

The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in regular session on Monday, July 22, 2019, at 5:30 p.m., in the Council Chambers of City Hall located at 605 Spring St., Columbus, Texas, with the following present:

Mayor	-	Lori An Gobert
Mayor Pro Tem	-	Chuck Rankin
Councilman	-	Keith Cummings
Councilman	-	Michael Ridlen
Councilman	-	Gary Swindle (Absent)
Councilwoman	-	Sandra Frnka
City Manager	-	Donald Warschak
City Secretary	-	Bana Schneider

Other City Staff present included:

Police Chief	-	Skip Edman
Code Enforcement	-	Richard LaCourse
Fire/Code Assistant	-	Duane Naiser

**1. Call to Order.**

Mayor Lori An Gobert called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

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

Gobert led the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.

**3. Consent Agenda:**

- a. Approval of Invoices
- b. Approval of Minutes of the June 24, 2019 Regular Meeting
- c. Approval of Minutes of the July 8, 2019 Regular Meeting
- d. Approval of May 2019 Financial Statements
- e. Approval of the Quarterly Investment Report for the Quarter Ended June 30, 2019

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

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Cummings, Ridlen, and Rankin; Councilwoman Frnka  
Absent: Councilman Swindle

The motion passed.

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

Citizens spoke during specific agenda items.

**5. City Manager's Report Including Sales Tax, and the Water Filtration Project.**

City Manager, Donald Warschak, gave his report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. Warschak said the sales tax payment of \$131,745 the City received for the month of July was up approximately \$24,000 over the same time period as last year. He also said the County saw an increase, while both Eagle Lake and Weimar saw decreases.

Warschak stated B&D Services had completed the installation of the face piping on all three filtration vessels. Pressure testing is taking place at the Hill location, and then the other two units will be tested.

Warschak also mentioned the Street Seal Coat Project was out for bids; the FEMA project at the McCormick WWTP for the generator platform construction would be going out for bids soon. He said he had received a call from the generator company, and it is ready to be shipped. The Waterline Grant Project is with TCEQ for their review with it to go out for bids in October, and lastly, the Bond Waterline Project will go out for bids in August. Mayor Gobert confirmed both of the waterline projects would begin next fiscal year.

**6. Consideration and Action to Award the Construction Contract for the 2019 Gas Line Improvement Project.**

Warschak stated two bids had been received for the gas line improvements. The project will entail line work on Highway 90 between Oak Cluster and Fairview in order to close the loop; on County Road 806 to tie into the high pressure line at Park Street near the high school; and to abandon the steel line running through the golf course. An isolation valve is also being cut in on Houston Street which will enable us to do some testing on the high pressure system which the Railroad Commission is requesting.

A company out of Houston submitted a bid of \$154,265 and B&D Services submitted a bid of \$94,576.20. A third contractor who requested a bid package did not submit a bid. Management recommended awarding the contract to B&D Services.

Councilman Rankin asked if this project was part of the master gas project plan. Warschak stated this is part of the first phase of the 5 year plan. Frnka stated there was quite a discrepancy in the bids. There was discussion regarding the reasons for that discrepancy

Councilman Rankin made a motion to award the gas line project to B&D Services. Councilman Ridlen Seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Cummings, Ridlen, and Rankin; Councilwoman Frnka  
Absent: Councilman Swindle

The motion passed.

**7. Consideration and Action Regarding a Noise Ordinance Variance for Thursday, August 1, 2019 from 12:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. August 2, 2019; Friday, August 2, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. August 3, 2019; and Saturday August 3, 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m. August 4, 2019 at the Colorado County Fairgrounds for the Liz Cook Trail Ride as Requested by Elizabeth Cook.**

Thomas Whitehead was in attendance for Elizabeth Cook. Councilwoman Frnka asked how many attendees were expected. Whitehead stated there would be over 2,000 attendees. Security was discussed with Whitehead commenting they would have 25 security personnel on site. Rankin asked how many years the event has taken place. Whitehead stated the event had been held for 9 years. Frnka stated she was not pleased with the 2:00 a.m. and 3:00 a.m. requests. Police Chief, Skip Edman was asked his thoughts on the event. There was discussion regarding the late hours and noise complaints from the event last year. Edman stated Thursday and Friday it was not very crowded and the music traveled further since it was not blocked by bodies. He also stated the rodeo can be long and most of the time it is late starting. Frnka asked about different activities and performances that would be taking place during the event. She also asked if a decibel limit would be in place. Edman stated that is not included in the ordinance. Frnka asked Whitehead about the qualifications of the trail bosses, and she asked if Sheriff Wied had trouble with this event in the past. Edman stated a few years ago event goers went through a neighboring property and they were met with gunfire. Gobert stated that was several years ago, and this event has a huge economic impact on the community. Frnka stated there is also an economic impact from those who live out there. They shop, eat, and pay taxes here, and we need to be good neighbors.

Councilman Ridlen made a motion to approve the variance as requested. Councilman Cummings seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Cummings, Ridlen, and Rankin  
Nays: Councilwoman Frnka  
Absent: Councilman Swindle

The motion passed.

8. **Discussion of the Posting of the 30 Day Comment Period Notice Regarding the City of Columbus' Intent to Submit a CDBG-DR Application for Hurricane Harvey Related Drainage Improvements.**

City Secretary, Bana Schneider, stated the notice was posted on the front window at City Hall on July 15, 2019. Gobert stated this was a formality and no action was required.

9. **Consideration and Action to Approve Resolution 194-19, a Resolution Supporting Participation in the TxDOT Transportation Alternatives Set – Aside (TASA)/Safe Route to School – Infrastructure (SRTS) Program.**

Warschak stated this resolution was to show the City's support for the program. He said the Safe Route to School Program was 100% funded by TxDOT, except for overruns, and the Transportation Alternative Set-Aside was an 80-20 split with the City's match being \$68,000.

The Mayor stated the program would be for sidewalks and curbing from Midtown Park to the middle school. The next step in the process will be a public hearing. Gobert stated she would try to have the local pastors sign a petition, and to get the word out to the community.

Ridlen asked if this would be unfettered monies. Warschak stated it will be similar to the grant projects we have participated in. Gobert discussed the process of applying, and the hoops that must be jumped through at that stage. Frnka asked if this was just for sidewalks. Warschak stated there would be some street widening and curbing included along the route.

There was a discussion about the scope of the project as well as the pedestrian crossing on Highway 71 near the new bridge.

Councilman Cummings made a motion to approve Resolution 194-19. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Cummings, Ridlen, and Rankin; Councilwoman Frnka  
Absent: Councilman Swindle

The motion passed.

10. **Consideration and Action to Approve an Engagement Letter from Pattillo, Brown and Hill for the September 2019 Financial Audit.**

Schneider stated the engagement letter has come out a little early this year. PBH was hoping to do some early work on the 2019 financial audit. Schneider also stated this was the last year in the audit contract, and we would go out for proposals early in 2020. Gobert stated everything she has seen from them seems to be very good. She asked Schneider if she liked working with them. Schneider stated they have been great to work with. There are different personnel every year, besides the partner manager, and she recommends approving the engagement letter.

Councilman Rankin made a motion to approve an engagement letter from Patillo, Brown and Hill. Councilman Ridlen seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Cummings, Ridlen, and Rankin; Councilwoman Frnka  
Absent: Councilman Swindle

The motion passed.

**11. Consideration and Action to Approve the Permit Fee Schedule for Mechanical, Plumbing, and Building Projects.**

Code Enforcement officer, Richard LaCourse, stated there is a new law regarding building permits. Schneider stated a copy of the new law was in the agenda packet. Rankin asked what the changes were and stated he would have liked to have had the original fee schedule. There was a discussion regarding the comparison between charging for square footage and charging per value. LaCourse gave some scenarios for actual permits he has recently issued. LaCourse stated it must be changed to be compliant with the law and he believes a square footage charge would be the correct course of action. There was discussion regarding the square footage rate to charge. The new schedule presented included \$.20 per square foot, but LaCourse feels \$.25 would be a better rate. Schneider stated some other cities have a tiered rate depending on the size. There was discussion regarding the number of inspections for a new build and the time spent on each permit. LaCourse was also questioned about his process. Rankin stated the objective was not to make money, but to recoup the cost of city personnel. Different square foot charges were discussed. Schneider stated it would be better to have the same amount for new builds and additions or remodels in our accounting software.

Councilman Rankin made a motion to amend the proposed fee schedule from \$.20 per square foot for building permits to \$.35 per square foot. Councilman Ridlen seconded the motion to amend.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Cummings, Ridlen, and Rankin; Councilwoman Frnka  
Absent: Councilman Swindle

The motion passed.

Councilman Rankin made a motion to approve the new permit fee schedule as attached to the minutes. Councilman Ridlen seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Cummings, Ridlen, and Rankin; Councilwoman Frnka  
Absent: Councilman Swindle

The motion passed.

**12. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the Fire Marshal Report.**

LaCourse gave the Fire Marshal report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. LaCourse stated the new Timewise gas station and store has been taking up much of the Fire Marshal's time. He also stated Baymont Inn now has a stand pipe which became operational this morning. Frnka asked about the re-inspections for Schobel's and Maria's always being on the report. LaCourse said there has been some push-back regarding some requirements the restaurants were not forced to follow before, but the Fire Marshal has been working with them to meet the requirements gradually.

No action was required.

**13. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the June 2019 Code Enforcement Report.**

LaCourse presented the Code Enforcement report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. He highlighted the permits issued during the month, and told Council he had submitted the ISO Code

changes to the City Attorney. He has received the attorney comments, but has not gone in to study the sections with comments.

LaCourse also said he would be starting again on the spreadsheet for properties not in compliance, and the remodels for the apartment complexes are beginning within a couple of weeks.

Ridlen asked if you had to have a permit to put in a parking lot. LaCourse stated a permit is required, but there is no permit fee. There was discussion regarding parking lots in the overlay district.

No action was required.

**14. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the June 2019 Police Report.**

Chief Edman gave the report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. Edman stated it had been a slow month, with many vacations happening during the month. He attended the construction kick-off meeting for the east river bridge, and said the work would be starting soon. Once the new bridge is completed, all traffic will use it and the old bridge will be rehabbed. Construction would start on July 19<sup>th</sup> this year with both bridges being completed by March of 2021. He stated he had mentioned to TxDOT the traffic situation in the City over the weekends if I-10 is backed up. Edman also stated the expansion of Interstate 10 would begin about the time the bridge is completed.

No action was required.

**15. Discussion of Budget Workshop – Budget Schedule.**

Schneider highlighted the budget schedule that was presented to Council stating two special meetings were slated.

The tax rate was discussed since the final property values had been received over the weekend. Schneider gave some revenue comparisons for different tax rates.

The new property tax laws effective for the 2020 tax year were also discussed.

**16. Executive Session: In Accordance with Texas Government Code, Subchapter D, Section 551.074, Personnel Matters – Annual Review of City Manager.**

Mayor Gobert adjourned the regular session at 6:45 p.m. and Council went into executive session.

**17. Reconvene into Regular Session and Consideration and Action, if Any, Regarding Executive Session – Annual Review of City Manager.**

The regular session was reconvened at 7:34 p.m. all council members present before the executive session remained present.

Gobert stated further discussion would be needed during the next meeting.

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

Councilman Cummings – None

Councilman Ridlen – None

Councilman Swindle – Absent

Councilwoman Frnka – None

Councilman Rankin – None

Mayor Gobert – She has been working with the GLO and Magnolia Place Apartments. They will be having a ribbon cutting to kick-off the renovations at the apartment complex on Tuesday the 30<sup>th</sup> at noon.

**19. Announcements.**

There were no announcements.

**20. Adjournment.**

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

  
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Mayor, Lori An Gobert

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.