

The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in regular session on Monday, February 24, 2025, 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 5:44 p.m.)

City Manager – Donald Warschak

City Secretary – Bana Schneider

Assistant City Secretary – Dinah Jacobs

Other City Staff present included:

Police Chief – Skip Edman

Fire Chief & Code Enforcement – Richard Lacourse

CCIDC President – Bruce Tesch

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: Ronny Daley

Seconded by: Keith Cummings

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

Daley

Carried 4-0

- 3.1 Approval of Invoices 20250224.pdf

- 3.3 Approval of Investment Report for the Quarter Ended December 31, 2024
 20241231 INVESTMENT REPORT.pdf @
- 3.4 Approval of the October 2024 Financial Statements OCT 2024.pdf @
- 3.5 Approval of the November 2024 Financial Statements NOV 2024.pdf @
- 4. Citizens' Presentations and Comments¹

Citizens requested to speak at specific agenda items.

5. City Manager's Report Including Sales Tax, TxDOT Projects Updates, City Projects Updates, the Rise Broadband Fiber Project, Sewer Averaging, and Sign Replacement

Project Updates. CM REPORT 20250221.pdf

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

Regarding sales tax, the County and City of Eagle Lake also saw increases.

6. Consideration and Action to Award the Bid for the CDBG MIT-MOD Drainage Project

Construction. CDBG-MIT-MOD GLO DRAINAGE BID.pdf @

Project engineer John Mercer was present to discuss the bids that were submitted.

Mercer recommended Strayhorn Construction for the project. Cummings asked if he will be able to get the project done in the required time. Mercer stated yes, and it should not be a problem completing the project. A letter of award will be sent tomorrow.

Let the record reflect that at 5:44 p.m. Michael Ridlen joined the meeting.

Motion to award the drainage project bid to Strayhorn Construction.

Moved by: Ronny Daley

Seconded by: Keith Cummings

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith

Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

7. Consideration and Action to Approve a Right-of-Way License Agreement with Rise

Broadband. ROW LICENSE AGREEMENT RISE BROADBAND.pdf @

City Secretary, Bana Schneider, stated the boring company has damaged water systems in other cities, so our attorney suggested we get this agreement in place.

Motion to approve the ROW License Agreement with Rise Broadband.

Moved by: Paige Sciba
Seconded by: Chuck Rankin

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith

Cummings, and Ronny Daley

8. Consideration and Action to Approve Resolution 295-25, a Resolution Designating Authorized Signatories for Contractual Documents Pertaining to the CDBG-MIT Resilient Communities Program Through the General Land Office. RESOLUTION 295-

25 COLUMBUS-E892-AUTH SIGNATURES.pdf @

Motion to approve Resolution 295-25.

Moved by: Paige Sciba

Seconded by: Keith Cummings

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith

Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

9. Consideration and Action to Approve an Interlocal Agreement with HPS Governmental Benefits Cooperative, HPS GBC_INTERLOCAL.pdf @

Frank Hejtmanek and Tye Gunn were present representing Higginbotham. Schneider stated they would be our broker for contracting for health care and voluntary services

The goal is to provide more options and cost effectiveness.

Motion to approve the HPS GBC Interlocal agreement.

Moved by: Paige Sciba Seconded by: Chuck Rankin

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith

Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

10. Consideration and Action to Approve an Operational Procedures Agreement with HPS Governmental Benefits. HPS GBC OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES AGREEMENT.pdf

Ø

Schneider discussed the Operational Agreement with Council.

Hejtmanek stated they will shop all of the benefits. They will work on locating medical coverage.

Ridlen questioned how they get paid. Hejtmanek stated they get paid by the carriers. They are independent.

With the cooperative, there comes a benefit platform. The employee will enroll in the services. Higginbotham will also be a third party administrator.

Rankin questioned if there was an issue, who do we call. Hejtmanek stated you call me.

Ridlen asked if we do not pay you, what makes you have the best benefit for us. Gunn stated the best prices and keeping your business.

Motion to approve the HPS GBC Operational Procedures Agreement.

Aye

Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith

Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

11. Consideration and Action to Send to Planning and Zoning of a Replat of a 1.2332 Acre Being Lots 3, 4 and a Portion of Lot 5, Block 43 of the City of Columbus into Two (2) Lots (0.4912 Acres (Lot 3A) and 0.7420 Acres (Lot 4A)) as Requested by Merrill and Elaine

Luman. REPLAT LUMAN-HEGER.pdf @

Warschak described and discussed the area with Council.

Motion to approve sending the described replat to P&Z.

Moved by: Paige Sciba Seconded by: Ronny Daley

Aye

Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith

Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

12. Consideration and Action to Accept the Certification of Unopposed Candidates for the May 3, 2025 General Election.

Consideración y acción para aceptar la certificación de candidatos sin oposición para las elecciones generales del 3 de mayo de 2025.

CERTIFICATION OF UNOPPOSED CANDIDATES CERTIFICATION DE CANDIDATOS UNICOS.pdf

Ø

Schneider stated she has certified that all races in the upcoming municipal election are unopposed.

Schneider afirmó que ha certificado que todas las elecciones en las próximas elecciones municipales no tendrán oposición.

Motion to accept the certification of unopposed candidates for the May 3, 2025 general election.

Moción para aceptar la certificación de candidatos sin oposición para las elecciones generales del 3 de mayo de 2025.

Moved by/movido por: Chuck Rankin Seconded by/secundado por: Paige Sciba

Aye/Si

Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith

Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried/Aprobado 5-0

13. Consideration and Action to Adopt Ordinance 289-25, an Ordinance of the City of Columbus, Texas Declaring the Unopposed Candidates for the Offices of Mayor, City

Councilmember Place One, and City Councilmember Place Two as Elected. ORD 289-25 CANCELLATION OF ELLECTION.pdf @

Examen y medidas encaminadas a adoptar Ordenanza 289-25, una Ordenanza de la ciudad de Columbus, Texas Declarar los candidatos sin oposición para la oficina Alcalde, Concejal dela Ciudad de la Lugar Uno, y el Concejal de la Ciudad Lugar Dos como Elegido. ORD

289-25 CANCELACIÓN DE ELECCIÓN.pdf @

Motion to adopt Ordinance 289-25.

Moción para adoptar la Ordenanza 289-25.

Moved by/movido por: Paige Sciba

Seconded by/secundado por: Chuck Rankin

Aye/Si

Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith

Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried/Aprobado 5-0

14. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the Columbus Community & Industrial Development Corporation's Annual Report.

CCIDC Board President, Bruce Tesch, updated Council on the sale of property to Lauren Concrete at the end of December. The other big project and sale of property was closed last week with PDC Atlanta. This has been a long time coming. PDC has 30 months for construction. There is one other piece of property that is being looked at at the Industrial Park. It would bring approximately 125 jobs if that sale closes.

No action was needed.

15. Consideration and Action to Approve a Manufactured Home Permit for BLK 104 LT S/2 S-5, 6 in the City of Columbus as Requested by Linda Hernandez.

Code Enforcement officer, Richard LaCourse, discussed this permit. It is the exact same permit from October, but that one lapsed. The only difference is the concrete plan. This was a resubmittal. Rankin asked if it as still in compliance. LaCourse stated it was.

Motion to approve the manufactured home as presented.

Moved by: Ronny Daley

Seconded by: Keith Cummings

Aye

Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith

Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

16. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the 2024 Columbus Volunteer Fire Department Annual Report. CVFD 2024.pdf @

Fire Chief, Richard LaCourse, gave the report. A copy is attached to these minutes.

Gobert stated the Oyster/Fish Fry was phenomenal. It was a great success. Ridlen stated this was some of the best oysters he had ever had.

Rankin questioned the status of the Fire Marshal.

LaCourse stated he is not part of the fire department. He is an appointment by the City.

Gobert stated she has approached Blinn College and the City of Weimar. Blinn did reach back out. There is someone that has expressed interest and they are working on a joint project.

This was a part time position. The ESD burned him. Warschak stated we are looking at all avenues and exploring other options. The full time fire fighters just don't want another extra part time job. LaCourse stated there are greater qualifications for being a Fire Marshal above being a just a firefighter.

Right now, the current fire marshal is working on a case by case basis. Ridlen stated if we are happy and he is happy, we should keep rocking and rolling. He did an awesome job, and if he would like to continue on a contract basis, we should.

Rankin stated Warschak should report on this every couple of months.

No action was needed.

17. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the January 2025 Code Enforcement Report. CODE ENFORCEMENT JANUARY 2025.pdf Ø

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

No action was needed.

18. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the January 2025 Police Report. CPD STATS JANUARY 2025.pdf Ø

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

There has been a lot of training going on.

Gobert questioned the rearrangement of staff. Edman stated Chris Mayfield was promoted to Lieutenant; Travis Kent has returned as Detective; they are still one short for patrol. Ridlen questioned the tenure of the rest of the staff beyond Chief. Edman stated Jose Lara, 11 years; Wilson 15 years; and Neumann and Blair also have a lot of experience. He worries about the "Baby Cops". It is very hard training three new rookies, but we hired some great new young people.

19. Items from Councilmembers²

Cummings - none

Daley - none

Sciba - addressed the need for lighting at the crosswalk at the Little League field and the need for lights shining down on Montezuma - there are lots of shadows and darkness and you cannot see kids or adults crossing; seems to be a very dangerous location; Warschak stated they will look into what can be done there

Ridlen - questioned when the property was sold to the school, was there something in there for who is responsible for lighting/safety in that area; Warschak stated he will check; asked about doing something as a Council to promote the ESD; something put out to the citizens that Council is in support of the effort; Gobert stated she went to the first Town Hall meeting; Ridlen is thinking of a letter from this body showing support and why as most citizens will not go to a Town Hall; mailed letter; newspaper; Schneider stated she would have to check rules on what can be done in support because of election laws; Ridlen stated the newspaper can print we are in support; Gobert stated she likes and follows and shares the ESD posts to show support; each individual member can do the same

Rankin - stated they could do something in a two part series; encouraging support now and then something after the local town hall; Schneider still needs to check on what can and cannot be done

Gobert - stated there are a lot of grants and hoops and things to jump through; thank you to Anne and Bana for all of the work they are doing; without Anne, there is no way all of this work would be getting done - there is an impressive amount of work going on; water well replacement grant - \$1.3M

20. Announcements

Warschak - new director at the Library - Lynnette Weido; three retirees - luncheon on Friday - Michael Poncik, Henry Polasek, Wendy Alley - 11am-1pm here at the Council Chamber

21. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Lori An Gobert, Mayor

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.

	ž		
	×		