

**COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS**  
**Special Meeting**  
**May 4, 2020**

**CALL TO ORDER:** By Mayor Ridge on Monday, May 4, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

**PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE:** Councilmembers Baker, McRae, Dyer, Hoogstra, Weissenborn, Mayor Pro-Tem Armitage, Mayor Ridge, City Clerk Terpstra and City Manager Guetschow.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** City Manager Guetschow read correspondence that was sent to the webmaster.

**Diane Bateman**, 202 E. Shaw, is opposed to closing CARA.

**Katrina Klaiss**, 3709 Long Hwy, Charlotte, is opposed to closing CARA,.

**Robin Exelby**, 7172 Lawrence Hwy., Nashville, MI, is opposed to closing CARA.

**Donna Leahy**, 408 E. Lovett, Charlotte, is opposed to closing recycling center.

**Owen & Judith Whitkopf**, 308 Plymouth Dr., is opposed to closing CARA.

**V. Wesley Sherman**, 7323 Moyer Rd., Charlotte, is opposed to closing CARA.

**Janelle Norton**, 7580 N. Wheaton Rd., is opposed to closing CARA.

**Carla Nighbet**, 3600 Brandy Lane, Olivet, is opposed to closing CARA.

**David & Mary Normand**, is opposed to closing CARA.

**Scott Pocan**, 1025 Northway Dr., Charlotte, (present on call) stated that he is concerned about the recycling center being closed. He is accumulating a garage full of recycling while the center has been closed.

There were also a number of citizen comments included in the agenda packet with regard to support for keeping the recycling center open.

**ITEMS OF BUSINESS:**

**A. DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED FY 20/21 BUDGET:**

City Manager Guetschow stated that the budget summary documents and budget message have been presented to council. He explained the tremendous level of uncertainty because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is unknown if the federal government will include legislation to include funding for State and Local government at this time. He is expecting at least a 20% reduction in revenue sharing and has no way of knowing if that is the right number. It is unknown when the economy will come back after the isolation. He stated that the \$200,000 that was to go into a trust for retiree health insurance may need to be deferred in case it is needed for cash flow purposes.

Council member Armitage questioned the drone that is proposed as he said that the County has purchased one to be used by all agencies. He asked if the fuel sales at the airport would have a negative impact at the airport.

City Manager Guetschow stated that he would ask the police chief about the drone and that the fuel sales are not factored in as they have a very small impact.

Council member McRae felt that it would be helpful to have a fiscal response running document to work with showing steps being taken with specific numbers. He stated that in looking at the Vision 2025

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documents some are very modest and feels that we should maintain the momentum and keep moving forward with those goals.

Council member Dyer would like to suggest to go through the funds one by one.

Council member Weissenborn asked to get an understanding of the difference between service transfers and operating transfers. She stated it would be helpful to understand what is included in the contractual services.

City Manager Guetschow explained that service transfers are one fund selling services to another fund. Operating transfers are where the general fund allocates funds to other departments. (General fund to Airport Fund for example)

Council member McRae asked about several line items and felt it would be helpful if a brochure could be put together for Vision 2025. He asked if the settlement fund could be used for the roof repair at the airport.

City Manager Guetschow explained that the intent for the roof repair was to use money from the Cares Act.

Mayor Pro-Tem Armitage asked about the Fire Department succession planning and what the time frame of that would be.

City Manager Guetschow stated that the Fire Chief contract with Fullerton Fire Services expires in April 2021. At the term of the contract they would be filling the full time chief position and also the sixth fire position.

Council member Baker stated that he had taken advantage of one on one time with the City Manager with questions about budget items in the past and found it very helpful.

Council member Dyer asked how much more money there would be if the general fund went to 15%.

Council member Weissenborn reminded that they need not lose sight of the pension issue.

Mayor Ridge asked if there was a COLA in the budget for employees. She asked if there were anything in the budget for DDA.

City Manager Guetschow stated there is a 2% increase across the board. He stated that the DDA does their own budget and because they have not been able to meet that was not in the budget at this time.

Mayor Ridge asked about the Clerks budget for salaries.

City Manager Guetschow stated that last budget it was split between the Clerk's budget and the Finance budget, however the accounting did not track to those funds. Therefore, he has put everything into the Clerk's budget for the corresponding offset.

Mayor Ridge asked about the fund balance for the airport and if there was any more known revenue.

City Manager Guetschow stated that revenue comes from the fuel sales, rental of hangars and flight school. All hangars are rented at this time. The plan is to build another set of hangars after the next phase is completed.

Mayor Ridge asked what the information technology was related to in the budget.

City Manager Guetschow explained that it is an in and out fund that was just set up this year. It is an accumulation of costs for computers, telephones, cell phones that are then allocated back to each department.

Mayor Ridge would like a time frame for Master Plan and would like some information on the status of the Redevelopment Ready Community.

**CARA DISCUSSION:**

Council member Dyer thinks that the amount of investment is minimal and there is a lot of community support and feels that the City should do whatever is possible to keep it open.

Council member McRae feels that the recycling center is a part of who we are. He feels that it would send a negative message to the community to close.

Council member Baker stated that he has been an advocate of CARA since it originated. He uses it both for home and his office. He stated that he had received around 19 emails in support of the center. He wondered if there would be a way to charge a mandatory fee. He also suggested going back to the townships that dropped out of the agreement to try and have them once again participate in the cost.

Council member Weissenborn would like a full picture of the operation. She is a huge advocate for recycling. She would like to know more about the former agreement. She asked if there had been any type of fund raisers.

Council member Armitage stated that if the elimination of CARA was in the budget he will not vote for it. He understands the deficit, however feels that it should be price not profit for the greater good and that it is worth keeping. He stated that assuming that nothing could be cut he would propose increasing .125 mills to keep this service. This would cost taxpayers around \$9.50/yr. He stated that Vision 2025 had recycling as one of the top issues and feels we would be stepping backward if we were to eliminate it.

Council member Hoogstra agrees that there is a need for other options to keep CARA going. The environment is very important. She likes the idea of increasing the mills.

Council member Weissenborn stated that she would like to look at all the options including curb pickup and private sector.

City Manager Guetschow stated that he is a frequent user of the center also. He has no problem with the center. He explained that the funding at the city level does not reflect the user base. Two-thirds to three quarters of the user base is township residents. The townships decided that they no longer wanted to participate in the agreement. The center ran a surplus until the last few years. The revenues from the sale of recyclables has dropped significantly which has also contributed to the deficit. Carmel Township is the only participating township left. Some fund raising has been done and there was a Friends of CARA that was formed to try to raise funds for the center. He explained that the problem is getting worse not better. It is a problem that non-residents are using and not contributing to the cost, while city residents are paying for it.

Mayor Ridge stated that this is not the first time this has been addressed. She stated that some limited fund raising was done thru Friends of CARA. She stated that we need to go to the townships once again.

Council member Baker lost from call at 9:07 p.m.

Council member Armitage suggested fixing it for this year and then have a work session with CARA to put together some long term strategies going forward.

Council member Dyer asked if vehicle purchases with DPW could be delayed for a year.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Don Sovey**, 106 Kensington Ct., stated that it was a good discussion. He reminded that the City always receives the GFOA award because of transparency. He feels more detail to compare year to date actual would be helpful. He questioned several line items. He would like to see a communication plan so that the public is more engaged. He encouraged looking at the GFOA website regarding information they have posted in relation to the corona virus. He encouraged staying engaged with the Vision 2025 plan.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

- Council member Dyer stated he is thankful for the support of the recycling center.
- Council member McRae no comment.
- Council member Baker no longer on call.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Armitage no comment.
- Council member Hoogstra no comment.
- Council member Weissenborn asked about discussion on city ordinance regarding code enforcement.
- Mayor Ridge stated that she likes the idea of a one page document for Vision 2025 from Bryan Myrkle. She stated that the google document is a great plan as well for that. She stated that she likes that the department heads can join the call and feels it is a very valuable way to present the budget. She stated that the discussions on the budget can start on the 11<sup>th</sup> and there will probably be another special meeting.

**Mayor Pro-Tem Armitage moved, seconded by Weissenborn to adjourn at 9:16 P.M. Carried. 6 Yes. 0 No (Baker lost from call)**

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Mayor Yvonne Ridge

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Ginger Terpstra, City Clerk, CMMC