

CITY OF COLUMBUS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
February 5, 2024
6:30 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

The City Council of Columbus, Kansas met February 5, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. presided over by Mayor Grant Spieth. Council members present: Tom Pryor, Lindsay Shoemaker, Kathy Doherty, and Laura Epler. Council members absent: Wiley Sanders.

City staff present: City Administrator Jake Letner, City Clerk Ruth Hutley, City Superintendent Randy Coble, Fire Chief Steven Burton, City Attorney Barbara Wright, City Treasurer Doug Mogle.

Randy Robison from Calvary Baptist Church provided the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

Shoemaker moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of Appropriation Ordinance #23-619, Appropriation Ordinance #24-620, City Council Meeting Minutes – January 16, 2024, Municipal Court Docket Summary – January 22, 2024, and Treasurer’s Report – January 31, 2024. Epler seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Epler. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

PUBLIC FORUM

Chris Baldwin addressed the Council with concerns about a recent incident at Central School. Baldwin was asking the council for ideas to raise awareness of bullying in schools and indicated he was intending to voice his concerns to the school board at a future time.

MAYOR

Mayor Grant Spieth reported he will be absent from the next City Council meeting. Council President Tom Pryor will preside.

STAFF REPORTS

City Administrator - City Administrator Jake Letner gave an update on the proposed housing development on Merle Evans Drive. Letner said the engineer should have the preliminary plat design completed in the next couple of weeks.

-Letner informed the Council that the Environmental Review process for the CDBG-CVR grant has been completed. The Kansas Department of Commerce will be sending the grant money to the city via wire transfer in the coming weeks, and the monies will be disbursed to the owners of Titan Fitness.

-Lastly, Letner reminded the Council that applications are still being accepted for the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. Letner encouraged the council to reach out to any members of the community who might be interested in serving on the steering committee.

Letner yielded the remainder of his time to City Treasurer Doug Mogle, who requested that the Council approve moving \$2 million currently in the Kansas Municipal Investment Pool to Labette Bank in Columbus to earn a better interest rate. Mogle said each area bank was contacted and Labette Bank offered the best interest rate of 5%. Shoemaker made a motion to approve the authorization of the Mayor, City Clerk and City Treasurer as account managers to move funds from KMIP to Labette

Bank. The motion was seconded by Doherty. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Epler. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

City Clerk – City Clerk Ruth Hutley reported that it was recently discovered that the city was losing thousands per year on credit card processing fees for utility payments being made online. Starting this billing cycle, a \$2.50 credit card processing fee has been added to the online system that customers will pay in addition to our vendor's convenience fees. Customers who pay in person using a credit card are only charged one transaction fee that is retained by the city. There are no processing fees for those who sign up for auto pay. This will only impact approximately 25% of customers that pay online using a card but have not signed up for auto pay.

-Hutley reported that city utility bills were mailed at the end of January as usual but so far, the bills have not arrived in the mail. Hutley contacted the Columbus Post Office, and they confirmed the bills were sent to the Kansas City distribution office but had not arrived back to Columbus yet. There has been no word from the postal service as to the reason for the delay. Customers can call or come by city hall during normal business hours to pay their bills.

-Hutley reminded the council that Monday, February 19, is President's Day and city offices will be closed. The next City Council meeting will be on Tuesday, February 20.

Fire Department – Chief Steven Burton sought the Council's approval to remodel the current fire chief's office as the department has run out of space in the existing office. The proposed remodel would involve removing the training room and adjacent conference room wall, building a wall, new entrance door and re-wiring. The new office would be approximately 8' x 14'. Burton said he had a bid from Box Construction in the amount of \$3,515 which would be paid from \$3,600 currently in reserves that was left over from a ventilation system.

Shoemaker made a motion to approve the remodel of the fire chief's office in the amount of \$3,515.00. The motion was seconded by Epler. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Epler. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

Police Department – No report. City Administrator Jake Letner reported that Officer Sierra Shannon is scheduled to report to the police academy for officer training on February 12.

Public Works – Public Works Superintendent Randy Coble reported the request for bids for street repairs are due February 19, and he anticipates having several bids by the next council meeting.

-Coble reported that the University of Kansas will be holding a pavement preservation and asphalt training at the City of Columbus' Public Works facility on Wednesday, February 14. Several area communities will be attending.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider Resolution 656 – Setting a Public Hearing for Consideration of the Development Plan for 129 E. Maple St.

City Administrator Jake Letner led the discussion regarding the statutory requirement of holding a public hearing prior to the adoption of the development plan and designation of the proposed Reinvestment Housing Incentive District, located at 129 E. Maple St. Doherty made a motion to accept Resolution 656, setting a public hearing date of Monday, March 18 for consideration of the development plan and RHID, for 129 E. Maple. The motion was seconded by Pryor. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Epler. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

Consider Approval of Operating Transfers to Reserve Accounts.

City Administrator Jake Letner requested the Council’s approval for operating transfers to the city’s reserve accounts for fiscal year 2023. Letner added that 2023 was a good year financially for the city. He said the city financial audit is scheduled for the final week in March, as usual. Pryor made a motion to authorize the operating transfers to the city’s reserve accounts. The motion was seconded by Doherty. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Epler. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

Consider Commercial Property Rehabilitation Grant for 211 W. Maple St.

City Administrator Jake Letner opened the discussion regarding a Commercial Property Rehabilitation Grant for 211 W. Maple Street. Letner told the Council he had received another grant application from the couple who bought the old tire shop across from Dollar General and intend to open a restaurant and bar in that building. Letner reminded the Council that \$5,000 is allocated for the Commercial Property Rehabilitation Grant each year. Epler made a motion to award \$2,500 to the owners of Life in Bloom and 211 W. Maple Street and \$2,500 to the owners of Lug Nutz Bar and Grill. The motion was seconded by Pryor. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Epler. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

CITY PROPERTY

Consider Authorizing Transfer of Real Estate to Optic Communications.

City Administrator Jake Letner opened the discussion regarding the authorization of the sale of real estate for the land around where the old cable television tower stood near the sewer lagoons to Optic Communications. Shoemaker made a motion to authorize the sale of the land where the old cable television tower stood. Doherty seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Epler. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

Consider the Sale of the Trolley.

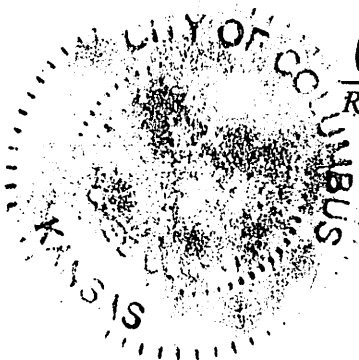
City Administrator Jake Letner requested the authority to sell the trolley. Letner said the city no longer has a place to store the trolley which is only used once or twice a year. After discussion, Letner informed the Council that he would make one more attempt to see to it that the trolley is placed under covered storage, and/or sold to a local party. Provided neither covered storage nor a local buyer could be found, Letner requested to list the trolley on Purple Wave. Shoemaker made a motion to authorize the sale of the trolley pursuant to the terms discussed at the meeting. The motion was seconded by Pryor. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Epler. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Doherty moved to adjourn the meeting. Shoemaker seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Pryor, Shoemaker, Epler. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Upcoming Events:

- **City Council Meeting – Tuesday, February 20, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.**



Ruth Hütley
 Ruth Hütley, City Clerk