



# MINUTES

March 24, 2021

## SECOND MONTHLY MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR, CITY HALL | 160 SIXTH AVE. E. 4:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Barbara G. Volk, Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Smith, and Council Members: Jeff Miller, Dr. Jennifer Hensley, and Lyndsey Simpson

Staff Present: City Manager John F. Connet, Assistant City Manager Brian Pahle, City Attorney Angela Becker, City Clerk Angela Reece, Communications Manager Allison Justus, and others

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Volk called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance. A quorum was established with all members in attendance.

### 2. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Update from Children and Family Resource Center – *Jamie Wiener, Executive Director, Sonia Gironda, Executive Director of Smart Start Partnership for Children, and Kelly Hart, Program Director for Smart Start Partnership for Children*

Jamie Wiener, Executive Director of Children and Family Resource Center addressed City Council regarding the importance of Early Childhood Education and the state of childhood education in Henderson County. Ms. Wiener discussed statistics, demographics, food insecurity, and health coverage issues facing Henderson County families. Ms. Wiener stated early childhood resources and education are an effective tool in crime prevention and said law enforcement officials are also advocating for early childhood education to reduce future crime. Kelly Hart, Program Director for Smart Start Partnership for Children spoke about the need for childcare and the impact of COVID-19 on childcare workers, centers, and staff. Ms. Wiener discussed the impact of trauma and stress on early childhood development and stated investing in early childhood education and family support is an effective tool for recovery. Ms. Wiener stated investing in high quality childcare not only positively impacts children but also strengthens the workforce. Ms. Wiener stated family friendly work policies lead to healthy children and healthier employees. Ms. Wiener encouraged City Council to become part of a Trauma-Responsive Henderson County which is a communitywide approach to share knowledge of the impacts trauma has on individuals, organizations, and systems and to create policies, procedures, and practices to assist those who have been impacted by trauma.

Council Member Dr. Jennifer Hensley clarified Center funding has been significantly decreased over the last year.

- B. Department Update – Police Department – *Blair Myhand, Police Chief*

HPD Police Chief Blair Myhand presented a department update to City Council. Chief Myhand stated he conducted an analysis of the department's workload, priorities, and staffing. Chief Myhand stated the department has motivated staff and strong mid-level leadership and said overall it was in good shape. Chief Myhand stated impending retirements of key staff will have an impact but will also provide for opportunities. Chief Myhand discussed challenges facing the department with recruiting and retention and with the structure and functions assigned to each area and presented a conceptual idea for how the organization can be structured in the future. Chief Myhand discussed patrol staffing and workload over the last 25 years and said the number of officers has stayed the same since 1995 while calls for service have doubled. Chief Myhand discussed reported crash statistics as compared to similar municipalities and said the data indicated that the City of Hendersonville has more crashes than the others of the same size. Chief Myhand discussed initiating a traffic unit in the future once additional data is available and stated positions and equipment could be covered through grants with no upfront cost to the City.

Chief Myhand discussed composition of staff stating the majority of the staff have less than 6 years of experience and discussed agency priorities proposing formation of a group of civilians to assist PD staff by providing support and advocacy. City Council Members supported this idea and gave direction

to Chief Myhand to proceed with formation of an informal group at the Chief’s discretion. Chief Myhand also discussed the potential for including a domestic violence advocate and mental health professional among the group.

Chief Myhand discussed accreditations and certifications stating HPD is currently part of the NCLM’s Risk Reduction Review Program and was one of the first to be accredited. Chief Myhand discussed HPD needs, specifically the need for a sustained vehicle replacement program and retention of officers.

City Council Member Jeff Miller discussed the need for additional staffing and Cpt. Rich Olson clarified additional positions have been allocated over the years for other purposes but stated patrol has remained the same since 1995. Chief Myhand clarified requesting additional staffing will be a multi-year endeavor due to cost citing \$120,000 to onboard a new officer in the first year with equipment and training. Council Member Miller asked for a proposed number of new officers and Chief Myhand stated at least 8 to 10 officers were needed and reminded City Council staff could seek grants to pay for the officers for the first few years.

Chief Myhand provided the following list of priorities:

1. Address immediate employee concerns using team approach to problem solving.
2. Develop an effective Mission, Vision, and Values statement to inform decision making.
3. Form a group of residents who provide support and advocacy.
4. Develop and utilize a multi-year strategic plan.
5. Evaluate and reorganization of the department to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of operations.
6. Prepare for upcoming retirements, promotions and create a long-term leadership development program.
7. Implement core training requirements and incentivize betterment through effective career progression program.
8. Review and revise policy manual as needed.
9. Maintain NCLM accreditation, seek state and/or international accreditation.

C. Pay & Classification Update – *Brian Pahle, Assistant City Manager*

Assistant City Manager Brian Pahle presented the Pay and Classification update to City Council reviewing the Pay and Classification Plan stating COVID delayed the timeline somewhat but said the project is back on track as more people are becoming vaccinated. Mr. Pahle provided the following timeline:



Mr. Pahle discussed the pay philosophy and key questions.

- What is the City’s reward strategy and on what basis will salaries progress? (Time Based, Merit Based, or Hybrid)

Mr. Pahle stated the current pay plan model is a hybrid model with performance based on merit with COLA and longevity increases. Staff recommended continuation of this model.

- What salary structure design does the City want to administer? (Open, Step, or Hybrid)

Mr. Pahle stated the current structure design model is performance based and said staff recommends the addition of more career progression opportunities which would make the model a true hybrid model.

- Does the City plan to make any changes to Total Compensation?

Mr. Pahle stated staff are proposing an increase in health insurance coverage for dependents to 75% and add paid family leave. The current dependent coverage is 50%. Mr. Pahle stated the current cost to the employee for family coverage is \$690.00 per month and said if the City offers 75% coverage then the cost to the employee for family coverage would be \$345.00 per month. The City pays 100% for individual employee coverage if wellness program criteria are met. Mr. Pahle stated the 75% coverage cost impact to the FY22 Budget would be \$127,576 across all funds. Council Member Jerry Smith clarified the percentage proposals were comparable to percentages offered by other municipal employers. Mr. Pahle further discussed health care premium percentages as they relate to competitors and provided the following information comparison for a city employee and a competitor employee benefit package.

Description	City	Competitor
<b>Starting Pay</b> (probation completion)	<b>\$16.90</b> / Hour <b>\$36,912.95</b> / Year	<b>\$18.06</b> / Hour <b>\$38,648</b> / Year
<b>Benefits Costs</b> (City at <b>50%</b> FY21 plan)	<b>\$711.50</b> / Month / Family Coverage	<b>\$260.00</b> / Month / Family Coverage
<b>Benefits Costs</b> (City at <b>75%</b> FY22 plan)	<b>\$345.08</b> / Month / Family Coverage	Same as above

Mr. Pahle stated these figures affect recruitment and retention with family coverage having a large impact on hiring and retention. Council Member Dr. Jennifer Hensley stated she supports higher coverage levels and inquired regarding wellness incentive-based programs and Mr. Pahle clarified the city currently has a program in place that allows employees to receive the full coverage benefit from the city if they meet certain wellness requirements. Human Resources Director Jennifer Harrell clarified the City’s insurance company, Medcost, also requires employees to meet certain criteria or the employee is charged a 10% surcharge on the premium.

- What market position does the City want to be in when compared to peers? (Lead, Align, or Lag)

Mr. Pahle recalled the prior pay/class study conducted in 2016 stating the model, which took three years to complete, aligned the scale at that time but clarified it has not been adjusted since. Mr. Pahle stated staff recommends providing City Council with a variety of “Lead” models with budget impacts and to address compression.

Mr. Pahle recalled City Council priorities as indicated below:

- Supporting Employees is a High Priority
- Growth Opportunities through Job Class and Education Tools
- Respecting and Paying Employees Fairly
- Employee Support is Reflected in Community Services
- Improve Pay & Benefits
- No Employee is on Government Subsidies
- Enough Pay to Support a Family

Mr. Pahle stated staff are asking for feedback and direction on staff recommendations. Council Member Jeff Miller stated he was glad the issue of compression was brought up to address retention. Council Member Jerry Smith clarified the pay scale would be updated annually to reflect inflation and that the pay scale would be amended annually to include inflation. Council Member Lyndsey Simpson inquired if dependents would be required to participate in wellness program incentives and HR Director Jennifer Harrell advised the insurance company does require any adult over age 26 to participate in annual screenings.

Council Member Jerry Smith asked staff if they have a recommendation of either pay or health insurance and Mr. Pahle stated pay is equitable to everyone and health insurance is a critical need for the organization and is affecting moral and retention. Mr. Pahle stated staff are including increased health care coverages in the recommended budget. Council member Hensley recommended a higher-level percentage of family coverage. Council Member Miller stated he wanted to see big picture and additional information with pay.

### 3. ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:28 p.m. upon unanimous assent of the Council.

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Barbara G. Volk, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Angela L. Reece, City Clerk

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