

The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in regular session on Monday, February 10, 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 (Absent)
Councilman	-	Keith Cummings
Councilman	-	Michael Ridlen
Councilman	-	Gary Swindle
Councilwoman	-	Sandra Frnka
City Manager	-	Donald Warschak
City Secretary	-	Bana Schneider

Other City Staff Present:

Police Chief	-	Skip Edman
Code Enforcement	-	Richard LaCourse
Library Director	-	Susan Chandler
Fire Chief	-	Dusty Dittmar
Assistant Fire Chief	-	Sidney Chollett
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 of Allegiance and Invocation.

**3. Consent Agenda:**

- a. Approval of Invoices
- b. Approval of Minutes of the January 27, 2020 Regular Meeting
- ~~c. Approval of the October 2019 Financial Statements~~

City Secretary, Bana Schneider, stated the financial statements were not available for approval.

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

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

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

Debbie Damon addressed Council regarding "Saturdays on the Square". She stated the weekly farmers market would begin on March 7<sup>th</sup> and continue through December 12<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 a.m. to noon on the courthouse drive. She read a letter from the vendors of the market, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Mayor Gobert read and signed a proclamation for the Junior Catholic Daughters Association. She took a photograph with the JCDA members present.

**5. City Manager's Report Including Sales Tax, the Water Filtration Project and Sewer Averaging.**

City Manager, Donald Warschak, gave the report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Warschak stated the Hill water plant was the only location without the filter system online. He stated there was probably a week or two of work remaining at that location before it would be ready to go. Warschak stated he has received positive comments concerning the City's water clarity since the Tait and Spring filter systems have gone online.

Regarding the Front Street and RV Park Lift Stations, Warschak stated both lift stations were damaged during Hurricane Harvey and have been running under temporary operational conditions. The bid packets for permanent repairs and mitigation work have gone out for those projects.

Warschak stated the sewer averaging period is coming to an end. The data from the 2 months of billing will be used to calculate the sewer rate for residential customers.

He also stated he had just learned the City had been awarded the TxDOT grant for the sidewalk project.

Gobert asked when the next water system flushing would happen. Warschak stated once the last filter system goes online then we would begin the flushing protocol. Gobert asked what the expected color of the water would be during flushing. Warschak stated anytime the system is stirred up, it will be discolored, but we will send out postcard notifications.

Councilman Swindle asked about the waterline project in the north part of the City. Warschak stated they are replacing lines in that area. Swindle asked about the finances, and if there would be funding for waterline replacement in the other targeted sector of the City. Warschak stated after the filter project is completed, we will be able to see how much funding would be available, but he indicated, most likely, there would not be enough to do the entire original plan.

**6. Discussion Regarding Proposed Alleyton Incorporation and Possible Consolidation with the City of Columbus.**

Gobert stated at this time the election for Alleyton's incorporation has not been called.

Councilman Cummings asked when the next Alleyton community meeting would be held. Shirley Kearbey stated the weekend of the 24<sup>th</sup>. Swindle asked where the meeting would take place. Kearbey stated at the Church of Christ.

**7. Consideration and Action to Adopt Ordinance 230-20, an Ordinance of the City of Columbus Authorizing a General (Regular) Municipal Election to be Held on May 2, 2020. *Consideración y acción para adoptar ordenanza 230-20, una ordenanza de la ciudad de Columbus que autoriza una elección municipal (regular) general para ser sostenido el 2 de mayo de 2020.***

Schneider stated the ordinance is a little different this year. If the City ends up having an election, we will be contracting with the County to conduct the election.

*Schneider declaró que la ordenanza es un poco diferente este año. Si la Ciudad tiene una elección, estaríamos contratando con el Condado para llevar a cabo la elección.*

Councilman Cummings made a motion to adopt Ordinance 230-20. Councilman Swindle seconded the motion.

*El concejal Cummings hizo una moción para aprobar la ordenanza 230-20. El concejal Swindle secundó la moción.*

The vote was as follows:

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

Absent: Councilman Rankin

The motion passed.

*La votación fue la siguiente:*

*Sí: los concejales Cummings, Ridlen, y Swindle; Concejal Frnka  
Ausente: El concejal Rankin*

*La moción pasó.*

**8. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the Nesbitt Memorial Library Report.**

Library Director, Susan Chandler, delivered the report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. Chandler highlighted the Summer Reading program and overall library statistics. Gobert commented that it looks as if teens are dropping out of the summer program. She also stated she thought the programs offered by the library were spectacular. Councilwoman Frnka asked the age of the teens who generally participate in library programs. Chandler stated they range from thirteen to eighteen. She also said they have some teens that come to the library every day. Frnka commended Chandler for her hard work.

Chandler stated the circulation of books has gone down. Councilman Ridlen stated the e-book circulation has gone up, though. There was a discussion of the e-book consortium and the process of e-book check out.

No action was taken.

**9. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the Columbus Volunteer Fire Department Annual Report.**

Fire Chief, Dusty Dittmar, gave the report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. Dittmar highlighted the calls the department responded to last year along with the man hours involved. The fire losses were also discussed. Dittmar also spoke about the suspected arson fires that happened in Glidden, as well as other notable calls during the last year. He also spoke about the fire department's new command vehicle. Dittmar thanked the City for all of the support they give to the department.

Councilman Cummings stated there are 33 fire fighters in the department with only two attending fire school. He asked how many fire fighters the department really needs. Dittmar stated the magic number used to be 40, but he stated you can have a lot of fire personnel, but you might not have very many fire fighters.

There was a discussion regarding the major structure fire the department responded to the evening before.

Frnka stated she doesn't believe we give the department enough credit. She led a round of applause.

**10. Discussion Regarding Parking Regulations in the Downtown Area.**

Gobert stated, for those of you who have attended meetings in the last year, you know there have been issues with downtown parking. A few people have taken it upon themselves to do some research into how other cities handle parking in their downtown and historic districts. Code Enforcement Officer, Richard LaCourse, stated after reviewing all of the research he was given, he found that many cities do not have off-street parking requirements in their downtown areas. LaCourse stated he, the City Manager, and the Mayor got together and came up with a target area in downtown that would be exempt from the parking and loading requirements currently in the code. He read the proposed change to be made in the ordinance; a copy is attached to these minutes. LaCourse highlighted the streets and blocks which would be exempt. There was a discussion of specific businesses that would benefit from these changes.

**11. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the January Golf Association Report.**

Schneider stated the financials indicate they have received cart shed rental fees, and they are ahead of last year for green fee collections.

No action was taken.

**12. Consideration and Action to Declare a 2007 Utility Truck, VIN 1FTRW12W47KD16075, as Surplus Property.**

Warschak stated this was his old truck.

Councilwoman Frnka made a motion to declare the 2007 utility truck as surplus property. Councilman Cummings seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**13. Items from Councilmembers.<sup>2</sup>**

Councilman Cummings – None

Councilman Ridlen – Would like to see Columbus become a Second Amendment Sanctuary City as the County has done.

Councilman Swindle – Asked about having lane markings placed on some of the busier intersections so drivers will know where they should be when they stop. There was a discussion of where striping should be placed as well as striping near the new bridge.

Councilwoman Frnka – None

Councilman Rankin – Absent

Mayor Gobert – Asked about an update regarding AEP. Warschak stated he had received an email regarding the settlement, but the official ruling has not been made.

**14. Announcements.**

There were no announcements.

**15. Adjournment.**

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 6:22 p.m.



Mayor Pro Tem, Chuck Rankin

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.