

CITY OF COLUMBUS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
August 17, 2020
6:30 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

The City Council of Columbus, Kansas met August 03, 2020 at 6:38 p.m. presided over by Mayor Grant Spieth. Council members physically present: Connie Bennett, John Brassart, Jerri Burton, Kathy Doherty, Stephanie Farstvedt, Jan Houser, Nate Long, Sammye Opela, Tom Pryor. Council members present by zoom: Sean Gilmore. Council members absent: None.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Doherty moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of July 20, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes, August 3, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes and Appropriation Ordinance 20-523 as presented. Burton seconded the motion. Voting aye: Bennett, Brassart, Burton, Doherty, Farstvedt, Gilmore, Houser, Long, Opela, Pryor. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 10-0.

Mayor Report –

-Nothing at this time.

City Administrator Report-

- Report in your council packet.
- City Park basketball court surface work will be finished up tomorrow. The same company will be resurfacing Reeves Park tennis court in the next few weeks with materials purchased earlier this year. Court will be marked for tennis and pickle ball.
- Backhoe, garbage truck and trash carts are scheduled to arrive in the coming weeks.
- Safe Routes to School request for quotes will be going out in the next few weeks.
- Municipal Court Judge and Prosecutor are here to speak to resuming municipal court processes.

City Treasurer Report

-Solid, stable account balances.

CONDEMNATION HEARINGS

Mayor Grant Spieth opened the condemnation hearing at 6:47 p.m.

Spieth asked if anyone present in person or by zoom would like to speak regarding the property at 533 West County Road. Seeing none, Spieth asked for anyone with interest in 415 South Indiana to come forward. Steve Beaty approached the council and asked them to reconsider the condemnation order. Beaty stated some work has been done to the property since receiving the violation notice. He advised that working out of town during the week and other obligations have keep him from finishing the remodel. Further discussion revealed this project began around 2000 and has been brought before the council at least twice, not including tonight.

CONDEMNATION EXTENSION – 415 SOUTH INIDINA

Houser moved to approve 45-day condemnation extension for 415 South Indiana with review at the October 5, 2020 council meeting. Bennett seconded the motion. Voting aye: Bennett, Brassart, Burton, Doherty, Farstvedt, Gilmore, Houser, Long, Opela, Pryor. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 10-0.

PROCEED WITH CONDEMNATION – 533 WEST COUNTRY ROAD

Houser moved to proceed with condemnation and demolition of property at 533 West Country Road. Doherty seconded the motion. Voting aye: Bennett, Brassart, Burton, Doherty, Farstvedt, Gilmore, Houser, Long, Opela, Pryor. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 10-0

Spieth asked for persons representing 419 South Delaware to come forward. Seeing none, City Attorney Barbara Wright asked about owner notification of the hearing besides publication in the newspaper. City Clerk and Code Enforcement Officer noted certified mail was accepted, return receipt was not signed by the property owner listed with Cherokee County. Attorney Wright advised to pass on this property until we can get good notification service.

Mayor Spieth called for anyone with interest in 302 North Kansas to step forward. No one approached. Code Enforcement Officer Gary Holt noted he has been in contact with the property owner by telephone. Owner placed plywood on some of the windows to secure the structure but has done nothing to improve the property.

PROCEED WITH CONDEMNATION – 302 NORTH KANSAS

Houser moved to proceed with condemnation and demolition of property at 302 North Kansas. Burton seconded the motion. Voting aye: Bennett, Brassart, Burton, Doherty, Farstvedt, Gilmore, Houser, Long, Opela, Pryor. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 10-0.

Mayor Spieth closed the condemnation hearing at 7:19 p.m.

Mayor asked if there were any objections in moving Old Business #2 up on the agenda to allow City Hall re-open and municipal court plan discussion.

City Administrator Rivas informed that City Hall doors are currently closed to walk in traffic. Feedback from the City Clerk and Assistant City Clerk provided operations of the office are being conducted successfully over the phone and through the drive thru. VIN inspections are being done with a phone call to city hall and officers walking out to vehicles to perform the paperwork and inspection. Committee meetings are being done with a mix of ZOOM and in person sessions. Rivas advised that Columbus is not the only city to have city hall closed to the public, she noted the decision is ultimately up to the council.

Municipal Court Judge John Bullard and City Prosecutor Jacob Conard spoke using a combination of ZOOM and in person options to resume municipal court. Conard noted once first appearances are complete, much of the follow up can be conducted through the attorneys.

Council agreed to leave reopening municipal court to the Judge and Prosecutor. Agreed for city hall office to continue with current mode of operation.

City Clerk Report –

-For Your Information report in your council packet contains virtual LKM conference information. Contact me if you would like to register.

-Fall clean up scheduled for September 14- September 25. Information will be in the utility bill newsletter and sent to the local paper as we get closer to the event.

Police Chief Report –

-Park vandalism update – two suspects have been arrested, appreciate the cooperation and response from the community.

-Department continues to work with KBI getting the electronic reporting process set up.

-Arlo Lewke hired as a Police Officer and began duty this week.

-Opening for an Animal Control Officer, will start advertising the position this week.

-Virtual training for officer continuing education.

-Law Enforcement Executive Leadership classes will begin again in January.

-I will be out of the office next week, contact Lieutenant Justice.

Fire Chief Report –

- 160 calls to date, 19 since last council meeting.

-Fire Prevention sponsorship letters will go out this week.

City Attorney Report –

-None.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR – JACOB LETNER

Opela moved to approve Jake Letner for the position of Economic Development Coordinator with a starting wage of \$17.50 per hour, FLSA exempt providing he passes all pre-employment requirements. Pryor seconded the motion. Voting aye: Bennett, Brassart, Burton, Doherty, Farstvedt, Gilmore, Houser, Long, Opela, Pryor. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 10-0.

It was noted light poles are being replaced on North High School Street. Administrator Rivas will reach out to Liberty Utility representative to inform them about the upcoming CDBG project.

Old Business –

1. **Discussion: 2021 Council Structure.** Rivas noted this is a continuation of discussions from previous council meetings. City Attorney needs direction to ready ordinances to update City Code before the first of the year when the council size goes to five members. Doherty moved to approve council restructure appointing one council member as a representative, subject matter expert (SME), of a department or category and have bi-weekly work session to discuss items related to city business. Houser seconded the motion. Voting aye: Bennett, Brassart, Burton, Doherty, Farstvedt, Gilmore, Houser, Long, Opela, Pryor. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 10-0.
2. **Discussion: Re-opening plan (City Operations).** Discussion held earlier in the meeting.

New Business -

1. **Discussion: Public Works Department Structure.** Ms. Rivas presented an idea to restructure the public works department to make better use of staff and equipment. She noted this could provide continuity of service and succession planning better serving staff and the department. An extensive discussion ensued. Rivas presented SWOT analysis which included the cost savings of splitting the department. The presentation included spitting the department from one public works department into two departments (utilities and property & parks). She emphasized this was just a discussion and would be emailing/mailling out the PowerPoint to all council members for their review and a continued discussion for future decision. Council members Houser, Long and Pryor noted efficiency, cost savings and potential revenue opportunities afforded by this proposal.

ADJOURNMENT

Houser moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 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:

Fire

Tuesday August 18, 2020 @ 5:30 p.m.

Streets/Alleys/Bridges

Tuesday August 25, 2020 @ 4:00 p.m.

Police & License

Tuesday September 1, 2020 @ 4:00 p.m.

Cherri Chancellor City Clerk