

Minutes of City Council Workshop

The City Council City of Richwood

A City Council Workshop of the City Council of City of Richwood was held Saturday, June 2, 2018, beginning at 9:00 AM in the Richwood City Hall, 1800 N. Brazosport Blvd. Richwood, Texas.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor - Mark Guthrie

Council member Position 1 – Mike Johnson

Council member Position 2 – Frank Blanks

Council member Position 3 – Sarah Reed

Council member Position 4 – Mark Brown II

Council member Position 5 – Katie Johnson

Others present: Michael Coon, City Manager; Ron Cox, Cox Consulting;

Staff arrived at 11:00 a.m.: Clif Custer, Public Works Director; Kenny Williams, Building Official; Giani Cantu, City Secretary/Finance Director

WORKSHOP

On June 2, 2018, the Mayor, City Council and staff met for their second annual planning session. Since the March 2017 session, all members of the Council, with the exception of the Mayor, were new. One was appointed to fill a vacancy, initially. Others were elected at the regular City election in May 2018. All have now been elected to full two year terms,. As a result, considerable time was devoted to working with the Mayor and Council as a new group. Their governance model was established. The City Manager attended the governance session as well. Later in the day, the department directors came. The full group participated in a “mini-SWOT”, discussion and amendments to the Vision, Mission and Core Values, and a discussion of the status of the 2017 Strategic Plan.

During all sessions, the Mayor and Council and staff freely worked together, and their work was exemplary in all respects. Ron Cox facilitated the process.

DISCUSS AND SET COUNCIL GOVERNANCE MODEL

Governance

As stated the members of the Council were only beginning to get to know one another. So, in order to better learn about each other the facilitator asked the Mayor and each member of the Council to answer two key questions: Why did you run for the position? What attributes do you bring to the group? The answers they provided are chronicled below. The facilitator also asked each member to tell a little about themselves as well. Although not chronicled here, each member did just that, describing where they grew up, some information about their work, and family, and what brought them to live in Richwood.

Why did you run for the position?

- If you complain, you need to get involved and become a part of the solution.
- Was influenced to run as a result of the recent flooding.
- Care about the city.
- Want to do my part and make the city a better place.
- As a result of a sense of community and servitude.
- Was asked to run initially – grew up in the area.
- Always had an interest in local government and decided to become involved.
- To be a part of the process – and be an influence for change.
- Family has a long history of service and a volunteer spirit to participate in the volunteer fire department, military, etc.

What attributes to you bring to the group?

- Is used to attending/holding/being a part of meetings.
- Experience in budgeting for public organizations (United Way and other service organizations).
- Able to work with people of varying viewpoints.
- Ability to diffuse tenuous situations.
- Budgeting and project management experience.
- Ability to think outside the box and offer new ideas (works in innovations for his company).
- Ability to ask questions and challenge the thinking of others.
- Always tell the truth as he sees it.
- Compassion.
- Forecasting and conflict resolution.
- A professional safety background.
- Second generation resident, so brings a sense of community history.
- Brings common sense.

The members were all elected as individuals. And, they bring these attributes to the table. However, they can only act as a body. Therefore, there is a particular need to understand and define how they are going to work together. The facilitator

led the group in a discussion to establish their governance philosophy for: Leadership; Communication; and Expectations.

Leadership

Discussion then centered on how the Council will lead collectively as a group. They responded as follows.

The City Council of Richwood will lead...

- By setting measurable expectations and guidelines.
- By holding staff and each other accountable to meeting those expectations and guidelines.
- Not micromanage the staff but monitor and be accessible.
- Avoid surprises.
- By building the team.
- By owning our decisions.
- Being open to and adapting to change.
- By being fair, firm and consistent.
- By displaying the values of fairness, honesty and integrity.
- By gaining and having knowledge and knowing and understanding why.
- Doing our homework; know the subject at hand.

Communication

Council then defined how they intend to communicate with each other, with citizens and with staff.

Council will communicate with citizens, staff and each other...

- Respectfully.
- Treat others as you want to be treated.
- To simply reply (respond) to inquiries.
- Listen to understand the issue
- Listen, ask questions, reflect and repeat your understanding; seek clarification if needed; decide.
- Have healthy debate.
- Be timely.
- When responding to members of the public, copy staff so they will also be aware.

Meeting Protocols (order of business).

Council, being newly elected, and the Mayor wanting all to understand, discussed how they were going to conduct the process of decision making within an agenda item. They agreed to following protocol for each agenda item:

- **Regular Agenda Items**

- Mayor calls for presentation on agenda item (may be staff; developer, etc.).
- Mayor calls for discussion with presenter following presentation.
 - Mayor calls on Council members for Q&A with the presenter.
- Mayor calls on public for comment (not discussion or dialogue) on the agenda item under discussion (limited to three minutes per comment).
- Mayor calls for motion/second/approval to discuss.
 - Motion approved.
 - Council discusses the agenda item among themselves.
- Mayor calls for motion for action; Council votes on the matter.
- **Consent Agenda Items**
- Mayor calls for items any Council member wants to discuss separately for removal from the consent agenda
 - If item is removed, it is moved to the bottom of the agenda as a separate item.
 - When considered separately, the above protocol for regular agenda items is followed.
- Mayor calls for motion/second/approval of the Consent Agenda
- **Work Session Items**
- These items are typically for discussion only. These items provide the opportunity for Council to fully discuss and issue in anticipation of an agenda item for action at a later date.
- Work Session items are generally limited to one or two discussion topics.
- Work Sessions will be held periodically, as needed on the same night as a regular council meeting but held earlier.
- Process is same as a regular agenda item, except there will be no public comment and no action.
- City Manager will reiterate his understanding of the results of the discussion and next steps for consideration by the Council members.

Expectations

Council expects the following of each other...

- To be congenial with each other, staff and citizens.
- To be direct and forthcoming with questions, comments, positions on matters.
- To accept that some may disagree, but to not be disagreeable.
- To show honesty, integrity and respect through deliberations and interactions.

Staff is expected to...

- Report the good and the bad (no surprises).
- To set goals (per department) then report progress to the Council.

- Council and staff also discussed the appropriate time for their weekly reports with Council providing flexibility to the City Manager on whether to provide on Fridays or the following Mondays.

Staff expectations of Council (as defined by Council) is to...

- Be present and participate.
- Be approachable.
- Provide resources – monetary, guidance, support and encouragement, knowledge/training.
- Allow the staff the freedom to do their job without intervention.
- Respect the staff.
- Provide leadership.

The department directors joined the Mayor, City Council and City Manager to focus on the Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Strategic Plan for 2017. This session was designed to reset, refresh and revise the existing Strategic Plan first established in 2016, 2017 and now 2018.

Vision Statement

Since the members of Council were all new to the process and had defined their reasons for running, the facilitator led the group in a discussion their vision for Richwood. They outlined their vision in general as follows.

- A community with amenities and services for its residents (do not have to go elsewhere)
 - Events.
 - Involvement with citizen volunteers.
 - Places in the city to work and play.
 - Schools in Richwood.
- A safe community.
- A community with a family-oriented environment.
- Growth with a focus on family and community
 - Neighborhood businesses.
 - Amenities for families
 - Quality neighborhoods.
- A renewed volunteer spirit (including new ways to communicate needs for volunteers).

The approved Vision Statement for the City of Richmond is as follows:

The City of Richwood is a model for safe and beautiful neighborhoods, with a thriving economy and opportunities for families and businesses by being dedicated to serving our community while providing sustainability and diversity for current and future generations.

After a review of the Council's stated vision elements compared to the current Vision Statement, the Council realized the Vision Statement should be amended. After thought, discussion and consideration, the Council arrived at the following revised Vision Statement for 2018.

The City of Richwood is a model for safe and beautiful neighborhoods with sustainable growth opportunities for families and businesses dedicated to serving our community for current and future generations. (Revised 6-2-18)

Mission Statement

Based on the vision and strategic plan, the Council reviewed the mission statement for consistency. They determined the mission statement is consistent and up to date.

To provide residents, visitors, and the business community with the highest quality of municipal services in an efficient and courteous manner, and to enhance the quality of life through planning and visionary leadership.

Core Values

Likewise, the Council reviewed the established core values and agreed they should remain as stated. They are as follows.

- **Act as good stewards of the city resources.**
- **Leading the city by serving our community.**
- **Foster economic growth for today and tomorrow.**
- **Maintain integrity through transparency.**
- **Promote a positive quality of life for our community.**

Strengths and Weaknesses

Council and staff divided into two groups and discussed the Strengths and Weaknesses of the community and organization. The following are their respective lists.

Strengths

Group 1

- Proactive leadership.
- Sense of community.
- Community pride.
- Location in the Brazosport area.
- Opportunities and positioning for growth.
- The popularity of the splash pad.
- Educational opportunities in the area.

Group 2

- The community.
- Churches/faith in the community.
- Dedicated staff.
- The greater Brazosport community.
- Proximity to amenities in other cities.
- Room to grow.
- Dedicated volunteers.
- The popularity of the splash pad.

Weaknesses

Group 1

- Drainage deficiencies.
- Employee turnover.
- Limited financial resources.
- Brazosport ISD academic reputation.
- Needed maintenance for streets and infrastructure.
- Lack of sidewalks in the community.
- Past development agreements that place the city at a financial and operational disadvantage.

Group 2

- Too few volunteers.
- Infrastructure needs including water, lack of past planning, roads, sewer, etc.
- Inconsistent compensation among the employees.
- No flood planning.
- Lack of commercial tax base.
- Few recreational facilities.
- Lack of street lights in certain areas of the city.
- Division of communities in the Brazosport area.
- Lack of regional services for both fire and ambulance.

Combining the weaknesses together, there were areas of emphasis that seemed to emerge. These were identified as follows.

Areas of emphasis from identified weaknesses

- **Infrastructure needs.**
 - Renew emphasis on infrastructure maintenance particularly on streets, water and sewer service, sidewalks, street lighting, recreational amenities, public safety-fire and EMS services.
- **Community needs.**

- Develop intergovernmental cooperation between the cities in the Brazosport Community, namely, Clute, Lake Jackson and Richwood.
- Bring the Richwood community together neighborhood by neighborhood for volunteer and other efforts.
- Support and encourage BISD in general and seek opportunity for a new campus in Richwood, should a need for a new campus in the District arise.
- **Staff needs.**
 - Reduce the amount of employee turnover throughout the employee population.
 - Improve the employee compensation program to develop pay equity among all employees.
- **Economic Development needs.**
 - Seek ways to improve the commercial tax base with businesses consistent with the revised Vision Statement.
 - Improve and expand the financial resources of the City.

FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019 STRATEGIC PLAN AND BUDGET GOALS

2016-17 Strategic Plan

The Council reviewed the 2016-17 Strategic Plan. The City Manager provided a brief review of accomplishments for the Council to review. It was noted that some Areas of Emphasis identified by this City Council are being addressed in the Strategic Plan.

It was agreed, in the interest of time, the City staff will address these in a revised proposed Strategic Plan for 2018 to be brought back to the City Council for consideration and approval.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

These minutes were read and approved on this 9th day of July, 2018.

Mark Guthrie, Mayor

Attest:

Giani Cantu, City Secretary

