



Richland County Council
Transportation Ad Hoc Committee
December 10, 2019 – 1:00 PM
Council Chambers
2020 Hampton Street, Columbia 29204

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Calvin “Chip” Jackson, Chair; Jim Manning and Dalhi Myers

OTHERS PRESENT: Allison Terracio, Michelle Onley, Eden Logan, Kimberly Toney, Michael Niermeier, Allison Steele, Quinton Epps, Rasheed Muwwakkil, Cheryl Cook, Jennifer Wladischkin, Leonardo Brown, John Thompson, Mohammed Al-Tofan, Nathaniel Miller and James Hayes

1. **Call to Order** – Mr. Jackson called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 PM.
2. **Approval of Minutes: October 22, 2019** – Ms. Myers moved, seconded by Mr. Manning, to approve the minutes as distributed.

In Favor: Jackson and Myers

Present but Not Voting: Manning

The vote in favor was unanimous.

3. **Adoption of the Agenda** – Mr. Manning moved, seconded by Ms. Myers to adopt the agenda as published.

In Favor: Jackson and Myers

Present but Not Voting: Manning

The vote in favor was unanimous.

4. **ITEMS FOR ACTION**

- a. **Transportation Project Budget Approval** – Mr. Manning stated this information has been before Council for approximately a year; therefore, he moved for approval of staff’s recommendation for Items 4(a) and 4(b). Mr. Jackson seconded the motion.

Ms. Myers stated Mr. Manning is correct the information has been before us, but it was brought before us by a different team of people executing the projects, and structuring the timing. She thinks it is different now that the projects are in-house. It was noted they were recommended to be approved, based upon the PDT schedule, and we are different place now. She requested clarity as to whether the Administrator thinks the schedule is consistent with where the staffing is now, the

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prioritization has been handled effectively, and have the issues with the projects that are under contract, but over referendum, been resolved.

Mr. Manning stated his motion was based on the fact the Administrator's staff recommended approval.

Mr. Jackson requested the Administrator to limit his scope to points of clarification between outside and inside recommendations.

Mr. Brown stated, based on Transportation's current review of the projects they had outlined, the budget should be appropriate, as confirmed with staff. As it relates to the projects, and the referendum portion, there is some cause for discussion on Item 4(b). There is money, within the projects, to do these projects. The prioritization is not a discussion that Council has communicated to him.

Ms. Myers made a substitute motion to divide the question. The motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. Brown stated, since the committee is taking both 4(a) and 4(b) together, that Council has technically already approved the sidewalk process. There were two (2) projects: Greene Street Phase II and North Springs/Harrison Intersection that he wanted some communication to the body on.

Ms. Terracio inquired, if these were not to continue, if there would be additional expenses.

Mr. Brown stated his understanding is there would be some additional costs associated with delaying these matters.

Mr. Niermeier stated they do not have a dollar figure, but when you are under contract with a company to do work, they have a schedule built in their mind. They are making decisions based on doing that work, while potentially putting off other work.

Ms. Myers inquired if they are contemplating once these are approved, we will be approving the overages, as well.

Mr. Niermeier inquired as to which projects Ms. Myers was referring.

Ms. Myers stated the projects that are highlighted in the budget document provided.

Mr. Niermeier stated they have been tasked to do a comprehensive review of projects that are over the referendum. Staff did the preliminary review, and this will be brought back to Council at a work session in February. The budget before you was approved by Council, but it will have to be revamped as Council decides how to move forward.

Ms. Myers stated we are being asked to approve a budget, for amounts over the referendum, when Council has specifically said to bring us a proposal that is different than this. Now we are back in the Transportation Ad Hoc Committee preparing to send it back to Council.

Mr. Niermeier stated they are not moving forward with any projects that are currently in design or construction that over the referendum until a decision has been made by this body. This budget was built at the bigger of last year, revised by staff in July, and once again before coming back to committee to ensure they accounted for the dollars being where they needed to be. The fact that

there are some on this budget over referendum does not mean we have to spend those dollars this year. That is just how the budget was built. Now, should a decision be made to move forward with a new scope or design, we can go ahead and do that. If not, it will happen next year, and those dollars can be rolled over into the following year.

Ms. Myers noted the briefing document provided says, "Staff requests approval of individual project funding as presented in the attachments." The attachments are on pp. 16 – 18, and those all contain the overages, which is why she is asking the questions she is asking. Staff is asking for an approval, but then backtracking and saying we may not spend the money. Once they approve it, the marching orders are to go forward.

Mr. Jackson stated he believes the last action by Council was that any items that had not been authorized to move forward, with regards to construction, that were in design and over the referendum, would be placed on hold.

Mr. Brown stated his understanding, at the time when Council was reviewing what steps they would take next, we would do a "medium" pause to review items that were not moving down the line. The two (2) things that came to his attention was Greene Street Phase II and North Springs/Harrison Intersection, which are projects that were potentially planned and people were projected they would happen, and it would raise large concerns, if they did not move forward. As a result of that, he spoke with staff and related that he understood we wanted a comprehensive review of the dollars we need to spend, but we need to make sure we are addressing these two (2) projects. He wanted to give the committee the chance to communicate that they want staff to go forward because we believe these things need to progress to prevent blowback because we put these large projects on hold.

Mr. Jackson stated, for clarification, Greene Street Phase II's contract has been awarded and it is within the referendum amount, which may be why Ms. Myers requested to divide the question.

Ms. Myers stated, with the question conjoined that way, we have all 19 projects, including 8 that are over the referendum, and Greene Street Phase II Project and North Springs/Harrison Intersection mixed in. If we divided the question, to move forward with what was pointed out, would be a better use of taxpayer money.

Mr. Jackson stated the flipside, the point that Mr. Manning made, and he shares 100%, is that we have had these same "projects" over referendum, but funding available, in one way or another, before us for the last year. We keep coming back to pushing it forward. We have held work sessions, discussed them in Council meetings, had recommendations made by the PDT, and now being recommended by internal staff. He is not sure moving it to a later date, to block the entire budget, is beneficial. He thinks if the question is can we approve the budget with the understanding these particular areas, which are over the referendum, will be debated and decided upon in February, he is willing to accept that as a compromise, if Ms. Myers will.

Ms. Myers stated 8 of the projects over the referendum are in the district she represents. She is keenly interested in getting all of the projects done, but she has been begging for a long time to make some hard decisions on this stuff, rather than kicking the can, and she sees this as kicking the can. Eventually, once we have these approvals upon approvals piled up, we get the statement that we approved it 99 times, but the same questions remain. For that reason, it makes her nervous to approve the budget with these itemized projects, well over the referendum amount, knowing we do not have the money because we are taking from other projects. She wants them to go forward. There is a lot of heat on her for them to go forward, but she cannot vote for a budget knowing that it is a

phantom budget.

Mr. Manning stated he would be willing to divide the question, if we take up 4(b) prior to 4(a).

Mr. Manning made a substitute motion, seconded by Ms. Myers, to divide the question and take up Item 4(b) prior to Item 4(a).

In Favor: Jackson, Myers and Manning

The vote in favor was unanimous.

Mr. Manning moved, seconded by Mr. Jackson, to approve the items in the budget that cover the projects approved in Item 4(b).

Mr. Jackson stated, for clarification, we want to approve the budget only for the items that were approved to carry forward.

Mr. Manning stated the remaining portion of the budget can go to the work session.

Ms. Myers requested staff to clarify that includes Greene Street Phase II...

Mr. Niermeier stated this budget, which was already approved by Council, in its entirety, is for all the projects listed, which include those that are ongoing, and further designs, once we are able to move forward with all the other projects. If you just approve the budget for these 4 projects, we are going to run out of money. They cannot do what they are doing now, and then ones we have planned in the future (i.e. resurfacing and dirt roads).

Mr. Manning inquired if staff has any ideas or thoughts for us to address the concerns that Ms. Myers has about the projects over the referendum, but allow us to move forward with the motion passed on Item 4(b), and the projects Mr. Niermeier just referenced.

Mr. Niermeier stated one of the compromises could be to continue approve and budget for the projects that are ongoing within the referendum amount. Now, we just approved greenways through the amendment, so we need to move forward with design on that too. Therefore, those funds will need to be made available in this vote. Whether the budget was built by another group, it was modified by this staff, and went forward with the premise that something would happen within this year. Now, if it does not happen, the money does not go away. It is still sitting there. It can get rolled over, and reallocated within the program. The budget, as it stands, was approved by Council. Now, the projects need to be presented, as they are right now. If the desire of Council is to not move forward on any projects over the referendum, which has been stated several times, staff is not going to move forward with those projects, whether it is in the budget or not. At some point and time, when a decision is made, and re-scope things and move forward, the money will be rolled over or reallocated back to those projects, as needed. The simplest thing is to approve it as is. They are not spending that money over referendum projects, until a decision has been made, but it will allow the rest of the projects that are under referendum, in progress, to be designed, right-of-way to be acquired, in the near future, to continue.

Ms. Myers stated to be clear, as one of the people that is constantly on this issue, once 6 people approve it, those are your marching orders. While she disagrees, she wants to be clear that it is not her individual right to stop the staff. If, what you are saying is, you have the requisite approval, even

if she is bellyaching about it from now until next December, she does not have the individual right to stop progress. The reason she raises this is she is unclear that it has been approved in the way it needs to be for us to go forward with these projects that are over the referendum. Her question, on the projects that are over the referendum amount, where we have been going back and forth for approximately 3 years, is staff currently working on plan, to bring back to Council, to get the necessary approval, or does staff believe they have the necessary approval.

Mr. Jackson responded staff does not have approval for the projects that are over the referendum.

Ms. Myers stated she is confused why they are in the budget.

Mr. Jackson stated the projects are mixed in with the funded projects that are under the referendum. In order to approve the budget, and continue to move forward, after we told the Administrator to cease and desist all projects that were not under construction, it involves projects that are under the referendum and over the referendum.

Ms. Myers inquired if the Administrator has instructed his team to only move forward on projects that do not need further refinement.

Mr. Brown stated they are not moving on projects that were not “dirt turning” before the transition. The projects we are discussing, which are projected to be under the referendum, staff communicated could move forward. He instructed them not to move forward because there is a larger question Council is trying to answer. Staff asked, “Are you saying to us, do no work?” “Are you telling us to not come to you with suggestions and use our professional judgement to communicate what we can be doing?” He responded that was not the case, but to bring the conversation to the committee, so we can have clarity between the Administrator and staff, as to how to move forward, instead of waiting until 2020 to start doing something.

Ms. Myers stated the list displayed on pp. 17 – 18 is almost irrelevant. We are not voting for that list.

Mr. Brown stated it is informational for you to understand the context in which we are working under.

Mr. Jackson proposed a friendly amendment to expand it to more than just the projects voted for under Item 4(b), and also include the projects that are not over the referendum.

Ms. Myers made a substitute motion, seconded by Mr. Jackson, to approve all items in staff’s briefing document that are under, or at, the referendum amount.

In Favor: Jackson, Myers and Manning

The vote in favor was unanimous.

- b. **Transportation Projects in Acquisition and Under Contract Approval** – Ms. Myers moved, seconded by Mr. Manning, to approve this item.

In Favor: Jackson, Myers and Manning

The vote in favor was unanimous.

6. **ADJOURN** – The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:28 PM.

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