

The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in regular session on Monday, November 23, 2015 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	-	Woody Moore
Councilwoman	-	Lori An Gobert
Councilman	-	Eddie Hernandez
Councilman	-	Chuck Rankin
City Manager	-	Donald Warschak
City Secretary	-	Bana Schneider

Other City Staff present included:

Police Chief	-	Bill Lattimore
Kaylee Brune	-	Municipal Court Clerk

1. **Call to Order.**

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

2. **Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.**

Dungen led the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.

3. **Consent Agenda:**

a. Approval of Invoices

Councilman Schonenberg made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Councilman Hernandez seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Schonenberg, Moore, Rankin and Hernandez; Councilwoman Gobert.

The motion passed.

4. **Citizens' Presentations and Comments.¹**

There were no citizen comments.

5. **City Manager's Report Including Sewer Averaging, Gas Line Project, Water Evaluation Study and TXDOT Projects Updates**

City Manager, Donald Warschak gave his City Manager's report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Warschak stated sewer averaging would begin December 15th and go through the 15th of February. The water used during that period would be averaged to determine the consumer's sewer rate for the year.

Warschak discussed the progress of the gas line project. He stated that the boring had begun and the first 900 feet from the main gate to Milam Street had been done by one subcontractor. The second subcontractor bored along Preston Street to the railroad tracks. Tomorrow, gas line will be pulled through the bore, and if everything goes well, we should have between 1200 and 1300 feet of gas line in place.

Councilman Rankin commented that although the area is marked well, it is not lit very well. Warschak stated they had some cones with the yellow lenses. Councilman Moore commented

about the equipment and Rankin stated that the road really narrows in that area. The Mayor asked about flashers. Warschak stated he would make sure that everything was barricaded well and that for future nights there would be flashing yellow lights.

Warschak then moved to the water system. He stated that O'Malley is working on the system evaluation study, and hopefully we will hear back from them soon. Warschak also stated that the water system flushing will begin next week on Monday November 30th and it will take 2-3 weeks to complete.

Warschak gave an update on the TXDOT projects in Columbus. The letting for the I-10 and Hwy 71 light project has been pushed back from December to January. The East River Bridge's original let date of January 2016 has been moved to August 2016 because of utility and right-of-way issues. The North River Bridge has been moved back until May of 2017.

Councilwoman Gobert asked about the ROW issues. Warschak stated that an additional 15-16 feet was needed for the project for the East Bridge, but he did not know what was required for the North Bridge as he had not seen any drawings.

6. Consideration and Action to Submit to Planning and Zoning Commission a Proposed Replat of a 0.2834 Acre Tract Situated in Lot 2 of Block 59 of the City of Columbus as Requested by Eugene and Agnes Schobel.

The Mayor stated that the plat drawing showed the 25 foot strip the Schobels want to sell to Tommy Hahn. Mr. Hahn owns the adjacent Dairy Cone property and wants to expand the drive through area.

Councilman Rankin asked if this would be added to Hahn's tract. The Mayor stated that it would.

Councilman Schonenberg made a motion to submit the replat request to Planning and Zoning. Councilwoman Gobert seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Schonenberg, Moore, Rankin and Hernandez; Councilwoman Gobert.

The motion passed.

7. Executive Session: In Accordance with Texas Government Code, Subchapter D, Section 551.072- Deliberations about Real Property.

The Mayor adjourned into Executive Session at 6.40 p.m.

The Mayor reconvened to Regular Session at 7:02 p.m.

All members present before the Executive Session were still present.

8. Consideration and Action to Approve Credit Card/Online Payment Processing for Municipal Court and City Utilities.

City Secretary, Bana Schneider, stated that Kaylee Brune would give a demonstration of the proposed online payment website. Schneider stated that it can be tailored to appear like the City's current webpage. She also stated that our accounting software provider will help configure the site and would manage and maintain it.

Councilman Rankin asked what we were going to be doing. Schneider commented that she thought Council might like to see a demo of the webpage. Further, she stated that online payments for court and utilities would be accepted, but there would be no face to face transactions.

Rankin then asked about the cost to the City. Brune gave the list of fees, which are attached to these minutes. She also stated that the website could be utilized not only for payments, but to check on the status of the users account.

Councilwoman Gobert asked if the software is mobile compliant. Brune indicated that payments would be able to be made on smart phones.

Rankin asked about transaction fees. Schneider stated that the software company charged \$1.25 per utility transaction and \$2.50 for court. Additionally the City will charge \$5.50 for court and \$3.00 for utility transactions in order to recoup the 2 to 3 % credit card processing fees.

The Mayor asked if we would be locked into a contract. Brune stated that we can cancel the service at anytime. Schneider added that the convenience or processing fees can be adjusted up or down at any time.

Councilwoman Gobert made a motion to approve credit card/online payment processing for Municipal Court and City Utilities as discussed. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilman Rankin, Schonenberg, Moore and Hernandez and Councilwoman Gobert

The motion passed.

9. Discussion Regarding Sign Ordinance and Business 71/Highway 90 (Walnut Street) Commercial District Overlay.

Mayor stated he wanted to get this going again. We will not be able to take any formal action at this meeting since our agenda is for discussion only.

Councilwoman Gobert stated a committee had been appointed by Council a few years ago to look at the commercial district overlay and the sign ordinance. She continued by saying the overlay, in conjunction with the historic district guidelines, could bring a more consistent look to the City. Along the corridor, existing properties will be grand-fathered in but as properties turn over or undergo major reconstruction, they will have to bring the property up to the standards set forth in the guidelines.

Dungen asked if currently there was any guidance in place. Gobert stated that it is very generic, and it only addresses setbacks. These new guidelines would address appearance, i.e. building materials and landscaping. There are two separate areas with Highway 90 East of Hwy 71 to the river bridge one area and Hwy 71 and Hwy 90 West of 71 a different zone. The area East of 71 would have stricter guidelines in keeping with the historic nature of downtown.

Dungen stated that there should be some sort of guidelines on the books. Gobert stated that she feels it is not too restrictive and believes there will not be much complaining. She continues that signs were not addressed in the overlay, but there is a separate sign ordinance that is not complete.

Dungen stated that it is amazing that there are 15 and ½ pages addressing signs. Gobert stated that they were trying to address all different types of signs hence the lengthy document.

Mayor does believe it is very important to address the commercial district. He wants it to go to Planning and Zoning for discussion since they will be meeting soon.

10. Consideration and Action to Appoint a New Member to The Columbus Municipal Golf Association Board of Directors.

The Mayor stated that after review of the resolution forming the Golf Association, Council does not need to appoint or approve new board members.

Dungen did state that Ron Stewart had resigned as board president and that the board then appointed John Mangini.

Councilman Rankin asked when Council would receive a report from the Golf Association. The mayor stated that it made sense for them to report the previous month's activity at the first Council meeting of every month.

No action was required.

11. Consideration and Action to Approve the Appointment of Bob Gillespie to the Library Advisory Board for a Term ending April 1, 2019.

Mayor Dungen stated he felt that Mr. Gillespie would make a good asset to the board. Gobert asked if he is replacing someone. Library Director, Susan Chandler stated that he will be replacing Chris Stein and that Stein will be taking the remainder of Jacob Truchard's term. Chandler also commented that Bob has always been a champion of the library.

Councilwoman Gobert made a motion to approve the appointment of Bob Gillespie to the Library Advisory Board. Councilman Schonenberg seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Schonenberg, Rankin, Moore and Hernandez; Councilwoman Gobert.

The motion passed.

12. Consideration and Action, If Necessary, Regarding the Library Quarterly Report Including the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan.

Chandler gave her quarterly library report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. There was some discussion regarding the strategic plan the library board has been working on. Councilman Schonenberg commented on how the library is reaching out to home-schoolers. Councilman Rankin commented that many of the ideas looked like they will need funding but no plan for funding seems to be included. Mayor Dungen asked if everything was operating okay. Chandler stated that as of that morning, an air-conditioning/heating unit had been condemned. Rankin asked what the Nesbitt Memorial Foundation did as far as the library's operations. Dungen stated they helped to build the library, but was not really for day to day running expenses. Chandler stated that this past year they purchased one of the databases for Ancestry.com, and they gave the library money for the gift cards for summer reading participants. They have also paid for speakers to come to the library. The Foundation is also working on paying off the property adjacent to the library in order to deed that to the city. This property was purchased in case future expansion was needed.

13. Items from Councilmembers.²

Councilman Moore – None

Councilwoman Gobert – None

Councilman Schonenberg – None

Councilman Hernandez – None

Councilman Rankin – None

Mayor Dungen – The out of town judges for the Miss Columbus were very impressed with the young ladies vying for the crown. They indicated that these young ladies were of such strong character, and are a good reflection of their parents and of the community as a whole.

6. Announcements.

The City Secretary announced the Holiday Party would be on December 18th at Los Cabos, and Council will receive their invitations soon.

The City Manager reminded Council that the next meeting is slated for Thursday, December 10th at 6:30 p.m.

7. Adjournment.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.



Mayor, Dwain Dungen

ATTEST:



Bana Schneider, 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.

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.

