

The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in special session on Thursday, August 18, 2016 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	-	Lori An Gobert
Councilman	-	Vacant
Councilman	-	Gary Swindle
Councilman	-	Eddie Hernandez
Councilman	-	Chuck Rankin
City Manager	-	Donald Warschak
City Secretary	-	Bana Schneider

Other City Staff present included:

Police Chief	-	Bill Lattimore
Fire Chief	-	Dusty Dittmar
Code Enforcement	-	Richard LaCourse

**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.
- b. Approval of Minutes of July 28, 2016, 2016 Regular Meeting.
- c. Approval of Minutes of August 4, 2016 Special Meeting

Councilwoman Gobert Hernandez made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Hernandez, Swindle, and Rankin; Councilwoman Gobert

The motion passed.

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

Citizens spoke during relevant agenda items.

**5. City Manager's Report Including Sales Tax, Water System Flushing, Water Plant Filtration Update and Gas Line Project Update.**

City Manager, Donald Warschak stated the sales tax received in August, which is from the June collections, was down approximately \$2,500 from the same time period last year. Eagle Lake and the County saw increases while Weimar also had a decrease.

Warschak stated the City crews would begin the water system flushing on Monday, the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Postcard notices have been sent to all water customers.

The City Manager stated he has been working on the piping design and layout of the water filtration system. He indicated the plans must be submitted to TCEQ for review and approval.

Regarding the potential repayment of the gas line project, Warschak stated a letter had been drafted, with the assistance of Grant Works and KWI, asking for an earlier close-out period. The letter will be sent to the state this week.

Warschak stated 5 or 6 members of the Corps of Engineers came to look at the riverbank by the waste water treatment plant. They are working on a federal interest document which will take approximately 2 weeks. After that is completed, work can begin on the feasibility study. Regarding funding for the emergency repairs, Warschak stated first, the City will need to request help with the cost from the County, the County, in turn, would request help from the State, and then the State would ask the Corps.

**6. Consideration and Action to Approve the Columbus Community and Industrial Development Corporation's 2016-2017 Budget.**

Councilwoman Gobert stated the large expenditure in the budget was for help in repayment of the gas line project, and the budget also includes expenses for finalizing real estate transactions.

Councilman Rankin asked about funds available in the CCIDC accounts. Gobert stated she did not have the notebook that contained that information. There was discussion about the two reserve funds shown on the budget. The City Secretary stated the reserved fund on the second page was their debt service fund.

Gobert stated at the time CCIDC passed this budget; they were thinking they had included enough for half of the repayment on the gas line project. If the amount ends up being more, then there will need to be a budget amendment.

Rankin asked about the unrestricted fund balance. Gobert stated she thinks it is between \$350,000 and \$400,000.

The Mayor stated the budget could be approved, and if need be, amended at a later date.

Councilman Swindle made a motion to approve the 2016-2017 operating budget of the Columbus Community and Industrial Development Corporation. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Rankin, Hernandez and Swindle; Councilwoman Gobert

The motion passed.

**7. Consideration and Action on a Tax Increase for Tax Year 2016 and Fiscal Year 2017 with the Rate Not to Exceed \$0.28 per \$100 Value.**

The City Secretary stated a detail comparison of the increase versus current rates was enclosed in their budget packets.

Councilwoman Gobert made a motion to approve an increase for tax year 2016 and fiscal year 2017 with the rate not to exceed \$0.28 per \$100 value. Councilman Swindle seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Hernandez and Swindle; Councilwoman Gobert

Nay: Councilman Rankin

The motion passed.

**8. Consideration and Action to Schedule Two Public Hearings on the Tax Rate.**

Councilwoman Gobert made a motion to schedule two public hearings on the tax rate for September 8<sup>th</sup> and September 15<sup>th</sup>. Councilman Hernandez seconded the motion

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Rankin, Hernandez and Swindle; Councilwoman Gobert

The motion passed.

9. **Consideration and Action to Approve the Closure of Travis Street from Walnut (Highway 90) to Spring Street and the Closure of Spring Street from Travis Street to Milam (Spur 52) on Saturday, September 17, 2016 from 6:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. as Requested by the Chamber of Commerce for the 2016 Junk on the Square Event.**

Councilman Hernandez made a motion to approve the street closures as requested by the Chamber of Commerce. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Rankin, Hernandez and Swindle; Councilwoman Gobert

The motion passed.

10. **Consideration and Action, if Necessary, on the July 2016 Columbus Municipal Golf Association Report.**

Mike Craddock of the CMGA gave the July report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Councilwoman Gobert asked if the Association still had some funds remaining. The City Secretary stated there was approximately \$7,000 left.

Gobert stated we will probably need to do another budget amendment. Dungen stated we may be able to push some things until October.

Craddock stated they are working with an accountant from Houston on their portion of the 2015 tax return. The association will be responsible for reporting November and December.

No action was required.

11. **Consideration and Action to Approve a Manufactured Home Permit for Lot S-4 Block 78 of Austin Street as Requested by Darlene Rios.**

The City Secretary stated the item could not be discussed since the wrong street location was put on the agenda. The permit is for Preston Street, not Austin Street.

12. **Consideration and Action, if Necessary, on the July 2016 Code Enforcement Report.**

Code Enforcement Officer, Richard LaCourse, gave the July Report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

LaCourse stated he was very happy to be working for the City, and thanked Council for the opportunity.

LaCourse indicated he had sent out several letters regarding weedy lots and trash in yards. He also has 15 properties on the substandard list, but he is waiting until he goes through the training course before he sends out letters.

Councilman Rankin asked about the status of the substandard housing list. LaCourse stated he was working on updating the list.

No action was required.

13. **Discussion of Budget Workshop.**

The City Secretary stated that she gave the Council the new budget information, and it is divided into tabs for their binders. She continued by stating there is an additional expense item that will need to be added. The City Manager explained about the "Code Red" notification system, and the cost for the City to participate would be about \$2,000.

Beth Easterling presented the Chamber of Commerce's budget request to Council. There was discussion about the projects the Chamber is planning in the coming year. Council also discussed the amount granted to the Chamber last year.

Fire Chief, Dusty Dittmar, spoke to Council regarding the equipment replacement list they had received. He apologized to Council for not reviewing the list before it was given to them. He stated truck #1422 should be removed from the fleet, Ladder 14 does not need to be replaced, and truck #1460 should be replaced with a heavy duty rescue or a rescue/pumper in 2025 at an approximate cost of \$500,000.

There was also discussion concerning the rate of contribution to the fire equipment fund.

Franchise fee revenues, garbage rate, and sewer rate increases were also discussed. Wage and health insurance costs were also debated.

**14. Executive Session: In Accordance with Texas Government Code, Subchapter D, Section 551.074-Personnel matters.**

The Mayor adjourned to Executive Session at 8:04 p.m.

**15. Reconvene into Special Session and Consideration and Action, if Any, Regarding Executive Session-Personnel Matters.**

The Mayor reconvened into Special Session at 8:29 p.m. All members present before the executive session were still present.

No action was required.

**16. Items from Councilmembers.<sup>2</sup>**

Councilwoman Gobert – Thanked City Secretary for list of equipment and vehicles.

Councilman Swindle – None

Councilman Hernandez – None

Councilman Rankin – None

Mayor Dungen – Welcomed Richard LaCourse to the City.

**17. Announcements.**

There were no announcements.

**18. Adjournment.**

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

  
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Mayor, Dwain Dungen Mayor Pro Tem

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bana Schneider, City Secretary

<sup>1</sup>During 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.

<sup>2</sup>Limited 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.

