

The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in special session on Wednesday, September 9, 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
Councilman	-	Keith Cummings
Councilman	-	Michael Ridlen (Arrived 5:34 p.m.)
Councilman	-	Gary Swindle
Councilwoman	-	Sandra Frnka
City Manager	-	Donald Warschak
City Secretary	-	Bana Schneider

Other City Staff Present:

Police Chief	-	Skip Edman
Library Director	-	Susan Chandler

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

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, Swindle, and Rankin; Councilwoman Frnka
Absent: Councilman Ridlen

The motion passed.

4. Citizens' Presentations and Comments.¹

There were no public comments.

5. Discussion of Budget Workshop – General and Utility Funds, Capital Improvements.

City Secretary, Bana Schneider, stated the golf course budget is in the budget packet. She highlighted the expenses the City subsidizes at the course.

Councilman Ridlen arrived at 5:34 p.m.

John Mangini and Tony Neuendorff from the CMGA spoke to Council about the possibility of buying the golf carts when the lease expires next April. There was a discussion regarding the cost of the buyout, and the replacement of the cart batteries as well as dialogue about a new lease.

Mangini also stated the equipment lease will be up at the same time, but they think the equipment should be leased. There was debate about an equipment lease being a better option for the golf course. Mangini asked if the City would consider helping with the buy-out.

Mangini discussed the needed repairs and maintenance of the existing water well on the course.

Council discussed the proposed library budget. Gobert stated she had asked City Secretary, Bana Schneider, to tweak the budget by reducing some line items, and increasing building maintenance in order for some painting to be done. There was a conversation regarding the fire suppression and fire alarm systems for the library.

There was discussion regarding the tax rate. Although the tax rate decreased, it is considered a tax increase because of the additional revenue that will be generated.

Wish list items discussed included the fire pension contribution, fire call attendance bonus, police vehicles, pool filter, and playground equipment cover. There was a lengthy debate regarding upgrades to the roads at the Crossroads Business Park.

Council discussed the Hotel Occupancy Tax budget. They deliberated about the grant to the Chamber. Schneider stated the amount in the budget for that grant would be netted with their surplus funds to reach \$185,000. The overall HOT operating budget and ending fund balance were discussed.

The utility fund ending balance was discussed. Cuts to operating expenses were discussed in order for the ending fund balance to be a better ratio to expenditures. City Manager, Donald Warschak, explained the maintenance items in the utility department for the coming year. Software upgrades to the meter reading system were also debated. Rankin asked about the downward trend of the utility revenue. Schneider stated grant monies were included in the revenues for the current year in the water department, and there are none included in the coming year's budget. Gobert stated the budgets for electricity in the different departments need to be examined. The budgeted amount is way above what typically is spent each year.

It was decided to reexamine some of the expenditures to get the ending fund balance for both the general and utility funds to more acceptable levels.

6. **Items from Councilmembers.**²

Councilman Cummings – None

Councilman Ridlen – None

Councilman Swindle – None

Councilwoman Frnka – None

Councilman Rankin – None

Mayor Gobert – Thanked Councilman Ridlen for dealing with the property tax issues that were brought up on Facebook.

7. **Announcements.**

Warschak stated the sewer rehab on Fannin has been completed, and the work has moved to Milam Street. The contractors will go to the waste water treatment plant after Milam.

Schneider stated the next meeting would be on Monday, September 14, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

8. **Adjournment.**

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:24 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.