

Thursday, February 22, 2024 - 9:00 a.m.
Harrah's Cherokee Center - Asheville

First Day of City Council Annual Retreat - February 22, 2024

Present: Mayor Esther E. Manheimer, Presiding; Vice-Mayor Sandra Kilgore; Councilwoman S. Antanette Mosley; Councilwoman Kim Roney; Councilwoman Sheneika Smith; Councilwoman Sage Turner; Councilwoman Maggie Ullman; City Manager Debra Campbell; City Attorney Brad Branham; and City Clerk Magdalen Burleson

Mayor Manheimer convened and welcomed everyone to the City Council Annual Retreat.

Mayor Manheimer then introduced Dr. Amy Climer from Climer Consulting, who would be facilitating the retreat.

Dr. Climer then gave a brief overview of the retreat, with the goals being (1) further develop as a team; (2) clarify roles and responsibilities between Council and staff; (3) review and reflect on challenges and opportunities; and (4) determine strategic priorities and goals for Fiscal Year 2025.

City Council then went through an exercise of what they are proud of about Council, and their one hope they have for this Council retreat. Dr. Climer then reviewed the retreat guidelines.

Discussion took place regarding building on last year's conversation of team development, and discussed high-performing teams. They began revision of Council's Success Compact, which were revised and converted into Working Agreements for Council. The Council Success Compact, which was created in 2021 were (1) Request to Debra and Staff: Provide a briefing on certain issues to Council to help share more information in advance of a conversation/ decision; (2) Speak up early and often if you have a perspective, feedback or need more information; (3) Verify that your interpretation of what was said is accurate; (4) Operate with Integrity – Keep your word, and if you can't proactively communicate why; (5) Use a pros and cons list as a tool to make logical policy decisions; (6) Be Patient with Your Teammate – Give people space if they need it, however if you need time take ownership to circle back to remediate; (7) Work to ask questions for clarification on a topic in a way that respects the other person and strengthens team health; (8) Be patient with your teammate as they bring their full self to the team (passion, knowledge, wisdom, intuition, etc.); (9) Bring a mindset of ownership to the process; (10) Honor and respect how others receive information and make decisions; (11) Assume your teammate has positive intent behind their actions. Reach out to your teammate directly to discuss their intentions; (11) Perspective Seeking – Be a curious sponge about the other person's point of view; (12) Avoid Surprises – Provide feedback or a heads up on comments one-on-one before making comments publicly; and (13) No Triangulation Agreement – Speak directly to the person you have a relationship issue with, rather than putting someone else in the middle.

Council then discussed new Working Agreements, with the conversation on how Council will work together as a team. In summary, the following are the new working agreements that City Council will strive to achieve (1) Be open and honest with each other; (2) Seek to understand each other's why; (3) Lead with compassion; (4) Operate and lead in good faith; (5) Collaborate and connect with each other; (6) Engage in respectful disagreement (cognitive conflict); (7) Support each other; and (8) Be yourself and support others in being themselves.

City Attorney Branham then reviewed with Council their Code of Ethics.

City Manager Campbell provided the following key takeaways: (1) Council priorities have been developed and evolved over the past several years based on the City Council's Vision and

Focus Areas; (2) In Fiscal Year 2023-2024, goal statements were added to each of the Council priorities to provide clarity in terms of outcomes and intended impacts related to the priorities; (3) Although this year has been challenging, steady progress is being made especially in the areas of housing, public safety and core services; (4) Advanced planning and technical assessments have increased knowledge and awareness in terms of infrastructure are being used to inform the upcoming budget process and possible General Obligation Bond; and (5) Highlights of this years accomplishments and ways staff have tried to improve service delivery and quality of life for people in our community will be shared as part of this presentation. More detailed information on projects and initiatives can be found on the City's webpage: <https://www.ashevillenc.gov/government/council-priorities>.

Assistant to the City Manager Jaime Matthews, Assistant City Manager Ben Woody, and Assistant City Manager Rachel Wood then reviewed with Council the accomplishments of Fiscal Year 2024 under each of their following six strategic priorities, and ways staff have tried to improve service delivery and quality of life for people in our community: (1) Equitable & Affordable Housing and Stability; (2) Homelessness Strategies; (3) Improve and Expand Core Services; (4) Neighborhood and Climate Resilience; (5) Reimagining Public Safety; and (6) Reparations. Dr. Climer then clarified the key definition language of goals vs. strategic priorities vs. visions.

Council then looked at their current strategic priorities and determined what they wanted to keep or change for Fiscal Year 2025. After discussion, City Council agreed upon the following 2025 strategic priorities: (1) Equitable and Affordable Housing and Stability; (2) Homelessness Strategies; (3) Improve and Maintain Infrastructure and Core Services; (4) Neighborhood and Climate Resilience; (5) Reimagining Public Safety; and (6) Reparations.

Dr. Climer then provided Council with an introduction to their discussion about goals.

At 4:21 p.m., Mayor Manheimer recessed the meeting until 9:00 a.m. on February 23, 2024.

Friday – February 23, 2024 - 9:00 a.m.
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Second Day of City Council Annual Retreat - February 23, 2024

Present: Mayor Esther E. Manheimer, Presiding; Vice-Mayor Sandra Kilgore; Councilwoman S. Antanette Mosley; Councilwoman Kim Roney; Councilwoman Sheneika Smith; Councilwoman Sage Turner; Councilwoman Maggie Ullman; City Manager Debra Campbell; City Attorney Brad Branham; and City Clerk Magdalen Burleson

At 9:00 a.m., Mayor Manheimer welcomed everyone to the second day of the City Council Annual Retreat.

Discussion surrounded Budget Manager Taylor Floyd's overview of the operating and capital budget challenges and opportunities. Potential November 2024 Referenda buckets could be housing; transportation; parks, recreation and entertainment; and public safety and facilities. Human Resources Director Shannon Barrett also provided an overview of compensation and benefits.

Discussion took place on goals. The following goals were agreed upon by City Council:

Neighborhood & Climate Resilience

- Through engagement and partnerships, prioritize resources and capacity across our climate, sustainability and neighborhood plans to maximize impact.

Equitable and Affordable Housing and Stability

- Implement anti-displacement strategies while increasing housing supply in strategic areas/corridors and reducing barriers to construction.
- Incentivize access for low income residents/households with emphasis on equitable growth.;
- Continue to update the Unified Development Ordinance.

Improve and Maintain Infrastructure and Core Services

- Hire and retain excellent staff.
- Prioritize and increase investment in municipal assets.
- Strengthen regional partnerships and explore creative and ambitious untapped revenue sources, including federal, state, regional, bond funds, etc.

Homelessness Strategies

- Through partnerships, make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring by targeting strategies recommended by the National Alliance to End Homelessness..

Reimagining Public Safety

- Improve community safety outcomes by securing funding, increasing and diversifying programming and partnerships to address quality of life issues.

Reparations

- Maximize and support collaboration with the Community Reparations Commission and community partners to effectively implement short and long term recommendations including the audit findings and long-term accountability strategies.
- Grow reparations investment by maintaining funding commitment and continue to look for more revenue sources and partners.

City staff then had the opportunity to get clarification from Council on the strategic priorities and goals and the year ahead. City staff will align the objectives or strategies/projects with the Council's goals. When applicable, we will bring items through Council committees.

Questions raised throughout the discussions by Council that staff were not able to immediately answer will be provided to Council.

Mayor Manheimer asked that staff review City Council wages, with the possibility of offering other benefits that full-time City employees receive, i.e., retirement benefits, 401K, etc.

Dr. Climer said that next steps will be for her to compile the information from the retreat and send it to the City Manager to disseminate to City Council.

At 3:07 p.m., Mayor Manheimer adjourned the meeting.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR