

**Aberdeen Council Work Session
April 20, 2009**

Present: Mayor Bennett, Council President Hiob, Councilman Kupferman and Councilwoman Young

Absent: Councilwoman Elliott

Also Present: Douglas Miller, City Manager
Monica Correll, City Clerk
Doris Manner, Recording Secretary

The work session was called to order by Mayor Bennett in Council Chambers at 4:30 p.m.

1. Matters of Immediate Concern – None
2. Work Session

A. Charter

Mr. Miller noted that the Council and the City Staff has been working on the Charter for one year. It must be adopted by May 11, 2009 to apply to this year's election. A public hearing has been held. Councilwoman Elliott has 58 amendments; however, she is absent tonight. Her concerns were discussed.

Council President Hiob stated that the Charter additions, when not specified, can revert to Maryland or Harford County Code. He suggested putting the 4-year term issue to referendum on the ballot. His support is for a 4-year staggered term. Mr. Miller said it can be put to referendum; the question is when it would be effective. Mayor Bennett noted that the State Charter is usually implied. Mr. Miller informed the Council that the City is a political subdivision of the State and the City has "home rule".

Mayor Bennett indicated that only two Council meetings are left to make Charter changes. Councilman Kupferman supports a 4-year term. Mr. Miller questioned whether the upcoming election would fit the 4-year rules. He will check into this issue. Chapter 3 of the Election Code would have to be changed.

Councilwoman Young wants voters to know they are also voting for the recall issue.

Council President Hiob reviewed some line changes and expressed concerns that clarification is needed. He wants the advertising in newspapers eliminated as a cost saving factor. Mr. Miller said the City, as a matter of policy, will continue to advertise.

Council President Hiob is against requiring the City Manager position maintaining membership in the International City and County Management Association (ICMA). He

feels this places unnecessary restrictions on any future Mayor/Council when hiring a City Manager. Mayor Bennett, however, favored the membership because this will attract the most qualified candidates for the position. Mr. Miller stated that this is a unique business requiring a mainline, experienced manager for a city with this type of population. This would also eliminate the potential of a purely political appointment occurring. The Council proceeded to discuss the duties and supervisory obligations of the City Manager without interference of the City Council or other commissions.

Councilman Kupferman said that no department head should execute orders of the Council without contacting the City Manager first. Mr. Miller stated that if the Council has authority over a department head's position, he/she will follow the Councilperson's wishes in order to keep his/her job. Mayor Bennett pointed out that the proposed changes are to protect the authority of the City Manager and that the ability of the Mayor to work with the City Manager on day-to-day operations.

The Council discussed the form of Government, the daily operations, how the City Manager and the Council deal with decisions, and how the department heads are directed.

Mayor Bennett, at the next Council meeting, will suggest withdrawing the repeal and enactment of the Charter and make changes as amendments after the election. Many meetings were held and a completed document was not realized since the Council cannot come to an agreement. Changes in the election code are needed.

Council President Hiob asked how the changes should be done. Mayor Bennett said submissions must be in writing and discussions held. Mr. Miller noted that the Council is under a time constraint for the 4-year issue on the ballot. Later, in 2009 and 2010, appropriate changes can be made in the Charter. Mayor Bennett supports this suggestion and, if possible, put the issue to a referendum. Mr. Miller will research this issue.

Councilwoman Young supports the referendum idea and also a form of recall.

Councilwoman Young supports the following:

- Counter signing checks by two people.
- Reference should be made to electronic banking in the Charter.
- City possessions should be inventoried.
- A Charter element regarding the City Manager or Mayor overstepping bounds.

Mayor Bennett stated that the 4-year term issue should have a recall and enforced by law with a 2-year term; this is a complicated procedure and must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Councilman Kupferman said the City finance person signs checks; otherwise, they are signed by the City Manager. Mayor Bennett agrees with Councilman Kupferman because City employees are bonded and finances are reviewed on a regular basis.

Council President Hiob asked if the Council was only dealing with the election process at this time. Mayor Bennett said it was.

3. Other Matters

Councilman Kupferman asked if there were any complaints on the deer problems behind Graceford Drive. Two cases of Lyme disease have been reported. Mayor Bennett noted that DNR must be involved.

Mr. Miller reported the following:

- FiOS is being offered to residents.
- The State is replanting along the Rt. 40 median.
- The City has applied for a BRAC Zone.
- A report will be given at the next meeting on the EDC branding process.
- The website will be revamped.
- The Legislation for independent living units from the State came through. If the Council is going to reconsider Presbyterian Homes, it must be Monday night.
- The budget is balanced with no increase.
- The water budget is balanced with no increase.
- The sewer budget will require an increase to residents.
- The Budget will be introduced on April 27, a hearing will be held on May 11, adoption can take place after May 11, and the final date for adoption is June 1.

Council President Hiob said that he wanted to clarify that he and the Council want to proceed with the Property Maintenance Code and did not make any negative inference toward Ms. Grover's actions regarding this.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.