



The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in regular session on Monday, June 26, 2023, 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:

Fire Chief – Dusty Dittmar  
Fire Marshal – Brent Gorman, Jr.  
Code Enforcement – Richard LaCourse  
Library Director – Susan Chandler  
Police Corporal – Christopher Mayfield

**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 consent agenda as presented.

*Moved by:* Ronny Daley

*Seconded by:* Keith Cummings

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

**Carried 5-0**

3.1

**Approval of Invoices** [INVOICES\\_06.26.2023.pdf](#)

3.2 **Approval of Minutes of the June 12, 2023 Regular Meeting**

[MINUTES 06.12.2023.pdf](#) 

3.3 **Approval of Financial Statements for December 2022 DECEMBER**

[2022 FINANCIALS.pdf](#) 

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

Library Director, Susan Chandler, and Jessica Commanda were present to present Dani Barten and Bella Barten with their mother Kristy Barten with books and certificates for reading 1000 books before Kindergarten.

Chris Christensen was present and addressed Council regarding the May 22, 2023 minutes because of no agenda item for the proclamation included.

Goibert stated Proclamations are not voted.

He stated this proclamation seemed to be promoting a specific sector.

City Secretary, Bana Schneider, stated proclamations are not on the agenda. Proclamations are done all the time and at other locations.

Christensen stated it states "declare / decree", which the Mayor does not have the authority, and ask the paper to write a retraction / correction since they reported it was not voted on.

Roman Footnick stated he is a new citizen to Columbus. He was here based on the proclamation from the May 22nd meeting. He stated he does not care what people do privately. As a Jew, he has a problem with it. You should not be proclaiming and celebrating things as a whole and presented his views regarding the Council doing the proclamation.

**5. City Manager's Report Including June 2023 Weather Event, TxDOT Projects Updates, Montezuma Street Sidewalk Grant Application, Softball and Baseball Park Restroom Renovations, and the PHMSA Pipeline Grant. [CM REPORT.pdf](#) **

City Manager, Donald Warschak, gave his report. A copy is attached to these minutes. Regarding the June 2023 Weather Event, Warschak reported there were temporary power outages and tree damages around the City. City crews are working to remove debris. Citizens can place tree limbs near the curb and call City hall for pickup.

Regarding the Hwy 71 (Fannin Street) Signal Light Project, Warschak reported the signal poles and lights are installed. Work continues on the turning radius at the intersection and a new electrical meter pole has been installed.

Regarding the FM 806 Sidewalk Improvements, Warschak reported TxDOT has finished the installation of sidewalks along the east side of FM 806 from Hwy 90 to Park Street.

Regarding the Montezuma Street Sidewalk Grant Application, Warschak reported the application has been submitted to TxDOT.

Regarding the Softball and Baseball Park Restroom Renovations, Warschak reported the Montezuma Street location is complete and open for use. The Softball field location is complete and open as well.

Regarding the PHMSA Pipeline Grant, Warschak reported they are working on an application to submit to PHMSA for the 2023 Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization Grant that is due in August.

**6. Consideration and Action to Approve Resolution 266-23, a Resolution Granting Consent for the Creation of Colorado County Emergency Services District No. 1. [RESOLUTION](#)**

**[266-23 - CONSENTING TO CREATION ESD1.pdf](#)** 

Fire Marshal, Brent Gorman, Jr. , addressed Council and answered questions regarding the creation of an ESD. With seventy percent of the calls being out in the County and the City funding the majority of the department needs, they Fire Department saw there was a need. CVFD cannot physically keep operating at the rate we are going now. Gorman distributed a proposed ESD-1 coverage map. There were 166 signatures of citizens that supported the endeavor. They have all been verified. This proposal was also presented to the County. The commissioners had to approve a hearing, and that was approved this morning. They have to give us consent to go to an election. This is an ad valorem tax to begin with and can switch to sales tax once formed. Normally funding is property tax, as that is a stable funding source, whereas sales tax is not. The maximum tax rate this would be set at is .10/\$100. The Board sets the rate based on the budget. Within the district, approximately \$1.2 million would be incurred. The last truck was approximately \$700,000 for a stripped-down unit. A new unit has gone up 20% plus per year. Calls continue to go up each year. Councilman Ridlen questioned why the other departments decided not to come on board with the ESD and who will make up the Board? The Board is appointed by the County Commissioners. Councilman Rankin voiced concern over proportionate representation on the Board. Councilwoman Sciba questioned if an ESD could be expanded. Gorman replied, yes, or an additional ESD could be added. Gobert stated should an ESD be formed, and the City does not agree, we still have to provide like services. The City would have to provide more funding than they are now, and we cannot keep up. Sciba stated a commissioner cannot appoint a commissioner. Sciba stated she has full confidence in Gorman knowledge and ability to present all of this information.

Fire Chief, Dusty Dittmar, stated this has been in discussion for five years now. Funding and personnel issues are being strained and will only continue to get worse.

Motion to approve Resolution 266-23.

*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, if Necessary, Regarding the Colorado County Central Appraisal District's Preliminary 2024 Budget. [CCCAD PRELIMINARY BUDGET 2024.pdf](#)**



Schneider stated now is our time for any comments to be submitted. Rankin thought there should be someone here as to why there is such an increase. Sciba stated we can all see where the numbers are coming from, but the question is why. Ridlen stated their budget concern, is how will it affect our contract? What are our options? Schneider stated we

could contract with another agency. This is a 28% increase. Rankin questioned how all of their inaccuracies affect the budget? And appraisal increases are out of step. Ridlen asked if we could accept bids for the service. Are they competitive? Schneider stated the collections part of our jurisdictional liability is the lower part. The higher charge is on the appraisal side. This year we paid \$38,000, which is \$10,000 more than last year. And this coming year it will be an additional \$10,000 based on this budget. It is required the Appraisal District do the appraisals. Gobert will visit with Mark Price about coming.

Motion to table this item.

*Moved by:* Paige Sciba

*Seconded by:* Michael Ridlen

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

**Carried 5-0**

**8. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the May 2023 Fire Marshal Report.**

[FIRE MARSHAL MAY 2023.pdf](#) 

Fire Marshal, Brent Gorman, Jr., gave his report. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes. Gorman reported on inspections, public relations, and monthly calls.

Ridlen questioned Knox boxes. Gorman replied every new construction or remodel requires a Knox box to be able to make entry. This is only required within the City. Rankin stated Gorman should pitch the Knox box information to business owners. Gorman stated the City can adopt fire code for protection. Big Easy is being very proactive on the fire safety side. Insurance is mandating it for them.

No action was required.

**9. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the May 2023 Code Enforcement**

**Report.** [CODE ENFORCEMENT MAY 2023.pdf](#) 

Code Enforcement Officer, Richard LaCourse, gave his report. A copy is attached to these minutes. LaCourse highlighted the permits issued, building permits, and the miscellaneous items including forced mows.

No action was required.

**10. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the May 2023 Police Report.**

[STATS MAY 2023.pdf](#) 

Corporal Chris Mayfield gave the police report in Chief Edman's absence. Mayfield highlighted training, the hiring of Brandon Godfrey. Godfrey did sign on with the hiring incentive and signed a three-year contract. Chief Edman was declining the referral bonus because he had taught him at the academy.

No action was required.

**11. Executive Session: In Accordance with Texas Government Code Section 551.074, Personnel Matters - City Manager Annual Review.**

Regular session adjourned at 6:52 p.m. to enter executive session.

**12. Reconvene into Regular Session and Consideration and Action, if Any, Regarding Executive Session - City Manager Annual Review.**

Regular session reconvened at 7:58 p.m. with the same members present.

Motion to have the Mayor follow up with Donald on more specific policies and procedures as discussed.

*Moved by:* Chuck Rankin

*Seconded by:* Keith Cummings

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

**Carried 5-0**

**13. Budget Workshop**

Schneider went over the calendar of budget events and valuations.

13.1 **Budget Schedule** [2024 BUDGET SCHEDULE.pdf](#) 

13.2 **Preliminary Property Valuation** [PRELIMINARY VALUATION 06.23.2023.pdf](#) 

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

Cummings – none

Daley - none

Sciba - none

Ridlen - none

Rankin - none

Gobert - Thank you to all

**15. Announcements**

There were none.

**16. Adjournment**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.



**Lori An Gobert, Mayor**

**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.