

CITY OF COLUMBUS  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
January 3, 2023  
6:30 P.M.

**ATTENDANCE**

The City Council of Columbus, Kansas met January 3, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. presided over by Mayor Grant Spieth. Council members present: Kathy Doherty, Tom Pryor, Lindsay Shoemaker. Council members absent: Stephanie Farstvedt.

Council member Kathy Doherty provided the Invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Doherty moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of Appropriations Ordinance 22-588, Appropriations Ordinance 23-589, Council Minutes – December 5, 2022, Council Minutes – December 15, 2022, Council Minutes – December 19, 2022, and Personnel Report – December 2022. Shoemaker seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

Mayor Grant Spieth read a proclamation acknowledging National Law Enforcement Day as January 9, 2023 in Columbus, Kansas and thanked City Police and County Officers for their service.

Mayor Spieth explained that each year council members are appointed to serve as representatives of one of each of the City's five Business Categories: Administrative, City Property, Emergency Response, Streets/Alleys/Bridges/Stormwater and Public Works.

Spieth made 2023 Business Category appointments of Administrative – Tom Pryor; City Property – Lindsay Shoemaker; Emergency Response – Open; Streets/Alleys/Bridges/Stormwater – Kathy Doherty; Public Works – Stephanie Farstvedt.

**COUNCIL BUSINESS CATEGORY APPOINTMENTS**

Pryor moved to approve the Mayor's 2023 Council Business Category Representative appointments of: Administrative – Tom Pryor; City Property – Lindsay Shoemaker; Emergency Response – Open; Streets/Alleys/Bridges/Stormwater – Kathy Doherty; Public Works – Stephanie Farstvedt. Shoemaker seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

Discussion evolved around the need for a second or back up council member for the business category appointments in the event the first representative is unavailable. City Attorney Barbara Wright advised an ordinance would need to prepare an ordinance to add this provision to the current code.

**AMEND BUSINESS COUNCIL BUSINESS CATEGORY APPOINTMENTS**

Pryor moved to approve adding a second council representative to each Business Category of Administrative, City Property, Emergency Response, Streets/Alleys/Bridges/Stormwater, and Public Works by Mayoral appointment. Shoemaker seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

Mayor Spieth explained that a President of the Council is elected each year to preside at council meetings in the event the Mayor is unable to attend. This person would also serve as Mayor if the office of the Mayor became vacant.

## **PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL**

Doherty nominated Tom Pryor for the position of President of the Council. Shoemaker seconded the nomination. Mayor Spieth asked for any other nominations. None came forward.

Doherty moved to approve Tom Pryor as the President of the Council for 2023. Shoemaker seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

### **End-of year department reports-**

#### **Administration/City Clerk Office**

Highlights from City Clerk Chancellor report:

Human Resource aspect of the City Clerk Office continued to focus on training opportunities for City staff, employee engagement, enrichment and retention.

Office staff participated in several organizations including City Clerk and Municipal Financial Officers Association (CCMFOA), Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC), Southeast Kansas Human Resources Association (SEKHRA) for continuing education and networking resources.

Merit increases for departmental certifications from continuing education achievements, monetary awards and certificates for years of service milestones and two new paid holidays were implemented to enhance employee enrichment and retention. Began updates to the employee handbook.

Employee lunches, the annual summer pool bash and holiday potluck dinner were a few of the activities held to grow relationships and community between staff and departments.

Implemented Phase I of the McGrath wage study bringing all employees to at least the temporary market minimum for their pay range.

2022 revenue statistics show municipal court and utility revenues continued to rebound from the COVID slump. Court fines and fees came in at just over \$35,000 and utility payments were just shy of \$1,900,000.

Communication strategies to reach residents/customers continued through the City Facebook page, marquee, utility bill, local newspaper and City website. The City's Facebook page has become a hub of information for the community with nearly 3,000 followers. FB coverage of the City's splash pad grand opening was noticed and one of the event photos was used for the 2023 Cherokee County Names and Number phone book.

Staff were involved in several community organizations including but not limited to Columbus PRIDE, Chamber of Commerce and Cherokee County Economic Development Corporation and participated in several community events such as the annual Chamber Dinner, H & H Splash pad grand opening.

Customer service enhancements continued to offer several utility payment options including 24/7 accessibility through phone system/IVR capabilities and the city website in addition to ACH (monthly debit to a checking / savings account), check, cash, or credit/debit card. Credit/debit card payments implemented only a few years ago have climbed to the second most popular form of payment.

Department projects and goals for 2023 include implementation of Phase II of the wage study recommendation, continue revisions to the employee handbook and moving to utility postcard billing.

## **Police Department**

Highlights from Police Chief Jason Daniel report:

The Police Department is staffed by eight Full-time Officers, three Part-time Officers and an Animal Control Officer. One newly hired Officer is awaiting an opening to attend the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Academy.

Statics show the total number of reports written in 2022 was up by more than 100 over 2021. Information-based reports still topped the list with traffic and theft reports being numbers two and three.

Nationwide challenge continues to hire and retain officers and first responders from a shrinking applicant pool.

Renovations to the animal control facility doubled the pound capacity and increased the health and well-being of the housed animals with a cost of approximately \$20,000 opposed to several hundred thousand dollars for a new facility. The department was also able to purchase a new truck.

Monies from the department VIN fund were utilized to transition the department from .40 caliber S&W to 9 MM handguns. This change will result in decreased ammunition expense, uniformity with area law enforcement offices and increased officer accuracy.

Staff continued community involvement efforts by participating in the annual Park School Elementary Touch a Truck event, the Family Dollar grand opening and serving lunches periodically at area grade schools. This was the first year for the Pork and Pride BBQ competition during Columbus Days which was very popular, and officers took part in the annual Halloween trunk or treat event and Christmas parade.

Lieutenant Dave Justice received recognition for five years of service with the department. Officer Gary Holt received a certificate of commendation for actions in the line of duty. Sergeant Kyle Clark graduated from Pittsburg State University with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice with Minors in Human Resources and Business Development.

Department goals for 2023 include a top priority of financial responsibility to taxpayers, community involvement with the Pork and Pride BBQ and other events, setup and installation of Square 9 records management system, participation in the Kansas Law Enforcement Accreditation Program, working on grants to fund K9, ballistic vest and technology improvement purchases.

## **Fire Department**

Highlights from Fire Chief Steven Burton report:

The Columbus Fire Department is a combination department utilizing full-time staff and volunteers to provide service to the community. Five full-time drivers, five part-time drivers and 15 volunteers make up the roster and include four EMT's and one paramedic.

The department covers approximately 265 square miles of Cherokee County through primary or mutual aid agreements.

Department apparatus consists of two fire engines, a ladder truck, a rescue unit, two brush trucks and a command vehicle. The fire engines respond to structure, vehicle and equipment fires. The ladder truck has made 70 service calls as well as participated in several community events. The rescue unit was purchased with grant

money and put into service in 2021. It is used for rescue and medical response calls and provided light and air support to more than 300 calls. The two brush trucks responded to approximately 100 fires in 2022. The department made 546 emergency runs in 2022.

Completed the five-year ISO audit and improved the department to a 4 rating. ISO, Insurance Services Office is an independent organization that scores fire departments against organization standards to determine property insurance costs within the district. Scores range from 1-10 with 1 being the best.

The department meets monthly for training and logged over 1,000 hours in 2022. EMT's staff are required to have an additional 28 hours of training annually with paramedics needing an extra 60 hours every two years to maintain certification.

Staff are certified every two years in CPR, first aid and AED training.

First annual Freedom Fest was held this year in the City Park. The department took over the Fourth of July celebration from the Chamber of Commerce. The department held several fundraisers for the event including burger/hot dog cookouts. There was a good turnout and participation for the first year.

Smoke detector program purchased and installed smoke detectors for qualifying residents.

Participated in several community events including the Columbus Fair, fire department open house, shop with a firefighter program. .

Fire prevention focus in October provided programing for area schools, churches and daycares. This project is funded by local businesses and resident donations.

### **Community Development**

Highlights from Coordinator Jacob Spencer report:

Coordinate work with Columbus Land Bank which is a five-member board with a goal to transform blighted/abandoned properties into productive use. The Land Bank acquires properties through donations, tax sales and other means.

Entering year 3/4 of the Pathways to a Healthy Kansas Initiative. Over \$150,000 has been allocated to the community for public health improvements. An additional \$40,000 is available and plans are in the works on how to best use these funds. Some of the projects scheduled for this year include working with the Farmer's Market and USD 493 and their farm-to-school program.

2022 was the second year for the Farmer's Market to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Double up Food Buck (DUFEB) program. The DUFEB is a state grant that provides a dollar for dollar match for SNAP monies up to \$25 per day per person. Despite the drought and extreme temperatures, nearly \$3,400 was utilized through these programs at the Farmer's Market in 2022.

Administrator for the Chronic Disease Risk Reduction Grant (CDRR). The purpose of the CDRR is to improve health standards of Cherokee County. Two of the projects for 2023 will be working with area businesses towards indoor commercial tobacco free policies in their facilities and working with area health providers to complete a Kansas Tobacco Cessation Help training program (KaTCH).

A second phase of the Safe Routes to School project was awarded. Through the Kansas Department of Transportation this program assists cities to construct sidewalks providing safer more efficient walkways for school children and pedestrians. This latest award involves the south side of West Maple from Sunset to High School Street and the north side of East Sycamore from Hwy 69 to North Sixth Street (Reeves Park).

Additional projects for 2023 include looking at affordable housing opportunities for the City, a series of community events promoting family engagement and searching for grants for capital improvements.

### **Public Works**

Highlights from Superintendent Randy Coble report:

Property - Construction of the new public works building completed. Staff mowed 91 code enforcement properties, constructed two public park restrooms and remodeled the City dog pound.

Streets – Replaced two aging backhoes with a new model. Added two new ½ ton trucks to the fleet with the generosity of the Police Department. Used 164 gallons of chemical during 14 mosquito spraying events. The second leaf pick up of the year collected 88 loads for 528 square yards of material, utilizing 68 gallons of diesel fuel in addition to the man hours.

Completed the Connecting Link Improvement Program (CCLIP) project on North East Avenue. This included 2” mill and overlay, stripping/marketing, installation of new sidewalks and ADA accessible ramps. A new valley gutter was incorporated in conjunction with the project.

2022 project of 10 city blocks equated to 39 square yards of milling and 1,390 tons of asphalt. City crews excavated 14” of base material that was found to be inadequate during milling. Material was removed, replaced, graded and compacted all in time for the new surface material. 43 feet of curb and gutter were also contracted.

Parks – Removed and replaced park playground equipment mulch with rot resistant cedar mulch. Worked with Columbus PRIDE and CUHS students to plant small grove of fruit trees in the City Park. Upgrades to City Park restrooms.

Completion of the H & H Splash Pad at Discover Park.

Cemetery – 37 burials for the year, chapel was used 17 times. Installation on new columbarium and sold first niche. Updated City Code to reflect current rates and procedures. Hired two summer laborers to assist with the cemetery upkeep.

Special projects/training – the department took part in the Park School Touch a Truck event. Partnered with the County to clear parking at VFW park. Cleared creek bed to allow for more storm water volume. Staff participated in CDL certification class. Coble completed Supervisory Leadership Program through KU PM Center.

2023 projects:

Water – developing standard operating procedures, a valve exercising program, and updating technology used in monitoring the city water system.

Property – Community Building updates.

Parks – Install equipment at Eddington Park, add Discovery Park entrance arch and park beautification.

Cemetery – plant trees and shrubs as part of a beautification project and relocate the city brush pile.

Streets – 2023 mill and overlay project, SRTS bid letting/begin construction, and begin street sign replacement project. SRTS project will provide a 4' sidewalk on the north side of West Country Road from High School Street to Kansas Street and on East Maple from Tennessee Street to Hwy 69.

Community – Volunteer efforts by department as they arise.

#### **New Business-**

**H.1A. Consider Cereal Malt Beverage License for Snak Atak #10.** City Clerk Chancellor informed the council this is a new license as the business formerly known as Pete's on the corner of East Avenue and Maple Streets has sold and the new owners are applying for a CMB license. The paperwork is complete and associated fees paid. Pryor moved to approve a Cereal Malt Beverage License for Snak Atak #10. Shoemaker seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

**H.1B. Consider Charter Ordinance 1504 regarding Home Rule.** City Attorney Barbara Wright noted this clarifies appointed/hired positions and hiring practices. Doherty moved to approve Ordinance 1504 regarding Mayor appointments and hiring practices. Shoemaker seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

**H.1C. Consider City Clerk position description and recruitment process.** City Clerk Chancellor reminded council of her resignation with her last day being Friday, February 3 and recommended advertising and recruitment begin right away. Chancellor stated the job description was updated recently and represents the duties of the office.

Mayor Spieth announced at today's LEPC meeting there was talk of new processes at the old Jayhawk Chemical plant and suggested Fire Chief Burton contact Dale Helwig, president of LEPC for more information.

**H.4A. Consider Safe Routes to School – priority 2 Improvements Design Contract with BG Consultants.** City Administrator Letner explained that the City has been awarded a grant for Phase 2 of the Safe Routes To School Project. This would provide an 80/20 split for sidewalks on Sycamore Street from Hwy 69 to Reeve's Park and on East Maple Street from Tennessee Street to Hwy 69. In order to move forward with the project, the City needs an engineering firm to take care of the design/engineering work. The City partnered with BG Consultants during Phase 1 of the SRTS project and they have expertise in navigating the grant process, as well as a strong relationship with the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT). Letner recommended waiving the City's policy to bid projects and agreements over \$25,000 and go with BG Consultants due to their prior involvement with the project.

Doherty moved to waive the City's bid policy and approve the BG Consultants SRTS Phase 2 preliminary design agreement in the amount of \$37,500 to be paid for street general fund. Pryor seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

**H.5A. Select engineering firm for stormwater/I&I study.** City Administrator Letner reminded the council that the City was awarded \$112,000 in FEMA funds to assist with a stormwater/I&I study with the City providing a 10% match. Six firms submitted proposals for the project. Letner explained that he believes any of

the companies are capable of doing the work. Shoemaker moved to approve the BG Consultants stormwater and I&I proposal. Doherty seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

Doherty called for a ten-minute executive session at 8 p.m. for personnel matters of non-elected personnel to discuss employee discipline with the Council, Mayor, City Attorney, City Administrator, City Superintendent, and City Clerk in attendance. Meeting to resume at 8:10 p.m. Pryor seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

Regular session 8:10 p.m.  
No action taken.

Doherty called for a five-minute executive session at 8:11 p.m. for personnel matters of non-elected personnel to continue employee discipline discussion, with the Council., Mayor, City Attorney, City Administrator, City Superintendent and City Clerk in attendance. Meeting will resume at 8:16 p.m. Pryor seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

Regular session 8:16 p.m.  
No action taken.

Pryor called for a ten-minute executive session at 8:18 p.m. for personnel matters of non-elected personnel to discuss employee performance with the Council, Mayor, City Attorney, City Administrator and City Clerk in attendance. Doherty seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

Regular session 8:28 p.m.  
No action taken.

Pryor called for a five-minute executive session at 8:30 p.m. for personnel matters of non-elected personnel to discuss employee discipline with the Council, Mayor, City Attorney, City Administrator, Fire Chief and City Clerk in attendance. Shoemaker seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

Regular session 8:38 p.m.  
No action taken.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Doherty moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:38 p.m. Shoemaker seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

### **Upcoming Events:**

#### **Council Meeting**

**Tuesday January 17, 2023 @ 6:30 p.m.**

  
Cherri Chancellor, City Clerk

