

**NOTICE OF STUDY SESSION
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
October 26, 2020
5:30 p.m.**

AGENDA

Requested by the City Manager

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

At the Study Session of the City Council of University City held via videoconference, on Monday, October 26, 2020, Mayor Terry Crow called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

In addition to the Mayor, the following members of Council were present:

Councilmember Stacy Clay
Councilmember Aleta Klein
Councilmember Steven McMahon
Councilmember Jeffrey Hales
Councilmember Tim Cusick
Councilmember Bwayne Smotherson

Also, in attendance were City Manager, Gregory Rose; City Attorney, John F. Mulligan, Jr.; Director of Finance, Keith Cole; Chief of Police, Larry Hampton, and Director of Parks & Recreation, Darren Dunkle.

2. CHANGES TO REGULAR AGENDA

Mayor Crow noted that there were no changes to the Regular Agenda.

3. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT – POLICE EXPLORERS – SENIOR PROGRAM

Mr. Rose stated while considering the Annual Operating Budget Council requested that staff provide them with an overview of these programs. And the Youth Employment Program will be presented by the Director of Finance, Keith Cole.

Youth Employment

Mr. Cole stated the Youth Employment Program (YEP) for U City residents was initiated in 2011. It was piloted by Ellen Bern of the U City Chamber of Commerce, Christine Woodward of the U City School District, and University City.

Objectives of the Program

- To provide youth with roughly 10 weeks of summer employment; June – August; Monday – Friday; 20 to 40 hours per week.
- To give participants an opportunity to obtain and retain a meaningful work experience.
- To provide participants with professional development; how to dress for an interview, and how to market themselves in a competitive job market.
- To provide an opportunity to learn and develop valuable & critical job skills.
- To provide an understanding of acceptable work habits.
- To provide an understanding of public service operations.
- To provide training in personal financial management.

Basic Eligibility Requirements

- University City resident
- Between the ages of 16 and 19
- Successful completion of the previous high school semester
- No felonies, misdemeanors, or Type 1 school offenses

Management, Roles & Costs

Management:

- The University City Chamber of Commerce and University City School District

Roles:

- Businesses that participated in the program were reimbursed 50 percent of their costs, which was split by the City and the School District.
- Reimbursement requests were processed by the City's Finance Department, and the School District was billed for their portion of the reimbursement.

Program Costs:

- Between 2014 and 2017, the total cost for this program was approximately \$38,000, which was split equally between the City and the School District; (\$19,000 each).
- Between 2011 and 2017, the City paid approximately \$143,000 in part-time wages for this program.
- The approximate cost for the City's portion of this program is \$162,000.

Summary

- Between 2014 and 2017, the YEP has provided summer jobs to approximately 85 students.
- 36 of those students maintained their jobs after the summer.
- These jobs were obtained through local businesses, the Library, and the City.

Mr. Cole stated overall; the program seems to have provided a positive experience for those youth who participated.

Councilmember Smotherson stated he would like to get the City Manager's opinion on when he thinks this program could be reinstated. He stated because of COVID's impact on employment, this would provide youth with an opportunity to achieve gainful employment, and it might be just the incentive some of the City's businesses need. Mr. Rose stated at this point, there are so many unknowns, that it is a difficult question to answer. The originator of this program was the Chamber of Commerce, which is now defunct, so they would have determined how the program would be managed and if the School District was still interested in participating.

Mayor Crow stated his hope is that staff will keep this on the back burner; especially considering Costco's impending arrival. They might be happy to hire local employees, so it would be a good program to have in place. He stated once staff has a better idea about the progress of the Olive/1-70 Development, his guess is that it would not be too hard to approach some of the City's larger employers to determine if they had a desire to participate.

Mayor Crow stated he would also like to acknowledge Former Councilmember Byron Price because this was a program, he was very passionate about.

Mr. Rose stated the Police Explorers Program would be presented by the Chief of Police, Larry Hampton.

Police Explorers

Chief Hampton stated the City's Explorer Program; which ended somewhere around 2009, was sponsored by the Boy Scouts of America, and therefore, governed by their Bylaws, insurance coverage, and organizational requirements. U City's Post was open to youth from Clayton, Ladue, Charlack, and any surrounding municipalities that did not have their own Post.

Purpose

- To provide youth with an opportunity to learn the various functions of daily policing techniques
- To demonstrate how they can better serve their community by assisting in City functions
- To provide a better understanding of social, economic, and governmental systems.

Membership Requirements

- Between the ages of 14 to 21 and have completed the 8th grade; *(parental consent required for anyone under the age of 18.)*

- Maintain at least a 2.0 GPA or possess a GED
- Reliable transportation to and from meetings
- A background check
- No felony convictions
- Be a U.S. Citizen

Explorers must attend several meetings with no unexcused absences before being admitted into the program. Once admitted, Explorers are expected to hold a high attendance rate with the program, including attendance at regularly scheduled meetings and pre-scheduled city functions. New explorers will attend meetings in business casual clothing for the first three meetings, at which time uniforms may then be issued and are required to be worn at all future meetings and/or training.

Curriculum

All aspects of the curriculum are governed by U City Ordinances, and State/Constitutional statutes.

- Ride-along with patrol officers
- Searches
- Car stops
- Bomb Threats
- Active Shooter training
- White/Blue collar crimes
- First Aid/CPR
- Radio procedures
- Conflict resolution
- Crime Scene processing
- Off-site training with other Explorer posts
- Team building exercises
- Community service tasks designed to help fund the Post

Explorers are expected to display professionalism and integrity at all times whether in uniform or not. When a youth becomes an Explorer with the department, they become a representative of the department and should be held to high standards.

Pros

- A good community outreach program that helps to breakdown some of the barriers and misinformation generated by social media
- Minimal out-of-pocket costs
- Good avenue for recruitment
- Allows participants to gain leadership attributes.
- A great resume tool and exposure to public service
- Offers scholarship opportunities funded by Police Departments

Cons

- While the post is largely funded through fundraising events and donations, a significant amount comes from the Police Departments to provide uniforms, supplies, and expenses related to personnel.
- The current social environment has hindered recruitment efforts
- Peer pressure

Councilmember Clay stated given the challenges you've identified, how much would it cost to operate this program today? Chief Hampton stated he had not calculated the cost, but to be effective it would have to include overtime pay for the commissioned officer assigned to the Post, supplies, administrative costs, and uniforms; which are tailored to fit each individual and are often not reusable. Councilmember Clay asked if there was any information on the Department's previous costs associated with the program? Chief Hampton stated he would have to check with Mr. Cole to see if he had any information.

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Councilmember Clay stated depending on the costs, you might be able to make the argument based on the current perception of police, that this could be a good program to invest in. And because of the way this Department is perceived, U City might have a better shot than most, in making this a viable program. Chief Hampton stated while he would agree with that statement, his biggest concerns are the space, manpower, and resources that will be needed to get this program up and running effectively. There is a definite need, but another obstacle is the ability to resume those partnerships with other communities because U City never had enough participants to keep the program alive on its own.

Councilmember Smotherson stated he would agree that this is a critical time where there is a real need to connect with young people and help them gain a better understanding of the role that police officers play in their communities. Are there any programs of this nature in our elementary schools because this kind of connection is critical for them as well? Chief Hampton stated as it relates to elementary school, what they've found is that this age group's limited attention span and the lack of participation by parents to attend meetings or after-school activities, has not led to any successful programs. However, several programs that target middle and high school students are The Police Athletic League, Beyond the Badge, Men's Night Out, and Ladies Encouraging Others; which are all groups his Department partners with. Chief Hampton stated there also used to be a program for kids in middle school called Real Talk, and The Pal Summer Program which met five days a week during the summer, and included a road trip on Saturdays, was canceled this year because of COVID.

Councilmember Smotherson stated with the influx of so many Normandy students into U City's School District, could this municipality be included as a partner in the Explorer Program? Chief Hampton stated the partnership is open to any municipality that wants to participate.

Councilmember Smotherson stated he hopes that once kids get back to their regular learning environment U City will be able to offer a program that helps these young people gain a different perspective about policing; especially here in U City.

Mr. Rose asked Chief Hampton if he could explain the role of the School Resource Officer? Chief Hampton stated these officers, who are required to go through extensive training that teaches them how to engage with young people in our school system, have daily interactions with students, much like the DARE Program. Currently, there is one officer stationed at Brittney Woods Middle School and another one at the high school. Chief Hampton stated both officers were raised in U City and currently resides here.

Mr. Rose stated far too often, the first exposure to law enforcement for Black and Brown individuals occur in situations that lend themselves to developing a poor rapport with police officers. That's why the City continues to promote the utilization of School Resource Officers because the hope is that by allowing them to see the human side of the men and women who perform this job they will gain a different perspective.

Mr. Rose stated Senior Programs, which is a program that is currently in existence, will be presented by the Director of Parks & Recreation, Darren Dunkle.

Senior Programs

Mr. Dunkle stated although these programs are currently on hiatus due to COVID, the Parks Department offers three categories of service for seniors.

Golden Lions

- Started last year as a result of programming changes by Aging Ahead.
- The City partnered with Aging Ahead to provide transportation and lunches. *(Although this contract expired in June, Aging Ahead has expressed an interest in resuming this partnership once things are back to normal.)*
- Meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Heman Park Community Center
- Social interactions, arts, crafts, games, and guest speakers.
- Part-Time Senior Coordinator and Recreation Program Supervisor

During the pandemic Aging Ahead has continued to provide lunches to some of the City's seniors on a weekly basis.

Fitness Memberships

- **Renew Active** (United Healthcare) - This Medicare Advantage Plan provides physical and mental exercise at no additional cost. Membership includes access to Centennial Gardens, Heman Park pool, and discounts on programs.
- **SilverSneakers** - An innovative health, exercise, and wellness program provided at no cost through various health plans. Membership includes access to Centennial Gardens, Heman Park pool, and discounts on programs.

Fitness Classes & Programs

Seniors who utilize a fitness membership can also participate in these programs at a discounted cost or no cost at all. Most classes are held at the Centennial Commons location and are offered year-round.

- Low-Impact Strength Class - Tuesdays from 9 to 10 a.m.
- Senior Stretcherize - Tues & Thurs from 10 to 11 a.m.
- SilverSneakers Boom Muscle - Mondays from 9 to 9:45 a.m.
- SilverSneakers Classic - Thursdays from 9 to 10 a.m.
- SilverSneakers Stability - Wednesdays from 11:15 to 12 p.m.
- SilverSneakers Yoga - Fridays from 10 to 10:45 a.m.
- Pickleball - Mon & Wed from 5 to 6:45 p.m.; Tues & Thurs from 9 to 12 a.m., and Friday from 6 to 8 p.m.

Councilmember Smotherson asked Mr. Dunkle if he was aware that Aging Ahead previously offered a four-day program, and that seniors are looking for this type of programming to resume? Mr. Dunkle stated his staff has continued to have discussions with Aging Ahead, but at this point, they can only provide funding for transportation and meals on two days of the week. So, to add extra days the City would have to look at other ways to expand these services because a majority of participants in the Golden Lion Program rely on this transportation. Councilmember Smotherson stated since Aging Ahead started their program at the Fee-Fee YMCA, they may not be interested in reestablishing those two days. So, he would suggest looking at other agencies to meet this need.

Mayor Crow asked how many seniors are currently in this program? Mr. Dunkle stated that generally there are about 40 seniors who show up daily. Mayor Crow asked if the program was open to all residents or just U City seniors? Mr. Dunkle stated the program is available to all seniors, but 98 percent of the utilization is by U City residents.

Councilmember Klein asked if the Golden Lions was an all-day program? Mr. Dunkle stated it starts at 9 a.m. and goes to noon. Councilmember Klein asked if meals were still being provided? Mr. Dunkle stated there is a light snack in the morning and Aging Ahead provides a warm meal at lunchtime.

Councilmember Klein stated she is the liaison for the Senior Commission and during their last meeting they discussed trying to find a way to assist seniors with gaining access and training on electronics; which she thinks would be especially useful for those seniors who cannot get out to these facilities. As a result, she was wondering if there were any excess resources not being used because of the reduction in services that could be provided for this kind of program? Mr. Dunkle stated he was not aware of any resources, especially since most of the senior services across the County have also been put on hold. He stated he and his staff are constantly looking to see if there are other programs the City can partner with and they will continue to reach out to see if they can come up with something.

Mr. Rose stated a question he is often asked is when will these facilities reopen? He stated the challenge they face is the positivity rate in St. Louis County, which is now above 8 percent.

And when you're looking to open a facility; especially recreational facilities, based on the guidance staff receives from the St. Louis County Health Department you should only have positivity rates between 1 and 3 percent. So, the reason he has been hesitant in making a recommendation about when these facilities will reopen is that it may be a long time before there is a resolution for this epidemic.

Councilmember Clay stated he was curious to know if there was any information on whether other communities with municipal recreation centers have opened their pools?

Mr. Rose stated he believes that over the summer several municipalities did open their pools, but he is not familiar with any recreational facilities that are open now. However, because of what we now know about the virus his intent is to look very closely at whether it would be reasonable to open the outdoor pool for the upcoming summer session. Although should that take place, staff will be making a recommendation to Council that management of the pool is contracted out. Because one of the challenges they've been faced with is hiring lifeguards to staff the pool.

Councilmember Smotherson questioned whether some of the City's elementary schools were slated to open in the near future? And if so, whether the guidelines they are following could be implemented to open facilities like Centennial Commons? Mr. Rose stated although this is an area where the Superintendent could shed more light on than he can, his understanding is that schools will likely give parents the option of virtual learning versus in-person learning. But here again, he thinks; and the Superintendent shares the same concerns, that is critical to look at the positivity rates before making any decisions to reopen.

Councilmember Clay stated Julia Goldstein is opening under the COVID model of two days for one cohort and two days for another.

Councilmember Smotherson stated these restrictions are killing him as he sits around watching himself grow fat and old. So, he would love the idea of adopting Julia Goldstein's concept. But at the very least, he thinks the City should offer online classes on its website; especially for those folks who have paid memberships to these facilities.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Crow adjourned the Study Session at 6:20 p.m.

Linda Schaeffer
Acting City Clerk