

The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in regular session on Monday, July 13, 2020, 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    |
| Councilwoman   | - | Sandra Frnka    |
| City Manager   | - | Donald Warschak |
| City Secretary | - | Bana Schneider  |

Other City Staff present included:

|              |   |            |
|--------------|---|------------|
| Police Chief | - | Skip Edman |
|--------------|---|------------|

**1. Call to Order.**

Mayor Lori An Gobert called the meeting to order at 5:30 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 22, 2020 Regular Meeting
- c. Approval of March 2020 Financial Statements

Councilman Swindle made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilwoman Frnka seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

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

There were no citizen comments.

**5. City Manager's Report Including Sales Tax, the Water Filtration Project, the Water Well Rehab Project, the North River Drive Storm Sewer Outfall Project, the 2020 Sewer Line Improvements, and the Library Roof Project Updates, and the Downtown Revitalization and GLO Mitigation Grants.**

City Manager, Donald Warschak, gave his report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. He stated the sales tax the City received for the month of July, which reflects May collections, was up approximately \$10,000 from the same time period last year. Eagle Lake and Weimar both saw increases while the County saw a slight decrease.

Warschak stated WesTech was scheduled to begin the start up process for the Hill Plant filtration system tomorrow morning.

Regarding the Water Well Rehab Project, the City Manager said the pumping equipment has been installed at the Pool Well, but the performance testing was less than anticipated. The contractor will

remove the well pump to inspect for any problems. Once the issues are resolved at the Pool Well, the contractor will begin work on the Tait Well.

Warschak stated B&D Services would be starting the North River Drive Storm Sewer Outfall Project this week. T Construction will start construction on the 2020 Sewer Line Improvements Project in two weeks, and contracts are currently being signed for the Nesbitt Library Roof Project. Lessman Roofing has indicated they would start construction shortly after the contract execution.

Warschak concluded his report with the Downtown Revitalization and GLO Mitigation Grants. Warschak stated the application process for both of these grants has begun. The Downtown Revitalization would target improvements from the recent Texas A&M study. The GLO grant would target the construction of a new wastewater treatment plant to replace the current plant located on the river at the end of Tait Street. Mayor Gobert stated the application for the GLO grant is due in October. Grantworks stated the City's rating was low and they did not have the time for the administrative work. She said the GLO and several federal and state officials encouraged the City to apply. Gobert stated we would be using a new company for the application and administrative process. There was also discussion regarding the Army Corps of Engineers riverbank project. Councilman Swindle asked about funding for waterline replacement in other areas of the City. Warschak stated if funding was available, replacement would target Travis Street near the courthouse towards Harbert Street first. Warschak gave the street details for the entire replacement project.

**6. Consideration and Action regarding the Mayor's Reappointment of Three Members to the CCIDC Board.**

Gobert stated Bruce Tesch, Larry Solansky, and Chuck Hall had all agreed to continue as members of the CCIDC board. She also stated Dan Pore` had resigned his place on the board so she would be searching for another candidate.

Councilman Swindle made a motion to approve the reappointments. Councilwoman Frnka seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**7. Consideration and Action Regarding the Resumption of Late Penalties and Cut-Offs for Delinquent Utility Accounts.**

Gobert stated, at the beginning of the pandemic, Governor Abbott had mandated public utilities could not terminate services. As time has gone on, we have quite a few accounts that have become a few months delinquent.

City Secretary, Bana Schneider, stated several customers have paid nothing towards their balances with many delinquent for four months. She stated she wanted Council's guidance regarding disconnection of services and the resumption of the 5% late penalty for bills left unpaid by the due date.

There was a discussion regarding the number and length of delinquencies, and the number of customers in arrears. Warschak stated he had called the City of LaGrange and they have notified customers via letter that they needed to contact the City by a certain date and make payment arrangements or they would be shut off.

Councilman Rankin made a motion that management begin to take action to bring the accounts current within four months. Councilman Cummings seconded the motion.

Councilman Ridlen stated he felt 6 months should be given to make accounts current.

Councilman Rankin amended his motion to state a 6 month time frame. Councilman Cummings seconded the amended motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**8. Consideration and Action Regarding Peddler Permits.**

Schneider stated she had received a request for a peddler permit for door to door sales. Because of the pandemic, she spoke with the City Attorney to see if the City had the right to not issue peddler permits. The attorney stated the City could deny any requests for a permit based on health and safety concerns. Ridlen asked about the rules for the permits.

Councilwoman Frnka made a motion that peddler permits are not issued for the duration of the disaster declaration. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**9. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the June 2020 Golf Association Report.**

John Mangini gave the report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. Mangini stated May and June had been really good months. He said they expected business in July to fall off, but that has not been the case. Mangini stated the course was enforcing the wearing of masks inside of clubhouse, and alcohol was not being served inside.

There was a discussion regarding the equipment lease and the cost of an equipment and cart buyout.

Mangini stated they did not receive a PPP loan. He said they had difficulty with the application process because an owner's name must be on the application.

John Jones of the *Colorado County Citizen* informed Council and Mangini the Columbus Golf Course had received the Reader's Choice Award for favorite golf course.

No action was required.

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

Councilman Cummings – None

Councilman Ridlen – Stated there was nothing wrong with the statement "Make America Great" or "Make Columbus Great".

Councilman Swindle – None

Councilwoman Frnka – None

Councilman Rankin – Agrees with what Dr. Ridlen had said at the last meeting about the Mayor taking the heat for Council. He said he believed that was in reference to her actions during COVID. He stated he has known the Mayor both personally and professionally, and the assumptions in a letter to the editor that she is racist are erroneous. He said the Mayor has been doing an excellent job for all of the citizens.

Mayor Gobert – Discussed COVID-19 positivity rate in the County; the Department of Defense's appeal for nurses and respiratory therapists; hospitalizations for County residents; and local testing.

**11. Announcements.**

Schneider stated Council had received hard copies of the City's and CCIDC's CAFR. She said the auditors would discuss the CAFR at a future meeting.

**12. Adjournment.**

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 6:14 p.m.

  
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Mayor, Lori An Gobert

ATTEST:

  
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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.