



The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in regular session on Monday, September 26, 2022, 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
City Manager – Donald Warschak
City Secretary – Bana Schneider
Assistant City Secretary – Dinah Jacobs

Other City Staff present included:

Police Chief – Skip Edman
Code Enforcement – Richard LaCourse
Fire Marshal – Brent Gorman, Jr.
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 and invocation.

3. Consent Agenda:

Motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Moved by: Keith Cummings

Seconded by: Paige Sciba

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

3.1. **Approval of Invoices** [INVOICES 09.26.2022.pdf](#)

3.2. **Approval of Minutes of the September 12, 2022 Regular Meeting**
[MINUTES 09.12.2022.pdf](#)

3.3. **Approval of Minutes of the September 21, 2022 Special Meeting**

[MINUTES 09.21.2022.pdf](#) 

4. **Citizens' Presentations and Comments¹**

Debbie Damon addressed Council with her concerns about expired permits in Eagle Lake and she feels it will eventually spill over into Columbus. Damon went on to say Endeavors no longer has their 501(c)3 status, and they have changed their name several times.

5. **City Manager's Report Including the McCormick WWTP Riverbank Project, the MLK Street Sidewalk Project, and the Highway 90 East River Bridge Project.**

[CM REPORT.pdf](#) 

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

Regarding the McCormick WWTP Riverbank Project, Warschak reported the contractor has completed the punch list and final walk thru. The project is now in the closeout phase and the Corp does still want to have a completion celebration.

Regarding the MLK Sidewalk Project, TxDOT is needing to schedule an ADA inspection. Once this is done, along with the punch list walk thru items, the project will be able to be closed out.

Regarding the Hwy 90 East River Bridge Project, TxDOT is working on bridge approaches at the Front Street intersection and the east end of the bridge. When the contractor begins the storm drain improvements, the City will continue with the replacement of the cast iron water main crossing under Hwy 90. Warschak stated TxDOT anticipates substantial completion of this project by the end of the year.

Rankin questioned the projected completion date. Warschak stated once the North side is completed they will jump to the South side, but the South side is a separate project.

6. **Consideration and Action to Approve Ordinance 260-22, an Ordinance Granting AEP Texas, Inc., Its Successors and Assigns, a Non-Exclusive Franchise to Operate Within the City of Columbus.** [ORD 260-22 AEP FRANCHISE AGREEMENT.pdf](#)

AEP representative, Vee Strauss, addressed Council regarding the renewal of the franchise agreement, and answered questions. They are requesting a 15 year agreement instead of a 10 year like the previous agreement.

City Secretary, Bana Schneider, stated the agreement has been reviewed by the attorney.

Motion to approve Ordinance 260-22.

Moved by: Chuck Rankin

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 the Closure of Milam Street North of the Alley at 1023 Milam to the Railroad Tracks on Saturday, October 15, 2022 from Noon to 11:00**

p.m. for the Brunson Night Fundraiser as Requested by the Live Oak Art Center.

[STREET CLOSURE BRUNSON NIGHT.pdf](#) 

Motion to approve the street closure as requested.

Moved by: Ronny Daley

Seconded by: Paige Sciba

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

8. Consideration and Action to Ratify the Budgeted Property Tax Increase Reflected in the 2022-2023 Budget. [RATIFICATION.pdf](#) 

I move to ratify the budgeted property tax increase as reflected in the 2022-2023 budget.


Moved by: Paige Sciba

Seconded by: Keith Cummings

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Keith Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Nay Chuck Rankin

Carried 4-1

9. [ADOPTION.pdf](#)  **Consideration and Action to Approve Ordinance 255-22, an Ordinance Establishing the Combined Property Tax Rate of \$0.297332. [ORD 255-22 TAX RATE.pdf](#)** 

I move that the property tax rate be increased by the adoption of a tax rate of \$0.292273, which is effectively a 3.10 percent increase in the tax rate.

Moved by: Paige Sciba

Seconded by: Keith Cummings

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Keith Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Nay Chuck Rankin

Carried 4-1

10. Consideration and Action to Approve Ordinance 256-22, an Ordinance Pertaining to Rates and Charges in Connection with Water Supply and Service. [ORD 256-22 WATER RATES.pdf](#) 

Schneider distributed the current utility rates and the proposed rates for 2022-2023. There was discussion on the utility rates.

The TDS contract and proposal was discussed. The item was removed from the agenda for voting approval due to having no information back from TDS.

Motion to approve Ordinance 256-22.

Moved by: Chuck Rankin
Seconded by: Keith Cummings

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

11. Consideration and Action to Approve Ordinance 257-22, an Ordinance Pertaining to Rates and Charges in Connection with Residential and Commercial Sewer Service and the Sewer System. [ORD 257-22 SEWER RATES.pdf](#) 

Motion to approve Ordinance 257-22

Moved by: Paige Sciba

Seconded by: Keith Cummings

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

12. Consideration and Action to Approve Ordinance 258-22, an Ordinance Pertaining to Rates and Charges in Connection with Gas Supply and Service. [ORD 258-22 GAS RATES.pdf](#) 


Motion to approve Ordinance 258-22.

Moved by: Paige Sciba

Seconded by: Chuck Rankin

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

13. Consideration and Action to Approve a Budget Amendment for a Library Texas Book Festival Grant Proceeds and Associated Expenditures. [BUDGET AMENDMENT TX BOOK FESTIVAL.pdf](#) 

Motion to approve the Library Budget Amendment for the Texas Book Festival Grant.

Moved by: Chuck Rankin

Seconded by: Paige Sciba

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

14. Consideration and Action to Approve a Budget Amendment for Library Memorials and Donations Proceeds and Associated Expenditures. BUDGET

[AMENDMENT MEMORIALS.DONATIONS.pdf](#) 

Motion to approve a Budget Amendment for Library memorials and donations.

Moved by: Paige Sciba

Seconded by: Keith Cummings

Aye Michael Ridlen, Paige Sciba, Chuck Rankin, Keith Cummings, and Ronny Daley

Carried 5-0

15. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the August 2022 Fire Marshal

Report. [FIRE MARSHAL AUGUST 2022.pdf](#) 

Fire Marshal, Brent Gorman, Jr. gave his report. A copy is attached to these minutes. Gorman reported five inspections listed. Gorman also discussed the meetings with Big Easy Ranch regarding fire protection and insurance ratings. Lastly, Gorman reported 30 fire calls for the month, bringing the total up to 243 for the year. The KBDI index is at 554, and a burn ban is back in effect for Colorado County.

No action was needed.

16. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the August 2022 Code Enforcement

Report. [CODE ENFORCEMENT-AUGUST 2022.pdf](#) 

Code Enforcement, Richard LaCourse, gave his report. A copy is attached to these minutes. LaCourse reported there were a total of 46 permits this month. Building permits included three residential, two remodel, and a demo/rebuild. LaCourse also highlighted the substandard home, the SmartGov software, backflow preventer review, and commercial plan reviews.

No action was needed.

17. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the August 2022 Police Report.

[AUGUST 2022 STATS.pdf](#) 

Police Chief, Skip Edman, gave his report. A copy is attached to these minutes. Edman highlighted department training, parades, bonfire, one mental health transport, and the murder still under investigation. One person has been arrested and another is being sought in that case.

No action was needed.

18. Items from Councilmembers²

Cummings - questioned the status of P&Z on the lunch wagons; Schneider replied the information has been sent to the attorney

Daley - none

Sciba - none

Ridlen - where are we on the grant application for CCIDC; Schneider replied it had been submitted earlier this afternoon

Rankin - none

Gobert - Thank you to Fire Chief Dusty Dittmar and to the fire department for all you guys do

19. Announcements

There were no announcements.

20. Adjournment

Gobert adjourned the meeting at 6:11 p.m.



Lori An Gobert, Mayor

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 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.