



BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, May 2, 2005, for the purpose of conferring with representatives of the Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge 32 (FOP) regarding the proposed FY 2006 budget.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:05p.m. It was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin; David E. Moran, Assistant City Manager and Jeff Williams, City Treasurer.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Craig Rich, President, John Rogers, Immediate Past President, Marty Parker, Treasurer, Mike Lanier, Vice President, Scott Yankowy, Recording Secretary and George Mathews, Greenbelt FOP; and Virginia Beauchamp, Greenbelt News Review.

Mr. Rich gave a slide presentation that highlighted their current areas of concern and requests of Council.

COLA: The FOP stated that the COLA should be calculated based upon percent of salary, instead of midpoint of the salary range, since the latter discriminates against more senior employees. Mr. Rich expressed concern that while this represented a small amount of money, it adds up over time. Mr. McLaughlin noted that any gap is made up based on performance pay.

Salary/Payscale: Mr. Rich reported that there were only 12 applicants for the last test and expressed concern about recruitment. He noted that previously over 100 applicants had been tested. Two charts were presented illustrating that Greenbelt's starting salary was below other jurisdictions in the area.

Buy-Back Leave Program & Health Insurance Contribution Reduction: The FOP opposed the continuation for a second year of the reduction in the Leave Buy-Back program. They also expressed concern about the change in the health insurance program from a 15 percent employee contribution to a 20 percent employee contribution. Mr. Rich stated that the FOP would support the change if retirees were granted the same benefit. The FOP expressed concern about the trend of reducing employee benefits. Mayor Davis noted that both the costs for the LEOPS retirement system and the costs for health insurance were increasing significantly.

Collective Bargaining: Mr. Rogers gave a presentation on collective bargaining. The presentation outlined how collective bargaining could be implemented in the City. He indicated that the FOP was seeking collective bargaining with binding arbitration. Mr. Rogers stated that if both sides were not able to agree, a third party would be brought

in to render a "fair compromise." He noted that any City police officer at the rank of Sergeant and below would be part of the bargaining unit.

Mr. Rogers indicated that COPAR would have to be amended to establish how bargaining would work and what would be covered by the bargaining. He also noted that a decertification process would have to be included.

He presented an FOP proposed timetable as follows:

June, 2005 Council grants collective bargaining

February, 2006 Negotiated changes are made to COPAR

March, 2006 Contract negotiations begin

By July 1, 2006 Contract is agreed upon, ratified and signed

Mayor Davis asked if other police agencies in the State had collective bargaining. Mr. Rogers responded that Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, M-NCPPC, Ocean City, Takoma Park and Easton had collective bargaining. He also indicated that Hyattsville was pursuing collective bargaining.

Mayor Davis stated that if collective bargaining were implemented then all existing benefits would be on the table and this was a risk for the FOP. Mr. Rogers acknowledged the risk and indicated that the FOP members were aware of this risk.

Mr. Lanier indicated that non-monetary issues such as policies, working conditions and promotional procedures could also be included in the collective bargaining process. He expressed concern that under the current system benefits and policies can be changed without rhyme or reason. Mr. Putens stated that personnel policies should be addressed and asked that the FOP raise any concerns they had about these policies.

Mayor Davis stressed the need to treat all employees equitably and expressed concern that if the FOP were granted certain benefits under collective bargaining, then she would be compelled to provide those same benefits to other employees. Mr. Rogers responded that the FOP was the only unionized employee group in the City. He indicated that other employee groups could form unions. Mr. Rogers stated that the FOP was concerned with its members and did not feel the FOP should be punished because other employee unions did not exist. He noted he had taken an oath to represent the FOP members.

Mr. Putens stated that Council had also taken an oath and had an obligation to represent all City employees. He noted that the taxpayers and citizens had also supported the City government and that these things had to be balanced.

Mr. Rogers stated that the FOP planned to formally ask Council at the next meeting for collective bargaining with binding arbitration. He acknowledged that Council may not be in a position to support collective bargaining, in which case the FOP would request that Council place a question on the ballot regarding collective bargaining. Mayor Davis

asked if the FOP would actively campaign for collective bargaining. Mr. Rogers responded that the FOP would work to educate the citizenry.

Mayor Davis and Ms. Mach both noted as former union members they understood how collective bargaining worked, but that now they represented the entire City and all of its employees. Mr. Herling expressed the need for a long range plan and suggested that the City explore collective bargaining for all of its employees.

FOP Retiree Health Savings Plan: The FOP provided information a new International City/County Management Association Retirement Corporation (ICMARC) plan endorsed by the Grand Lodge of the FOP that was "tailored" for police officers and better than the City's current ICMARC Retiree Health Savings Plan.

Other Business

Mayor Davis reported on the Maryland Municipal League (MML) "If I Were Mayor" contest. She noted that MML was discontinuing its current "award for excellence" program and developing a new awards program.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

David E. Moran

Assistant City Manager