

CITY OF DENTON CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

March 4, 2019

After determining that a quorum was present, the City Council convened in a Work Session on Monday, March 4, 2019 at 11:30 a.m. in the Sherman Conference Room at the Linda McNatt Animal Care & Adoption Center, 3717 N. Elm Street, Denton, Texas.

PRESENT: Council Member Gerard Hudspeth, Council Member Keely Briggs, Council Member Don Duff, Mayor Pro Tem John Ryan, Council Member Deb Armintor, Council Member Paul Meltzer, and Mayor Chris Watts.

ABSENT: None.

WORK SESSION

1. Work Session Reports

- A. 19-447 Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction regarding an overview and options for Fire Department recruiting and hiring.

Brad LaHart, Assistant Fire Chief, presented the item. He stated that the Fire Department hiring practices were regulated by the Texas Local Government Code 143, City of Denton rules and regulations of the Civil Service Commission, and the Fire Department Meet and Confer. He reviewed the basic hiring process, hiring requirements, and hiring differences between the Fire Department and the Police Department. He stated that they recruited through advertising, at local schools, at special events, fire academies, and paramedic schools. He reviewed the variety of traditional and non-traditional forms of advertising and marketing they used to increase the candidate pool.

Kenneth Hedges, Fire Chief, reviewed exam demographics and stated that minority percentages had increased in the past five years. He stated that staff recommended continuation of recruiting while further examining additional recruiting strategies through the "Homegrown" program.

- B. ID 19-445 Receive a report, hold a discussion, and provide staff direction regarding City Council priorities for upcoming work session report topics.

Bryan Langley, Deputy City Manager, presented the item. He stated that staff distributed a survey to City Council on February 19 that included topics from previous strategy sessions that had not yet been scheduled for a work session along with all policy-related Informal Staff Reports that were distributed from November 9 - February 15 where a work session was not currently scheduled. The top six topics included Hickory Street bicycle lanes; traffic and roadway projects technology; use of utility billing information for development public hearing notification; sobering centers; economic development corridor/small area reinvestment grant program; and zero energy homes. The Red Light Camera Pilot Update was also added to the top.

Council discussion included having some of the Council Committees look at some of the topics, topics that fell under current ordinances, better scheduling of agendas and items on the agendas so there wasn't a two or three hour break in-between.

- C. ID 19-408 Receive a report, hold a discussion, and give staff direction regarding the Animal Services operation and operational review.

Tiffany Thomson, Director of Customer Service, presented the item. She stated that the Animal Services Department had transitioned from the Police Department to the Customer Service Division. This was done to focus Police resources on core public safety functions, while continuing to support a strong customer-focused service delivery model at the Animal Shelter. Since the transition, management has worked diligently to evaluate the operations of the Animal Services Department. The evaluation included assessing the organizational structure, staffing levels, and pay; external and internal communications; customer service, phone call volumes, and responsiveness; operating supplies; and volunteer and rescue group support.

Staff hired a professional animal shelter consultant to come in and conduct an objective assessment of the operation, which included a review of the shelter facility, shelter operations, animal care, fundraising and volunteers, communications and public relations, governance, and vehicles and equipment.

Critical findings and action taken included services had been secured to develop the Employee Handbook and Standard Operating Procedures specific to Animal Sheltering and the process and training for proper cleaning and sanitation of all animal housing areas. A formal volunteer program was being developed. Staffing issues had been addressed for the Customer Service Representatives and management has been in discussions with RSVP about ensuring contract compliance and addressing improvement areas. The management and customer service approach in the operation had significantly changed to ensure effective leadership, accountability, involved management and that a service mentality was delivered.

Council discussion included service animals, integrating the animal care and adoption facility with the dog park, program with domestic violence shelters and holding an animal, and volunteer training.


D. ID 19-465 Conduct a walking tour of the Linda McNatt Animal Care and Adoption Center, located at 3717 N. Elm Street.

Members of the Council and City staff participated in a tour of the animal care and adoption center.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:23 p.m.



CHRIS WATTS
MAYOR
CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS



JANE RICHARDSON
ASSISTANT CITY SECRETARY
CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS