

CITY OF COLUMBUS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
September 18, 2023
6:30 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

The City Council of Columbus, Kansas met September 18, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. presided over by Mayor Grant Spieth. Council members present: Tom Pryor, Lindsay Shoemaker, Stephanie Farstvedt, Kathy Doherty and Wiley Sanders. Council members absent: none.

Kathy Doherty provided the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

PATHWAYS GRANT UPDATE PRESENTATION

Bobbi Williams appeared in person and Liz Simpson appeared via Zoom and presented the council with an update on the Pathways Grant.

CONSENT AGENDA

Farstvedt moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of Appropriation Ordinance #23-608, City Council Meeting Minutes – September 5, 2023, Work Session Meeting Minutes – September 11, 2023, and Municipal Court Docket Summary – September 11, 2023. Doherty seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Farstvedt, Shoemaker, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

STAFF REPORTS

City Administrator – City Administrator Jake Letner gave an update on the Safe Routes to School project. Sidewalks are currently being constructed on Country Road from the intersection of High School Ave. east to Kansas Ave. According to Letner, the construction is progressing according to schedule and should be completed within the next several weeks. Letner asked for the citizens' patience during the construction phase.

City Clerk – City Clerk Ruth Hutley reported that she and City Administrator Letner have been gathering quotes and reviewing options for the 2024 employee health insurance renewal in November. -Hutley shared that the accounting clerk position has been advertised and she has already received a good response. She will be scheduling interviews soon. -Hutley concluded that the Splash Pad is now closed for the season.

Police Department – Police Chief Jason Daniels reported that Derrek Mitchell has been hired as a police officer. -Chief Daniels advised that the police department is taking applications for the Police Sergeant position, with three internal applications being received so far. -Chief Daniels reminded the council that the police department has partnered with Lexipol to update the department's policy manual. Daniels asked the council if they would like to see the sections as they are revised, or if they preferred to review the entire manual when it's completed. After discussion, the council agreed they would prefer to see each section at a time. Daniels advised he should have the first revisions ready to present to the council by the next work session.

Fire Department – Fire Chief Steven Burton advised the council that the fire department will be exercising the fire hydrants within the coming week. He will give the schedule to City Superintendent Randy Coble and to the Columbus News Report.

-Chief Burton reported that the department is working to finalize the bylaws for the Jr. Firefighter Program.

Public Works – Public Works Superintendent Randy Coble reported at the September 14, 2023, Bone Creek monthly board meeting, the City of Columbus made a motion to accept Option #4 on the agenda regarding backup water source options. The motion passed 7-4. This vote closed discussion on partnering with the City of Girard. The board will continue to consider capital improvements that have the district and the water plant’s best interest in mind.

-Coble advised that the new location for the city brush pile at the sewer lagoon is nearing completion. KDHE will inspect the new location at the end of the week.

-Coble reported that a 4” leaking water valve near the intersection of Mulberry & Vermont will be repaired soon.

-Coble reminded the Council that the citywide Fall Cleanup will be September 25 through September 29. Residents are asked to have any items at the curb on September 25 as crews will be working throughout the week to pick them up.

-Coble concluded that Public Works Foreman Justin Rogers attained his Water Operator I certification through KDHE on August 31, 2023. Rogers now holds Water and Wastewater I certifications.

NEW BUSINESS

Presentation from Jean Pritchett, Columbus Chamber of Commerce, regarding Use of Transient Guest Tax Funds.

Jean Pritchett from the Columbus Chamber of Commerce reported on plans for the upcoming Columbus Day Festival and Hot Air Balloon Regatta scheduled for October 6 – 8, 2023. Pritchett advised that the Chamber paid \$2,700 for liability insurance for the Hot Air Balloon Regatta and the reason why they charged \$5 parking for the event was to help cover the cost of the insurance. She requested the Council consider reimbursing the Chamber in the amount of \$2,700 for the insurance cost so that no parking fees would be required for the event this year. Shoemaker made a motion to approve reimbursing the Chamber in the amount of \$2,700 from the City’s Transient Guest Tax Fund. Motion was seconded by Farstvedt. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Farstvedt, Shoemaker, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

Consider Street Closure Request from the Columbus Police Department for Home Football Games.

Police Chief Jason Daniels led the discussion regarding closing Maple Street, between Titan Alley and Vermont Avenue, during home football games for the remainder of the season to help decrease the potential for injury for those attending. The closure would be from approximately 6:30 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. Shoemaker made a motion to approve closing Maple Street, between Titan Alley and Vermont Avenue during home football games. Motion was seconded by Doherty. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Farstvedt, Shoemaker, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

Consider the Sidewalk Matching Grant Program Application for 118 W. Olive.

Shoemaker made a motion to approve the Sidewalk Matching Grant Program Application for 118 W. Olive, with the city’s share of the funding not exceeding \$3,937.50. Motion was seconded by Farstvedt. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Farstvedt, Shoemaker, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

Consider the Sidewalk Matching Grant Program Application for 415 S. Kansas.

Doherty made a motion to approve the Sidewalk Matching Grant Program Application for 415 S. Kansas, with the city’s share of the funding not exceeding \$3,187.50. Motion was seconded by Pryor. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Farstvedt, Shoemaker, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

Consider Directing Staff to Draft a Resolution Regarding Future City Sidewalk Funding Allocation.

City Administrator Jake Letner opened the discussion regarding future city sidewalk funding allocation. In the 2024 adopted budget, \$10,000 was allocated for sidewalk repair. Letner advised that the current use of the funding involves a matching grant program, wherein 75% of sidewalk replacement costs are granted to individual homeowners upon submission and approval of the application to the City Council. The council discussed a need to focus on connectivity of sidewalks. Pryor made a motion to instruct staff to draft a resolution to end the current city sidewalk matching grant program and instead have city staff construct consistent stretches of sidewalks in strategic areas, approved by the Council each year. Motion was seconded by Shoemaker. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Farstvedt, Shoemaker, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion Regarding the Proposed Titan Turf Project.

City Administrator Jake Letner opened the discussion regarding the proposed Titan Turf Project by the Rec Commission. Different funding strategies were discussed, should the council agree to help fund the project. No action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Shoemaker moved to adjourn the meeting. Doherty seconded. Voting aye: Doherty, Shoemaker, Pryor, Farstvedt, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Upcoming Events:

- **City Council Meeting – Monday, October 2, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.**
- **League of Kansas Municipalities Annual Conference Oct. 7 – 9, 2023.**

Ruth Hutley
Ruth Hutley, City Clerk

