



**CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**City Hall—Council Chambers, 590 40th Ave NE**  
**Monday, February 22, 2021**  
**7:00 PM**

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**MINUTES**

**Mayor**  
*Amada Márquez Simula*  
**Councilmembers**  
*John Murzyn, Jr.*  
*Connie Buesgens*  
*Nick Novitsky*  
*Kt Jacobs*  
**City Manager**  
*Kelli Bourgeois*

The following are the minutes for the regular meeting of the City Council held at 7:00 pm on Monday, February 22, 2021 in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 590 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.E., Columbia Heights, Minnesota. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this hybrid meeting was held both virtually and in-person.

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Mayor Márquez Simula called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Present: Mayor Márquez Simula; Councilmember Buesgens; Councilmember Jacobs; Councilmember Murzyn, Jr.; Councilmember Novitsky

Also Present: Kelli Bourgeois, City Manager; James Hoeft, City Attorney; Lorien Mueller; Will Rottler, Community and Events Specialist; Nicole Tingley, City Clerk

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

*Our mission is to provide the highest quality public services. Services will be provided in a fair, respectful and professional manner that effectively addresses changing citizen and community needs in a fiscally-responsible and customer-friendly manner.*

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Márquez Simula reported that two additional items had been added to the agenda under "Proclamations, Presentations, Recognition, Announcements, Guests" after it had been distributed, which were the School Board Liaison Update and Acknowledgement of Buffalo Allina Clinic Tragedy.

*Motion by Councilmember Murzyn, Jr., seconded by Councilmember Jacobs, to approve the agenda as amended. A roll call vote was taken. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.*

**PROCLAMATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, RECOGNITION, ANNOUNCEMENTS, GUESTS**

**A. School Board Liaison Update - Lorien Mueller**

Ms. Mueller announced "School Bus Driver Week" the week of February 22-26 and encouraged all to thank their bus drivers, as their duties are sometimes challenging; reported that art students earned 38 awards at the Scholastic Art Awards, which is a competition organized by art educators of Minnesota. Two students have advanced to the State competition for the "Poetry Out Loud," a spoken-word type medium, and she said the Board is proud of those students as well and wished them luck as they compete.

The School Board is hosting a community engagement session via Zoom on Tuesday, February 23, at 5:45 pm, and its link has been distributed via email and the Columbia Heights Facebook page. Columbia Academy and High School families have been sent a survey to communicate with Administration about the learning model choice for students the remainder of the third quarter and fourth quarter, and the subject will be covered at the Board meeting on Tuesday, February 23, about having secondary students at school in a hybrid model starting on March 15. It is being determined how many students will be interested in returning to school and, from there, plans on what that would look like would be forthcoming. The Board is asking all affected families to respond to the survey.

There is no school scheduled for Friday, February 26, through a partnership with Anoka County, as a vaccination clinic has been set up for all teachers who wish to be vaccinated. Should, for some unknown reason, the vaccination clinic would be cancelled, school would be held on Friday; communication updates will be forthcoming.

Ms. Mueller reported another loss at Columbia Heights Public Schools is Karen Crotty, who was the administrative assistant at Northpark Elementary for 35 years, and said Karen and her family are in the thoughts of all. Mayor Márquez Simula expressed her condolences on behalf of the City and said she will be missed by many, then added, "Keep educators in our thoughts. Our schools do a fine job of serving our communities during the good times and bad. Through the distance learning challenges and opportunities, it is hard for them and us to be in community together. And so especially at a sorrowful time like this, we need to support our students, families and all who work in the school district while they process and grieve."

**B. Acknowledgment of Buffalo Allina Clinic Tragedy**

Mayor Márquez Simula acknowledged another tragic and sad event, being the Buffalo Allina Clinic on Tuesday, February 9. She said, "Our thoughts and condolences go out to the families of all those who are affected, the Allina Health System and to the Buffalo community. We are so grateful for the sacrifices and bravery of our healthcare workers and first responders. You always are there, available, risking your lives and answering the call day or night during community celebrations and during the pandemic. You are there to ensure that others can get the emergency medical and public safety responses we all need, and we are truly thankful."

**C. Centennial Celebration Update**

Specialist Rottler reported that approximately 300 residents showed up for the "SnowBlast" event in January, and the City hopes to bring that event back next year. Dave's Sport Shop in Fridley was a partner and offered discounts for skate rentals and skate sharpenings, which resulted in sharpening 39 pairs of skates and 30 rentals. 19 Centennial calendars of 275 remain, at \$5.00 each, and he can be contacted for anyone interested in purchasing one. Additional copies of the coloring page contest forms, sponsored with the Northeast Bank, have been distributed to the Library and Recreation Building; submissions are due Saturday, March 6.

“Music in the Park” was announced by the City, and nine bands have applied; a final band selection by the City and Centennial Celebration Committee will be forthcoming. The “Snow Sculpture Contest” is due Monday, March 1.

The City partnered with the Minnesota Streetcar Museum in hosting a virtual presentation on the history of streetcars in Columbia Heights, and 37 people attended via Zoom and 60 people signed up. Councilmember Buesgens, who participated, said it was very interesting and expressed sadness that streetcars are not able to be used today.

House historian Kathy Kullberg will partner with the City for a virtual event in May regarding “Architects Avenue” and then in September with the Library for a walking tour of those houses.

The City will be partnering on Arbor Day with Sister Cities to do a tree planting ceremony with urban forestry specialist Liam Genter on Friday, April 30, at 2:00 pm at Lomiaki Park. A tree sale will follow as well.

Planning stages have begun for the “Saturday in July” on July 17, and the City is looking to partner with Columbia Heights organizations and places of worship to host a penny carnival, with each sponsoring their own carnival booth. Punch cards will be handed out to residents to play carnival games and win prizes.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

*Motion by Councilmember Buesgens, seconded by Councilmember Novitsky, to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented. A roll call vote was taken. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.*

**1. Approve February 1, 2021 Work Session Minutes**

MOTION: Move to approve the minutes of the City Council Work Session of February 1, 2021

**2. Approve February 8, 2021 City Council Meeting Minutes**

MOTION: Move to approve the minutes of the City Council Meeting of February 8, 2021

**3. Accept January 6, 2021 Library Board Minutes**

MOTION: Move to accept the Library Board Minutes of January 6, 2021.

**4. Second Reading of Ordinance 1664, an Ordinance amending Chapter 3, Article 3 of the Columbia Heights City Code Relating to Administration of Boards and Commissions and Removal of Inactive Commissions.**

MOTION: Move to waive the reading of Ordinance 1664, there being ample copies available to the public.

MOTION: Move to approve Ordinance 1664, an Ordinance amending Chapter 3, Article 3 of the Columbia Heights City Code Relating to Administration of Boards and Commissions and Removal of Inactive Commissions, and direct staff to send a summary of the ordinance as presented, for publication in the legal newspaper.

- 5. Approve Resolution 2021-19 Requesting Funds from the Anoka County HRA**  
MOTION: Move to waive the reading of Resolution No. 2021-19, there being ample copies available to the public.  
MOTION: Move to approve Resolution No. 2021-19, a resolution requesting funds from the Anoka County Housing and Redevelopment Authority to support economic development activities within the City of Columbia Heights.
- 6. Approve Resolution 2021-20 for a Joint Grant Application to MnDOT Supporting the Rehabilitation of 53rd Avenue from Central to University Avenues**  
MOTION: Move to waive the reading of Resolution 2021-20, there being ample copies available to the public.  
MOTION: Move to adopt Resolution 2021-20, being a resolution in support of the LRIP grant application to MnDOT jointly with the City of Fridley for the 53rd Avenue street rehabilitation and pedestrian improvements from Central to University Avenues.
- 7. Rental Housing Licenses**  
MOTION: Move to approve the items listed for rental housing license applications for February 22, 2021, in that they have met the requirements of the Property Maintenance Code.
- 8. License Agenda**  
MOTION: Move to approve the items as listed on the business license agenda for February 22, 2021 as presented.
- 9. Review of Bills**  
MOTION: Move that in accordance with Minnesota Statute 412.271, subd. 8 the City Council has reviewed the enclosed list of claims paid by check and by electronic funds transfer in the amount of \$2,200,704.58.

## **CITY COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

### **Report of the City Council**

Mayor Márquez Simula attended a Regional Council of Mayors meeting, met with Columbia Heights faith leaders at a get-to-know-you meeting and said she looked forward to working with them, and attended a diversity and equity Allyship meeting. She was interviewed by one of the co-editors of the High School's Heights Herald newspaper and read a book to a classroom at Highland Elementary. HeightsNEXT donated six large boxes of yarn, which had been received last year, to "Little Free Fiber Library" in Columbia Heights.

Councilmember Jacobs attended the Transportation Alliance meeting regarding highway funding and budget setting process and how that is accomplished; attended an FTA seminar on the impact of large conveyances in urban communities, "117<sup>th</sup> Congress on the Advocacy Roles Related to COVID and Mental Health"; watched an independent lens production, "Women in Blue," which focused on the Minneapolis female police force and the changes they've been through, and the three-part series on QAnon and the Black Church series. She finished her individual training on the League of Minnesota

Cities and has one more breakout session on Friday, February 26; attended a seminar on rule changes and how the Care Act affects HIPPA protections; and facilitated six resident reach-outs this past period.

Councilmember Buesgens attended the developing leader in situs workshop for advanced councilmember training with the League of Minnesota Cities; met with a person from Conservation Minnesota with Mayor Márquez Simula; and watched the streetcar presentation online that the City put on, noting that it was very fascinating and will be available on the City cable channel and YouTube for residents who were not able to attend.

#### **Report of the City Manager**

Manager Bourgeois reported that the City received recognition from the Census Bureau, in that the City received the highest self-reporting count, and recognized the Complete Count Committee and its chair, Councilmember Jacobs. She also confirmed that the streetcar video is on Facebook and YouTube via a link on the website and will soon be available on cable, if it is not on there already. The newsletter will be distributed in the next few weeks. She also encouraged residents to sign up for Code Red via the City website, which would notify them of any weather-related emergencies. Reminded those interested that Board and Commission applications are due by Sunday, February 28.

#### **Report of the City Attorney**

Attorney Hoeft had no update to report.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion by Councilmember Jacobs, seconded by Councilmember Novitsky, to adjourn. A roll call vote was taken. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.*

Meeting adjourned at 7:24 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Nicole Tingley, City Clerk/Council Secretary