

**CITY OF NEW BERN
BOARD OF ALDERMEN STRATEGIC PLANNING WORK SESSION
OCTOBER 05, 2023 9:00 AM – 12:30 PM
PLEASANT HILL COMMUNITY CENTER
431 NC HWY. 55 WEST, NEW BERN**

Mayor Odham opened the meeting. The pledge of allegiance was recited. Prayer by Alderman Royal.

Roll Call: Mayor Jeffrey Odham; Aldermen Rick Prill, Hazel Royal, Johnnie Ray Kinsey, and Robert Brinson. Absent: Alderman Robert Aster and Barbara Best. A quorum was present.

Also in Attendance: Foster Hughes, City Manager; Marvin Williams, Assistant City Manager; and Brenda Blanco, City Clerk. Others: Charlie Bauschard, Director of Utilities, George Chiles, Director of Public Works; Patrick Gallagher, Chief of Police; Sonya Hayes, Director of Human Resources; Jordan Hughes, Director of Water Resources; Jim McConnell, Interim Fire Chief; Colleen Roberts, Public Information Officer; and Ernest Simons, Director of Information Technology.

Lydian Altman, facilitator from the University of North Carolina provided an overview for the day and reviewed the strategic planning meeting that took place on August 30, 2023. In reflection, Alderman Kinsey expressed concern about one person on the Board making decisions instead of involving the whole Board. As an example, he referenced the redesign of the courtroom being handled by one elected official with no input from the other elected officials. He voiced a desire for the Board to be able to offer an opinion and have involvement in the day-to-day operation of the City. Alderman Prill noted under the Council-Manager form of government, the day-to-day operations are handled by the manager and the Board's responsibility is to make policy. Mayor Odham noted the point of a strategic plan is to give staff direction on how to move forward. Alderman Brinson felt the last meeting provided officials with an opportunity to interact more with the staff. Alderman Royal agreed with Alderman Kinsey and felt as a new official it would be good to have someone to mentor them. She felt Alderman Kinsey was trying to express the need for officials to support each other. Part of the design of this workshop series is to knit the elected officials with staff, according to Ms. Altman.

The morning session focused on establishing a preliminary vision for the community and a mission. Attendees broke out into small groups to review notes from the last meeting to identify what would be applicable to a vision statement, mission statement, and organizational values. The City's current mission statement was reviewed and feedback received. The importance of educating the public was discussed.

Ms. Altman noted affordable and safe housing was a suggestion that surfaced at the last session, but she observed there had been little information on that topic. Mayor Odham recognized public perception is that the City is involved in housing, but historically the City

has had no involvement at all outside of land use ordinances and permitting. Consideration should be given to educating the public on this. He also suggested when developing future goals, this Board may want to consider just how involved it wants to be in housing.

(A break was taken from 10:55 a.m. to 11:07 a.m.)

Attendees again broke out into groups to discuss potential goals and markers of success. Mayor Odham reminded everyone that when goals and objectives are developed, it will be important to keep in mind that not everyone will be in agreement. When a small group of citizens voice opposition or support of a goal, it is important to keep in mind that the group does not represent the whole population of 32,000. Mr. Hughes expressed the need for departmental strategic plans to tie into the overall goals of the Board.

Stakeholder engagement was discussed. Alderman Royal felt it was invaluable to be transparent and obtain input from others. When residents are not part of the process, it brings confusion. Alderman Brinson noted that often when community input meetings have been held there have been few to attend and participate. Mr. Hughes felt the participation had varied based on the topics. Alderman Brinson questioned whether the City should attend Rotary meetings, etc. to share the strategic goals and objectives. Alderman Royal felt the outcome would still be the same: small attendance with a small group of people who will be very vocal in favor or against the plan. Mariah Canup, MPA student who accompanied Ms. Altman, commented there are several alternative methods for communicating the plan to the public. Mayor Odham felt it was important to define the audience. Other suggestions for obtaining input included going out into the community versus having the community come to city meetings, a combination of both going out and coming to the city, and offering remote input. After some discussion about engaging the public, the consensus was that it was too early to seek public input now and that it would be more beneficial to wait until there is a draft plan to reveal. It will be easier for the public to offer feedback if they have something to consider.

Ms. Lydian announced staff in attendance would spend the afternoon working to further develop the information collected during the morning. A summary of today's meeting will be shared by her in a couple of weeks. Mr. Hughes said following staff's afternoon meeting, information would be presented to a smaller group and then would be shared with the full Board. A timeline for a draft plan was discussed. It was anticipated the plan would be ready by the end of November.

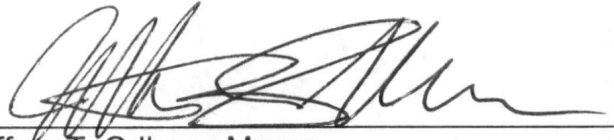
Adjourn

Alderman Royal made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Alderman Brinson. The motion carried unanimously 5-0, time being 12:42 p.m.

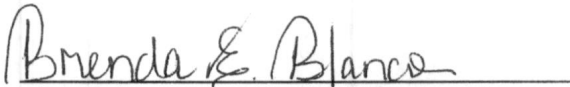
The attached documents are incorporated herewith and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

NOTE: For additional details and information on the Board of Aldermen meetings, please visit the City of New Bern's website at www.newbernnc.gov. Video and audio recordings of the meeting have been archived.

Minutes approved: October 24, 2023



Jeffrey T. Odham, Mayor



Brenda E. Blanco, City Clerk