

The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in special session on Thursday, August 21, 2014 at 6:30 p.m., in the Council Chambers of City Hall located at 605 Spring St., Columbus, Texas, with the following present:

Mayor	-	Dwain Dungen
Mayor Pro Tem	-	Curtiss Schonenberg
Councilman	-	Steve Woodall
Councilwoman	-	Lori An Gobert
Councilman	-	Eddie Hernandez
Councilman	-	Chuck Rankin
City Manager	-	Donald Warschak
City Secretary	-	Linda Lakich

Other City Staff present included:

Police Chief	-	Bill Lattimore
Library Director	-	Susan Chandler

1. Call to Order.

Mayor Dwain Dungen called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.

Mayor Dungen led the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.

3. Citizens' Presentations and Comments.¹

Chris Stein, who is a member of the Library Foundation, addressed Council concerning the importance of the Library to the community. He stated that the Foundation purchased the adjoining property for possible future expansion and that all of their resources are being used for that. He said that the library's archive is an important resource and that because of it, people from Utah come to Columbus to do research on genealogy. He asked Council to maintain, or even increase, the library's budget.

Jim Kearney, who is a former member of the Library Foundation, explained that the foundation was not set up to fund daily maintenance and operations, but rather things that are above and beyond the everyday needs and which will contribute to the excellence of the library. He stated that the Nesbitt Memorial Library is probably the best small-town library in the state. He stated that the adjoining property was purchased with the intension of expanding the library some day, but if that is not needed, that the foundation felt that it could be put to some public use.

Tracey Wegenhoft said she agreed with what others had said and emphasized that the Foundation was set up to help fund supplemental items.

Dr. Tom Hancher said that the adjoining property could have many uses, either as a library expansion or a museum to house some of the library's archive items. He emphasized the role of the library in preserving the history of the area through the archives. He encouraged Council to continue asking questions, but to not cut back on the library's budget, at least in the current year.

Mayor Dungen thanked the citizens for their input and explained that preparing the budget is an important part of being on council and that they have questions concerning every department and are looking to best serve the citizens of Columbus.

Councilwoman Gobert stated that while she thinks that Columbus has an excellent library, she was surprised by the amount of funds that the City spends each year on it in comparison to other departments.

4. Discussion of Budget Workshop.

The mayor asked if there was any discussion that was needed on the Library Budget. Councilman Woodall asked the library board to look at who is using the library and how to redefine its use in light of current technology. Councilman Rankin asked that they report to Council periodically. Councilwoman Gobert stated that she thought the Library Director was looking at the areas that they had discussed such as counting users, and that next year they will have additional information to use in preparing the budget.

There was a discussion of water lines and Donald Warschak outlined some of the things that will be tried to improve the water clarity. They will be changing the blend which is used to control the iron content and will change to quarterly line flushing rather than semi annually. They are also going to explore the possibility of using ice pigging on some of the lines. Linda Lakich explained that the only changes made to the proposed budget since the last meeting, were the addition of \$30,000 for a utility infrastructure planning study and \$20,000 for sewer line smoke testing. Because of the increased efficiency of the new metering system, the proposed budget does not include any utility rate increases for citizens of Columbus. When a new garbage collection contract is signed, there may be an adjustment to the garbage rates. The contract for treating Glidden sewage is in the process of renewal.

5. Items from Councilmembers.²

Councilman Woodall – no comment.
Councilwoman Gobert – no comment.
Councilman Schonenberg – no comment.
Councilman Hernandez – no comment.
Councilman Rankin – no comment.

6. Announcements.²

The dates and times for the public hearings on the tax rate and the budget were announced.

7. Adjournment.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.



Mayor, Dwain K. Dungen

ATTEST:



Linda Lakich, City Secretary

¹During this agenda item, citizens may comment for the record on items, which are not on the agenda. However, the Council may not participate in discussion or deliberation on any item that is not on the agenda. Citizens may request that a topic be added to a future agenda. Citizens who wish to comment on a posted agenda item may do so when that item is addressed by the Mayor. Citizen's comments are limited to five minutes.

²Limited to statements. Issues raised by councilmembers under this item cannot be deliberated by Council. The Open Meetings Act does not allow Council to deliberate items that don't appear on the agenda.