

OWENSBORO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Work Session

February 11, 2020 12:00 PM

Owensboro City Hall

101 E. 4th Street

Owensboro, Kentucky

1. CALL TO ORDER - Mayor Tom Watson

Present: Mayor Tom Watson, Commissioners Larry Maglinger, Pam Smith-Wright and Jeff Sanford

Unavailable: Commissioner Larry Conder

2. A+ LEADERSHIP UPDATE – Dr. Fred Reeves, A+ Leadership, explained they are in the preliminary stages of looking at affordable downtown housing (\$800-\$1,100/mth). David Johnson, A+ Leadership, 439 Maple Ave., explained that they are also working on an open-house event with Bluegrass Museum and the Realtors Association to get people downtown and to understand downtown living. They continue discussions with developers both local and from out of town. A Housing Committee has been established that includes Economic Development Corporation, Chamber, city staff, Realtors Association, and others. The building which houses the Owensboro Area Museum of Science and History is owned by the City and consists of 82,000 square feet. A+ conducted a Strategic Plan for the Museum three (3) years ago, therefore, they are familiar with inner workings. A+ recently met with the board members and other stakeholders of the Museum. They left the meeting with the understanding that the Museum is not interested in moving. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Reeves toured the building and they believe there are some possibilities for the building. Ms. Olson eluded to being open to future partnerships that may arise. There are developers from Louisville that are interested and have experience in renovating that type of building.

Mayor Watson asked the amount of taxpayer dollars spent on the Museum. Ms. Hamric, Finance and Support Services Director responded that \$1,772,000 has been funded to the Museum over the past eleven (11) years; if the building was taxable and assessed it would have generated about \$100,000 over the same time period; in 2014, the City replaced cast iron boilers - \$31,000 and in 1998 the City replaced the roof - \$200,000.

In reference to the Ford Center, the exhibits are still at the Museum, but the programming has left the building. Mayor Watson explained that a Ford Center representative stated these as their top issues with the Museum: 1) the use and scheduling of the Ford Center space (times open were inconvenient); 2) the financial requirements imposed on the Center in order to utilize the space were unreasonable considering the amount of money Wendell Ford, his family and colleagues raised in 1998 to build the Ford Center, in addition to the multiple fundraisers held. The Ford Center was responsible for all expenses related to upgrades/repairs to the Center, i.e., exhibit, technology, marketing, etc. The Center offered to make an additional \$5,000 annual donation in return for priority scheduling and access, but the Museum declined

the offer; and 3) the Ford Center became uncomfortable with the management of the funds designated/earmarked for the Ford Center. In 2013, prior to Wendell's passing, he requested the Ford Center become financially separate and start their own 501(c)(3).

Mayor Watson expressed concern over not knowing exactly who is on their board and that neither the City nor County have a representative on the Board. City Manager Pagan was asked to get an appraisal on the property and Mr. Johnson was asked to get a list of the board members and explain how they are appointed.

Mr. Johnson told the Museum that A+ Leadership was willing to help them be a fantastic asset to downtown. He believes the Museum will be amenable to working on a plan and potentially a partnership with the City to utilize the building as more than a museum.

Mayor Watson further explained that in 2018, the City proposed the following to the Museum Board of Directors: the Museum relocate to the now former Bluegrass Museum for \$1 per year for twenty (20) years; the City would ensure the building is mechanically sound prior to taking possession; fund the move and build out of the space (not to exceed \$500,000); and sponsor a grand opening (not to exceed \$25,000). If the Museum decided to move into a space other than the now former Bluegrass Museum space, the City offered to: fund the move and build out of the space (not to exceed \$200,000) and sponsor a grand opening (not to exceed \$25,000). The Museum response letter in the following month depicted numbers of visitors in 2017, and a synopsis of their programming. Mayor Watson does consider the Museum an asset, but a working agreement is needed to help them be successful. Commissioner Sanford agreed that the Museum needs to help themselves and would like to see their business plan for the next three (3) months. Commissioner Smith-Wright requested to meet with the board members and hear their plans and vision. Mr. Johnson will facilitate the meeting.

3. POPULAR ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT – Ms. Hamric presented the Second Popular Annual Financial Report for the FY ended June 30, 2019 (attached). The report is a summary view of the City's financial position and activities. The report is available on the City's website and at City Hall.

4. ENTERTAINMENT DESTINATION CENTER – Tim Ross, Public Events Director, explained that the first season of The District resulted with no concerns or incidents. The participating establishments responded positively and expressed an interest in expanding the hours outside of a case-by-case basis. Staff has discussed and is requesting input from the Commission on the requested expansion prior to the 2020 festival season. Options could be weekends with specific hours, 24/7, all weekend, etc. Mayor Watson requested to be updated on meeting discussions prior to announcing at a work session.

5. POLICE DEPARTMENT CRIME STATISTICS – Chief Art Ealum presented 2019 crime stats for the City (attached). Chief Ealum explained the data is collected from KYOPS and may not match the FBI data. Additionally, agencies are not required to

report to KYOPS or FBI. Violent crimes consist of murder, rape, robbery and assault. Ealum credited their efficient clearance rate to the hard-working police department staff.

6. CITY PROJECT LIST – Mayor Watson asked for the timeline to take down Gabe’s Tower. Mr. Lelan Hancock, Assistant City Manager, said the contractors’ estimate it will be September. Amanda Rogers, Parks Director, gave a brief update on the renovations at Jack C. Fisher Park. Commissioner Sanford said he had received questions regarding the Gabe’s Shopping Center remodel. Ms. Abby Shelton, Community Development Director explained that there were structural issues with columns, which resulted in change orders.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:53 p.m. upon motion of Mayor Watson with a second by Commissioner Sanford.

Thomas H. Watson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Beth Cecil, City Clerk