

CITY OF COLUMBUS  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
May 18, 2020  
6:30 P.M.

**ATTENDANCE**

The City Council of Columbus, Kansas met May 18, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers presided over by Mayor Grant Spieth. Council members physically present: Connie Bennett, John Brassart, Jerri Burton, Kathy Doherty, Stephanie Farstvedt, Jan Houser, Nate Long and Tom Pryor. Council members present by zoom conference call/video: Sean Gilmore and Sammye Opela. Council member absent: None.

Council person Kathy Doherty led the Invocation followed the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Burton moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of April 20, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes, May 4, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes and Appropriation Ordinance 20-518 as presented. Houser seconded the motion. Voting aye: Bennett, Brassart, Burton, Doherty, Farstvedt, Gilmore, Houser, Long, Opela, Pryor. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 10-0.

**City Administrator Report-**

- CDBG-CV: The Kansas Department of Commerce released funding for a Community Development Block Grant that was created to specifically address COVID-19 related funding issues. Cherokee County is applying for the micro grants on behalf of cities which will provide funding to local businesses. The County is also applying for the meal programs grant (for Baxter Springs and Columbus) which is intended to provide cities with funds to supplement various programs that provide access to nutritious foods during the COVID -19 crisis.

-Utility bill receipt collections are down approximately 14% compared to last year. Most of the collections are not considered uncollectable at this point. We expect collection after Governor Kelly's executive order is lifted. The City will be working with residents to become current in the coming months.

-We are halfway through the 2021 draft City budget. We have received the motor vehicle tax valuation and are still waiting on the County Clerk's Budget Information for City assessed valuation. The County is required to provide this by June 15.

-Governor Kelly's executive order issued Friday May 15, 2020 Phase 1.5 does not allow the opening of community centers. We will postpone the renting of the Community Building tentatively until June 1.

-Employee appreciation luncheons are scheduled for all departments. A list is in your council packet. This is an opportunity to thank staff for their hard work and give them a quick update on all things City. The Personnel Committee invites all Council members to attend in hopes that these are a few of many more lunches that we can all gather in a less formal manner and continue positive candid conversations on how we can move our City forward.

-City staff and elected officials collected over 250 pounds of food for the Cherokee County Extension Office City Food Fight Challenge. Collectively over 10,000 pounds of food was collected for area food pantries. Columbus won the challenge with 3,480 pounds. Farmers CO-OP challenged area cities to raise 2,000 pounds of food then CO-OP would donate 2,000 pounds. All of the donations stay in the community they were collected – everyone wins.

**City Treasurer Report –**

-Report in the council packet. City finances are fairly stable. Working on the quarterly report for the next council meeting.

**City Superintendent Report –**

-Report in council packet.

**City Clerk Report –**

-Pool memo in your council packets that will be covered under old business section of the meeting.

**Police Chief Report –**

- Department has conducted 25 VIN inspections since re-opening on Monday, May 4.
- New graphics have been installed on one of the new Charger patrol units. The second vehicle is scheduled be updated this week. Radios for the two CARS are in, radar units are scheduled to arrive in June. Both units will be put in service once the equipment is installed.
- Ordered PPE to cover the department staff for six to twelve months depending on the rate of use.
- Communicating with County emergency management to see if department technology improvements can be reimbursed or fall under a FEMA grant. These improvements could also keep the department functional in the event of a natural disaster.
- Working with Judge Bullard and the Court Clerk to get things in place for Municipal Court to resume June 8.
- Columbus Chamber of Commerce held a Fire up for Firework cookout Thursday May 14. The parking lot south of the Community Building and behind City Hall was set up for the drive thru event. A second drive thru cookout is scheduled for Thursday June 11.

Code Enforcement Gary Holt presented a sanitation report for 310 North Indiana. Officer Holt noted the property is in violation of City Code; overall appearance of the structure is unsightly; lack of upkeep and general repair cause it to be a general blight to the neighborhood and community. City Attorney Barbara Wright noted this matter can be handled by resolution similar to a structure condemnation.

**PROCEED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL HEARING PROCESS**

Opela moved to allow the City Attorney to proceed with the resolution and hearing process for environmental code violations at 310 North Indiana and allow the Mayor to sign the resolution. Burton seconded the motion. Voting aye: Bennett, Brassart, Burton, Doherty, Farstvedt, Gilmore, Houser, Long, Opela, Pryor. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 10-0.

**Fire Chief Report –**

- 88 runs to date.
- Will begin fire hydrant testing this Thursday or Friday.
- Business walk throughs will start up again next week.
- Installing new weather radar system in the department training room. This will allow better tracking and reporting during storms.

**City Attorney Report –**

-CDBG application is ready for signatures following Friday's hearing on the matter. The County is applying for this funding opportunity to assist businesses within the Cherokee County.

**PUBLIC WORKS POLE BARN**

Doherty moved to allow purchase and build of a three-sided pole barn for the Public Works department compound not to exceed \$25,000 to be paid out of sanitation reserves. Burton seconded the motion. Motion and second were withdrawn before the vote.

#### **Old Business –**

1. ***Consider approval of Professional Engineering Consultant agreement for High School sidewalk and utilities.*** City Administrator Rivas noted this agreement covers the City's portion of the High School Street CDBG Project and includes the sidewalk and utilities segment of the project. Houser moved to approve the agreement with PEC for the sidewalk and utilities portion of the High School Street Project. Burton seconded the motion. Voting aye: Bennett, Brassart, Burton, Doherty, Farstvedt, Gilmore, Houser, Long, Opela, Pryor. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 10-0.
2. ***Discussion: Opening of City Pool.*** City Clerk Cherri Chancellor referred to the pool data sheet included in council packets noting several points to consider to be able to make an informed decision regarding opening the City swimming pool for the 2020 season. It was agreed to postpone the decision until the June 1 council meeting.

#### **New Business –**

1. ***Consider allowing parking at City Industrial park for Movie night on June 19<sup>th</sup>.*** City Administrator Rivas informed she has been approached by citizens attempting to organize a movie night in the City Industrial Park. The group has permission from the building owner in the Industrial Park to use the side of their building for the showing. Rivas noted the group stated the event would not be held if rain continues and the ground is too wet to be driven on. Houser moved to allow parking at City Industrial park for Movie night on June 19<sup>th</sup>. Long seconded the motion. Voting aye: Bennett, Brassart, Burton, Doherty, Farstvedt, Gilmore, Houser, Long, Opela, Pryor. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 10-0.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Houser called for a ten-minute executive session at 8:03 p.m. for discussion prior to acquisition of real estate concerning economic development with the Council, Mayor, City Administrator, City Attorney and Chief of Police in attendance. Meeting will reconvene at 8:13 p.m. Burton seconded the motion. Voting aye: Bennett, Brassart, Burton, Doherty, Farstvedt, Gilmore, Houser, Long, Opela, Pryor. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 10-0.

Regular session 8:13 p.m.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Houser called for a five-minute executive session at 8:14 p.m. to continue discussion prior to acquisition of real estate concerning economic development with the Council, Mayor, City Administrator, City Attorney and Chief of Police in attendance. Meeting will reconvene at 8:19 p.m. Burton seconded the motion. Voting aye: Bennett, Brassart, Burton, Doherty, Farstvedt, Gilmore, Houser, Long, Opela, Pryor. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 10-0.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Houser moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Doherty seconded the motion. Voting aye: Bennett, Brassart, Burton, Doherty, Farstvedt, Gilmore, Houser, Long, Opela, Pryor. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 10-0.

**Meetings:**

**Police and License**

Tuesday May 19, 2020 @ 4:00 p.m.

**Fire**

Tuesday May 19, 2020 @ 5:30 p.m.

**Property/Pool/Parks**

Wednesday May 20, 2020 @ 1:00 p.m.

**Cemetery**

Thursday May 21, 2020 @ 3:30 p.m.

**Economic Development**

Thursday May 21, 2020 @ 4:30 p.m.

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*Cherri Chancellor City Clerk*