

The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in regular session on Monday, September 14, 2020, at 5:30 p.m., in the Live Oak Art Center located at 1014 Milam St., Columbus, Texas, with the following present:

Mayor	-	Lori An Gobert
Mayor Pro Tem	-	Chuck Rankin
Councilman	-	Keith Cummings
Councilman	-	Michael Ridlen (Arrived at 5:36 p.m.)
Councilman	-	Gary Swindle
Councilwoman	-	Sandra Frnka (Attended via telephone)
City Manager	-	Donald Warschak
City Secretary	-	Bana Schneider

Other City Staff present included:

Police Chief	-	Skip Edman
Code Enforcement	-	Richard LaCourse
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
- b. Approval of May 2020 Financial Statements

Councilman Rankin made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilman Cummings 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. <sup>1</sup>**

Public comments were made during specific agenda items.

**5. City Manager's Report Including Sales Tax, the Water Filtration Project, the Water Well Rehab Project, the North River Drive Storm Sewer Outfall Project, the 2020 Sewer Line Improvements, and the Library Roof Project Updates.**

City Manager, Donald Warschak, gave his report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. Warschak stated the sales tax the City received this month was down approximately \$430 from the same time period last year. The county was also down, while the cities of Weimar and Eagle Lake both saw increases.

The City Manager stated WesTech will be onsite next week to inspect the filter vessels and determine the corrective measures in order to get them back online.

Warschak said we are waiting for water usage to decrease before taking the Tait well off-line for the camera survey and any rehab worked required on the well.

Warschak stated the contractor has done the back-fill for the storm sewer on North River Drive, and the project is basically done.

Regarding the sewer line improvements, Warschak said the replacement of lines on Highway 71 had been completed, and they have moved to Milam Street. The contractors will be replacing a 12-inch sanitary sewer main from Dewees to Preston. They will complete the project by replacing a 350 foot, 16-inch clay pipe at the McCormick waste water treatment plant.

Warschak concluded his report by saying the contractor has installed the new roof at the library. They have a few miscellaneous items to complete before that project is finished.

**6. Consideration and Action to Approve Resolution 216-20, a Resolution Terminating the disaster Declaration in Response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency issued by Mayoral Proclamation on June 19, 2020**

Councilman Ridlen arrived at 5:36 p.m.

Mark Potter of the Barn Builders thanked Council for hearing the group. He stated the grassroots organization was working with local elected officials to open our community 100% from the COVID shut downs. He stated the group had been called "peaceful protesters", but he stated they were here to offer support to local officials. Potter asked that Council rescind the local disaster declaration and open the City up totally. He stated the cloud of fear needs to be removed, and he concluded by saying trust us to make the right decisions.

Cliff Masarik from the group gave a recap of what has happened since the Barn Builders attended the August 10<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. He stated the data regarding COVID is wrong, and not trustworthy. This flawed data was used to shut down our society. Masarik discussed how, other than this month, sales tax was at an all-time high. He said you would think with businesses being shut down; tax revenue would be down. That means we do not know who is conducting business within our community. Hotel occupancy is down; City funding from utility revenue is down. There is COVID funding which the City and school are tapping into, and hopefully being used appropriately. He stated the CDC and DSHS had retracted some of their conclusions, and validated the group's point of view. He predicts there will be empty buildings on the square by December. The shackles placed on us by this COVID-19 fraud are upsetting. Take off those shackles and let our businesses compete, and open churches and schools.

Councilman Ridlen stated he agreed much of the data was not accurate when it first came along in February, March, and April. He asked if the group had any science or data that points to what will happen if we open the community and go back to February status. Masarik stated he would lob that back at him. If we open up, can it be any worse? He also stated death was the only indicator. We have to stop this madness. Receiving funding on a false pretense is wrong, and it will have to be paid back at some point.

Lorri Charvat of the group stated information is coming out every day from scientists. At first it was "flatten the curve." We did that. Originally the herd immunity numbers that came out was 60 to 80% of the population needed to contract the virus, now they are saying 20-30%. We have reached that point. We cannot forecast what will happen if we open. We do not get to see any information because it is censored. She stated she trusts Council to do what is right for our community. Potter stated we don't see the ripple effect. His business is down by 50%, and he is using his savings to pay his bills. He stated he can't tithe at church. He asked if the cure was worse than the disease. He also stated we are 160 days into the disaster declaration. He asked when do constitutional rights override a disaster declaration that no longer makes any common sense.

Mayor Gobert read the resolution aloud.

Councilman Swindle made a motion to approve Resolution 216-20. Councilman Ridlen seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

7. **Consideration and Action to Approve the Closure of Legion Drive between the Large Memorial Stadium Entrance Gate to Legion Circle as Requested by Columbus Independent School District for the Following Dates and Times:**

- 09/17/2020 – Freshman/JV Football Game 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- 09/24/2020 – Freshman/JV Football Game 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- 10/08/2020 – Junior High Football Game 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- 10/09/2020 – Varsity Football Game 4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.
- 10/15/2020 – Freshman/JV Football Game 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- 10/22/2020 – Junior High Football Game 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- 10/29/2020 – JV Football Game 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- 11/05/2020 – Junior High Football Game 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- 11/06/2020 – Varsity Football Game 4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Councilman Cummings made a motion to approve the street closures as requested. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

8. **Consideration and Action to Approve the Closure of Travis Street between Walnut and Spring Streets from 6:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 19, 2020 for Saturdays on the Square Farmers Market.**

Debbie Damon made the request. She stated the purpose of the closure was to control the traffic into and out of Travis Street so the vendors would have an easier time setting up and breaking down. There was a discussion regarding the need for the closure.

Councilman Rankin made a motion to approve the street closure as requested. Councilman Cummings seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

9. **Consideration and Action to Approve the Closure of Milam Street from the Adult Probation Office to Crockett Street on Saturday, October 17, 2020 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. for Brunson Night at the Live Oak Art Center.**

Gobert stated the thoroughfare from the bank to Highway 90 would be open. Rankin asked why not close all the way from Milam. Warschak stated they did not want to cut-off access to bank customers.

Councilman Ridlen made a motion to approve the street closure as requested. Councilman Cummings seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**10. Consideration and Action to Approve the Partial Closure of Spring Street at Milam Street on Tuesday, October 27, 2020 from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. as Requested by the Chamber of Commerce for a Drive-thru Chili Dinner in Front of the Stafford Opera House.**

City Secretary, Bana Schneider, stated they want to make Spring Street one-way from Travis to exit on Milam. Chief Edman spoke about the problems with the closure at 4:30 p.m. He suggested not closing until 5:00 p.m. If the street isn't closed until 5:00 p.m., the police can make vehicles move along. Edman stated he does not want people leaving work in the area to have difficulty backing out of the angled parking. There was discussion regarding the time the closure should end.

Councilman Ridlen made a motion to approve the street closure from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**11. Consideration and Action to Approve Resolution 217-20, a Resolution Authorizing the Submission of a Community Development Block Grant – Mitigation Project Application to the General Land Office; and Authorizing the Mayor and/or City Manager to Act as the City's Executive Officer and Authorized Representative in all Matters Pertaining to the City's Participation in the Community Development Block Grant – Mitigation Program.**

Warschak stated this was the GLO – Mitigation grant for a new wastewater treatment plant. This resolution is the authorization needed to submit the application.

Councilman Swindle made a motion to approve Resolution 217-20. Councilman Cummings seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**12. Consideration and Action to Adopt the Citizen Participation Plan Policy for the GLO Community Development Block Grant Program.**

Schneider stated Council has approved this plan for other grants.

Councilman Cummings made a motion to adopt the Citizen Participation Plan policy. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**13. Consideration and Action to Re-Adopt the Financial Management Goals and Objectives for the City of Columbus.**

Schneider stated there were no changes to the financial goals, this is a re-adoption.

Councilman Ridlen made a motion to re-adopt the Financial Management Goals and Objectives for the City. Councilman Cummings seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**14. Consideration and Action to Approve Resolution 218-20, a Resolution Amending and Adopting the Purchasing Policy and Addendum for the City of Columbus.**

Schneider stated the only thing new was the addendum regarding federal procurement rules.

Councilman Swindle made a motion to approve Resolution 218-20. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**15. Consideration and Action to Approve Resolution 219-20, a Resolution Authorizing the Approval of a Cost-Share Agreement Between the City of Columbus and the Department of the Army for the City of Columbus Bank Erosion, TX – Design and Construction Project.**

Warschak stated this was authorizing signing the agreement with the Corps. He gave a recap of the project timeline, and stated the project cost is predicted at \$550,000 with a cap at \$5,000,000. Councilman Rankin stated this would be committing us for future participation.

Councilman Swindle made a motion to approve Resolution 219-20. Councilman Cummings seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**16. Consideration and Action to Approve Industry State Bank Renewal Option as City Depository until September 30, 2021.**

Schneider stated she recommended the extension with the City going out for bids next August.

Councilman Rankin made a motion to approve the renewal option with Industry state Bank. Councilman Swindle seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**17. Consideration and Action to Ratify a Contract for Collection Services with the Colorado County Central Appraisal District.**

Schneider stated this was a yearly requirement.

Councilman Swindle made a motion to ratify the contract. Councilman Ridlen seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

**18. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the August 2020 Golf Association Report.**

Schneider stated she included the two-year comparison of total revenues for cart rentals. There was a discussion regarding the proposed cart lease buy-out as well as the cost for new batteries for the carts.

No action was required.

**19. Discussion of Budget Workshop – General and Utility Funds.**

Schneider stated there was an additional \$4,000 of expense in the general fund and an additional \$6,000 in the utility fund. This additional expense would be for a generator maintenance contract. She stated those expenses are in the summary, but she had not reprinted the individual departments with the \$4,000 and \$6,000 additions.

She highlighted some of the expense cuts in the budget. Gobert stated the overall loss has gone down to just over \$500,000.

There was a discussion regarding the schedule for adoption of the budget and tax rate.

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

Councilman Cummings – Feels security cameras should be installed outside City Hall since Bana works at the office late some evenings and weekends. There was discussion regarding current cameras. Rankin stated we should also look at why Bana needs to work late.

Councilman Ridlen – None

Councilman Swindle – None

Councilwoman Frnka – Thanked the Council for allowing her to attend the meeting remotely.

Councilman Rankin – None

Mayor Gobert – Thanked the Live Oak Art Center for allowing the meeting to be held in their building.

**16. Announcements.**

There were no announcements.

**17. Adjournment.**

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 6:47 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 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.