

The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in regular session on Monday, November 23, 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
Asst City Secretary	-	Dinah Jacobs

Other City Staff present included:

Police Chief	-	Skip Edman
Code Enforcement	-	Richard LaCourse
Fire Marshal	-	Brent Allen Gorman
Fire/Code Assistant	-	Duane Naiser

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 November 9, 2020 Regular Meeting

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.¹

There were none.

5. City Manager's Report Including Sales Tax, the Water Filtration Project, the Water Well Rehab Project, and the GLO Storm Sewer Project Updates.

City Manager, Donald Warschak, gave his report. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes. He stated the sales tax the City received for the month of November, was \$151,437 compared to \$155,383 for the same time period last year. This was a decrease of almost \$4,000. The County and the City of Weimar saw slight increases, while the City of Eagle Lake saw a slight decrease. Regarding the Water Filtration Project, Warschak stated the two vessels are onsite in Iowa. They are currently working on the first filter, sandblasting the interior areas for repair. City Secretary, Bana

Schneider, emailed the photos to council members as requested. Warschak stated he will be speaking with the Strand engineer tomorrow to review the project.

Regarding the Water Well Rehab Project, Warschak stated the contractor was working at the Tait location. The lower pumping equipment has been installed. They are completing the remaining items and plan to pull water samples for testing before Thanksgiving. This will need to be done before it can be placed back into service.

Regarding the GLO Storm Sewer Improvement Project, Warschak stated JTM Construction continues working. They are now at the intersection of Rampart & Preston Street.

Warschak stated Saturday morning there was a large water leak at FM806 and Montezuma at Interstate 10. The pipe split at the bottom. City employees excavated and made repairs. It was a very sandy area, creating a very lengthy process.

Regarding COVID and staff updates, Warschak reported a library employee was in close contact with a COVID positive person. That employee is currently quarantining, awaiting results. The library is closed to the public at this time. The other two employees continue to work during this time. The library will remain closed until the Monday after Thanksgiving. They will offer curbside service only during the closure.

Gobert stated the parade closure that was approved at the last meeting, has increased questions on whether we as a City should proceed. She stated surrounding cities have all canceled their parades. COVID case numbers were discussed, along with exposure and issues relating to officers covering the parade. Gobert felt it really was not in our best interest to proceed with the parade. Emergency Management Coordinator, Chuck Rogers has also advised against having the parade. Gobert stated she will be contacting parade organizers about canceling the parade due to safety and exposure. She stated the County has canceled their Christmas party as well. The country market is currently still on, but they are monitoring the situation, and will be watched closely to make sure protocols are followed. Gobert went on to say she has met with the Chamber regarding Ladies Night Out. They will meet again Monday or Tuesday to make the final call. There is concern with the consumption of wine, there will be more group gatherings and congregating, and less emphasis on masking and social distancing.

6. **First Reading of Resolution 223-20, a Resolution Approving Expenditures of 4B Revenues over \$10,000 of City Created Economic Development Corporations, with less than 20,000 Residents for Funding of an Economic Development Grant to the Columbus Volunteer Fire Department to Help with the Acquisition of a Newer Upgraded Ladder Truck for the Columbus Community.**

Gobert read Resolution 223-20 approving an expenditure over \$10,000 for the Columbus Volunteer Fire Department.

7. **Consideration and Action to Approve the CCIDC Grant of \$10,000 Awarded to the Boys and Girls Club of Champion Valley for Volleyball, Badminton, and Soccer Improvements, and Associated Equipment.**

Councilman Rankin made a motion to approve the CCIDC grant to the Boys & Girls Club in the amount of \$10,000. Councilman Cummings seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

8. **Consideration and Action , if Necessary, Regarding the October 2020 Fire Marshal Report.**

Fire Marshal, Brent Allen Gorman gave his report. A copy is attached to these minutes. There were two inspections and one consultation. Due to COVID, facilities are trying to lock more doors in order to restrict access. Gorman stated that is fine, but with no push bar exits, that is not allowed. He went on to state City Hall is now compliant as well with the push bar exit on the lobby door. There was an investigation of a fire pit explosion, and there were eleven calls for service. There was no full

blown fire prevention program this year due to COVID. Gorman stated he did reach out and present programs to two daycares.

Regarding the COVID fund updates, all items are either on order, or have been received. We are still waiting on a few SCBA masks and cartridges. The only hiccup was the gear dryer. It was set to arrive on November 20th, but has now been delayed until March 10th. Gorman stated we are seeking alternative leads to try to get one before year end.

No action was needed.

9. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the October 2020 Code Enforcement Report.

Code Enforcement Officer, Richard LaCourse, gave his report. A copy is attached to these minutes. He reported 35 permits being issued, with most being for remodels, one new residence, and one commercial permit.

LaCourse stated the horse previously in question is now "missing", presumably it has been moved. The property at 1506 Crockett is in the process of being demolished, and the substandard property list has been completed.

LaCourse stated he has been recertified as a code enforcement officer through TDLR and he will be in training next week at Sam Houston State University.

LaCourse stated he had sanitized City Hall and the Library with the setup that Brent Allen Gorman put together.

No action was needed.

10. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the October 2020 Police Report.

Police Chief, Skip Edman, gave his report. A copy is attached to these minutes. He stated there was more training for his officers this month. There were no mental health transports so far. His department helped with the homecoming parade. He went on to say the number of parades has increased and made it very cumbersome. He discussed the issues, and his request to scale back the number of parades here. Councilman Michael Ridlen questioned the cost of staffing a parade. Edman stated there are currently six parades: FFA, Fair, Juneteenth, Homecoming, Guadalupe, and now the Holiday Light parade. It requires his full staff for road closures and this is taking them away from their families. Warschak stated City personnel also assist with the parades. There was discussion regarding the cost to hold a parade, the morale cost, and possible permitting in the future. Gobert stated she would make this a discussion item in the future.

No action was needed.

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

Council entered into Executive Session at 6:08 p.m.

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

Regular Session reconvened at 6:54 p.m. with all members still present.

There was no action from the executive session.

13. Items from Councilmembers.²

Councilman Cummings – none

Councilman Ridlen – wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving

Councilman Swindle – None

Councilwoman Frnka – Happy Thanksgiving

Councilman Rankin – Happy Thanksgiving

Mayor Gobert – thanked the Mayor Pro Tem for running the meeting in her absence; she thanked all City personnel who handled the large water leak; she asked that management convey to City personnel thanks for their hard work during the pandemic; she stated their work has not gone unnoticed; Happy Thanksgiving to all

17. Announcements.

Chief Edman spoke in regards to a noise variance he received. Schneider stated there was no action as there was no time to get notice in the paper before the event. Edman went on to discuss the noise variances and his thought it was more geared for commercial and not residential, and that maybe more consideration needs to be given to the noise variance.

Warschak – wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving

18. Adjournment.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:01 p.m.



Mayor Lori An Gobert

ATTEST:



Dinah Jacobs, Assistant 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 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.