

The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in special session on Thursday, September 7, 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
Councilman	-	Keith Cummings
Councilwoman	-	Lori An Gobert
Councilman	-	Eddie Hernandez
Councilman	-	Chuck Rankin
Councilman	-	Gary Swindle
City Manager	-	Donald Warschak
City Secretary	-	Bana Schneider

Other City Staff present included:

Police Chief	-	Bill Lattimore
Police Lieutenant	-	Skip Edman
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.**

Dungen led the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for hurricane victims.

**3. Citizens' Presentations and Comments.<sup>1</sup>**

Elizabeth Flint complimented the City administration and workers for all of their hard work during the flooding. She stated she was very thankful for the City yard being open for dumping of the debris from her house. Ms. Flint also stated, in light of all of the damage, she would understand if nonessential items had to be cut from the budget because of flooding expenses. She hopes that other citizens would feel the same way.

Mayor Dungen commended the City crews for all of their hard work.

**4. City Manager's Report Including Hurricane Harvey.**

City Manager, Donald Warschak reported on the Hurricane Harvey aftermath. The rising waters resulted in many evacuations. The City worked with Chuck Rogers from the County EOC.

Warschak thanked the City of Weimar for undertaking responsibility for the evacuation shelter. When that shelter closed, some of the evacuees went to the shelter in Sealy.

The clean-up effort was a collaboration of the City, the EOC, the Chamber, and Dale Alexander and his wife. City office staff compiled a list of damaged properties that was then sent to Chuck. If people called in to volunteer, they were referred to the Chamber; and those wishing to donate were sent to the Alexander's.

There was a massive clean-up of debris on Saturday with volunteers from all over. Sunday, volunteers went in to homes to remove damaged items. Monday, the debris removal continued, and on Tuesday, City crews made rounds throughout the City picking up any new debris.

Mayor Dungen asked about the number of roll-off containers that had been filled. Warschak stated 12-16 forty yard roll-offs had been serviced, with 6 containers being serviced at a time.

City workers have also been cleaning the maintenance facility, and the workers were greeted by a couple of large cotton mouths. Warschak stated it will take time to recover.

The City manager also stated the riverbank repairs at the WWTP seemed to have weathered the storm just fine, but a day after the water receded, it collapsed.

Councilman Rankin stated the flooding in the Northwest section of the City was fast and unexpected. He asked if we had a complete, accurate elevation map of the City. Warschak stated he will be working with Frank Surveying to get more accurate elevations.

Ms. Flint asked if there had been pump failures at Hwy 90 and Hwy 71. Warschak stated water was coming from the west onto Crockett and Chapman Streets. The pumps did not stop working; they just could not keep up.

There was discussion of past river flooding and the water levels on the golf course.

Councilman Swindle asked about the number of condemned homes. Warschak stated the condemnation process is dependent on many factors, and the number of homes that were a total loss is not yet known.

There was discussion regarding FEMA and the disaster recovery center established at the EOC.

Ms. Flint asked about grants available for housing. The Mayor stated the block grant program for hurricane victims is in the very early stages.

**5. Consideration and Action to Approve the Columbus Community and Industrial Corporation's 2017-2018 Budget.**

Councilman Rankin asked about the line item for infrastructure, and how much was included in the City budget. The KWI gas line grant ends on September 19<sup>th</sup>. City Secretary, Bana Schneider, stated CCIDC had earmarked \$237,000 for the grant repayment. She also indicated the KWI repayment in the City's budget is \$320,000 with \$83,000 of that coming from City funds.

Rankin asked about the infrastructure spending. Warschak spoke about the drainage and sanitary sewer work that needed to be done at the park. Rankin expressed his opinion concerning the grant repayment. He feels CCIDC should be responsible for all repayment. Councilwoman Gobert stated CCIDC could not carry the entire repayment due to the other infrastructure costs. There was additional discussion regarding the funding for the drainage project at the industrial park. The mayor suggested the City did not have to be reimbursed up front, but CCIDC could pay the City back when funding comes available. Gobert stated in order for CCIDC to cover all of the KWI repayment, they would have to scrap the E'Kabel contract, which would mean losing half of the money needed to fix the drainage issues.

The Mayor asked if there had been any changes to the park since the last flood. Warschak stated there had been a little bit of dirt work and ditch work done. There was discussion concerning the location of the E'Kabel property within the industrial park, and some past water movement within the park. Rankin stated CCIDC might want to get a second opinion since the park flooded last year, but did not flood during the hurricane.

The Mayor stated as long as the money is in the budget, it can be used for one or the other since it is all for infrastructure. Dungen stated we are a victim of the flooding, and we should not have to bear the responsibility. Gobert stated the other entities involved were contacted, but there was basically no response.

Councilwoman Gobert made a motion to approve the CCIDC 2017-2018 Budget. Councilman Cummings seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**6. Consideration and Action to Approve Industry State Bank Renewal Option as City Depository until September 30, 2018.**

The Mayor stated this extension was in the contract. We are happy with ISB, and the recommendation from staff is to renew.

Councilwoman Gobert made a motion to approve the one-year renewal option with Industry State Bank. Councilman Hernandez seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**7. Consideration and Action to Approve and Ratify an Agreement with Colorado County Central Appraisal District for Assessment and Collection Services for the Year 2018.**

Councilman Rankin made a motion to approve and ratify the agreement with Colorado County CAD. Councilwoman Gobert 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 Approve Resolution 173-17 Setting the Dates, Times and Places for Public Hearings on the Proposed Annexation of Certain Property by the City of Columbus, Texas and Authorizing and Directing the Mayor to Publish Notices of such Public Hearings.**

Dungen stated the public hearings are on the regular meeting nights of September 25<sup>th</sup> and October 10<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.

Councilwoman Gobert made a motion to approve resolution 173-17. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**9. Consideration and Action on the Mayor's Appointment of City Attorney.**

Dungen proposed the renewal of Michael Trefny as City Attorney.

Councilman Hernandez made a motion to approve the mayor's appointment of Michael Trefny as City Attorney. Councilwoman Gobert 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 the Mayor's Appointment of Associate Prosecutor.**

Dungen proposed the reappointment of Pat Gillespie as Associate Prosecutor. He stated Mr. Trefny did not have much trial experience; hence the reason for the appointment of Ms. Gillespie.

Gobert asked if the Municipal Court was pleased with Gillespie. Chief Lattimore stated they were pleased.

Councilwoman Gobert made a motion to approve Gillespie as the Associate Prosecutor. Councilman Hernandez seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**11. Consideration and Action on the Mayor's Appointment of the Municipal Court Judge.**

The Mayor stated his appointment for Municipal Court Judge was Leonard Peters.

Councilman Swindle made a motion to approve Peters as Municipal Court Judge. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**12. Consideration and Action on the Mayor's Appointment of the Associate Municipal Court Judge.**

Dungen reappointed Francis Truchard as the Associate Municipal Court Judge.

Councilman Swindle made a motion to approve Truchard as the Associate Municipal Court Judge. Councilman Hernandez seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**13. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the July 2017 Golf Association Report.**

John Mangini gave the July Golf Association report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. He stated there was no major damage to the course during the flooding. Water did infiltrate the private cart sheds, but not the new rental cart shed or the clubhouse. They have had several work days since the flooding. Mangini stated they did have to take down a large pecan tree.

The Mayor commented the year to date actual indicates the Association is in the red only \$146, and they have not taken their entire draw from the City. Rankin stated, to be clear, they have received over \$68,000 from the City.

No action was required.

**14. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, regarding the July 2017 Code Enforcement Report**

Richard LaCourse gave the July 2017 Code Enforcement report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Rankin asked what the permitting process was for those who flooded. LaCourse stated he was issuing permits for flood damaged homes, but there was no charge for those permits. He stated permits were only required if there was structural damage, not for cosmetic.

No action was required.

**15. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, regarding the July 2017 Police Report.**

Bill Lattimore gave the July Police report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. Lattimore stated, after speaking to St Anthony's school principal, John O'Leary, he would recommend four-way stop signs and crosswalks at the intersections of Bowie and Wallace and Live Oak and Wallace.

He stated 165 homes had been cleaned, but that number does not include the apartments. Lattimore stated this number included areas outside the City limits, such as Alleyton. He gave an update of the donations coming in, and he also gave a run-down of the department's help with the flooding. Lattimore stated it was nice to be a part of a community where everyone came together.

No action was required.

**16. Discussion of Budget Worksheet.**

The Mayor stated the items discussed tonight were supposed to have been discussed at the last meeting, so Council would have to have another special meeting to get everything done. There was discussion regarding the scheduling of another meeting.

Utility fund expenditures by department were discussed.

There was discussion regarding utility billings with the new meter system and the lack of increased revenue. The Mayor stated data could be pulled for the amount of pumpage versus the amount billed. The wish list was also discussed.

The Mayor discussed the amount in the budget for maintenance items.

Rankin asked if the cost of damages from the flooding have been examined. Warschak stated he has been compiling a list.

Council asked for storm remediation funds to be added to the budget for both general and utility funds.

Utility rates were also discussed. Council feels there should be no rate increases for the coming fiscal year.

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

Councilman Cummings – Thanked members of the community and City personnel for all of their help in the clean-up efforts. Cummings and the Mayor reflected upon their experiences during the clean-up.

Councilwoman Gobert – Everybody was so pleasant during this crisis, the City workers, Chuck Rogers, who is a hero in emergency management, and the Mayor really showed how much he cares about the community.

Councilman Swindle – He has an employee who lives in the hardest hit neighborhood. She was crying because of all of the people helping.

Councilman Hernandez – None

Councilman Rankin – The Mayor did a great job on the Radio.

Mayor Dungen – None

**18. Announcements.**

Warschak stated City crews would be going out again Monday to pick up storm debris.

**19. Adjournment.**

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8:14 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor, Dwain Dungen

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.

