



City of Tacoma

City Council Study Session Minutes

Dial: 253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 894 9617 1192

Webinar Link: www.zoom.us/j/89496171192 Passcode: 896569

September 21, 2021

12:00 PM

Call to Order

Mayor Woodards called the study session to order at 12:03 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: 7 - Beale, Blocker, Hines, Hunter, McCarthy, Walker and Mayor Woodards

Absent: 2 - Thoms and Ushka

All Council Members participated virtually.

Briefing Items

1. [21-0898](#) Reserve Policy Updates

At approximately 12:04 p.m., Council Member Hines provided a summary of the Government Performance and Finance Committee's (GPF) review and discussion of the City's reserve policy at their August 17, 2021, meeting. Katie Johnston, Budget Officer, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), introduced Andy Cherullo, Director, Finance, and presented updates on the reserve policy, including an agenda; current policy elements; Government Finance Officers Association best practices; reserve levels maintained by comparable cities in Washington State; and considerations for policy updates, noting scope and purpose, fund balance level, and use and replenishment of funds. Mr. Cherullo presented the recommendations to create the General Fund Reserve, Emergency Reserve, and Contingency Reserve sub-funds, noting voting requirements, targets, uses, and replenishment; the process for use and replenishment of the sub-funds; initial funding of the sub-funds; and next steps, including a resolution to update the policy.

Discussion ensued regarding GPF review and goals; clarifying how funds are used and replenished; the fund goals as percentages and as dollar amounts; balancing funding for priorities, programs, and the reserve funds; differences between the current and proposed policies; previous uses of reserve funds; and how catastrophic events are defined or determined.

2. [21-0899](#) Recommendations for Juneteenth as a City Holiday

At approximately 12:37 p.m., Mayor Woodards provided opening remarks regarding recommendations to make Juneteenth a City holiday, and introduced Lisa Woods, Interim Director, Office of Equity and Human Rights (OEHR). Ms. Woods further introduced Lucas Smiraldo, Senior Policy Analyst, OEHR, Hayley Falk, Lead Budget Analyst, OMB, and Dylan Carlson, Senior Labor Relations Manager, City Attorney's Office; and presented an overview, background of a previous City Council discussion and observed holidays, a history of Juneteenth, cultural paid holiday models to offer an annual paid holiday or an additional floating holiday, and considerations and feedback. Ms. Falk reviewed a fiscal analysis of the two models, noting service continuity costs and incremental costs. Mr. Smiraldo reviewed stakeholder engagement and feedback from various departments, noting major themes and preference for an additional annual holiday. Ms. Woods concluded by reviewing recent legislation and trends within private companies and federal, state, and local governments; and potential next steps, noting continued stakeholder engagement, legislation, implementation, and observation of the holiday in 2022.

Discussion ensued regarding the timeline, other agencies that have implemented a Juneteenth holiday, Council Member support for the proposal of a new holiday for Juneteenth, options to recognize other cultural holidays, appreciation for staff members' work to provide context and costs related to the proposal, the importance of feedback from staff and affinity groups, the value of a formal acknowledgement and investment, the City Council's role to move forward with legislation, and a focus on education and service.

3. [21-0900](#) Systems Transformation

At approximately 1:06 p.m., City Manager Elizabeth Pauli presented an update on systems transformation, including new items, noting Committee of the Whole review of mid-biennium budget modifications and American Rescue Plan Act funding; consultant-facilitated cross-departmental reviews of budget modification proposals; Tacoma Venues and Events gaining Sensory Inclusive certification as of September 2021; the proposed Juneteenth holiday; the Affordable Housing Action Strategy, noting updates to the Rental Housing Code, the Multi-Family Property Tax Exemption Program, and Home in Tacoma Project; Community's Police Advisory Committee events to collect feedback on use of force and oversight, noting the upcoming event on September 30, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.; Tacoma Police Department (TPD) Chief recruitment; a request for proposals on the City's communications strategy assessment and recommendations; and the transformation timeline and history available on the City website at cityoftacoma.org/transform.

Other Items of Interest

- 4. [21-0901](#) Council Consideration Request - University of Washington Tacoma Latinx Celebration Sponsorship

Mayor Woodards presented a Council Consideration Request (CCR) to allocate \$5,000 of Council Contingency Funds to support the inaugural University of Washington Tacoma Celebrando Comunidad: Latinx Celebration and Awards on October 8, 2021, including the proposal by the Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (CIRA), CIRA’s role to select the award category, and the City Events and Recognition Committee’s competitive selection process.

* * * * *

Mayor Woodards stated a proposed Substitute Resolution No. 40839, regarding appointments to the South Sound Housing Affordability Partners (SSHAP) Executive Board, will be brought before the City Council at tonight’s meeting, noting the Board will be formed at the end of September 2021.

Mayor Woodards further stated that she plans to sign an amendment to Proclamation of Emergency Rule No. 2, related to postponing utility shut-offs, noting the amendment will extend the timeline, eliminate the requirement that customers establish a payment plan while the Emergency Rule is in effect, and clarify that no late fees will be applied to balances incurred during the emergency.

Discussion ensued regarding changes to payment plan requirements.

- 5. [21-0902](#) Council Consideration Request - Building Program Capacity to Resettle Afghan Immigrants and Refugees

Council Member Hunter and Mayor Woodards presented a CCR from Council Member Thoms to allocate \$25,000 of Council Contingency Funds to assist in building program capacity to resettle Afghan immigrants and refugees to Tacoma and Pierce County, including coordination with Lutheran Community Services Northwest as the local non-profit to administer the program.

Discussion ensued regarding the funding amount and community partner.

6. [21-0903](#) Manuel Ellis Investigation Update

Mike Ake, Interim Police Chief, TPD, presented an update on the Manuel Ellis investigation, including expected completion this week of two of the five investigations for the officers who were not charged with a crime, attempts to conduct civilian interviews, and next steps for the remaining investigations.

Discussion ensued regarding steps to close out the investigations, the status of the remaining three investigations, impacts of the Washington State Attorney General's Office reopening of their investigations, the process for recommendations and final decisions, how civilian interviews are conducted, and the difficulty to estimate timelines in complex investigations.

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports given.

Agenda Review and City Manager's Weekly Report

7. [21-0904](#) Weekly Report to the Mayor and City Council, September 16, 2021

City Manager Pauli stated there are no ceremonials on tonight's meeting agenda, and that two changes are expected to tonight's agenda, including a proposed Substitute Resolution No. 40839, related to Council appointments, to add the appointment of Mayor Woodards to the new SSHAP Executive Board; and a proposed Substitute Ordinance No. 28780, related to the Rental Housing Code, to establish an emergency and set an effective date.

Adjournment

On proper motion, the study session was adjourned at 1:31 p.m.

Victoria R. Woodards, Mayor

Doris Sorum, City Clerk