

CITY OF COLUMBUS  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
October 16, 2023  
6:30 P.M.

**ATTENDANCE**

The City Council of Columbus, Kansas met October 16, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. presided over by Mayor Grant Spieth. Council members present: Tom Pryor, Lindsay Shoemaker, Kathy Doherty and Wiley Sanders. Council members absent: Stephanie Farstvedt.

Jim Thomas from First Baptist Church provided the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Shoemaker moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of Appropriation Ordinance #23-610, City Council Meeting Minutes – October 2, 2023, City Council Work Session Minutes – October 10, 2023, and Treasurer’s Report – September 29, 2023. Sanders seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

**STAFF REPORTS**

**City Administrator** – City Administrator Jake Letner informed the Council that the Columbus Recreation Commission has withdrawn their request for a donation from the City for the Titan Turf Project, as they have found other avenues for funding the project.

-Letner said there will be some upcoming end of year reserve transfers and advised that the city sales tax collections are approximately 5-10% above projections.

-Letner said he should have health insurance rate information for 2024 at the next council meeting.

**City Clerk** – City Clerk Ruth Hutley reported that Rebekka Sanchez has been hired for the Accounting Clerk position. Her first day of employment will be October 30.

**Police Department** – Police Chief Jason Daniels reported that Officer Gary Holt has been promoted to the Interim Sergeant position. The Department is taking applications for one police officer vacancy.

**Fire Department** – Fire Chief Steven Burton reported that the fire department is currently conducting their fire prevention program with the local school children. He said 200 area children have visited the fire station in the last week.

-Chief Burton reminded the public to check their heaters and smoke detectors.

-Chief Burton reported there are currently no burn bans in the city or Cherokee County.

**Public Works** – Public Works Superintendent Randy Coble reported that the Safe Routes to School Project should be concluded by the first week of November with backfilling and seeding still to be done.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Discussion of Potential Subdivision Development – 1050 Merle Evans Dr.**

City Administrator Jake Letner opened the discussion regarding a proposed housing development at 1050 Merle Evans Dr. and introduced the developer, Jeremy Strup. Strup discussed his proposal to construct moderate income housing in the development comprised of duplexes, quadplexes and single-family homes. Mr. Strup is a Cherokee County resident and he and his partner have constructed similar housing units in the City of Galena. Immediate next steps include the procurement of

engineering services to develop a preliminary plat for the proposed development. Letner will have information on this process by the next City Council meeting.

**Consider Dental Insurance and Life Insurance Agreements for 2024.**

City Clerk Ruth Hutley reported that 2024 Blue Cross Blue Shield dental rates for the city employees have decreased slightly from the current year. Clerk Hutley also reported that the 2024 city employee basic life insurance rates have remained the same. Currently, each city employee has a \$20,000 basic life insurance policy at no cost to the employee. To increase the life insurance to a \$25,000 policy would increase the premium by \$.90 per month per employee for a total monthly increase of \$27.90 per month. A motion was made by Doherty to approve the 2024 BCBS dental insurance renewal and to increase the employee life insurance to a \$25,000 policy. The motion was seconded by Pryor. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

**Consider the City Sidewalk Matching Grant Application for 500 S. Kansas Ave.**

A sidewalk matching grant application for 500 S. Kansas Avenue was discussed. The Council tabled the discussion until more information could be obtained from the property owner.

**Consider Street Closure Request for the Zombie 5K Run.**

Police Chief Jason Daniels asked the Council's permission to close the 100 block of West Maple Street on Saturday, October 28 from 5 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. for the Zombie 5K Run. A motion was made by Shoemaker to approve closing the street for the event. The motion was seconded by Pryor. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

**Consider Street Closure Request for the Cherokee County Health Department Drive Thru Flu Shot Clinic.**

Doherty made a motion to approve closing the 100 block of East Walnut from Kansas to Indiana Street on October 24 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. for the Cherokee County Health Department Flu Shot Drive Thru Clinic. The motion was seconded by Sanders. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

**Consider Purchase of 2021 Dodge Durango Police Vehicle.**

Police Chief Jason Daniels requested the Council's permission to purchase a 2021 Dodge Durango police vehicle from the Kansas Highway Patrol for \$31,775.00. Chief Daniels said there is currently \$27,000 in capital equipment reserves for future vehicle purchases and a \$5,000 unencumbered balance in the capital improvement reserves that could also be used for this purchase. Once the vehicle is purchased, one of the older police vehicles will be sold with the proceeds being used to replenish the reserve funds. Doherty made a motion to approve the purchase of the 2021 Dodge Durango police vehicle. Motion was seconded by Shoemaker. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

**Consider Street Closure for Chamber of Commerce Trunk or Treat Event.**

Shoemaker made a motion to approve closing the 100 block of West Pine Street and the 100 block of South Kansas Street on October 31 between 4:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. for the Chamber of Commerce Trunk or Treat event. Motion was seconded by Sanders. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Doherty made a motion at 7:32 p.m. to go into executive session for 10 minutes to discuss personnel matters of non-elected personnel to discuss the City Administrator's annual evaluation with the

Council, Mayor, City Attorney, City Clerk and City Administrator in attendance. The motion was seconded by Shoemaker. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

Regular session at 7:42 p.m. No action taken.

Doherty made a motion at 7:43 p.m. to go into executive session for 10 minutes to discuss personnel matters of non-elected personnel to discuss the City Administrator's annual evaluation with the Council, Mayor, City Attorney, City Clerk and City Administrator in attendance. The motion was seconded by Shoemaker. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

Regular session at 7:53 p.m. No action taken.

Shoemaker made a motion to approve a 2% cost of living and 2% merit increase in the City Administrator's salary effective January 1, 2024. The motion was seconded by Doherty. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Doherty moved to adjourn the meeting. Shoemaker seconded. Voting aye: Doherty, Shoemaker, Pryor, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

**Upcoming Events:**

- **City Council Meeting – Monday, November 6, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.**

  
Ruth Hutley, City Clerk

