PRESENT: Mayor Barbara Jo Blain-Bellamy, Mayor Pro Tem William M. Goldfinch IV, and Council members Thomas J. Anderson II, William M. Goldfinch IV, Shane Hubbard, Ashley Smith, Jean M. Timbes, and Larry A. White

STAFF: Adam Emrick, City Administrator; Vicky Lefler, Deputy City Administrator; Kevin Chestnut, Public Works Director; Mary Catherine Hyman, Planning Director; Robert Cooper, Building Official; James Friday, Public Utilities Director; Addison Jarrell, Parks, Recreation and Tourism Director; Reggie Jenrette; Solid Waste Director; Tammy Carter, Police Captain; Timmy Williams, Grounds and Maintenance Director; Lynn Smith, Human Resources Director; Le Hendrick, Fire Chief; Allison Williams, Finance Director; and Barbara Tessier, City Clerk

OTHERS: Kathy Ropp and other media representatives

The requirements for posting notice of this meeting under South Carolina’s Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) were met.

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Blain-Bellamy called the meeting to order.

The following is Council input on discussion items for the FY 2019-2020 budget and future budgets:

**Anderson** thanked staff for the jobs they do and asked that his appreciation be conveyed to all employees. Input on budget/goals:
- Increase police officers’ salaries.
- Need to make sure the City is doing all it can to protect firefighters from their exposure to carcinogens and other environmental hazards that are in smoke.
- Need to consider some adjustment of salaries in correlation to the recent salary and compensation study.
- Encourage City workers to live within City limits.
- Allocate additional money and seek community partners to invest in the inclusive-designed playground.
- Encourage the building of additional apartments downtown.
- Actively seek support from state leaders for another bridge across the Waccamaw River.
- Part of the bridge discussion needs to be six lanes at the “Busbee Swamp dam” with more outlets for water going under the bridge.

**Goldfinch** also thanked employees for their hard work and commented that citizens view City staff as a team. Input on budget/goals:
- Enhance and strengthen the working relationship with counterparts from Horry County and state legislators.
• Need to be mindful of a potential slowdown in the economy as the budget process gets underway.

**Hubbard** commended employees for the work they do. Input on budget/goals:
• Would like to see stronger marketing effort to let citizens know what projects the City has no control over.
• Look at installing additional LED street lights in the City (Santee Cooper has advised that now is a good time).
• Spoke on the possibility of rent reduction as an incentive for police officers to move within the City limits.

**Smith** offered the following input on budget/goals:
• Need more focus on accomplishing goals from the past several years.
• Create a taskforce on litter prevention.
• Long Avenue Extension and Busbee Street continue to be unsightly with debris left behind from floodwaters last fall.
• City’s Solid Waste Department needs more trucks.
• Need to work on plans for a new Tennis Center.

**Timbes** offered the following input on budget/goals:
• Council goals from past years are unfinished.
• Give first priority to signage for the major entrances into the City.
• Highway 378 improvements need to be completed or this goal should be eliminated.
• Medallion program for various recognitions has not been established.
• A report on rentals of the Fifth & Main facility needs to be shared with Council. Expressed concern that there appears to be little/no use of building by community organizations.
• The Celebration of Lights needs a permanent location out of harm’s way from floodwater.
• Some City parks that were closed due to floodwater damage have still not reopened.
• Communications need improvement; there are documents (including the recent audit report) that Council members need and have not received.
• Building an amphitheater needs to be a priority and greater effort is needed to bring this project to fruition in a timely manner.
• If construction of a fully-inclusive playground is not possible, look at adding ADA equipment to existing City parks, or consider doing both.
• Revive the women’s leadership luncheon program.
• Consider an ordinance prohibiting vape and drug paraphernalia shops.
• Expressed concern and urged caution relative to changing or amending ordinances to suit only certain developers.

**White**
• Trash receptacles are needed on Oak Street and other litter-prone streets.
• Sidewalk is needed on Oak Street.
• Dilapidated and burned out houses need to be demolished and removed as soon as possible.
• Reorganize the Smith-Jones Advisory Board.
White encouraged Council not to overwhelm staff with requests but to have patience. He also requested Council recognition for a 7-year-old student at Conway Elementary School who has won several medals in wrestling.

**Mayor Blain-Bellamy** commented that the hard work by Department Heads is noticed and appreciated. She offered the following input for budget/goals:

- Completion of Highway 378 and major entranceway signage projects.
- City facilities are being left in deplorable condition after rentals. There should be someone making lists of clean-up, fix-up, needs.
- Construct inclusive-design park in best feasible way.
- Review purchasing methods for risks, efficiency and ethical issues; look carefully at use of RFPs and RFQs.
- Hiring from within: Each department (other than Fire and Police) should have an employee designated as second in command and this person should be groomed for higher responsibilities.
- Begin planning for a new City Hall facility.
- Develop an alternate route for the Celebration of Lights that would not be impacted by floodwaters.
- Plan an event, such as a walk across the bridge, to celebrate the reopening of Main Street Bridge.
- Add features to the access channel, such as weather on the 9’s, and news on the 8’s, information on upcoming events, and perhaps a monthly feature, to make it more user friendly.

Goldfinch asked about the possibility of a phone app so citizens could receive notices (weather, City news, etc.).

Mayor Blain-Bellamy asked staff if they had any questions relative to Council’s input. There were none. The mayor opened the floor to Council members for last comments.

**Anderson:**

- Suggested that the annual membership fees for Myrtle Beach Regional Economic Development be given instead to Public Works for additional street lighting.
- Commented that the City’s reserve fund might be a bit too high and the amount recommended by the auditors is not needed.
- Suggested Council committees be established to facilitate projects and be given authority to make decisions.

There was a brief discussion on the Celebration of Lights and whether to have light displays only downtown or have light displays both downtown and in a drive-thru scenario.

Anderson suggested that the facility rental program be re-evaluated facilities unless there was a designated City crew to clean and be responsible for upkeep of rental facilities. Hubbard agreed with Anderson that it was a burden on staff. Mayor Blain-Bellamy commented that the City should handle the rental program differently or not at all, and asked what those buildings would be used
for if not rented. Jarrell informed Council that some of the buildings were being used by the Recreation Department, and could be used for after school camps and other things. Timbes commented that it should be kept in mind that the people who rented these buildings might not be able to afford the higher priced facilities. Emrick noted that Council had approved a reduced rate for non-profit organizations, which included service clubs, at 5th and Main, but even the reduced rate might be too high for most non-profits. Timbes recommended the various service organizations be made aware they could receive the reduced rental rate at 5th and Main. Hubbard pointed out that churches had meeting space that could be used by service organizations. White recommended that a committee be established, to include Recreation Department employees, to study this issue. Mayor Blain-Bellamy noted that Council members, staff, and renters would be a good mix for this committee.

Goldfinch asked that the City look at its revenue sources and evaluate sources other than property taxes and business license fees. Emrick offered to provide that information and informed Council that suggestions for other revenue sources will be presented at the Budget Retreat.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion: Goldfinch made a motion, seconded by White, to adjourn the meeting. Vote: Unanimous. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes approved by City Council this day of February, 2019.

Barbara A. Tessier, City Clerk