

The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in regular session on Monday, August 14, 2017 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	-	Keith Cummings
Councilman	-	Gary Swindle
Councilman	-	Eddie Hernandez
Councilman	-	Chuck Rankin
City Manager	-	Donald Warschak
City Secretary	-	Bana Schneider

Other City Staff Present:

Police Chief	-	Bill Lattimore
Police Lieutenant	-	Skip Edman
Library Director	-	Susan Chandler
Code Enforcement	-	Richard LaCourse

1. Call to Order.

The Mayor 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 August 10, 2017 Special Meeting

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

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

4. Citizens' Presentations and Comments.¹

Debbie Damon gave an update on the PUC hearing regarding AEP delivery charges. A copy of her report is attached to these minutes.

Chris Christensen spoke to Council regarding the pending changes to the manufactured home (MH) ordinance. He stated Council has a fiduciary duty to the citizens, and the current ordinance allows for perpetual replacement of nonconforming MH's. In many cases the resident is not the owner of the MH; the owner of the MH is not the owner of the property upon which the MH sits. He suggested that replacement of a noncompliant MH be tied to the homestead tax exemption so the owner of all property is the resident.

Mayor Dungen stated Council does have some of the same concerns Mr. Christensen raised.

5. City Manager's Report Including Sales Tax, Visitors Center, and KWI Gas Line Grant Update.

City Manager, Donald Warschak, gave his report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. Warschak stated the sales tax the City received in August was up over the same time period last year. Weimar, Eagle Lake, and the County as a whole also saw increases.

At the Visitors Center, the roof is on the building, and the contractor is installing the ridge cap. They are doing some inside electrical work, and the brick should be delivered this week. Completion should be sometime in mid October.

Regarding the KWI gas line grant, Warschak stated the deadline is September 19th. A request has been sent asking the state for clarification on why another extension was denied. As of the last jobs report, KWI had 55 eligible employees and a total of 87 are needed. Councilwoman Gobert stated that 32 new employees were still needed. Warschak stated KWI has actively been seeking new hires, but are having trouble finding qualified employees. Gobert asked what the repayment would be at this point. City Secretary, Bana Schneider, stated \$320,300. Dungen stated KWI hired 14 employees before the contract started. He wants to see if those jobs can be included in the total employee number since there was a delay starting the contract.

6. Consideration and Action Regarding Use of the City Swimming Pool by the High School Swim Team.

Mayor Dungen stated the team had been using the pool for the last couple of years. Karen Magera, representing the swim team, stated this was the fourth year the team has asked to use the pool for practice until it gets too cold.

Councilman Rankin made a motion to allow the high school swim team use of the pool for practice. Councilman Cummings seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

7. Consideration and Action on the Mayor's Appointment of One Member to the Columbus Community and Industrial Development Board.

The Mayor stated Ryan Thomas was his nominee. Mr. Thomas is a contractor with Five Oak Construction.

Councilman Cummings thanked Thomas for coming to the meeting and for serving on the board. Thomas stated he is a four year resident of Columbus, and his wife was born and raised here. He indicated he had a vested interest in the growth of the community.

Councilman Swindle made a motion to approve the appointment of Ryan Thomas to the CCIDC Board. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

8. Consideration and Action to Allow for the Construction of a Gazebo at the Cardinal Hill Park by the St. Paul Lutheran Church Service Organization.

Warschak stated all project costs would be covered by the church, and the gazebo would become City property. Warschak mentioned Evan Herchek's Eagle Scout Project for playground equipment to the group, and suggested the erection of the gazebo in that area so it could be utilized by parents while their children are playing.

Councilman Swindle made a motion to allow for the construction of a gazebo at Cardinal Hill Park. Councilman Hernandez seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

9. Consideration and Action to Approve Voluntary Employee Deductions for Extreme Gym.

Dungen stated any payroll deduction must be approved by Council. Schneider stated the corporate membership requires a 1 year commitment, and is approximately half the cost of a regular membership. She also stated it was open to employees, spouses, and dependents over age 16. There must be at least 15 participants, and at this time 18 people have shown an interest.

Councilwoman Gobert made a motion to approve voluntary payroll deductions for Extreme Gym. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

10. Consideration and Action on a Tax Increase for Tax Year 2017 and Fiscal Year 2018 with the Rate not to Exceed \$0.28 per \$100 Value.

Gobert stated she did not feel it was a tax increase if the rate stays the same. Schneider commented it is considered an increase because of an increase in the revenue even though the rate is not increasing. She stated a tax rate of \$0.28 would increase tax revenue by \$56,935 or 7.06%, and of that amount, \$18,235 is from new property added to the tax rolls.

Councilwoman Gobert made a motion to approve a tax increase for tax year 2017 and fiscal year 2018 with a rate not to exceed \$0.28 per \$100 value. Councilman Swindle seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

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

Schneider stated the public hearings would need to be held on Thursday September 7th and Monday September 11th.

Councilwoman Gobert made a motion to approve the two public hearings for the tax rate as discussed. Councilman Hernandez seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

12. Executive Session: In Accordance with Texas Government Code, Subchapter D, Section 551.074-Personnel Matters.

The Mayor adjourned the regular session at 6:55 p.m.

13. Reconvene into Regular Session and Consideration and Action, if Any, Regarding Executive Session-Personnel Matters.

The regular session was reconvened by the Mayor at 7:32 p.m. All those present before the executive session remained present.

No action was required.

14. Discussion of Budget Workshop.

Schneider stated the new pages for the budget included the changes for police computers and increased hours for the fire marshal.

Library Director, Susan Chandler, gave Council an overview of the library budget requests. Parks Department budget requests were discussed. The Mayor stated he wanted to make sure there was some additional funding to support Evan Herchek's Eagle Scout project. Improvements at the City swimming pool were also discussed. Gobert brought up some safety issues at the pool. There was discussion of raising the rates for the swim parties. The budget for the golf course was also discussed. Warschak gave an outline of the long-term street seal-coat project. The possible reimbursement for the KWI gas line project was discussed.

15. Items from Councilmembers.²

Councilman Cummings – None

Councilwoman Gobert – Asked if the organization Ms. Damon spoke about in her presentation was for individuals or for the City as a whole. Dungen stated the City.

Councilman Swindle – None

Councilman Hernandez – None

Councilman Rankin – None

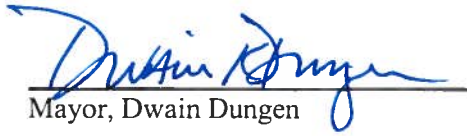
Mayor Dungen – None

16. Announcements.

The next meeting and budget workshop are scheduled for August 28th.

17. Adjournment.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8:07 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 council members 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.

