and attentiveness and gave an overview of the content and schedule for the upcoming budget meetings.

Mayor Schewel stated that the budget meeting for 2-12-21 would need an additional 30 minutes at the end for possible questions.

Council Member Caballero stated that she would be mobile during part of the 2-12-21 meeting.

Ms. Page hoped that the first meeting set the tone for upcoming meetings and thanked staff.

[ADJOURNMENT]

Seeing no further business to come before council, Mayor Schewel adjourned the meeting at 1:07pm