

The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in special session on Monday, July 26, 2021, 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	-	Ronny Daley
Councilman	-	Gary Swindle (Absent)
Councilwoman	-	Sandra Frnka
City Manager	-	Donald Warschak
City Secretary	-	Bana Schneider
Asst City Secretary	-	Dinah Jacobs

Other City Staff present included:

Code Enforcement	-	Richard LaCourse
Fire Marshal	-	Brent Gorman Jr.
Police Chief	-	Milton "Skip" Edman
Fire/Code Assistant	-	Duane Naiser
Library Director	-	Susan Chandler
Fire Chief	-	Dusty Dittmar

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:**

- 3.1. **Approval of Invoices**
- 3.2. **Approval of Minutes of the July 12, 2021 Regular Meeting**
- 3.3. **Approval of Minutes of the July 15, 2021 Special Meeting**
- 3.4. **Approval of the May 2021 Financial Statements**
- 3.5. **Approval of the Investment Report for the Quarter Ended June 30, 2021**

Councilman Daley made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilwoman Frnka seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

4. **Citizens' Presentations and Comments. ¹**

Debbie Damon spoke about the Town Hall meeting that was held on July 22, 2021.

5. **City Manager's Report Including the Water Filtration Project Update, the Transportation Alternatives Sidewalk Application Update, and the CodeRED Notification System.**

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

Regarding the Water Filtration Project update, Warschak reported all three filters at the three different locations are in operation. The Spring location has a valve leaking. The manufacturer was out to access the valve, and took them with him to review for a solution. They also looked at the solenoids while they were out to determine why they keep going out.

Regarding the Transportation Alternatives Sidewalk Application, Warschak reported the application is in review with TxDOT. October will be the notification time period if we are awarded a grant.

Regarding the CodeRED notification system, Warschak reminded citizens to sign up for the notifications. It is an easy process. Notification regarding signing up has been on the back of the utility bills that are mailed out. There have been 135 citizens recently sign up for CodeRED. Gobert stated we still have a long way to go.

6. First Reading of Resolution 232-21, a Resolution Approving Expenditures of 4B Revenues over \$10,000 of City Created Economic Development Corporations with Less than 20,000 Residents for Funding of a Business Improvement Grant to Raetzsch Ventures to Help with Façade Improvements to the Building at 1136 Milam Street.

Gobert read the resolution. Gobert stated CCIDC had approved two grants, but the other was under the \$10,000 threshold and not requiring a resolution reading.

Councilman Cummings made a motion to approve the first reading of Resolution 232-21. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

7. Consideration and Action to Approve Resolution 233-21, a Resolution Authorizing the Selection of an Administrative Service Provider for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP Act) Program.

Gobert stated there were three bidders, with bids ranging from \$45,300 to \$202,717.32. Rankin questioned if these fees come out of the awarded funds. Gobert stated yes.

Councilman Rankin made a motion to approve Resolution 233-21, selecting Grantworks as the Administrative Service Provider for the American Rescue Plan Act. Councilwoman Frnka seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

8. Consideration and Action to Approve the Appointment of Jacob Truchard to the Library Advisory Board for a Term Ending October 1, 2024.

Councilman Rankin made a motion to approve the appointment of Jacob Truchard. Councilwoman Frnka seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

9. Consideration and Action to Approve a Budget Amendment for the Fire Department Donations and Revenues and Associated Expenditures.

City Secretary, Bana Schneider, stated the cost of the new Tower is a little over these numbers, due to the equipment that was added to the truck. Code Enforcement and Assistant Fire Chief, Richard LaCourse, stated the overage amount is coming out of different budget line items.

Councilwoman Frnka made a motion to approve the budget amendment. Councilman Rankin seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

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

The motion passed.

Gobert thanked the Fire Department personnel in attendance for all they do for the City and the community.

10. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the June 2021 Fire Marshal Report.

Fire Marshal, Brent Gorman, Jr., gave his report. A copy is attached to these minutes. Gorman stated there were six inspections and two consultations. Gorman went on to say he had been contacted by The Falls, which is out in the county. He stated there were discussions about renovations at the club and he made suggestions. They do not have to follow his suggestions, and Gorman stated they pretty much indicated they probably won't. Gorman reported he had obtained his TCFP Fire Officer IV certification, which is the highest level. There were only two fire calls for June, making it a fairly slow month. Gorman went on to give a brief report of a July extrication event that occurred. Three firefighters were treated for heat exhaustion and later released. Gorman reported that as of July 1, the Tower is in full service. We are constantly outfitting the unit, making it our own.

Gobert questioned the risk for firefighters if they are responding to calls out in the county that have no code to comply with. Gorman stated he had addressed the County requesting they adopt some sort of code, like the State code. LaCourse stated this would apply to anything outside of the city limits. Gorman stated all he could do was suggest what should be done, but he has no enforcement capabilities because they have no adopted code. Rankin asked about the presentation he did for the County. Gorman replied he has had no response of any kind. Frnka asked if insurance companies ever reach out to him in regards to a property. Gorman replied, sometimes, but not very often. Frnka went on to ask, that if a situation in the county is very unsafe, can you withdraw? Gorman replied yes. Daley asked if there was any grandfathering. Gorman replied some yes, some no. If it is high risk related, then no. Gorman stated Big Easy Ranch had reached out and they want to do the right things, even if there is no enforcement of any code.

No action was necessary.

11. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the June 2021 Code Enforcement Report.

Code Enforcement, Richard LaCourse, gave his report. A copy is attached to these minutes. LaCourse reported there were 37 permits pulled during June. The building permits were for a pole barn construction, residential addition, dog run, commercial addition, storage building, and a commercial remodel. LaCourse went on to say the St. Paul drainage study has been turned in for review by him and Warschak. The substandard structure in the report is still in the process of removal. LaCourse stated he has obtained his Class B Exempt license to operate the large fire equipment.

Gobert stated the town hall meeting addressed 101 Smith Street, and could he please check on that property. It was reported there were personal belongings overflowing into the right of way and drainage areas.
No action was necessary.

12. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the June 2021 Police Report.

Police Chief, Skip Edman, gave his report. A copy is attached to these minutes. Edman highlighted staff training. Edman reported he had attended Chief training and gave an update on a few of the legislative pieces that were addressed.

No action was necessary.

13. Discussion of Budget Workshop – Property Tax, General Fund, Utility Fund.

Schneider stated several of the utility items in the budget were actually completed in this fiscal year, so those items have been removed from the 2021-2022 fiscal year proposed budget. Schneider discussed the notice that has to be publicized in the newspaper, and not having the new forms released yet. The appraisal district had done some of the calculations for us as they have similar software to the State. Rankin asked what the attorney advised to do if the new forms were not released yet, and we have a deadline for publishing. Schneider stated she would contact the attorney in the morning to discuss. Discussion was to use the forms available at the time of the publishing deadline. Rankin stated there should be a mid-year rigorous budget review. Cummings questioned about HOT funds, if the pandemic hits, and travel is curtailed. Rankin stated he told Billy if the dollars come in, it will be ok, but if they don't, you will get what you get. Rankin went on to say we need a close review once a quarter, and watch the revenue trend.

14. Consideration and Action on a Tax Increase for Tax Year 2021 and Fiscal Year 2022 with the Rate not to Exceed \$0.29000 per \$100 Valuation.

Councilman Cummings made a motion to approve the tax increase. Councilman Daley seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Cummings – aye
Daley – aye
Frnka – aye
Rankin – begrudgingly aye
Swindle - absent

The motion passed.

15. Items from Council members.²

Councilman Cummings – budgeting is always hard, but you all make things easy for us

Councilman Swindle – absent

Councilman Daley – Mayor, I never want your job. Thank you for all you do.

Councilwoman Frnka – Bana and the whole administration have done a good job; we are not a business of profit, but a business of service; thank you all for the time and effort, as well as to the field personnel

Councilman Rankin – Mayor, you have done a really good job navigating the budget and the process

City Secretary Schneider – I am open to suggestions on how you all want the budget presented for discussion next year

Mayor Gobert – having it on a viewable screen could help; the guys in the field need to watch spending as well; Dinah is working very hard, as well as Donald; we have a very dedicated team

10. **Announcements.**

Schneider asked if council members had the opportunity to log into the new agenda meeting software platform


11. **Adjournment.**

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 6:36 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.