

The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in regular session on Monday, September 27, 2021, 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 (arrived 6:13 p.m.)
Councilman	-	Ronny Daley
Councilman	-	Gary Swindle
Councilwoman	-	Sandra Frnka
City Manager	-	Donald Warschak
City Secretary	-	Bana Schneider
Asst City Secretary	-	Dinah Jacobs

Other City Staff present included:

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

**1. Call to Order.**

Mayor Lori An Gobert called the meeting to order at 5:31 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 September 13, 2021 Regular Meeting

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

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

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

Debbie Damon addressed Council regarding redistricting and the Endeavors Project in Eagle Lake.

Kathryn Griffin-Grinan, the Human Trafficking Director for Precinct 1, in Harris County adlibbed on her experiences.

John Adams, a member of one of the groups that meets at the Mansfield building, addressed Council. He and his group are requesting permission to do a few repairs at the building at no expense to the City. Gobert stated this topic was addressed at the last meeting. City Manager, Donald Warschak, stated we are exploring our options with that property. Gobert suggested they wait a few weeks before starting anything.

Chris Christensen questioned Council on a number of topics. The mobile food vendors and the process with P&Z. He suggested a separate working group for P&Z. He stated the ordinance for devices if a meeting is at capacity should not show preferential treatment to the press. He questioned the CCIDC budget line item of \$635,000.

Cynthia Penney asked Council where the veterans plaque at the water tower was. She stated the Confederate Daughters had placed it in there and it is now gone. Chief Edman responded why it was removed, and by whom, and it was with the Confederate Daughter's permission.

**5. City Manager's Report Including the Transportation Alternatives Sidewalk Application, CodeRED System, Water System Flushing, and the McCormick WWTP River Bank Project.**

City Manager, Donald Warschak, gave his report. A copy is attached to these minutes.

Regarding the Transportation Alternatives Sidewalk Application, Warschak stated the application is in the evaluation phase with a targeted award date in October.

Regarding the CodeRED system, Warschak urged citizens to sign up or update their information if they currently are signed up for CodeRED notifications.

Regarding water system flushing, Warschak stated the flushing continues within the City. There may be a drop in water pressure and possible discoloration during this time.

Regarding the McCormick WWTP River Bank Project, Warschak stated the Army Corp is planning the mobilization of the contractor in November. Gobert asked Warschak to update Council on the meeting they had regarding mitigation funding. Gobert included it was a positive meeting with Michael McCaul and Lois Kolkhorst and trying to get benefits for those outside of the Harris County area.

**6. Consideration and Action to Approve the Closure of Travis Street Between Walnut Street and Spring Street on Sunday, November 7, 2021 from Noon to 6:00 p.m. for the Boys & Girls Club of Champion Valley "Taste of Columbus".**

Councilman Daley made a motion to approve the street closure. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Rankin, Swindle, Daley, and Councilwoman Frnka

Absent: Councilman Cummings

The motion passed.

**7. Consideration and Action to Award Bid for Bank Depository.**

City Secretary, Bana Schneider, stated there was only one bid received, and it was from Industry State Bank. Their service is good. The rates are not that great. She did recommend staying with Industry State Bank.

Councilwoman Frnka made a motion to award the depository bid to Industry State Bank. Councilman Swindle seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Rankin, Swindle, Daley, and Councilwoman Frnka

Absent: Councilman Cummings

The motion passed.

**8. Consideration and Action to Approve the 2021-2022 Operating Budget for Columbus Community & Industrial Development Corporation.**

Gobert stated the only change from the previous budget was to add the \$625,000 for the Untermeyer building/property purchase to the \$10,000 that was already in that line item. Contracts have been signed by both parties. Gobert stated this will be for economic development. They plan to sell the building. They have partnered with the Lynch's and Daley to help create this green space. There will be an upgrade for parking and drainage.

Christensen asked if there was a timeline. Gobert stated the property has been on the market for quite some time. Parking has always been an issue downtown and hindering businesses. We hope within 5-7 years. Hound Song is already expanding and there are others looking to come in. CCIDC has been helping on Milam Street to revitalize that area as well. Christensen asked who the owners of the property were. Gobert replied, Becca and James Edmiston.

Councilman Swindle made a motion to approve the 2021-2022 CCIDC budget. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

9. **Consideration and Action to Approve Ordinance 245-21, an Ordinance Pertaining to Rates and Charges in Connection with Water Supply and Service.**

Schneider stated this was the increase reflected in the budget.

Councilman Daley made a motion to approve Ordinance 245-21. Councilman Swindle seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

10. **Consideration and Action to Approve Ordinance 246-21, an Ordinance Pertaining to Rates and Charges in Connection with Residential and Commercial Sewer Service and the Sewer System.**

Schneider stated this is the increase to match the budget.

Councilwoman Frnka made a motion to approve Ordinance 246-21. Councilman Daley seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

11. **Consideration and Action to Approve Ordinance 247-21, an Ordinance Pertaining to Rates and Charges in Connection with Gas Supply and Service.**

Schneider stated this is the same thing, to match the budget.

Councilwoman Frnka made the motion to approve Ordinance 247-21. Councilman Daley seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

12. **Consideration and Action to Approve Ordinance 248-21, an Ordinance Pertaining to Rates and Charges in Connection with Solid Waste Management and Service.**

Schneider stated this reflects the scheduled increase from the provider.

Councilwoman Frnka made the motion to approve Ordinance 248-21. Councilman Daley seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**13. Consideration and Action to Approve Ordinance 249-21, an Ordinance Establishing Policies and Procedures for City Meetings.**

Gobert stated this does not give any preferential treatment. It does give a way to get a device in should the room be at capacity and someone not able to get in.

Councilman Swindle made a motion to approve Ordinance 249-21. Councilman Daley seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Councilmen Rankin, Swindle, Daley, and Councilwoman Frnka  
Abstain: Councilman Cummings

The motion passed.

**14. Consideration and Action to Approve a 2020-2021 Budget Amendment for Library Memorials and Donations and Associated Expenditures.**

Schneider stated these are things that have not been budgeted because they do not know the number or dollar amounts that they may receive throughout the year.

Councilman Rankin made a motion to approve the Budget Amendment. Councilwoman Frnka seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**15. Consideration and Action to Authorize the Mayor to Enter the City of Columbus into a Contract for Public Health Services with Family Crisis Center.**

Schneider stated these items were in the budget, but needed approval now.

Councilwoman Frnka made a motion to authorize the Mayor to enter into a contract with Family Crisis Center. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**16. Consideration and Action to Authorize the Mayor to Enter the City of Columbus into a Contract for Public Services with Combined Community Action.**

Councilman Rankin made a motion to authorize the Mayor to enter into a contract with Combined Community Action. Councilwoman Frnka seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**17. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the August 2021 Fire Marshal Report.**

Code Enforcement, Richard LaCourse, gave the report in Fire Marshal Gorman's absence. A copy is attached to these minutes. LaCourse reported the structure fire investigation at 1526 Walnut St, Suite B, was ruled accidental. The investigation of 2215 Walnut Street was not accidental. The Ladder truck that went to auction sold Saturday for \$8,000. Tanker 1455 is out for repairs at Barten Industrial Coating. The liner is chipping out. It is due back this week. A new water rescue boat is being built for the fire department. The entire project is being funded by Todd Barten.

Frnka questioned the Lil' Einstein facility. LaCourse reported it is up and running, and she is already out of room. Gobert questioned the A Brighter Day facility inspection. LaCourse reported it did pass.

No action was needed.

**18. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the August 2021 Code Enforcement Report.**

Code Enforcement, Richard LaCourse gave his report. A copy is attached to these minutes. He reported 27 permits being issued. There are constant hospital inspections. He reported three CCIDC grant project inspections. He stated in the future, all grants will need to pull a permit for tracking purposes.

Frnka questioned the hydrants and if they have to be painted a particular color, as many are peeling. LaCourse responded it is a utilities function and the paint indicates different lines and sizes.

No action was needed.

Let the record reflect that Councilman Cummings arrived at 6:13 p.m.

**19. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the August 2021 Police Report.**

Police Chief, Skip Edman, gave his report. A copy is attached to these minutes. Edman reported they have been pretty busy with recent incidents, several officers out with COVID, and one out with surgery. He reported the Homecoming parade was the first reroute. He stated it went well, and he had received lots of positive comments on the change. He stated there was a press release regarding the arrest of the three murder suspects. They continue to work diligently on the case. Gobert stated great job by all parties involved in the apprehension. Edman stated you have some great officers working for the City.

No action was needed.

**20. Items from Council members.<sup>2</sup>**

Councilman Cummings – none

Councilman Swindle – none

Councilwoman Frnka – none

Councilman Rankin – none

Councilman Daley - none

Mayor Gobert – Gobert read a proclamation for Teacher Appreciation on October 5<sup>th</sup>. She requested having a task force for the mobile food ordinance item placed on the next agenda.

**21. Announcements.**

Schneider stated the next meeting will be on Tuesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, due to the City holiday on the 11<sup>th</sup>.

**15. Adjournment.**

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 6:18 p.m.



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 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.