



**Minutes of the City of Mount Rainier Maryland
City Council Meeting
Swearing In Ceremony**

Date: 5-11-2015

Place: One Municipal Place, Mount Rainier

Presiding officer: Mayor Miles

Councilmember's present: Jesse Christopherson, Bryan Knedler, Tracy Loh, Shivali Shah

City Hall Staff: City Manager Jeannelle Wallace, Assistant City Manager Veronica Owens, Economic Development Director Samantha Olatunji, Chief Scott, Finance Director Vijay Manjani, City Clerk Janis Lomax

Agenda

Council Rules and Procedures

Department Director Briefings

Mayor and Council Liaison Assignments

Department Director Briefings

City Manager Jeannelle Wallace Briefing

She explains that City Hall is the Hub. People come in daily to get permits and/or pay tickets. It is where all the legislation is produced and all the copying for city meetings occurs. The city manager handles personnel issues, consultations with attorneys, and contractors. She also modifies all revisions to the City Code.

In regards to all employees, all employee contributions to the state retirement fund are matched by the City. Also, the police department has the background checks for all the employees.

City Clerk- Janis Lomax

The City Clerk is responsible for:

- Creating the minutes of the Mayor and Council Meetings, which are official documents that are checked when the City is audited.
- Getting in touch with the clerk of the circuit court to come to the City for swearing in
- Making sure all legislation is filed for the department of legislative services in Annapolis
- Managing events

- Processing Permits
- Answering the phone
- Processing Business Occupancy Licenses (Licenses are due in February each year. Businesses have a 30-day grace period. The deadline is March 28th).
- Processing ticket payments.
- Accepting all money for the City Hall.

Agenda and Resolution/ Ordinance Protocol

In order to get an item on the agenda, a councilmember must submit a draft to the City Manager. The City Manager then puts it in format to send to the attorney to verify that it is in the proper format and has the necessary information. The resolution or ordinance can be introduced without the verification; however, verification is necessary later. In the rules it states that the council member is to send the ordinance by 12:00 pm Friday. However, by council consensus, it has been previously agreed upon to send items as early in the week as possible because typically if councilmembers do not get them in by Friday and the agenda has been produced, over the weekend there are more add-ons and changes. New business items can be added to or removed from the agenda at the beginning of the meeting.

Police Department- Chief Scott Briefing

The police department is responsible for all the public safety activities that occur in the city. It makes sure that crime is investigated and prevented. Each month the council will get a report that is broken down by wards and team policing areas.

There are currently seventeen employees in the police department. The department is open from 9:00am to 12:00 am every day. It has Spanish speaking employees daily and two Spanish-speaking officers for anyone who needs translation. Patrol shifts are twelve hours long. There are always at least two officers available on duty at all times. On night work from 7:00 pm to 7:00 am, there are three officers on duty, which is usually a Sergeant, Corporal, and one or two officers. During the day time, there is a Corporal and Senior Police Officer that handles things on a rotating shift basis. There are approximately twenty cars in the fleet at one time. Most of them are marked and take-home vehicles. The Officers are racially diverse so that the department can relate to anyone. And the department has a really good working relationship with the District One command at 5000 Rhode Island Avenue. They assist the City with burglaries and robberies.

The Chief breaks information down by policing areas and types of crimes. If a police officer is not on a call for service, he/she should be in the team policing area working on the problems that are endemic to that area. There are different problems depending on where in the City you are. Multi-family dwellings are different from single –family areas and warehouse districts. The officers that patrol the various neighborhoods are aware of these differences.

Vijay Manjani, Director of Finance

The finance department deals with any money that comes in and out of the city. It is responsible for creating the budget and dealing with cash management on a regular basis. There are two employees in this department, the Finance Director and an Accounting Assistant. Currently, the accounting assistant is on maternity leave.

City's Financial Audit Process

The City's fiscal year is July 1st to June 30th. Money that comes sixty days after June 30th can still count towards the last fiscal year. During this time, auditors start working with the City. The deadline to finish the audit is November 1st. All of the City's audits have been complete and the City is in good status.

Economic Development- Samantha Olatunji Briefing

The Economic Development Director position was reinstated last year and is still fairly new. The objective of the Economic Development Director is to serve as the professional economic development arm of the City's management team that helps to manage and support development activities as well as revitalization efforts in the downtown area. Most recently, she has created a development map, which was developed after she started. It provides a visual representation of the development that either has been completed within the last five years or is currently underway and in the pipeline. This tool along with others will be used to monitor investment activity in the Mount Rainier area.

Her responsibilities and goals include:

- Promoting events and programming that support the mixed-use town center zone, other business districts, the Arts District, and the industrial areas in Mount Rainier.
- Spurring economic investment by identifying funding and opportunities to support infill or adaptive reuse in the mixed-use town center or commercial districts.
- Developing collaborative partnerships with local and regional partners.
- Supporting the council priorities in terms of annexation
- Supporting the Economic Development Committee, which includes Councilman Christopherson and, previously, Councilman Bolin. Currently, there is a seat available.
- Acting as liaison for the Economic Development work group, MUTC Committee and Design Review Board. Through the MUTC committee, she works with the local businesses to process MUTC applications. And the Design Review Board reviews requests for variances for residential properties.
- Leveraging both local and regional funding opportunities to support development efforts in Mount Rainier
- Driving business attraction and marketing efforts
- Cultivating business retention and expansion opportunities

- Promoting the brand and strategy for Mount Rainier. Her goal is to create a brand that reflects the unique identity of the City of Mount Rainier and gives the City a competitive advantage in this region. The “Why Mount Rainier?” Survey is very important for developing the Mount Rainier Brand.
- Developing a critical infrastructure that will make the city more relevant for business activity like a complete streets plan that supports making the downtown area more pedestrian friendly.
- Seeking funding and resources to develop a comprehensive public art and wayfinding plant.

Currently, she is working with the Economic Development work group and Committee to develop an Economic Development Strategy and Plan for Fiscal Year 2016. She will be holding a series of facilitated stakeholder discussions in the summer. The goal is to be able to develop a strategy by the end of 2015 or the start of January 2016.

MRTV- Bob Paige

MRTV started in 1986 with one camera and two volunteer staff, Bob Paige and his wife. Originally, the agenda was to record the City events. It has since expanded with the advent of new technology. To see any of the broadcasts, one can watch it through Verizon on channel 21 and Comcast, on channel 71. Broadcasts are also streamed on the Internet through the City of Mount Rainier Homepage.

Currently, the department is active in a project for google maps, the newsletter, which is presented electronically and in print form, and a few events coming up, such as Mount Rainier Day, which is on May 16th. The cable department is used as a public relations arm, and thereby helpful in drawing in many excited businesses into the City.

The Mayor informs the Council that MRTV is available to them. Ideas, shows and thoughts that the councilmembers would like to get out can be aired through MRTV. Also, there are a lot of different ways that the MRTV department can be utilized. She mentions having a program for kids to learn how to use the equipment.

Assistant City Manager- Veronica Owens Briefing

The Assistant City Manager supports the City Manager with various duties and projects. Her second primary role is managing the Code Enforcement Department. In Code Enforcement, there are two staff personnel, Alex Brown and Ruth Sandy. Currently, the department is working on applications and business licenses.

Other responsibilities include:

- Seeking and leveraging for additional funds for the City (i.e. Grants, in-kind services, sponsorship for events, etc.).

- working with the Economic Development Director on economic development strategies and fundraising.
- managing the newsletter to keep residents up to date on all of the City's activities
- Updating and posting events on the listserv.
- Supporting various committees such as the Election Committee, the Green Team, and working on special projects like Buchanan Street and some others.

Councilman Christopherson: What would you say are your two or three top objectives in the next year?

Assistant City Manager: My key objectives would always be supporting the City Manager in all of those roles and duties. Secondly, to work with Code Enforcement, to continue to strengthen the Code Enforcement through best practices. We spent a day in Bowie and we learned a lot. So we are implementing a few things that will be coming out in the next couple of months. And thirdly, to continue to establish new relationships with new funders and keep the old relationships with our existing funders so that we continue to bring funding and resources into the City.

Public Works

There are nine employees in public works. One is an administrative person. There are two trucks that work two different routes for the Refuse Collection, recycling, yard waste. If anyone is sick or on vacation, the City uses temporary personnel. Temporary personnel do not operate equipment or drive vehicles because of insurance issues.

City Manager Wallace informs the Council that they can do a ride-a-long with the trash and snow removal crew. Also, Mr. Michael Barnes is the Assistant Director of Public Works, but is acting as the director until the position is filled.

Call-A-Bus Briefing

The Call-A-Bus has one driver. He was in an accident recently and was injured. The Bus is for people who do not have personal transportation or have some kind of physical challenge. It is a door-to-door service primarily for doctor's appointments in a five mile radius. However, it also picks up youth from three different area schools and brings them to Joe's Movement Emporium, gets seniors to voting polls and city events, and helps residents with shopping. There are reports that have to go to the County once a month that shows the number of riders. The councilmembers can use the bus for other purposes; however, the driver would have to be compensated for overtime. There is no money in the budget allocated for them to do that.

Vice Mayor

Motion to appoint Councilman Bryan Knedler, from Ward II, as the new Vice Mayor for a one-year term.

Councilwoman Shah
2nd Councilman Christopherson
4-0

Mayor and Council Liaison Assignments

*It has not been updated in two years.

The Mayor explains that the Downtown Development Committee and a team of Councilmembers working on Economic Development have formed the Economic Development Work Group, which works on issuing the RFP to bringing the building to fruition. The Councilmember team for 3200 Rhode Island Avenue currently has Councilman Christopherson from Ward I and needs a councilmember from Ward II.

Councilman Christopherson: The Economic Development Committee is a little different because it is composed of council members so we wouldn't have a liaison. The other point I wanted to make is that the Economic Development Committee members should be the liaisons to the Economic Development work group, which is the Downtown Development Committee.

Councilman Christopherson would like to appoint Councilwoman Loh to the committee because of her credentials even though the policy for picking representatives is to choose one councilmember from each ward.

Councilwoman Shah: Even though the councilmembers involved might be both Ward I, if there is enough residents involved on both sides, then that could probably serve as the balance in that respect. And then I am definitely in favor of having this advertised and advertised each time there is a meeting happening...

Councilman Christopherson: I think we should put all of the auxiliary meetings on the website.

Assistant City Manager: As long as we know about a meeting, it is posted.

The Mayor reminds the council that it is the council's responsibility to go to the committee meetings and bring updates on future meetings and events to the council meetings.

Motion to appoint Tracy Loh to the Economic Development Committee
Councilman Christopherson
2nd Councilwoman Shah

Councilwoman Loh believes that some of the committees could be consolidated. The Council will modify the list before the Work-session, when the assignments will be made.

Election Policies

The Election Board would like to speak with the Mayor and Council on the policies. According to the Mayor, parts of the policy have been tested during this past election that needs to be changed, edited, and updated.

Media Policy

City Staff are working on updating the website. The Economic Development Director will be sending the Mayor and Council her list of recommended websites that she suggests the council use to get the Council's information out to advertise and brand the city.

Mount Rainier Day Schedule

9:30 AM – Line up for the parade at 22nd St. and Varnum St.

10:15 AM- Parade will begin

12:00 PM – Drill Team

12:00-5:00PM- Vendors and Performances

Motion to adjourn at 9:08 PM

Councilman Knedler

2nd Councilman Christopherson

4-0