The Durham City Council held a virtual Special Budget Meeting on the above date and time with the following members present: Mayor Steve Schewel, Mayor Pro Tempore Jillian Johnson and Council Members Javiera Caballero, DeDreana Freeman, Mark-Anthony Middleton and Charlie Reece. Excused Absences: None.

Also present: City Manager Tom Bonfield, City Attorney Kim Rehberg, City Clerk Diana Schreiber and Deputy City Clerk Ashley Wyatt.

Mayor Schewel called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance at the virtual meeting.

[ANNOUNCEMENTS BY COUNCIL]

There were no announcements by council.

Being no further business to come before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 2:33 p.m.

PRESENTATION 1: CITY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Director Pat Young provided a brief overview of the City County Planning Department and reported on the following: Core business operations and how the department made the shift successfully to teleworking; public hearings being made available on YouTube; the department operating remotely effectively for the foreseeable future, daily manager briefings; the ongoing status of the comprehensive plan; modest reduction in revenue; and limited in person services for certain residents with limitations.

Council Member Middleton noted that he was pleased to see social distancing being adhered to on various work sites throughout the city.

Mayor Schewel asked if the department as a whole had learned anything new since teleworking due to COVID-19.

Mr. Young advised that knowing the department could work remotely effective was something that was learned.

PRESENTATION 2: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Director Marvin Williams provided a brief overview of the Public Works Department and reported on the following: In person services still were occurring, development review
services; staff located in City Hall teleworking; public utility work, volume of requests, reduction in funding for street resurfacing of current roads, and the need for 2 additional Full Time Employees.

Council Member Reece asked what could happen if the 2 full time positions were not filled.

Mr. Williams advised that continued limited inspections on public utilities would be a result of not hiring 2 additional full time positions. He also advised that the 2 positions would be able to shut down work that was not permitted.

Council Member Middleton asked if the requested 2 positions would have an impact on any safety concerns.

Mr. Williams advised that the positions would have an impact on safety and that the department has needed them for years, but has tried to be innovative in finding other solutions over the years.

Council Member Freeman asked for clarification as to who the “public utilities” were.

Mr. Williams stated that public utilities were referencing any company that puts its infrastructure in the ground in the city or cell phone towers.

Council Member Freeman noted that she was displeased with how the State had put local municipalities in bad position with how public utility companies were allowed to conduct business in their jurisdiction.

Council Member Caballero asked if there were any noteworthy trends of things slowing down in the industry.

Mr. Williams advised that there were not.

Council Member Caballero asked if there was a priority ranking of requests for the department.

Mr. Williams advised that he and the budget analyst for the department would provide that information at a later date.

Mayor Schewel noted that the State took the authority away from local governments to charge public utilities for certain things that now fall to the city to maintain and/or monitor.

PRESENTATION 3: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Director Reginald Johnson provided a brief overview of the Community Development Department and reported on the following: Staff getting city issued devices who had been using their own devices while teleworking; challenges for increased fundraising for non-profits; shelters not being able to serve as many people in order to comply with social distancing; implementation of the bond program; eviction diversion program; and property tax outreach.

Council Member Middleton asked if property tax outreach had actual money associated with it or if it was just education.

Mr. Johnson advised that it was just education.

Council Member Reece asked clarifying questions regarding the presentation material and asked that additional market info be shared at a later time.

Mr. Johnson advised that the information was tied to the housing bond and that information would be sent.

Council Member Reece asked if that was why information on the housing bond itself was not included.

Mr. Johnson advised that he was too uncertain as to what the housing bond funds would look like due to the current circumstances of COVID-19.

Council Member Reece asked why the requested Full Time Employee was important.

Mr. Johnson stated that the role would be responsible for developing very unique contracts for the various projects of the department.

Council Member Reece asked who was doing the job at present.

Mr. Johnson advised that there was no one doing that role.

Council Member Middleton asked if there was more that could be done regarding public outreach as it pertained to grants and preserving home ownership. He suggested that the program become more robust and impactful.

Mr. Johnson stated that the state of the program was a direct reflection of the amount of resources allocated, the length of time it takes to review the applications, as well as the cost benefit analysis.

Mayor Pro Tempore Johnson expressed that she would like to see the program continue.

Council Member Freeman echoed the comment made by Mayor Pro Tempore Johnson and added that race equity as well as space for small business should be included.
Council Member Caballero stated that she would like to see the program move forward into the next budget.

Mayor Schewel noted the consensus of the council and by visual “thumbs up” the council unanimously authorized the City Manager to include $10,000.00 into the Home Ownership Grant Program.

Council Member Freeman noted that she still had concerns about race equity and how the city engaged with residents as far as the housing bond was concerned. She stated that people of color had notoriously been disenfranchised as it pertained to housing over the years.

Mayor Pro Tempore Johnson noted that homelessness seemed to be increasing and that it was very concerning. She requested that the situation was looked into and to identify if additional resources were needed.

Mayor Schewel stated that he looked to the Durham County Commission for support on tax relief for long term, low income homeowners, and that he would like a proposal to come from them that the City Council could consider at any time.

Council Member Freeman expressed concerns about leaving actions up to the county and felt that the city could handle certain issues in house so that residents would not be isolated.

Council Member Reece agreed with Mayor Schewel and stated that while he would have also supported putting money in a fund for tax relief, that it would not make sense if the county was not on board.

Council Member Caballero stated that the Council should be ready to act as soon as there was movement from the county.

Mayor Pro Tempore Johnson expressed her support for the plan.

Council Member Middleton also supported the plan and added that a dollar amount should be included to encourage the county.

Council Member Freeman stated that the council should send a message that they would be moving forward and that a dollar figure should have been included in the budget.

Mayor Schewel responded that he had concerns about including a number and not knowing what the number could be.

Council Member Freeman said that residents needed to know that the city supported home owners.
Mayor Pro Tempore Johnson asked if the memo given to council included a total cost.

Council Member Middleton suggested that a formal letter of intent or official statement be sent to the county with or without a number.

Council Member Caballero agreed with the comments made by Council Member Middleton.

Council Member Reece suggested that Mayor Schewel write a letter on behalf of the Council to partner in the Tax Relief program.

**MOTION** by Mayor Pro Tempore Johnson, seconded by Council Member Freeman, to suspend the rules and take a vote on the item, was approved at 12:35 p.m. by the following vote: Ayes: Mayor Schewel, Mayor Pro Tempore Johnson and Council Members Caballero, Freeman, Middleton, and Reece. Noes: None. Absent: None.

**MOTION** by Council Member Middleton, seconded by Council Member Freeman, to send a formal letter of intent to the Durham County Commissioners on behalf of the Durham City Council regarding partnering in the Tax Relief Program, was approved at 12:38 p.m. by the following vote: Ayes: Mayor Schewel, Mayor Pro Tempore Johnson and Council Members Caballero, Freeman, Middleton, and Reece. Noes: None. Absent: None.

**PRESENTATION 4: OFFICE OF ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Director Andre Pettigrew and members of his staff provided a brief overview of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development and reported on the following: Durham small business recovery loan program; digital website portal; direct technical assistance; equitable engagement; built to last; neighborhood revitalization; virtual job fairs; transitional jobs; welcome home; and targeting small businesses.

Mayor Schewel asked for additional information on the Welcome Home Program.

Council Member Freeman thanked the department for their great information and asked why there was a hold up for reopening the career centers.

Council Member Middleton stated that he would be happy to use funds for the program.

Council Member Reece inquired about the status of a partner to help administer the program.

Mr. Pettigrew advised that it would have been premature to announce anything officially, but there were conversations taking place.

**PRESENTATION 5: DISCUSSION OF ENGAGEMENT**
Robin Baker and Monica Chaparro of the Budget and Management Services Department provided a brief overview of engagement happening in the city and reported on the following: Community engagement; identifying urgent items (current- August); deploying resources to DHA residents; and recommendations for moving forward.

Council Member Freeman thanked Ms. Baker and Ms. Chaparro for their presentation. She stated that she was able to understand the presentation slides better with context. She also asked how public art was being surveyed.

Ms. Baker advised that she would follow up.

Council Member Middleton noted that he found only virtual options for engagement to be problematic and that all programs needed full equity and in person engagement.

Mayor Schewe thanked Ms. Baker and Ms. Chaparro for their presentation.

Council Member Reece thanked Ms. Baker and Ms. Chaparro for their presentation and noted that there were things that would need to be worked out in the future.

Mayor Pro Tempore Johnson noted that public health would be in the forefront of everyone’s minds for the long term and that it would affect how engagement and how everyone would need more access to technology.

City Manager Bonfield commented that there had been a less than 1% rate of responses to the 2020 census of the most vulnerable neighborhoods in the city and having that information could be helpful. He also asked if it was the consensus of the council to move any follow up items to the June 4, 2020 Work Session.

The consensus of the council was to have and budgetary flagged items on the next work session agenda.

Seeing no additional business to come before council, the meeting was adjourned at 2:33p.m.

Ashley Wyatt, CMC
Deputy City Clerk