



The City Council of the City of Columbus, Texas met in regular session on Monday, March 11, 2024, 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 (Absent)
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

1. Call to Order

Mayor Pro Tem, Chuck Rankin called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation

Rankin led the pledge and invocation.

3. Consent Agenda:

Motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.

Moved by: Ronny Daley

Seconded by: Keith Cummings

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

Carried 5-0

3.1 Approval of Invoices [INVOICES 20240311.pdf](#)

3.2 Approval of Minutes of the February 26, 2024 Regular Meeting
[MINUTES 20240226.pdf](#)

4. **Consideration and Action to Approve Invoices for Columbus Tire Center (Sciba Corporation).** [COLUMBUS TIRE 20240311.pdf](#) 

Motion to approve the Columbus Tire invoices as presented.

Moved by: Michael Ridlen

Seconded by: Keith Cummings

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

Abstain Paige Sciba

Carried 4-0

5. **Citizens' Presentations and Comments'**

William Durbin addressed Council regarding the volunteer fire department. He shared comments he had received from within the community after the year end report was given at the last Council meeting.

Others requested to speak at respective agenda items.

6. **City Manager's Report Including Sales Tax, Utility Billing, TxDOT Projects Updates, the PHMSA Pipeline Grant and the Texas A&M University Transportation Study.** [CM](#)

[REPORT 20240311.pdf](#) 

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

Sciba asked for clarification on the email sign up for billing.

City Secretary, Bana Schneider, stated there are a good number of citizens that are signed up for draft payments.

Ridlen questioned Midtown Park and the playground equipment. Warschak stated they are almost finished with the demo of the old equipment. They will then meet with the individuals who are helping to fund the new equipment. Ridlen asked for the timeline of installation. Warschak stated it is approximately a 12 week delivery timeframe. The City will do the construction of the equipment. Ridlen asked if it will be here and ready by May when school releases for the summer. Warschak stated it will be hard pressed, most likely June.

7. **Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding Presentation on AEP Rate Change Request.**

William Newyear, AEP, addressed Council regarding their request for the City to deny the rate change.

Ridlen questioned their 13% rate increase request. Newyear stated that is the amount AEP feels they need with rising costs.

Chris Christensen addressed Council and the blight of all of the AEP abandoned electric poles around town. He stated the City should negotiate the removal of those abandoned poles with any rate increase. He stated this was brought up a year ago, and there have still been no changes regarding removal.

8. **Consideration and Action to Approve Resolution 276-24, a Resolution:**

a. **Denying the Rate Change Requested by AEP Texas, INC** [RES 276-24 \(A\) DENIAL.pdf](#)



OR

b. Suspending the Rate Change Requested by AEP Texas INC to Permit Time to Study the Request and Establish Reasonable Rates; Cooperate with Cities Served by AEP Texas and Authorizing Intervention in the Requested Rate Change by Hiring Lloyd Gosselink Attorneys and Consulting Services to Negotiate Litigation and Appeals. [RES 276-24 \(B\)](#)

[SUSPENSION.pdf](#) 

Motion to approve Resolution 276-24 suspending the rate change request with AEP.

Moved by: Keith Cummings

Seconded by: Michael Ridlen

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

Carried 5-0

9. Consideration and Action to Approve the Closure of Milam Street (Spur 52) from Spring Street to Walnut Street (HWY 90) on Friday May 17 at 4:00 p.m. Through Sunday, May 19 at 8:00 a.m. for the Magnolia Days Festival as Requested by the Chamber of

Commerce. [MAGNOLIA DAYS MILAM CLOSURE.pdf](#) 

Chamber President, Peggy Harrison, and Executive Director, Becky Nutt, addressed Council regarding the street closure. There was discussion on the reasoning for their request.

Rankin questioned if they had talked to the businesses along that street to see if they are in agreement with a closing. Nutt stated no contact had been made.

When questioned how many accidents they have had during Edman's tenure here, Edman stated zero.

There was sympathy regarding safety issues. A temporary stop sign as well as, possibly, a temporary crosswalk will be looked into by Warschak.

Motion to deny the street closure requested by the Chamber of Commerce.

Moved by: Michael Ridlen

Seconded by: Keith Cummings

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

Carried 5-0

10. Consideration and Action to Approve the Street Closures Listed Below as Requested by the Chamber of Commerce for the 2024 Magnolia Days Festival. [MAGNOLIA](#)

[DAYS STREET CLOSURE.pdf](#) 

Friday, May 17, 2024

- 1. Spring Street from the Corner of Milam Street up to the attorney's office at 415 Spring Street at 7:00 a.m. At 5:00 p.m., the Remainder of Spring Street to Front Street Through Midnight Saturday, May 18, 2024.**
- 2. Travis Street from Walnut Street to Spring Street at 7:00 a.m. At 5:00 p.m., Travis Street from Walnut to Washington Street Through Midnight Saturday, May 18, 2024.**

Saturday, May 18, 2024

1. **Milam Street from Walnut Street to Crockett Street from 7:00 a.m. thru 6:00 p.m.**

Motion to approve the street closure as presented.

Moved by: Ronny Daley

Seconded by: Michael Ridlen

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

Carried 5-0

11. Consideration and Action, if Necessary, Regarding the February 2024 Golf Report.

[GOLF FEB 2024.pdf](#) 

City Secretary, Bana Schneider, reviewed the golf course report with Council.

They do have new flags as requested. The course has been busy.

No action was needed.

12. Items from Councilmembers²

Cummings - none

Daley - none

Sciba - none

Ridlen - can the City put in a request for a temporary stop sign? Warschak will check to see what paperwork is needed to make it a 4-way stop. Edman stated a temporary crosswalk would be helpful if we can get it with the temporary stop sign.

Rankin - none

Gobert - absent

13. Announcements

Warschak - Trash off is around the corner

Schneider - still waiting for the *Houston Chronicle* to get back with her on rates. There is also a concern with what is pulled from Google as far as the location. Ridlen stated Google can fix that.

Rankin thanked Dinah for the cookies.

Asst. City Secretary, Dinah Jacobs, announced there was going to be a City Hall Potluck luncheon on Monday, March 18, if anyone was interested in attending. Lunch will be from 11:00-1:00pm, come and go.

14. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:15 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.