

CITY OF COLUMBUS  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
May 20, 2024  
6:30 P.M.

**ATTENDANCE**

The City Council of Columbus, Kansas met May 20, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. presided over by Mayor Grant Spieth. Council members present: Kathy Doherty, Laura Epler, Tom Pryor, Wiley Sanders, and Lindsay Shoemaker. Council members absent: None.

Neil Martin of Sherwin Christian Church provided the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Grant Spieth opened the meeting with a moment of silence in honor of Police Chief Jason Daniels, who passed away on May 8, 2024.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Shoemaker moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of Appropriation Ordinance #24-627 – May 20, 2024, City Council Meeting Minutes – May 6, 2024, Municipal Court Docket Summary – May 13, 2024, and Treasurer’s Report – March 31, 2024. Doherty seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Epler, Shoemaker, Sanders, Pryor. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

**MAYOR**

Mayor Spieth noted the recent rainfall and requested those noticing any drainage issues to report them to city hall so they can be included in the stormwater project data.

**STAFF REPORTS**

**City Administrator** – City Administrator Jake Letner reported that BG Consultants stormwater report for the City of Columbus is completed, and they will deliver their report at the City Council work session meeting on June 24. There will be two reports, one for stormwater and one for sewer along with their recommendations for capital improvements.

- Letner shared that the Governor’s office will be issuing an order that flags be flown in the City of Columbus at half-staff on May 24 in Chief Daniels’ honor.

- Letner reported that Crossland Construction has been in contact with the city regarding an expansion plan and an interest in using industrial revenue bonds. A cost benefit analysis, paid for by the owner, will be required.

- Letner reported that the ownership of the service station at the intersection of Maple Street & US Highway 160 has changed. Accordingly, the new owner is required to obtain a CMB license, which is considered and approved by the City Council. This item is to be addressed under new business.

**City Clerk** – City Clerk Ruth Hutley reported there has been a shortage of lifeguard applications this season. Nine lifeguards have been hired so far. There is still time to complete the lifeguard certification and training, and Hutley asked if anyone else is interested that they contact her to schedule an interview.

**Fire Department** – Fire Driver Jason Allison was present in Chief Steven Burton’s absence. Allison reported that the department has responded to 258 emergency calls year-to-date, which is 132 calls more than the previous time last year.

-Allison reported the fire department will be cooking hamburgers for a benefit hosted by SKIL on May 22.

**Police Department** – Lieutenant Kyle Clark reported that Officer Sierra Hampton graduated from the police academy on May 15. Officer Arlo Lewke and Lieutenant Clark attended her graduation ceremony.

-Lieutenant Clark shared that the annual taser and firearms training is scheduled for the first part of June. Once that is completed, all officers will have either met or exceeded their minimum statutory requirements for firearms training.

**Public Works** – Superintendent Randy Coble shared that the pool is ready for the opening on May 26 and the city’s splash pad opened last Friday, May 17.

-Coble reported that mosquito spraying will begin May 29.

-Coble announced a citywide brush pickup the week of June 3 – 7.

-Coble shared that preparation for concrete repairs in front of Tique-A-Bou boutique will begin soon.

-Coble reported that City Equipment Operator Brent Perry recently achieved his Water Operator I certification through KDHE.

-Lastly, Coble thanked the Cherokee County Sheriff’s Department for their assistance at the city cemetery. The sheriff’s department supplied inmates to help with mowing and trimming prior to Memorial weekend.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Presentation of the 2023 Financial Audit from Diehl, Banwart, Bolton.**

Amanda Lancaster from Diehl, Banwart, Bolton, CPAs was present via Zoom to present the results of the city’s 2023 financial audit and answer questions.

City Administrator Jake Letner noted that the city increased its overall cash balance in 2023 by 18.4%. He credited this to city department heads responsibly managing their budgets, a large reimbursement from KDOT for the CCLIP project, cost savings on health insurance, and the City Treasurer making sound investments with the city’s idle cash.

### **Consider Approval of Cereal Malt Beverage License for Galaxy Food Mart.**

City Administrator Jake Letner reported that Galaxy Food Mart has recently purchased the convenient store at 100 S. East Avenue and has filed an application with the city clerk’s office for a Cereal Malt Beverage license. Doherty made a motion to approve the Cereal Malt Beverage license for Galaxy Food Mart. The motion was seconded by Pryor. Voting aye: Doherty, Shoemaker, Sanders, Pryor and Epler. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

### **Consider Annual Maintenance Contract for City Tornado Sirens with CDL Electric.**

City Administrator Jake Letner opened the discussion regarding a proposal from CDL Electric for bi-annual inspections of the city storm sirens. The council tabled the discussion until further information could be obtained on the number and locations of storm sirens.

### **Consider Proposal for Additional Shading at the City Pool.**

City Superintendent Randy Coble led the discussion regarding a proposal to provide additional shading at the City Pool. Coble said he has had requests for additional seating and shade at the City Pool and proposed that the city pour concrete on the North side of the pool and purchase a hip shade structure with dimensions of 15’ x 25’. The council requested that Coble compile a formal proposal for the additional shade and present it to them at a later date.

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

### **Code Enforcement Presentation Regarding Demolitions.**

Code Enforcement Officer Arlo Lewke presented information to the Council regarding demolition procedures.

### **Consider Executing a Letter of Support for the City of Columbus Police Department's Application for the C.O.P.S. Hiring-Grant Program (CHP).**

City Administrator Jake Letner led the discussion regarding the police department's application for the C.O.P.S. Hiring-Grant Program. The city is requesting the grant to be able to hire a school resource officer to serve at the new Highland Education Center administered by SEK Interlocal #637. SEK Interlocal is a special education collaborative that serves children from Crawford, Cherokee, and Labette counties. They currently operate one behavioral school in Girard which forces them to transport students from Cherokee and Labette counties daily and have chosen to open an additional school in Columbus. Based on the nature of the facility, the police department feels it is critical that a school resource officer be housed full-time at this location. This officer would be able to ensure the safety and security of students, faculty, and staff. Spring River Mental Health & Wellness, SEK Interlocal and the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office have all provided a letter of support for this idea. Shoemaker made a motion that the city council sign a letter of support to be included with the grant application process. The motion was seconded by Pryor. Voting aye: Doherty, Shoemaker, Sanders, Pryor and Epler. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

### **Dog Tethering Discussion.**

City Administrator Jake Letner opened the discussion regarding dog tethering. Currently there is nothing prohibiting tethering in the city code. City Attorney Barbara Wright shared that there are additional policies and regulations contained in the Uniform Public Offense Code (UPOC), which is adopted annually by the City Council. Enforcement of a possible ordinance prohibiting tethering was discussed, along with other considerations. The council tabled the discussion and requested to re-address the topic at an upcoming work session.

### **Discussion of Proposed Improvements on the 100 Block of South Vermont Ave.**

City Administrator Jake Letner shared that he and City Superintendent Randy Coble met recently with paving contractors, Emery, Sapp & Sons, and a representative from the school district to discuss improvements on the 100 Block of South Vermont Ave. USD 493 has slated improvements for this area, including the installation of a new sidewalk and removal of the retaining wall to be replaced with curb & gutter. It has become evident that installing a drain line to redirect stormwater from west to east into the ditch is imperative to prevent pooling along the west curblin. The cost of this adjustment is estimated to be less than \$500 for materials and parts. Emery, Sapp & Sons have agreed to adjust their paving plan accordingly without additional cost implications. Shoemaker made a motion to approve the proposed improvements on the 100 Block of South Vermont Ave. as specified. Epler seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Shoemaker, Sanders, Pryor and Epler. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Doherty called for a 10-minute executive session at 8:17 p.m. for consultation with an attorney on matters that would be deemed privileged in an attorney-client relationship. The motion was seconded by Pryor. Voting aye: Doherty, Shoemaker, Sanders, Pryor and Epler. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

Returned to regular session 8:27 p.m.  
No action taken.

Doherty called for a fifteen-minute executive session at 8:37 p.m. for personnel matters of non-elected personnel. The motion was seconded by Pryor. Voting aye: Doherty, Shoemaker, Sanders, Pryor and Epler. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

Returned to regular session 8:52 p.m.  
No action taken.

Doherty called for a five-minute executive session at 8:57 p.m. for personnel matters of non-elected personnel. The motion was seconded by Pryor. Voting aye: Doherty, Shoemaker, Sanders, Pryor and Epler. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

Returned to regular session 9:02 p.m.  
No action taken.

**Appointment of Interim Police Chief**


Doherty made a motion to appoint Kyle Clark Interim Police Chief. The motion was seconded by Pryor. Voting aye: Doherty, Sanders, Pryor and Epler. Voting nay: None. Abstentions: 1. Motion carried 4-0-1.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Doherty moved to adjourn the meeting. Epler seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Shoemaker, Sanders, Pryor and Epler. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

**Upcoming Events:**

- **City Council Meeting – Monday, June 3, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.**
- **City Council Work Session – Monday, June 24, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.**

  
Ruth Hutley, City Clerk

