

**** DRAFT ****

CITY OF ATLANTIC COUNCIL MEETING

January 29, 2025

5:30 PM

Atlantic City Council met for a workshop session in the Council Chambers at City Hall with Mayor Garrett presiding. Council members present were Emily Kennedy (Ward 1), Jim Behrens (Ward 2), Mike McDermott (Ward 3), Shawn Sarsfield (Ward 4), Dana Halder (Ward 5), Gerald Brink (At-Large), and Elaine Otte (At-Large). Absent: None. Also present: City Administrator John Lund, City Clerk Laura McLean.

Motion by Sarsfield; second by Behrens to approve agenda. All ayes. Motion passed.

Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Discussion and Consensus on Voting Systems Options.

Lund presented five different election methods among which the City Council can choose. Under the current method, the City holds a regular election followed by a separate full runoff election as necessary. Following a brief discussion about the merits and drawbacks of each option, the Council reached a consensus to change to the "Chapter 45" method, whereby candidates will be nominated by petition to participate in only one election, with no primary or runoff.

Discussion and Consensus on Parking at Locust Street 1st Street to the Railroad Tracks.

A business owner in the area requested there be no parking allowed on one section of road to facilitate the movement of semis. Consensus was to share the applicable ordinances with the business owners in the area and encourage them to work it out among themselves.

Update on Sidewalk Legislation.

Lund reported that legislation has been proposed to shift the responsibility for sidewalk maintenance onto the property owners. If enacted, it would impact the sidewalk repair program.

Local Option Sales Tax Update. December sales and therefore LOST revenue were up.

Discussion & Consensus on Retail Coach Renewal.

After three years, the Council has not seen the results they hoped for from Retail Coach. Consensus was to not renew the contract but to seek alternative routes to economic development.

2025 Debt Series B – Commerce Street or Not.

Council received two estimates from Snyder on paving the area with asphalt or concrete. Asphalt is slightly cheaper but does not hold up well when heavy vehicles are turning on it, especially in the heat. Concrete would be the recommended option. Snyder can do a traffic study to capture data about how often the roads there are used.

Discussion was held about whether it would be worthwhile extending the paving to Iowa Avenue alongside the campground because that road raises a lot of dust. Another suggestion was to spray on dust control or seal coat the road. Snyder will give an estimate for each. Council consensus was to do the paving, with details yet to be determined.

Discussion & Consensus on City-Wide Cleanup.

The councilmembers have heard a lot of support from the public for this but there were problems with how it was done in 2017 that need to be addressed. Cedar Rapids has an ongoing voluntary clean-up effort. Red Oak charged all taxpayers \$10 to pay for their city-wide cleanup day. Code Enforcement director has ideas for how a city-wide clean up could be effective while not costing too much in labor or disposal fees. Consensus was to move forward with planning this.

Presentation, Discussion, and Consensus on YMCA Funding.

Lund explained that currently there is a 20-year agreement between the YMCA and the City, where the City owns the property and the Y manages it. There are several ways the City could help to finance the Y expansion as requested by Vision Atlantic.

Nick Hunt was invited to address the Council. He explained that four years ago the Y board began to consider renovation, and last year the Lakin Foundation agreed to grant the YMCA Expansion project \$6.4M, if 80% of their fundraising goals were met. A committee has raised \$12M from major donors so far. They would like to ask the City to provide \$2.5M this year and potentially up to \$3.77M later. The 80% funding needs to be secured by the end of 2025 or the Lakin Foundation could withdraw its grant. He said the \$2.5M would help Vision Atlantic raise money from other government and foundation sources.

Brink asked specifically how much money Vision Atlantic needs to raise by the end of the year. Christina Bateman said they aren't sure yet because construction costs have gone up.

Behrens asked about the financial health of the City after giving \$2.5M. Will there be anything left to bring industry/jobs to town? Lund said there will still be debt capacity. The city wouldn't have millions to attract big industry like larger cities do, but there would still be options. Lund estimated that borrowing \$2M would result in annual payments of \$160K for twenty years.

Council consensus was to get more information on funding and meet with Vision Atlantic for more concrete discussions during the February 5 business meeting.

Order to Enter Exempt Session Pursuant to Iowa Code Section 20.17(3) Providing for the Strategy Meetings of Public Employers for Collective Bargaining.

Council entered into exempt session at 6:50 pm.

Motion by Sarsfield; second by Kennedy to exit exempt session at 7:09.

Motion by Brink; second by Halder to enter open session

Other Discussion.

Council members said that the main topics they hear about from the public are Vision Atlantic and the swimming pool. They hear a lot of differing opinions and concerns about both.

Council mentioned the other large projects currently happening or being planned, including the ambulance, police and fire equipment, and the Commerce Street project.

The next City Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 5th, 2025.

Motion by Halder; second by McDermott to adjourn at 7:50 pm. All ayes. Motion passed.

Grace N. Garrett, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Laura McLean, City Clerk