



Richland County Council
Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee Meeting
MINUTES
May 2, 2023 – 2:00 PM
Council Chambers
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29204

+COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Jesica Mackey, Chair, Paul Livingston, and Chakisse Newton

OTHERS PRESENT: Gretchen Barron, Anette Kirylo, Patrick Wright, Tamar Black, Michelle Onley, Leonardo Brown, Abhijit Deshpande, Jennifer Wladischkin, Ashiya Myers, Aric Jensen, Angela Weathersby, Kyle Holsclaw, Oscar Rosales, Chelsea Bennett, Jeff Ruble, and Michael Maloney

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chairwoman Jesica Mackey called the meeting to order at approximately 2:00 PM.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. **December 15, 2022** – Mr. Livingston moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded by Ms. Newton.

In Favor: Livingston, Mackey, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA** – Mr. Livingston moved to approve the agenda as published, seconded by Ms. Newton.

In Favor: Livingston, Mackey, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

4. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION**

a. **Strategic Planning Update** – Ms. Mackey stated that now that the Strategic Plan is in place, we wanted to develop a quarterly meeting schedule to get updates on the Strategic Plan and discuss initiatives and paths forward.

1. Dashboard: Mr. Leonardo Brown, County Administrator, stated the “Dashboard” is our continued step toward the success of excellence.

Mr. Abhijit Deshpande, Budget Director, indicated most of the updates are of a quality nature rather than quantity. A lot of work still needs to be done with the department heads. He noted we will seek technical assistance from the software provider. From his office’s perspective, once the budget season is done, this will be the main focus for his team.

Mr. Deshpande gave a quick overview of the progress with the “Dashboard.”

Ms. Newton inquired if Mr. Deshpande's team is the only team making updates or are other departments providing input.

Mr. Deshpande replied his team is making the updates.

Ms. Mackey inquired if there is an interim report that could be provided prior to the "Dashboard" being launched.

Mr. Brown responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Mackey requested a template with all the goals listed at the next meeting.

2. **Objective 1.3 – Establish metrics for accountability in implementing the strategic plan (0-6-months)** – Mr. Brown stated as we looked at how we operationalized the Strategic Plan and establishing metrics for accountability, it became apparent the department heads were not necessarily on the same page with what should be measured, how to go about measuring it, and what things would Council want to see versus Administration. In dealing with these situations, he determined this would be a good opportunity for him to intertwine his focus as the County Administrator with the Strategic Plan. The pillars of what he is looking at are People, Processes, and Performance, which he believes tie into what Council has approved. In dealing with the people side, as it relates to establishing metrics for accountability, one of the things he looked for is the systemic methodology that could be applied so that we could positively affect what we are trying to accomplish. One of the tools he is going to use is NACo's "High Performance Leadership Tool" to help unify us in understanding a basic platform for how we can establish metrics for Richland County. NACo also has a tool called "Leading Analytics," which will help provide a methodology that will unify what we are trying to do. He noted that ten (10) department heads have been enrolled in the NACo Program, and he and Ms. Ashiya Myers, Assistant to the County Administrator, recently finished the program.

Ms. Mackey inquired if all department heads have enrolled in NACo's "High Performance Leadership" program.

Mr. Brown responded that not all department heads could enroll but would participate in the future. Once the department heads complete the program, it will be offered to management-level employees. Richland County previously partnered with other governmental entities and put together a program using Midlands Tech. With the NACo program, it is online, and you keep all of the resources. In addition, they are communicating with him as the Supervisor so he can track the metrics.

Ms. Mackey requested to keep the committee updated on the progress.

2023 Strategic Planning Forum Update:

Goal 4: Plan for Growth through Inclusive and Equitable Infrastructure

4.1 – Establish plans and success metrics that enable smart growth: Administration has approved leadership development for staff through the use of the National Association of Counties' Higher Performance Leadership Academy. This training will provide staff with the necessary understanding and/or tools to develop and track the metrics associated with the Strategic Plan.

4.2 – Coordinate departments to prepare for planned growth in areas by providing water, sewer, and roads in necessary locations: Council committed \$2M of ARPA funds to construct a new water tank in Lower Richland to provide water services.

Additionally, the County was awarded \$10M from the SC Rural Infrastructure Authority to expand the Eastover Wastewater Treatment Plant.

4.3 – Create excellent amenities and facilities: The County presently has several construction projects underway: The Public Safety Complex – 911 Center; the Family Services Center (Department of Social Services, Department of Health and Human Services, and Department of Health and Environmental Control); and Probation, Pardon, and Parole. As we provide this new and updated space at the Columbia Place Mall, it will allow for better accessibility to the citizens by being in a central location that has mass transit availability.

Ms. Newton inquired if Council can expect to see further recommendations during the budget process in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Mr. Brown responded there would be some recommendations from the Administration. The idea is for Council to vote to further develop the County’s strategic focus related to capital improvement.

4.4 – Provide equitable living and housing options: Council is considering the most appropriate method to move this issue forward.

Ms. Mackey inquired if this matter is being addressed in the Coronavirus Ad Hoc Committee.

Mr. Brown replied in the affirmative. The idea is for Council to tell staff what they want to do and authorize them to utilize necessary funding to affect that.

Ms. Mackey indicated after the allocation, she wants to think about a long-term plan for affordable housing.

Mr. Brown pointed out that you may want to make that an area where the County invests like you invest in people in the organization.

Goal 5: Achieve Positive Public Engagement

5.1 – Champion the organization and County wins: The Communication Department has begun implementing a process to share positive County activities and stories through media and social media outlets. These activities spotlight Council and staff as they engage in activities in the County.

5.2 – Foster positive public relationships to allow us to “tell our own story”: The Communications Department is spotlighting community organizations that provide resources and services for County residents. Additionally, we are encouraging Council and staff to participate in activities by these organizations (i.e., blood drives, Heart Walk, volunteering in food warehouses, and reading to children).

Ms. Mackey inquired if there is a way to track what success looks like when we talk about telling our story.

Mr. Brown stated he would look at the plan to see if we listed what evidence of success would look like regarding positive public engagement. If we did not, we may need to establish it. He noted before the next meeting; he would provide some metrics that may identify evidence of success.

Ms. Newton expressed that there are things internally that could be highlighted in addition to the external activities. In addition, to reestablish the Richland 101 Program in some iteration. Finally, she requested a longer lead time in order to participate in the internal programs.

5.3 – *Create a Public Information team focused on public engagement:* Director of Communications, Deputy Director of Communications, Media Specialist, and Publication Editor/Outreach Specialist currently on staff. An additional two staff members are to be hired.

5.4 – *Complete and celebrate penny projects to create excitement in the community:* Communications and Transportation have been providing publicity for Penny projects. The following events were featured and attended by Council and other local officials:

- Greene Street Bridge Opening
- Bull Street Project Ground Breaking
- Blythewood Road Widening Ground Breaking
- North Main Street Opening

Ms. Mackey suggested looking at the County holistically and highlighting projects in each Council district.

Mr. Livingston recommended engaging key community leaders and having them talk with residents and actively participate in Transportation and community events.

Ms. Newton suggested providing Penny Project awareness to the community. In talking with citizens, she has noted that many do not understand what the Penny is intended for.

Goal 6: Establish Operational Excellence

6.1 – *Establish competitive salaries:* The County has engaged Evergreen Solutions to perform a Compensation Study. Administration will recommend a cost-of-living increase in FY24.

6.3 – *Modernize technology:* Council approved ARPA funds for GIS, Cyber Security, Information Technology's replacement of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, and the County's website upgrade to improve workplace efficiency and access for citizens and employees.

Ms. Mackey inquired about how Councilmembers can get involved with the County's new website and the timeline for implementation.

Mr. Brown replied the workgroup is meeting, but they have not provided a timeline. Ms. Newton is a part of the workgroup and can provide timely updates. At the end of the day, we want to have a tool that connects people to the County without them having to pick up the phone.

Ms. Mackey indicated she hopes the new website will tie into Goal 5 and that we are looking at creating a user-friendly website the public can utilize.

Mr. Livingston inquired about the utilization of the website and what we can do to increase its usage.

Ms. Newton stated the workgroup's vision is to have an interdisciplinary committee representing different parts, places, and people in the County. Because we are a government agency, there has to be a procurement process. As it relates to organizations like ours, nobody just creates a website. There is a period that involves stakeholder engagement and understanding the problem that needs to be solved. She would hope we allow the successful vendor to manage a process that gets them all the input they want. The committee will ultimately draft an RFP that will follow all of our procurement processes.

3. Review of all other Goals/Objectives – This item was not discussed.

5. **Next Steps** – The next steps were covered in Mr. Brown’s presentation.

6. **ADJOURNMENT** – Ms. Newton moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Livingston.

In Favor: Livingston, Mackey, and Newton

The vote in favor was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:53 PM.