

CITY OF COLUMBUS  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING

July 1, 2024  
6:30 P.M.

**ATTENDANCE**

The City Council of Columbus, Kansas met July 1, 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.

Melvin Myers of Quapaw Free Will Baptist Church provided the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Shoemaker moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of Appropriation Ordinance #24-630 – July 1, 2024, City Council Meeting Minutes – June 17, 2024, City Council Work Session Minutes - June 24, 2024, and Municipal Court Docket Summary – June 24, 2024. Epler seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Epler, Shoemaker, Pryor, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

**MAYOR**

**Appointments to Volunteer Fire Department.**

Shoemaker made a motion to approve the mayor's appointment of the following to the Columbus Volunteer Fire Department:

Steve Burton Sr. – Assistant Fire Chief

Jason Allison – Deputy Fire Chief

Kale Kitterman

Cody Burton

Jaden Tedlock

David Allen

Craig Burton

Zach Davis

Derek Carroll

James Minor

Brier Martin

Kasie England

Alexis Scofield

Joey Midgett

The motion was seconded by Epler. Voting aye: Doherty, Epler, Shoemaker, Pryor, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

**STAFF REPORTS**

**City Administrator** – City Administrator Jake Letner reported that he received the budget information from Cherokee County on June 29. Letner shared that while real estate and personal property valuations rose, the state assessed utilities valuation decreased by 56.9% from the previous year. Letner advised he would have full budget information at the next council meeting.

**City Clerk** – City Clerk Ruth Hutley reported that the utility department has continued to distribute a door hanger reminder for past due accounts prior to service being turned off for non-pay. Hutley

reported the new notification system has greatly reduced the number of disconnects for non-pay at the end of the month.

-Hutley advised that the city administrative office will be cross-training in the coming month.

**Fire Department** – Fire Chief Steven Burton reported the department has responded to 322 emergency calls year-to-date.

-Chief Burton said the department has been working hard preparing for the annual Freedom Fest on July 6. He said the benefit golf tournament is scheduled for July 7 and is full.

-Chief Burton reported that volunteer firefighter Doug Dardenne has moved out of town. He commended Dardenne for his service with the volunteer firefighters and said he would be missed.

**Police Department** – Police Chief Kyle Clark reported that the police department will be assisting with the Freedom Fest event.

-Chief Clark reported that he is taking applications for the sergeant position and has had several good applicants both in house and from the public.

**Public Works** – Superintendent Randy Coble reported KDOT and BNSF will be closing Hwy 69 at the railroad crossing on July 15 and 16 and it will reopen on July 17. Traffic will be diverted through Crestline.

-Coble reported a streetlight has recently been installed at highway 69 and Country Road.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Proposed Housing Subdivision Presentation – Crossland Construction Co., Inc.**

Mattie Crossland of Crossland Construction Co., Inc., presented a plan for a new housing development on the west side of the city. According to Crossland ten homes will be constructed in Phase 1 of the plan. The homes will be 1100-1200 sq. ft. and be considered moderate income homes. Once the homes have sold, Phase 2 of the plan will begin, and those homes will be larger. The homes will be built by Schuber Mitchell. Crossland asked for assistance from the city for construction of sewer and water lines as well as splitting the costs of street construction. City Administrator Jake Letner added that he had created a cost benefit analysis of the project with estimates for material costs that he and City Superintendent Randy Coble had gathered. Letner estimates that in 8-12 years the city will get back its initial investment through property and sales tax revenue resulting from the housing project. Mayor Grant Spieth asked Crossland to keep the Columbus Planning Commission in the loop as the project progresses. After discussion, Shoemaker made a motion to approve the drafting of a resolution for the city to provide materials and split the cost of the street construction with Crossland Construction Co., Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$137,500. The motion was seconded by Epler. Voting aye: Doherty, Epler, Shoemaker, Pryor, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

### **Discussion of Recreational Vehicle Policy.**

City Administrator Jake Letner opened the discussion regarding recreational vehicles in the city. Policies from Galena, Joplin and Carthage were reviewed by the council. Currently the City of Columbus does not have standards pertaining to the placement or duration of recreational vehicles on public or private property. Whether RVs should be permitted to be parked on public property, whether RVs should be required to tie into public utilities and the maximum duration for RVs to be occupied on private property were discussed. Council member Wiley Sanders suggested creating an ad-hoc committee. Shoemaker made a motion to create an ad-hoc committee consisting of council members Wiley Sanders and Laura Epler and moderated City Administrator Jake Letner to draft a proposed city policy pertaining to RVs in the city. The motion was seconded by Pryor. Voting aye: Doherty, Epler, Shoemaker, Pryor, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

**Discussion of Proposed Housing Development at 0 E. Merle Evans Drive.**

City Administrator Jake Letner shared an update on the construction of a proposed housing development on the parcel located at 0 E. Merle Evans Dr. currently owned by Columbus Housing Inc. Letner provided a conceptual rendering along with duplex specifications the developer would like to construct, which consists of 16 duplexes for a total of 32 rental units. The developer has discussed a desire to use the space north of the current Cherry Creek Townhome development as a green space or park area. Letner advised there will be another meeting between the developer and the Columbus Housing Inc. board on July 9 to reach an agreement on the transfer of land. It is unclear at this time whether the board will donate the land or sell it, Letner said. The Council provided direction to Letner regarding the transfer of land, authorizing \$20,000 to be used to facilitate the sale of the land, should Columbus Housing Inc. desire to sell instead of donating it. Letner asked the board to consider what level of involvement the city would like to have in helping with the water, sewer and street costs, if any. The council asked for cost estimates of the water, sewer and street construction.

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

**Fire Department Tanker Upgrade Discussion**

Fire Chief Steven Burton opened the discussion regarding a 2014 tanker truck owned by the City of Joplin that will be sold through a closed bid process this month. Chief Burton said the tanker truck currently owned by the City of Columbus is a 1997 model and is a converted agricultural vehicle not intended for use in the fire service. The council discussed reaching out to local lenders to see if they would be interested in financing the purchase. The maximum amount that the city should bid on for the truck was also discussed.

**PUBLIC WORKS**

**Review and Discuss Results of Sanitary Sewer/Stormwater Evaluations.**

City Administrator Jake Letner opened the discussion regarding the results of recent sanitary sewer and stormwater evaluations completed by BG Consultants. Since the city lacks the financial resources to take on all the projects simultaneously, Letner and Public Works Superintendent Randy Coble recommended the council approve moving forward with the sanitary sewer project. After discussion, the council approved city staff to begin investigating financial options, including grant opportunities to fund the sewer rehabilitation project.

**CHANGING START TIME OF NEXT CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

Since there are several lengthy topics on the July 15 City Council Meeting Agenda, Shoemaker made a motion to move the start time of the meeting to 5:30 p.m. Epler seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Epler, Shoemaker, Pryor, Sanders. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Shoemaker moved to adjourn the meeting. Doherty seconded the motion. Voting aye: Doherty, Shoemaker, Pryor, Sanders and Epler. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

**Upcoming Events:**

- **City Council Meeting – Monday, July 15, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.**



*Ruth Hutley*  
Ruth Hutley, City Clerk