

CITY OF DENTON CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
August 17, 2019

After determining that a quorum was present, the City Council of the City of Denton, Texas convened in a Planning Session (Retreat) on Saturday, August 17, 2019; at 9:00 a.m. in the Board of Regents Conference Room, 16th Floor, Texas Woman's University, 304 Administration Street, Denton, Texas.

PRESENT: Mayor Chris Watts, Mayor Pro Tem Gerard Hudspeth and Council Members Keely Briggs, Jesse Davis, John Ryan, Deb Armintor, and Paul Meltzer

ABSENT: None

Also present were City Manager Todd Hileman, City Attorney Aaron Leal, Deputy City Manager Mario Canizares, Assistant City Manager Sara Hensley, Chief Financial Officer Antonio Puentes, Chief of Staff Rachel Wood

Facilitators from Accenture SOW were Steve Struthers and Chris Newport.

1. **ITEM(S) FOR DISCUSSION**

- A. ID19-1830 Hold a retreat discussion facilitated by Accenture SOW and give direction and priorities concerning the following: City services and infrastructure; streets; parks; finances, budget; planning; zoning and development; environmental issues; human resources; technology; public utilities, taxes; engineering; economic development; code enforcement; city facilities; transportation; purchasing; management; intergovernmental relations; boards, commissions and committees; meetings; agenda development; City Council dynamics; City Council communication with staff and the public; specific goals for the upcoming fiscal year; and without limitation, any and all operations of the City of Denton city government.

The following goals for the session were covered:

1. Review of progress city/council has made on last year's priorities;
2. Set objectives for next year; and
3. Set a shared guidelines/processes on how to engage better as a Council and Council/staff.

Proposed agenda/principles to guide the day's proceedings were detailed. No formal decisions were made, although a consensus to determine the level of support on the issues being discussed were undertaken. Formal action could possibly be set for the August 27th meeting on those areas resulting from the day's discussions.

Retreat Principles were noted that would assist in focusing on the issues at hand as well as make the session successful and accomplish the goals outlined at the onset of the meeting.

Importance of having council members focus on the bigger picture versus being down in the weeds was noted. Although not to say that should not happen. Concern is that members could begin losing support as a governing body even if votes at an election are not actually lost.

Results of discussions with members and staff brought about the following:

- All have strong commitment to getting things done, but lengthy discussions at meetings.
- Responsiveness from staff, but now ever-increasing requests which affects staff resources.
- Success in social media, but public interacting more with members than city staff and perceived as a loss of confidence of staff.
- Results-focused on priorities, but agenda items being requested are not focusing on this.
- Value in pre-meetings, but the frequency, variety and short turnaround required, increases staff pressure and questions if responses are reviewed in advance of meetings.

Report on the inventory of “Pain Points” which covers issues identified where a process is needed to be more effective included:

- **Number/Length of meetings (Council and Community)**
 - Council Meetings: Results of comparison show Denton relative to the average is exceptional. Legal prepared spreadsheet. Going to survey cities’ online videos and time spent for work session and when an item is presented and by when it is concluded.
 - Time reduction options for meetings:
 1. Time on Concluding Items.
 2. Work Sessions questions that come day of that cannot be answered (done on the fly), staff can defer the presentation.
 3. For work sessions, if speaking for/against the item, trigger a time limit, which will be determined at a later time.
 4. Before, speaking 2nd time, everyone else would have had to have their first opportunity to speak.
 5. Follow Robert’s Rules on motion, second then discussion for action items.
 6. If question on the fly during presentation, allow staff the ability to not speculate and get answer later.
 - Community Meetings: Compared total meetings to average public attendance, hours. Lack of good public attendance.
 - KEY POINTS:
 - ⚡ There is nothing that could be directly discussed/determined at this time to address how to reduce the length of meeting time as there is not sufficient time to provide for obtaining specificity or consensus to address the issue.
 - ⚡ Quality to total volume is the key.

- **Volume/Expectations on member information requests**
 - Report was detailed by City Manager Hileman, with some not being used for agenda related items. Staff time could have been spent on other issues.
 - Types of Council Requests identified to fit in the following categories:
 - Passing along constituent service request
 - Seeking clarification
 - Requesting policy-related research
 - Components of Requests to be identified when submitting:
 - Purpose/Type of Request
 - Specific question (asked)/action expected
 - Timeliness of expected response
 - Post-Request Considerations:
 - Ability/Expectation of staff going back to requestor
 1. Clarify “clean up” language
 2. In-person is OK
 - Tracking of request status
 - Visibility to other members
 - Management discretion on how to route/handle request
 1. Decide whether/how to escalate to full Council
 - Consideration of liability to City.
 - Council as a group needs to give direction to the city manager and not a single member.
 - Consideration of liability to City.
 - Trust management judgement on time to complete.
 - Ability of city manager to elevate even without majority.
 - Council Request Process Options were detailed, which would be affected by the Concluding Item Process.
 - Staff will inventory.
 - Some threshold that if it exceeds a certain amount of time, it goes to a pool and taken to Council as a work session item.
 - **KEY POINTS:**
 - Clear distinction on the types of components/types of requests being made
 - Seeking factual clarification.
 - Some commonly held expectation that a member would be required to send to staff clarifying what is being requested.
 - Identify timeframe/timeline for response.
 - Staff can return to council member in some form to seek clarification on what is being requested.
 - Some means of tracking for staff accountability.
 - Method of removing items from the list.
 - Consideration of Liability to City.

- ✦ Trust the city manager's judgement on the time it will take.
- ✦ Ability of city manager to elevate even without majority.
- ✦ Ability of a member to get information even if not the will of a majority.
- ✦ If policy-related request, not done unless a majority of Council makes that determination.

A formal recap was provided on the areas outlined above in this category that provided a draft proposal on the Council Request Update. Requests are to be in writing; staff will develop a form, but its use is strictly optional. Consensus reached.

On the 4th Tuesday meeting, the Work Session agenda will be properly captioned to provide for Council to act on requests for items on the agenda, which will ensure compliance with TOMA. Member submits request ahead of time and then member would receive one (1) minute "pitch" with one (1) minute for debate, with no more than 7 minutes. Need to set a mechanism by which items on the list/inventory can/will be removed: (a) Member can take his/her own item(s) off; and (b) full Council action to remove. Council to receive the Request report for each to mark those items that can be deleted beginning next week. Self-regulation is the key to ensuring meeting time doesn't extend. Time/clock mechanism and compliance by all. All should be actively listening/be present. Set limit per member/per meeting. One request per member per week. Final process to be considered for adoption at an upcoming meeting.

o **City Council Priorities**

City Manager Hileman provided an overview of the progress on the 2019 Council Priorities. Next steps are adoption of the 2019-2020 Priorities on August 27th, development of online dashboard to track and report progress on Council priorities; and use of Council priorities as foundation for budget development.

- o Improvement on how agendas get set.
- o Meeting/Behavior at meetings could be better.
- o What is trying to get accomplished at Work Sessions?
- o What is the degree/purpose of Council Committees?
- o Opportunities/Process for community/stakeholder input.
- o Expectations from a member on constituent service request.

Members and staff were given the opportunity to identify up to 15 strategic priorities from either the existing list or establishing new. Those identified/classified for discussion purposes were as follows:

- o Mobility
 - Complete revision of mobility plan
 - Enhance public transit
 - Master Plan around the City of Denton

- Investment in Capital Street Fund
- Traffic control improvements
- Enhance pedestrian/bicycling strategy/improvements
- Two-way streets
- Youth Sports Complex
 - Move forward on 10-minute walk goal
 - Complete cost of service for parks program
 - Parks Department year-round child care and Parents Day Out Program
 - Develop plans for multi-use center
- Downtown
 - Public space for organization expanded downtown
 - Completing downtown plan
 - Solid Waste Valet Service
- Health
 - Food deserts
 - City Wide food waste plan
- Environment
 - Drainage improvements
 - Updating sustainable Denton Plan
 - Aggressive environmental incentives
 - Register Denton landmark trees
 - Commercial recycling
 - Develop municipal Zero Waste Policy and then city wide
 - Going natural organic in all departments (chemical sprays)
 - Enhance Environmental Sensitive areas
- Economic Development
 - Finalize comprehensive ED plan
 - ED plan via tax incentives (funding strategy)
 - Target industries
 - Address upcoming annexation/strategy issues
- Safety
 - Fire Station Location Study (Station #9)
 - Staffing assessment
 - Citizen committee on police issues (create)
- Homelessness
 - Address day time shelter gap
 - Change ordinances to decriminalize homelessness
 - Strengthen county wide efforts to support
- Housing Development/Land Use
 - Revise comp plan
 - Housing instability of tenants
 - Affordable housing strategy
 - Address historic preservation issues

- Design Hillwood Development (Hunter Cole Ranch)
- Incentivize industrial relocation
- Implement minor updates to Development Code
- Increase homestead exemption
- Municipal Utilities
 - Complete management plan (water/wastewater)
 - Revise utilities billing practices
- Finances
 - Focus on public/private non-public funding mechanisms
 - Loss of franchise fees
- Bond Programs
 - Close out old bond programs
- Facilities
 - City Hall West renovation
 - New Development Services offices
 - Finish various plans in place
 - Organize customer service
 - Complete template for facilities management
- Other
 - Finalize information requests by Council
 - Budget performance/measures

▪ **KEY POINTS:**

Of those areas identified above, council members were asked to rank the items as to their preference. As a result, the following were the ranking results:

Priority Area	Votes Received
Affordable Housing Strategy	5
City Hall West	5
Complete Revision of Mobility Plan	5
Update Sustainable Denton Plan	5
Countywide Strategy	3
Hunter Cole Ranch	3
Public Private Partnerships	3
Address Food Deserts	2
Complete Downtown Master Plan	2
Finalize Completion of Economic Development Plan	2
Fire Station Location Study	2
Funding Strategy for Economic Development	2
Invest in Street Replacement	2
Plan for Multi-Use Event Center	2

Priority Area	Votes Received
Youth Sports Complex	2
Advance 10-Minute Walk Goal	1
Citizens Committee on Police	1
Commercial Recycling Plan	1
Eliminate Ordinances that Criminalize Homelessness	1
New Development Services Office Space	1
Replace Franchise Fees	1
Revise Billing Practices	1
Shelter Strategy	1
Update Denton 2030 Plan	1
Year-Round Parks Parents' Night Out/Childcare Services	1
Zero Waste Plan	1
Align Council Priorities with Budget	0
Complete 2021/2014 Bond Program	0
Complete Cost of Service for Parks	0
Develop Citywide Food Waste Plan	0
DME Management Plan	0
Enhanced Cycling/Pedestrian Access	0
Green Infrastructure Strategy	0
Historic Preservation	0
Housing Plan	0
Industrial Relocation	0
Move to Use of Natural/Organic Products Citywide	0
Organization Wide Customer Service	0
Public Space Enhancement	0
Register Landmark Trees	0
Solid Waste Valet for Downtown	0
Staff Assessment	0
Strengthen ESA Protections	0
Template for Facilities Management	0
Traffic Control Improvements	0
Update to Annexation	0
Council Process for Information Requests	0
Total Votes	56

City Council would have the opportunity to determine what the 2019-2020 Priorities are to be at a future meeting.

Council members and staff were asked to complete the following questions:

○ ***For me the day has been:***

- Helpful
- Encouraging
- Constructive
- Refreshing
- Promising
- Mixed
- Enlightening
- Interesting

○ ***If you could give us feedback, what would have made today even better:***

- As good as it could have gone;
- Fantastic – corrected themselves and agreed with him
- More time on priorities but time spent was well served
- Increase public participation
- Ensuring clarity on expectations

During discussion, the session was recessed several times at 10:43 a.m. for a short break and reconvened at 10:59 a.m.; at 12:19 p.m. for lunch and reconvened at 12:54 p.m.; at 2:30 p.m. for a short break and reconvened at 2:34 p.m.; and at 3:33 p.m. and reconvene at 3:38 p.m.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:02 p.m.



CHRIS WATTS
MAYOR
CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS



ROSA RIOS
CITY SECRETARY
CITY OF DENTON, TEXAS

MINUTES APPROVED ON: September 10, 2019