

CITY OF COLUMBUS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
December 2, 2024
5:30 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

The City Council of Columbus, Kansas met December 2, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. presided over by Mayor Grant Spieth. Council members present: Laura Epler, Kathy Doherty and Misty Spear (via Zoom). Council members absent: Tom Pryor, Wiley Sanders.

Cody Bohall of First Christian Church provided the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

Epler moved to approve the consent agenda consisting of Appropriation Ordinance #24-640 – December 2, 2024, City Council Meeting Minutes – November 18, 2024, Treasurer Reports – 3rd Quarter 2024 and November 27, 2024, and Municipal Court Docket Summary – November 25, 2024. The motion was seconded by Doherty. Voting aye: Epler, Spear, Doherty. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

MAYOR

Mayor Grant Spieth presented city employee, Jason Spainhower with a 5-year service award. Mayor Spieth commended Mr. Spainhower for his hard work and dedication to the City of Columbus.

STAFF REPORTS

City Administrator – City Administrator Jake Letner reported there will be a hearing to amend the budget at the next council meeting on Dec. 16.

-Letner advised there will be a council work session meeting on Dec. 9 to discuss how the council would like to proceed with the comprehensive plan for the city.

-Letner reported that the owner of the parcel at 422 W. Sycamore has contacted him and expressed a desire to give the parcel to the Columbus Land Bank. Letner asked the council for approval to forgive the city's demolition assessment on the parcel should the owner deed the property to the Land Bank.

Doherty moved to conditionally forgive the demolition and other special assessments on 422 W. Sycamore, in the event the owner deeds the parcel to the Columbus Land Bank. The motion was seconded by Spear. Voting aye: Epler, Spear, Doherty. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

City Clerk – City Clerk Ruth Hutley reported two items to be discussed later in the meeting.

Fire Department – Fire Chief Steven Burton reported the department has responded to 574 emergency calls year-to-date.

-Chief Burton reported the department will be participating in two upcoming Christmas events again this year, the shopping with a firefighter program and cookout before the parade.

-Chief Burton reported that Mercy is donating a used hazmat trailer to the fire department to be used for training purposes.

Police Department – Police Chief Kyle Clark reported the police department is currently sponsoring a toy drive and are taking donations of toys to distribute to area children.

-Chief Clark reported that Officer Sierra Hampton is currently attending training to become a certified evidence custodian manager and Officer Arlo Lewke is attending a school resource officer training in Topeka.

Public Works – City Superintendent Randy Coble reported the city is currently flushing fire hydrants to maintain water quality in the lines.

-Coble said the citywide leaf pickup is scheduled for December 9-20 and will go by wards, with 2 days being spent per ward. Coble added the new leaf vacuum is working great.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider Authorizing Christmas Bonuses for City Employees

City Clerk Ruth Hutley asked the council to approve a holiday bonus for city employees, recommending a bonus structure the same as in past years. Epler made a motion to approve the holiday bonuses for city employees as presented. The motion was seconded by Spear. Voting aye: Epler, Spear, Doherty. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

Consider Closing City Hall at Noon on December 24, 2024.

City Clerk Ruth Hutley asked the council for approval to close city offices at noon on Christmas Eve to allow employees time to spend with family. Spear made a motion to approve closing city offices at noon on December 24 and reopening on December 26. The motion was seconded by Epler. Voting aye: Epler, Spear, Doherty. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

Consider Records Retention Policy

City Clerk Ruth Hutley presented a draft records retention and disposition policy. After discussion, the council tabled the discussion until Hutley can include more information regarding electronic records storage in the policy.

PUBLIC WORKS

Consider Authorizing the Professional Administrative Services Agreement with the Southeast Kansas Regional Planning Commission (SEKRPC).

Carey Spoon from SEKRPC was present via Zoom and Wesley Weishaar from BG Consultants was present to discuss the next steps in the city's sanitary sewer capital improvement process. Weishaar presented a summary of the results of the recently completed SSES system analysis and associated capital improvement recommendations. 12,500 LF of the city's sanitary sewer system was studied, identifying several areas with severe structural defects. BG Consultants has recommended a combination of pipe bursting and cured-in-place pipe rehabilitation to reduce the volume of stormwater inflow and infiltration into the city's sanitary sewer system. The proposed improvements to the sanitary sewer system total approximately \$1.6 million.

The Kansas Department of Health & Environment (KDHE) offers low-interest loans for infrastructure projects through the State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF). The SRF loans are issued with 20- or 30-year terms, with an interest rate at 60% of the market rate on a 20-year loan and 70% of the market rate on a 30-year term. SRF loan applications are due in mid-February 2025, and the city must complete several procedural requirements to be eligible, including holding a public hearing and public meeting to discuss the loan application and associated project, as well as complete an environmental review. If awarded loan funding, the city would be required to submit performance information and volumes of additional reporting to KDHE. SEKRPC submitted a proposed Administrative Services Agreement to administer the SRF loan on behalf of the city and complete the required environmental review. City

Administrator Letner is actively pursuing grant applications to offset the financial impact of the project, and this work will remain ongoing.

After discussion, Epler moved to approve the SEKRPC Administrative Services Contract in the amount of \$35,000 for the SRF loan. Spear seconded the motion. Voting aye: Epler, Spear, Doherty. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

Doherty moved to set a public hearing and public meeting on January 21, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. to consider the loan application and associated project. Epler seconded the motion. Voting aye: Epler, Spear, Doherty. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion of the Proposed Housing Development on Merle Evans Dr.

City Administrator Jake Letner opened the discussion regarding the proposed housing development on Merle Evans Drive. The significant economic impact of adding the 32 new rental housing units to the city was discussed. Doherty made a motion to provide financial support to the developer of the housing development on Merle Evans Drive not to exceed \$200,000. Epler seconded the motion. Voting aye: Epler, Spear, Doherty. Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Doherty moved to adjourn the meeting. Epler seconded the motion. Voting aye: Epler, Spear, Doherty, Voting nay: None. Motion carried 3-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Upcoming Events:

- **City Council Work Session – Monday, December 9, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.**
- **City Council Meeting – Monday, December 16, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.**


Ruth Hutley, City Clerk

