

CITY OF COLUMBUS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
August 21, 2023
6:30 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

The City Council of Columbus, Kansas met August 21, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. presided over by Mayor Grant Spieth. Council members present: Tom Pryor, Lindsay Shoemaker, Stephanie Farstvedt and Kathy Doherty. Council members absent: Wiley Sanders.

Tom Pryor provided the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC FORUM

Nate Long, resident of 118 W. Olive, addressed the Council asking for an exception to Municipal Code Sec. 36-146, 36-148, 36-167 and 36-169 regarding sidewalks.

-Mr. Long advised that he was unaware of the requirement to apply for a permit for the removal and reconstruction of a city sidewalk. Long also advised that a section of sidewalk along Pennsylvania Ave. has already been removed as part of a comprehensive lawn maintenance project, which includes the installation of an underground irrigation system. Long stated that he did not intend to reconstruct a new sidewalk in its place. Long provided the Council and staff with images of condition of the former sidewalk, the ongoing work in which he is engaged, and the condition of sidewalks at adjacent properties.

-City Attorney, Barbara Wright, advised the Council that Municipal Code Sec. 36-148 (b) charges the Public Works Superintendent with the responsibility to review work associated with sidewalk construction and reconstruction. She recommended that Superintendent Randy Coble assess the situation and provide feedback at the next Council meeting.

-City Administrator, Jake Letner, advised Mr. Long that an email copy of the city sidewalk construction/reconstruction permit application would be sent to him directly the following morning.

CONSENT AGENDA

Farstvedt moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of Appropriation Ordinance #23-606, City Council Meeting Minutes - August 7, 2023, and Municipal Court Docket Summary - August 14, 2023. Doherty seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Farstvedt, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

MAYOR

Mayor Grant Spieth and Public Works Superintendent Randy Coble presented Kasie England with a certificate in recognition of her 5 years of service to the City of Columbus in the Public Works Department.

STAFF REPORTS

City Administrator – City Administrator Jake Letner updated the Council on the proposed Bone Creek PWWSD#11 capital improvement projects. Letner informed the Council of the three capital improvement options that have been presented to board members. Letner shared rate projections and other information that has been provided to the PWWSD #11 Board of Directors related to the proposals. A vote is anticipated on whether the district will move forward with any of the proposed options at the next PWWSD #11 board meeting scheduled on Thursday, September 14 at 7 p.m. at the district office.

Letner presented the Columbus Planning Commission Bylaws, adopted by the Planning Commission on 7/19, to the Council for approval. Letner reminded the Council that the Planning Commission was established via Ordinance in October 2022. Planning commissioners were appointed by the Mayor and approved by the Council earlier in 2023. The Planning Commission held its first meeting in May and has met monthly ever since. The Planning Commission meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall. Meetings are free and open to the public. Letner also mentioned that Planning Commission meeting minutes will be included in Council packets moving forward. The first objective for the Planning Commission will be to set forth and cause to be made a Comprehensive Plan for the City of Columbus.

Pryor made a motion to adopt the Columbus Planning Commission Bylaws as presented. Shoemaker seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Farstvedt, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

Letner concluded with an update on the Columbus Land Bank. The Land Bank successfully acquired two properties at a recent Cherokee County delinquent tax sale. The Land Bank will soon be acquiring two additional properties. Letner advised that a webpage will be created in the coming months to begin the process of marketing the properties to prospective buyers.

City Clerk – City Clerk Ruth Hutley advised the Council that a former plan to switch to a postcard utility billing system would not be implemented due to a number of issues that she had recently learned other cities have encountered, namely that the postcards were frequently lost and/or damaged in the mail due to their small size, the wear on the office copier machine caused from printing on heavier stock as well as the availability and cost of postcard stock.

-Hutley stated that the utility bills will continue to be printed on standard paper and she will investigate other ways to reduce postage costs, including the possibility of allowing customers to opt out of receiving a monthly statement, or an e-statement option.

-Hutley announced that a Suicide Awareness Walk will be held on Sunday, Sept. 10 at 6 p.m. The group will meet at the courthouse and walk on S. Tennessee to Country Road and back. The public is invited to participate in this free event.

Police Department – Police Chief Jason Daniels reported that the Police Department were given tours of new USD 493 school buildings. These walkthroughs will be helpful in the event of emergency response scenarios. Daniels also reminded the Council and public that school is back in session and that residents should exercise caution in school zones.

Fire Department – Fire Chief Steven Burton reported that the department has responded to 271 emergency calls so far this year, down from 320 calls at this time the previous year.

-Burton shared a desire to start a Junior Firefighter Program in conjunction with USD 493, with the goal of encouraging youth to consider careers in firefighting. Burton advised that he will provide a presentation to the Council regarding this program at an upcoming work session.

Public Works – Public Works Superintendent Randy Coble reported on recent valve repairs at 6th & Maple. Crews replaced a 4” valve and thanked the public for their patience while repairs were ongoing. -Coble advised that he and his crew are aware of a leaking water valve near the intersection of Mulberry & Vermont. Due to excessive heat, Coble stated that crews will look to repair the valve next week.

-Coble stated that a tree on the city easement at 401 S. Lash needed to be removed due to safety concerns. He obtained a \$2,600 bid from a tree removal specialist and has authorized the work to take place.

-Coble reported that fence installation work is ongoing at the sewer lagoons.

-Coble shared that APAC will be in town within the next 2 weeks to begin the annual mill and overlay project. Coble reminded the Council of the mill and overlay project sites for 2023, which include a full-depth reclamation of Runway Lane to High School Street, an asphalt overlay of the 100 and 300 blocks of S. Minnesota and a full-depth reclamation of the intersection of W. Country Road and S. High School Ave. Coble added that an additional section of road on N. Kansas, near the railroad track, could be considered this year depending on quantity pricing.

-Coble shared that he had a recent inquiry regarding ditch cleanout and the street sweeper. Coble reminded the Council that ditch cleanout work is typically performed in the fall months. The street sweeper, Coble advised, stirs a lot of dust and even though the sweeper is equipped with a water mister, they attempt to operate it after there has been precipitation to help control the dust. Coble stated that the street sweeper is still being operated on a regular basis as staff time and conditions allow.

-Coble concluded that he attained his Wastewater Operator I certification through KDHE on August 4, 2023. Coble now holds Water and Wastewater I certifications.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider the Commercial Property Rehabilitation Grant Application from Team Threads.

The council decided to table a decision on the grant application from Team Threads until photographs are submitted, per the grant policy.

Consider Revised Community Building Cleaning Procedures

A proposal was submitted to the Council by City Clerk, Ruth Hutley, to take the burden of cleaning and inspecting the Community Building off the fire department who are currently responsible for performing those tasks, and instead pay a contracted flat rate of \$75 to clean the community building as needed. The \$75 fee would be paid from the cleaning deposit that is forfeited by the renter of the building when it is not cleaned.

Shoemaker made a motion to approve the revised Community Building cleaning procedure. Motion was seconded by Farstvedt. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Farstvedt, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

Consider Resolution 651 – Granting a Special Event Permit to the Chamber of Commerce.

Pryor made a motion to approve Resolution 651, granting a special permit to the Chamber of Commerce for the Columbus Day Festival on October 7, 2023, which would allow a vendor to sell alcoholic beverages at the 100 block of W. Pine St. Doherty seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Farstvedt, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

Consider Police Vehicle Purchase/Sale Request.

Police Chief Jason Daniels requested the council's permission to purchase a used Kansas Highway Patrol 2021 Dodge Durango, 5.7 AWD police package vehicle at a purchase price of \$31,775.00. Doherty made a motion to approve the purchase of the 2021 Dodge Durango. Motion seconded by Shoemaker. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Farstvedt, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

-Chief Daniels requested the council's permission to place for sale the 2014 Dodge Charger on PurpleWave auction site with the proceeds from that sale to go back into the equipment reserve fund.

Doherty made a motion to approve the sale of the 2014 Dodge Charger. Motion seconded by Farstvedt. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Farstvedt, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

Consider Part-Time Fire Driver Position Job Description

Fire Chief Steven Burton advised the Council that there was not a current part-time fire driver job description so one was drafted, per city policy. Farstvedt made a motion to approve the part-time fire driver job description. Motion was seconded by Pryor. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Farstvedt, Shoemaker. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Doherty moved to adjourn the meeting. Farstvedt seconded. Voting aye: Doherty, Shoemaker, Pryor, Farstvedt. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Upcoming Events:

- **City Council Meeting – Tuesday, Sept. 5, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.**
- **City Council Work Session – Monday, Sept. 11, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.**
- **Cherokee County Economic Development Member Recognition Breakfast – Wednesday, Sept. 20, 2023, at the Mollie Venue & Retreat in Galena, Ks from 7:00 – 9:00 a.m.**
- **League of Kansas Municipalities Annual Conference Oct. 7 – 9, 2023.**


Ruth Hutley, City Clerk

