



The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in regular session on Monday, February 26, 2024, at 5:30 PM, 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 – Ronny Daley
Councilwoman – Paige Sciba
Councilman – Michael Ridlen (Arrived at 5:39 p.m.)
City Manager – Donald Warschak
City Secretary – Bana Schneider
Assistant City Secretary – Dinah Jacobs

Other City Staff present included:

Police Chief – Skip Edman
Code Enforcement – Richard LaCourse
Library Director – Susan Chandler
Fire Chief – Dusty Dittmar
Code/Fire 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 and invocation.

3. Consent Agenda:

Motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Moved by: Keith Cummings

Seconded by: Ronny Daley

Aye Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 4-0

3.1 Approval of Invoices [INVOICES 20240226.pdf](#)

3.2 Approval of Minutes of the February 12, 2024 Regular Meeting

[MINUTES 20240212.pdf](#) 

4. **Citizens' Presentations and Comments'**

There were no public comments.

5. **City Manager's Report Including Utility Billing, TxDOT Projects Update, PHMSA Pipeline Grant, and the Texas A&M University Transportation Study.** [CM](#)

[REPORT 20240226.pdf](#) 

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

Let the record reflect Councilman Michael Ridlen arrived at 5:39 p.m.

6. **Consideration and Action, if Necessary Regarding the Nesbitt Memorial Library Annual Report** [NESBITT LIBRARY 2023.pdf](#) 

Library Director, Susan Chandler, gave her report. A copy is attached to these minutes.

No action was needed.

Gobert stated the Nesbitt Library received a distinguished award from the Texas Municipal Library Directors Association. They were presented with the 2023 Achievement of Excellence in Libraries Award. Gobert presented Chandler with a plaque and a photo was taken with the mayor and library staff.

7. **Consideration and Action to Approve Ordinance 276-24, an Ordinance Providing for the Closure, Vacation, and Abandonment of a Portion of Public Right-of-Way and Providing for the Terms and Conditions of Such Abandonment.** [ORD 276-24- STREET](#)

[CLOSURE.ABANDONMENT GREAT SOUTHERN WAY.pdf](#) 

CCIDC President Bruce Tesch was present and showed, on the big screen, the portion of the road to be closed.

Motion to approve the abandonment as presented.

Moved by: Michael Ridlen

Seconded by: Chuck Rankin

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

8. **Consideration and Action to Approve an Engagement Letter with Patillo, Brown & Hill for the 2023 Financial Audit.** [AUDIT ENGAGEMENT LETTER 2023.pdf](#) 

Motion to approve the engagement letter as presented.

Moved by: Chuck Rankin

Seconded by: Keith Cummings

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

9. Consideration and Action to Accept the Certification of Unopposed Candidates for the May 4, 2024 General Election. [CERTIFICATION OF UNOPPOSED CANDIDATES.pdf](#)

[📎](#)

Consideración y acción para aceptar la certificación de candidatos sin oposición para las elecciones generales del 4 de mayo de 2024. [CERTIFICACION DE CANDIDATOS](#)

[UNICOS.pdf](#) [📎](#)

Motion to approve the certification of unopposed candidates.

Moción para aprobar la certificación de candidatos sin oposición.

Moved by: Keith Cummings

Seconded by: Ronny Daley

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

10. Consideration and Action to Adopt Ordinance 275-24, an Ordinance of the City of Columbus, Texas Declaring the Unopposed Candidates for the Offices of City Councilmember Place Three, City Councilmember Place Four, and City Councilmember Place Five as Elected. [ORD 275-24 ELECTION CANCELLATION.pdf](#) [📎](#)

Examen y medidas encaminadas a adoptar Ordenanza 275-24, una Ordenanza de la ciudad de Columbus, Texas Declarer los candidatos sin oposicion para la oficina Concejal de la Ciudad de la Lugar Tres, Concejal de la Ciudad de la Lugar Cuatro, y el Concejal de la Ciudad Cinco como Elegido. [ORD 275-24 ELECCIONE.pdf](#) [📎](#)

Motion to approve Ordinance 275-24 as presented.

Moción para aprobar la Ordenanza 275-24 tal como se presentó.

Moved by: Keith Cummings

Seconded by: Ronny Daley

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

11. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the Columbus Volunteer Fire Department Annual Report. [CVFD 2023.pdf](#) [📎](#)

Fire Chief, Dusty Dittmar, gave the report. A copy is attached to these minutes.

Rankin asked about the strategy to address the ESD for funding, stating there should be a group working on this.

Dittmar stated there has been some conversation with the County thus far, but nothing until the next fiscal year.

Gobert stated there has been ongoing discussions, but no timeline. Gobert has also reached out to TDEM for assistance as well.

Gobert thanked the Chief and the entire fire department. They are all volunteers. They work and raise as much in fundraisers with all of these hours that equals the amount the county contributes.

12. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the January 2024 Fire Marshal

Report. [FIRE MARSHAL JANUARY 2024.pdf](#) 

Code Enforcement officer, Richard LaCourse, presented the report in Gorman's absence, and pointed out the help the Fire Marshal gave in order for the new Weimar day care to get up and running.

No action was needed.

13. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the January 2024 Code Enforcement

Report. [CODE ENFORCEMENT JANUARY 2024.pdf](#) 

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

Rankin questioned the electrical issues they uncovered during the Holiday Inn event.

Ridlen questioned their Certificate of Occupancy. LaCourse said it has been torn up. They currently do not have one.

Gobert thanked him for the updated substandard list.

No action was needed.

14. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the January 2024 Police Report. [CPD](#)

[STATS JANUARY 2024.pdf](#) 

Police Chief, Skip Edman, gave his report. A copy is attached to these minutes.

Gobert stated there was lots of training.

Ridlen questioned staffing.

No action was needed.

15. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the Mansfield Building.

Gobert stated she assumed no bids were received. Warschak stated, correct, no bids.

Gobert stated we should advertise it again for the required amount of time according to state law.

Schneider stated it has to be advertised in a newspaper. That is state law.

Daley questioned if we can just advertise it "Building For Sale". Leave out all of the weed details to minimize the cost of the ads. That information would be given when they inquire.

Rankin stated maybe we could ask a realtor for some assistance on how we can advertise. City Secretary, Bana Schneider, stated she would have to check with legal counsel to see if we can do that.

Ridlen stated he would like to see it in the Houston Chronicle.

Motion to have City Administration look into listing the property for sale in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible.

Moved by: Keith Cummings
Seconded by: Michael Ridlen

Carried

Motion to amend the first motion, to approve advertising in the local newspaper as soon as possible (March 3rd and 13th, with offers if any presented at the March 25th meeting), and then continue to inquire on the cost for the Houston Chronicle and bring those numbers to the next Council meeting for discussion.

Moved by: Michael Ridlen
Seconded by: Paige Sciba

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

16. Executive Session: In Accordance with Texas Government Code Section 551.072, Deliberations about Real Property - Possible Sites for New Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Regular session adjourned at 6:11 p.m. to enter into executive session.

17. Reconvene into Regular Session and Consideration and Action, if Any, Regarding Executive Session - Possible Sites for New Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Regular session reconvened at 6:29 p.m. All members remained present.

Motion to appoint Councilmen Ridlen and Rankin to enter into real estate negotiations per discussions in executive session.

Moved by: Paige Sciba
Seconded by: Keith Cummings

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

18. Items from Councilmembers?

Cummings - none

Daley - none

Sciba - none

Ridlen - none

Rankin - concerned we have not seen the fire marshal; Schneider stated he rearranged his real job schedule to be here last month, but had jury duty and this time he has had the flu

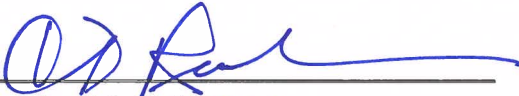
Gobert - I have spoken to the fire marshal; he is still employed and doing fire marshal duties; just taking a break from the fire department

19. Announcements

Schneider - no election!


20. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m.



~~Lori An Gobert, Mayor~~
Chuck Rankin, Mayor Pro Tem

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 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.