

**MINUTES OF WORK SESSION  
OF THE NEWPORT NEWS CITY COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE 10<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
2400 WASHINGTON AVENUE  
February 12, 2019  
4:30 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** Sharon P. Scott, MPA; Tina L. Vick; Patricia P. Woodbury; Sandra N. Cherry, D. Min; Marcellus L. Harris III; David H. Jenkins; and McKinley L. Price, DDS-----7

**ABSENT:** -----0

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Alan Archer; Collins L. Owens; Mabel Washington Jenkins; Joye Thompkins; Darlene Bradberry; Shelia McAllister; Flora Chiros; Lisa Cipriano; Susan Goodwin; Florence Kingston; Venerria Thomas; Everett Skipper; Louis Martinez; Frank James; Janice Roach; Dean Collins; Dawn Barber; Sonia Alcantara-Antoine; Chief Steve Drew; Erica Woods-Warrior; David Freeman; Cleder Jones; Kim Lee; Eoghan Miller; Zina Middleton; and Josh Reyes

**I. Youth & Gang Program Briefing**

Mayor Price introduced Mr. Alan Archer, Assistant City Manager, to provide an overview of the Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Violence Prevention and Response (a copy of the presentation, "Building Better Futures, City of Newport News Youth and Gang Violence Prevention Initiative 2019 - 2021", is attached and made a part of these minutes).

Assistant City Manager Archer noted the City's objective was to review the "draft plan" with City Council and respond to any questions prior to implementation. He indicated that the draft plan was not reviewed completely at the January 22, 2019 City Council Work Session. He introduced, Dr. Erica Woods-Warrior with Carrington Consulting, LLC and Newport News Chief of Police Steve Drew.

Assistant City Manager Archer indicated the right approach was being made, so everyone could look at the situation through the same lens, while providing action steps with a clear road map about who would be in charge of the next steps and the time line to execute those steps.

Assistant City Manager Archer noted that the Work Session objective was to review the Core Comprehensive Strategic Plan recommendations:

- Vision

- To inspire hope and improve the quality of life for youth and young adults in the City of Newport News

Assistant City Manager Archer stated the strategic goals was the backbone of the Building Better Futures Initiative (BBFI) blueprint. The strategic goals were well documented and well thought through.

- Strategic Goals
  1. To increase the communication and coordination of services among agencies to serve gang-involved youth more effectively
  2. To reduce the number of violent incidents and improve community safety in targeted neighborhoods
  3. To reduce the number of barriers of youth and young adults returning to the community
  4. To equip school based staff with tools to meet the needs of gang-involved and violence-involved youth and young adults
  5. To increase community awareness and participation in gang and youth violence prevention strategies and awareness
  6. To engage members of the faith community as a partner in the Initiative

Assistant City Manager Archer shared the proposed organizational structure:

- Organizational Structure – BBFI Restructured
  - Office of Youth and Gang Violence Prevention was consolidated within the Police Department Division of Youth and Community Support
    - Governance was accomplished through the shared leadership of two Co-Chairs (Chief of Police and Director of Human Services)
    - Work was managed through a dedicated project lead
    - Work was performed through a Collaborative Work Group that used data analytics to achieve outcome
  - Work was reinforced through input from youth and the faith community
  - Work was supported by a Strategic Communications Plan
  - Work was focused on three high priority neighborhoods
    - Ridley Circle
    - Marshall Courts
    - Courthouse Green/Beechmont

Assistant City Manager Archer noted that the shared leadership structure in which the organization had been engaged over the last year, around rethinking the roles as department heads to move more collectively while crossing departmental lines. Trying to create organizational environment, while looking at solutions for some of the more obvious problem, but doing so by sharing the workload and looking beyond what the priorities might be within the City's operating departments. A model of the organization was created to be used during the budget process for FY 2019 – 2020.

Assistant City Manager Archer noted that the work was managed by a dedicated project team. The reason for the recommendation in the Comprehensive Plan was realized between activities under the six goals and the work group there was enough activity to indicate that a dedicated lead was needed. He indicated, with any large scale project, coordination was needed, as well as a strategy to identify a lead person to ensure that the coordination was occurring. He advised that the work was performed through a collaborative work group that used data analytics to achieve outcomes. Over the past several years, City Council had requested more of an effort around the work performed, and results to give accountability that the plan was followed through and executed. Assistant City Manager Archer shared that Serious or Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program (SHOCAP) was very important. He had met with Mr. Andy Block, Director, Juvenile Justice for the Commonwealth of Virginia, to advise the City on how to share data to ensure that the confidentiality required was in place. There was a lot of data available, and the City had not been taking full advantage to use the data in a smart way to guide the decisions made.

Assistant City Manager Archer advised that Chief Drew was already active with the faith-based community to engage them in the work of community policing. Chief Drew had been actively identifying and planning youth forums, while giving youth a more active voice. He further addressed that Chief Drew had a number of citizen groups. There was an advisory network in place to funnel information from these efforts to reinforce the plan while recognizing the value of the work. The communication plan outlined the areas of weakness - actively going out in the community and getting members involved with community policing. To convey to community and citizens of what BBFI was and to kick off the initiative. The BBFI focused on three high priority neighborhoods, 1) Ridley Circle, 2) Marshall Courts, and 3) Courthouse Green/Beechmont.

Assistant City Manager Archer shared the Revised Street Outreach Structure was as follows:

- Police Department ( Direct Oversight)

- BBFI Collaborative Work Group with Co-Chairs (Police and Human Services)
  - Youth Outreach (Case Manager)
  - Juvenile Services
  - Sheriff's Office
  - Human Services
  - Data Analyst
  - Court Services

Assistant City Manager Archer stated there were recommendations on STEP, while partnering with the Newport News Public Schools (NNPS) with a component of Summer Program for Arts, Recreation and Knowledge (SPARK). The City was in the process of preparing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for bids for a provider; however the City received a \$900,000 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Grant and the NNPS Superintendent willingness to have a discuss of the larger role that schools could play in the STEP program. Would like to implement a training curriculum that could be used in-school STEP participants and still allow them to work at worksite; but also use that to transition into one of the many career pathway programs.

- Summer Training and Enrichment Program (STEP) Redesigned
  - In-School: Partner with NNPS to bridge training with Career Pathways
  - Out-of-School: Partner with the Navigating Wealth Building Initiative and Brooks Crossing Innovation and Opportunity Center
  - Emphasis on supportive services, full-time employment and program evaluation
  - Work was focused on three high priority neighborhoods with defined eligibility criteria
    - Ridley Circle
    - Marshall Courts
    - Courthouse Green/Beechmont

Councilwoman Woodbury interjected, she thought the City had done everything that was needed for the STEP program. The City had not received any data/research for the past five-years of the STEP program. She believed there was a new program/plan from the informative provided at the January 22, 2019 City Council Work Session. Assistant City Manager Archer replied there was a new plan and the new plan would have partnerships with other entities to help administer and run the program, while exploring two options, 1) partner with the NNPS to include the 9 – 10 week program, to occur during the summer months, and 2) for the out-of-school youth to work more closely with the workforce development center. There would be more discusses about other initiatives and collaborative work with the Newport News Shipyard and NNPS Career

Pathway Program. There were a lot of duplication of programs and the program should grow beyond what the limits of the City administration was capable of doing.

Councilwoman Cherry indicated that she had read through the first draft and she submitted questions to the City Manager to get clarification; unfortunately, those questions were not answered. She thanked Assistant City Manager Archer, Dr. Woods-Warrior, and Chief Steve Drew for their work on the plan; however, it was too much data and convoluted. The document indicated what the City once did and what the City was trying to do with Chief Drew's program, but it did not work well together. She questioned what would the City do with STEP? She further stated that Chief Drew gave a wonderful presentation on the plan for Youth and Gang Violence that was good, and questioned why not go with that plan. Councilwoman Cherry advised the focus was to disrupt community violence in the City of Newport News, and questioned why not go with the plan Chief Drew presented at the press conference?

Vice Mayor Vick stated the information and what was received from the first report emphasized that the summer jobs program was to build better youth. The youth were not the only people that committed crime. The STEP program put a separate focus to help the youth 18 – 24 years of old. There needed to be a youth friendly atmosphere, but not through the Police Department. Assistant City Manager Archer replied that STEP would not be a part of this group or the responsibility of the Police Department, which was why a consultant, Carrington Consulting, LLC was contracted. He shared that STEP (summer employment) was a high priority in the overall comprehensive plan, but not a part of what the collaborative work group would be involved with.

Councilwoman Cherry stated it was not the job of Chief Drew and Ms. Venneria Thomas, Director, Newport News Department of Human Services to tell department heads what to do. There was a problem with the blueprint, and because there was too much information, the BBFI was not clear. She questioned what was happening with the STEP program and inquired about the data for the program. She said she served on two of the peer groups prior to becoming a Councilmember and the peer groups did not accomplish the work they set-out to do.

Councilwoman Woodbury questioned the redesigned program? Assistant City Manager Archer replied this was the same draft plan presented at the January 22, 2019 City Council Work Session, but this was a summary. Councilwoman Woodbury replied that a consultant was hired and a huge amount of work was put into the BBFI. Assistant City Manager Archer replied the information he showed was the same draft plan presented by the consultant.

Councilwoman Cherry thanked everyone for the hard work and great data, but it was too much information. It was great to have department collaboration. She indicated this presentation left her with more questions.

Councilwoman Woodbury indicated she believed the proper place would be with the Police Department. She believed that what Chief Drew was attempting would build a foundation that should bubble up in all the areas. She questioned why hire a consultant if the City was not going to listen to the recommendations?

Assistant City Manager Archer shared that the CORE recommendations presented were the same recommendations in the Strategic Plan, he stated he would try to condense the report. He indicated the draft plan pulled a lot piece into one large discuss and structure which gave greater insight with all the activities occurring in the City and engages the task people. He said Chief Drew welcomed the opportunity to be of the larger discussion and saw many more opportunities, the City has never had the type of insight which has created a different type of dynamics and create change. Dr. Woods-Warrior move out of piece mill way of tackling this issue and to move together.

Councilwoman Cherry questioned, with all of the data in the draft plan, what other information from the press conference could be used. Chief Drew replied, when he arrived in July 2018, a lot of people were already at the table discussing the concerns. He stated that youth were important to him. A big portion or challenge with this draft plan was getting the different departments to share information. The goal was to have all entities/departments to sit at the table and share information on youth. All departments touch the same young people; but everyone was in their own silo. Communication was a challenge, when it came to getting the information needed about youth when it came to crime reduction and improving the quality of life for our youth. The key component was to have all entities at the table to share necessary information.

Councilwoman Cherry questioned why Chief Drew and Ms. Thomas were the leads. Chief Drew replied a lead was needed in order to collaborate and explained why the information was necessary. Partnering with Ms. Thomas as co-leader could break the barrier of sharing the information.

Councilwoman Cherry questioned how Chief Drew could be a co-leader of BBFI and still take care of the other programs he had implemented. Councilwoman Woodbury replied someone had to drive the plan/program forward. Chief Drew stated that was where Dr. Woods-Warrior expertise came into play. The best way to collaborate, how many meetings were needed, and who should be at the table. He had to show commitment and set up the structure. He said he would assign Assistant Chief Randall who oversaw community youth and outreach. He stated he believed more interaction with the youth and community would reduce crime. Again, all entities involved touched the same young person, a plan could be put in place to assist that young person. Ms. Thomas, Director, Department of Human Services could be of great assistance with the array of services they provided.

Councilman Harris indicated the initial interpretation of the program, in Summer 2018, was a SHOCAP presentation, to have something that would holistically be for every individual. He indicated to have all entities involved was needed. There had been questions on how successful the STEP Program had been; however no data was produced. He believed partnering with the schools could be beneficial because of the career pathways initiative that NNPS had in place. The focus was to get the qualifying youth who would not have had access for employment in program. Vice Mayor Vick agreed and stated after 5-years there should be some data available. She stated just because a family was low-income should not be an indication that they were into crime. Young people wanted to get summer jobs. It was February and the process should not be held up. She advised that March 2019, that businesses should be receiving STEP program applications and registrations. She stated her concern was that the STEP program was for the low-income in the area. It appeared as though a lot of time was being put into reinventing the program. There had been some success with the STEP program and no one had mentioned that. There had been youth that had developed positive work ethics.

Chief Drew noted the high crime rates were in the Ridley Circle, Marshall Courts, and Courthouse Green/Beechmont areas. If Council looked at information and stats from 2018, the same three areas were high crime areas. During the Intel meetings, he wanted to see a decrease in crime in those three areas. He indicated that Street Outreach Workers would be incorporated under the team of Captain Morgan, Assistant Chief Randall, and himself. The Community Outreach Workers would be divided into three teams of two, to cover the three neighborhoods. Both Vice Mayor Vick and Councilwoman Cherry stated employees should be separated out. Assistant City Manager Archer replied the administration of STEP would not be responsible for this group. Councilwoman Cherry said the problem was STEP was added into the draft BBFI and the Youth and Gang Violence plan.

Councilwoman Woodbury indicated, at the January 22, 2019 City Council Work Session the presentation was null and void. Councilwoman Cherry replied this presentation was a summary. Councilwoman Woodbury stated she was not hearing the same information.

Assistant City Manager Archer shared that both Chief Drew and Ms. Thomas bought value to the plan. Their role was limited to facilitation and engagement within that structure and whatever time commitment are required for those meetings (tentatively suggested twice a month).

Councilwoman Woodbury questioned whether the STEP program would continue moving forward. Assistant City Manager Archer replied yes, the STEP program would continue moving forward. Councilwoman Woodbury indicated she had not heard that at the January 22, 2019 City Council Work Session presentation. Assistant City Manager Archer replied that the

presentation was not completed because of the sake of time. Councilwoman Woodbury inquired whether the removal of STEP was recommended. Assistant City Manager Archer replied yes, it was in the recommendation of the draft plan that STEP be removed.

Councilwoman Scott shared during a previous discussion, it was indicated that the STEP program was not reaching the intended targeted youth. There were youth coming home from college in the summer getting jobs, and the disadvantaged youth did not get employed. She questioned if that issue had been resolved. Assistant City Manager Archer replied, going forward, STEP was intended to be a smaller program and to focus on those individuals that could benefit from the program the most, not necessarily those individuals who had city residency, but those either in targeted areas, or because they had barriers that would prevent them from obtaining employment. He said those were the individuals the BBFI was to capture and engage in STEP as opposed to a cumbersome City-wide program. The STEP program was growing steadily from the beginning, from 170 during the initial years, and approaching 500. The City was not an employer to have someone to manage a summer program of that magnitude effectively.

Councilwoman Scott questioned whether the STEP program would be more concentrated in the three high risk neighborhoods, as opposed to citywide. Councilwoman Cherry indicated those three areas were not only about youth crime but crime as a whole. Assistant City Manager Archer replied that the barriers and eligibility criteria identified were broad, and reflected workforce practices that were seen in other programs that were offered under Workforce Innovation Opportunities Act. He indicated while those three high risk neighborhoods were targeted, the effort was to show a difference by concentrating all of the resources in target areas, but there was discretion to allow for those individual who lived outside the target areas to be enrolled in the program.

Councilwoman Scott questioned how the City would ensure that the targeted youth gained employment, and not the students who were home for the summer, who did not qualify. Assistant City Manager Archer replied they would not meet the criteria.

Councilwoman Cherry inquired who would oversee the STEP program. Assistant City Manager Archer replied it would be arranged with a provider to carry out the system (i.e. NNPS, Workforce Opportunity Innovation Center, a partnership). The oversight of the agreement would be in the City Manager's office.

Councilwoman Woodbury advised that \$1.5 million had been spent for the five-year program. She indicated she had an opportunity to speak to 10 – 15 gang members approximately three-years ago and did not believe that any of the outreach workers had spoken to this group. The individuals asked for a course in welding in an effort to become employed. She



made the request on their behalf, but none of them received a course in welding, nor were a part of the STEP program. She said the STEP program needed to reach the people that needed to be helped. Assistant City Manager Archer replied that partners would assist so not to be a burden of the City. The City was not equipped to fulfill that mission well. It was suggested that other partners could do it better, particularly with the NNPS curriculum and a program around career pathways which could provide enrichment during the summertime. Why not explore that opportunity? As the City got ready to open the Brooks Crossing Innovation Opportunity City with the TANF grant and other opportunities on the STEM side, why not fulfill that purpose/mission where the resources designed and structures to provide people with full time employment.

Vice Mayor Vick shared it had not been five-years wasted. There had been a number of youth that had gained work experience. She was not frustrated with STEP and stated she knew there were lives changed because of the employment experience and the parents could see a future for their child. She hoped STEP would continue even though the requested data was not available.

Mayor Price indicated he hoped everyone would look back at the history of the STEP program. He stated, for years, the City denied there was a gang problem, and once the STEP program began, a tentative plan was put in place. He looked at this process as something that was adapted to the needs of the research that was founded. The City has professional help to focus us into path that would be more productive for the money put into the program. He did not believe the money was wasted, the program had some good results. The people around the table, who are professionals had come to City Council suggestions on how they could better help the City to do what was needed, and what was best for the City and the STEP program. The agencies who would not allow data sharing, were beginning to breakdown were going to be targeted to get the plan together and adapt it to needs of the City and for the needs of the youth. With STEP the City would be where we wanted to be for those individuals with the need of those services, rather than being a summer training program for 500 youth. The City could not maintain 500 youth economically or management wise, which was why the draft plan had to be restructured. He advised, with the leadership of the Police Department and Department of Human Services, the plan could grow, adapt and be functional to what the City goals are and making the plan work.

Councilwoman Cherry indicated two different ideas were being discussed, 1) STEP and 2) BBFI. Ms. Woods-Warrior replied that STEP was not a part of the BBFI because it fell under street outreach, and in order to separate out the distinct rules of street outreach, one needed to figure out what to do with STEP. STEP was not part of the initial recommendation, the recommendation was that STEP be severed completely, restructured, and brought back after one-year. She referred to Assistant City Manager Archer about the recommendation being changed. Assistant City Manager Archer added, upon review of the draft plan, the City Manager did not feel

as though we had the flexibility to take off one-year from STEP. It was a priority for the City Manager and the administration, who would move forward restructuring STEP, working with partners who could make the program more efficient and effective at delivering the program.

Councilwoman Cherry advised that distinction between the BBFI and STEP was made clear. It made sense that the entities came together to share the information for wrap-around service. She questioned when Career Pathway began. Councilman Harris replied Career Pathway began in kindergarten. She inquired about who would pay for STEP and what part of this plan was in progress. Assistant City Manager Archer replied, should one meet TANF eligibility requirements the fund would come from the grant; otherwise the City would assist with the same level of funding for that individual.

Assistant City Manager Archer advised the next steps would be as follows:

- Finalize the Draft Comprehensive Strategic Plan
  - Update Implementation Plan target dates
  - Update Communication Plan target dates
- Proceed with administrative action to support core recommendations
- Start work immediately

Councilwoman Cherry indicated she could not see the implementation of the presented draft plan moving forward. She agreed on the collaborative group work. Assistant City Manager Archer replied the collaborative group was solid and workable. Councilwoman Cherry questioned whether this was the plan City Council had to vote on. Assistant City Manager Archer replied the City Manager would like the flexibility to look at the plan as a whole, particularly in terms of recommendations for hiring people and finding the most workable solution going forward. The need for an administrative position may not be needed because those positions could be found within the police department. He stated there were a lot of ways to get the work done, but the challenge for Dr. Woods-Warrior was presenting what she thought the plan needed in order to have sufficient support to move forward, which was why the positions were added. He honestly believed, if City Manager Rohlf was present she would indicate she wanted to make the best recommendation for the organization and the initiative.

Councilwoman Cherry questioned what was already operable and being done through the police department and was in full flow of the draft plan because, again, crime was not only for youth but for the whole crime prevention plan.

Councilwoman Woodbury understood that the presentation was not completed at the January 22, 2019 City Council Work Session and was frustrated because this presentation did

not appear to be a summary, rather a different plan. Assistant City Manager Archer replied he wanted to finish the BBFI presentation and this was a summary. He indicated the next step would be a final document that could be released (the actual plan) and the City Manager would have some very specific recommendations on how to implement of the plan.

Councilwoman Cherry questioned the “update implementation plan target dates” and hoped that was not saying the City Council accepted the draft plan as presented. She stated whereas it was indicated that this presentation was a summary, there was a lot of information in the previous document that City Council received. There was too much information and not properly separated into categories. Assistant City Manager Archer replied those were thing the City could take steps on, the actual suggestion for today’s work session are the convening of this group and in conjunction with the work people were undertaking, he stated the plan was solid. The goals and activities that support this work and work of the larger collaborative very actionable, workable and prepared to move forward.

Councilwoman Cherry inquired about the communication plan. Assistant City Manager Archer replied that was totally independently of this group.

Councilwoman Scott questioned whether BBFI and STEP was in one pot of money or two different pots of funding. Assistant City Manager Archer replied that would be addressed during budget process moving forward.

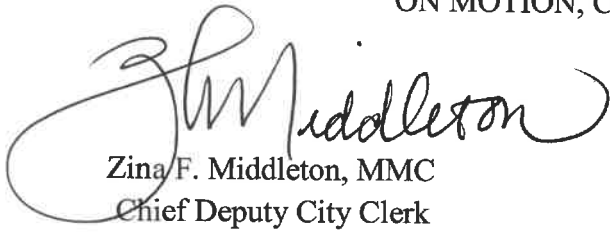
Councilwoman Cherry questioned if these were City departments, why would more money be requested. Assistant City Manager Archer replied more money was not being requested, funding could be transferred from one department to another.

## **II. Comments / Ideas / Suggestions**

Mayor Price advised there had been discussions about the approval and preparing of proclamations. There were two types of recognitions - proclamations and resolutions. He provided a sample proclamation to City Council to review. He proposed that each City Council Member could recognize individuals in their district. City Attorney Owens reminded that resolutions went through the City Attorney’s office. Mayor Price advised, the samples were not a written plan but he sought suggestions. He thanked the Offices of the City Attorney, City Manager, and the Communication Department for collaborating and coming up with this proposal.

Vice Mayor Vick indicated there needed to be some guidelines, such as time frame, information needed, etc. Councilwoman Scott shared there were exceptions when a rush job may be needed. Mayor Price replied that guidelines would be established.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS  
ON MOTION, COUNCIL ADJOURNED 5:52 P.M.



Zina F. Middleton, MMC  
Chief Deputy City Clerk

McKinley L. Price  
Mayor  
Presiding Officer

A true copy, teste:

City Clerk