

The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in regular session on Wednesday, December 23, 2020, at 12:00 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 (absent)
Councilman	-	Gary Swindle
Councilwoman	-	Sandra Frnka (via telephone)
City Manager	-	Donald Warschak (via telephone)
City Secretary	-	Bana Schneider
Asst City Secretary	-	Dinah Jacobs

Other City Staff present included:

Police Chief	-	Skip Edman
Code Enforcement	-	Richard LaCourse

1. Call to Order.

Mayor Lori An Gobert called the meeting to order at 12:00 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 December 14, 2020 Regular Meeting

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

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Cummings, Ridlen, Swindle, and Rankin
Councilwoman Frnka (via telephone)

The motion passed.

4. Citizens' Presentations and Comments. ¹

None.

5. City Manager's Report Including the Water Filtration Project, the Water Well Rehab Project, and Sewer Averaging.

City Manager, Donald Warschak, began by recognizing City employees for their years of service, as well as the Employee of the Year. Rolando Tello was recognized as the Employee of the Year. A photo was taken with the Mayor. Brenden Suchadoll, Denver Weiser, Kevin Daniel, and Bana Schneider were recognized for 5 years of service. Emily Guidry-Lewis was recognized for 10 years of service. Warschak congratulated all employees.

Warschak gave his report. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes. Regarding the Water Filtration Project, Warschak stated the two vessels are onsite at the fabricator.

Warschak stated he had received an email this week indicating the Strand engineer had inspected the vessel along with WesTech. They are blasting the first vessel in preparation for painting. The vessel is still on schedule to be returned in early January. The second vessel was also inspected. Welding work continues on this vessel.

Regarding the Water Well Rehab Project, Warschak stated the new pump is in at the Tait well. When they started pumping, there was sand production. The pump was pulled and camera surveys are being done to locate the issue. The initial survey did not return anything suspicious, but another will be done to further inspect.

Regarding Sewer Averaging, Warschak stated sewer averaging for residential water usage continues. This will run through February 15th.

Councilwoman Frnka asked how many city employees were out with COVID, and what was the protocol for their return. City Secretary, Bana Schneider stated there was one office personnel, the City Manager, two field personnel, one library personnel, one code personnel (hospitalized), and then Chief Edman added one police personnel. Schneider stated they are following instructions from their doctor as to when they can return to work. One employee returned today, and the City Manager is scheduled to return on Monday, December 28th.

Councilman Cummings asked if they had to have a negative test to return. Gobert stated the negative test has been unsuccessful as many still have the protein, yet are not infectious, so 14 days, or the modified 10 days is the protocol.

Frnka went on to say there are different protocols for different businesses, and questioned if we were different from any other state entity. Gobert replied we are following the 10-14 days based on what the individual physicians are recommending.

6. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the November 2020 Fire Marshal Report.

Code Enforcement, Richard LaCourse, gave the report in the Fire Marshal's absence.

A copy of the report is attached to these minutes. The biggest investigation is the fire behind the TA truck stop. There were 21 fire calls.

Gobert spoke about a citation issued (this will be included in next month's report) to a day care. This has been an ongoing issue for 2 ½ years. LaCourse stated Gorman has the file. He has spoken to the attorney, and has everything in line.

7. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the November 2020 Code Enforcement Report.

Code Enforcement, Richard LaCourse, gave his report. A copy is attached to these minutes.

He stated 24 permits were issued. The largest is the GLO house on 158 Railroad Ave. It took them one week from tear down to dry in. This removed one substandard property. There is another substandard to be removed, and it will most likely be a GLO home as well. LaCourse stated he had attended 60 hours of training. LaCourse addressed Councilman Rankin's concerns on the substandard property listing. He stated some are judgment rankings, but he will reexamine the report and clarify the items in question. LaCourse went on to say he is still working on the horse penning issue. He has been researching three cities out in a full radius of Columbus. Gobert stated we just need what's safe for the animal, and the best solution for neighbors. She went on to say that Councilman Ridlen went by the location and saw no concerns.

8. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the November 2020 Police Report.

Police Chief, Skip Edman, gave his report. A copy is attached to these minutes. Edman highlighted all of the officers' training. Shop With A Cop was held December 16th. There were 36 kids, 22 officers, and each kid received \$150 to spend. The event spanned 2-3 hours at Wal-Mart. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

9. Items from Council members.²

Councilman Cummings – wished everyone a Merry Christmas

Councilman Ridlen – absent

Councilman Swindle – I enjoyed the virtual brisket

Councilwoman Frnka – none

Councilman Rankin – wished everyone a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year and the Mayor did a terrific job this year


Mayor Gobert – there are several things to wrap up – penning and parades; wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year; January/February I think we will be in Phase III and hopefully by March resuming to a more normal; thanked Asst. City Secretary, Dinah Jacobs, and Court Clerk, Kaylee Brune, for running the City single handedly while everyone was out.

10. Announcements.

Schneider questioned the City's employees timing of getting the COVID vaccine. Gobert stated City personnel are Tier II, while police are Tier I. Tier I are the front line, police, EMS, paramedics, hospitals, clinics, and nursing homes. Tier II are the ones considered essential and still working. Tier III are non essential personnel. The vaccine will most likely be Moderna. Gobert went on to say there was a glitch and mess up in the shipping, so there have been delays. She thinks the City will be able to get theirs by the end of January.

11. Adjournment.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 12:24 p.m.



Mayor Lori An Gobert

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.