



Special Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 03, 2024 at 6:30 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Roll Call

Council President Amy Roelke called the Special Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 6:30pm. Members present included Council President Amy Roelke, Mayor Joe Hammer, Alderperson Sarah Motiff, Alderperson Trina Reid, Alderperson Michael Lawson, Alderperson Ryan Rostad and Alderperson Molly Finkler.

Notice of Open Meeting

Noted as posted.

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Alderperson Rostad, Seconded by Alderperson Finkler to approve the agenda.

Voting Yea: Council President Roelke, Mayor Hammer, Alderperson Motiff, Alderperson Reid, Alderperson Lawson, Alderperson Rostad, and Alderperson Finkler. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Public Comment

None.

New Business

1. Presentation by Bray Architects regarding Public Safety Feasibility Study:

Administrator Amundson reminded all that Council approved hiring Bray Architects to do a feasibility study and space analysis on the City's current Fire and Police Department facilities. Matt Wolfert and Joseph Loring shared the Facilities Assessment results with the Committee and staff present. This study revealed that the Fire Station Building issues include its age, roof condition, size, safety concerns and ADA non-compliance. The Police Department building, formerly an insurance office, proved out better, but is not ideal either. Key takeaways include the current need to use the basement for processing, the size of the building and storage availability. In addition, the complete Space Needs Study was shared which factors in a plan for future city needs and growth. Bray also shared preliminary test fit plans for the two city owned properties at Tower Drive, and 1149 W. James Street including both pros and cons for each. A Public Information Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at 6:00pm in the Community Center.

2. Discussion regarding Raze Order for 235 W Harrison Street:

The home at 235 W. Harrison Street was destroyed in a fire on September 13, 2024. According to the City's Building Inspector, the home was rendered dangerous, unsafe, unsanitary or otherwise unfit for human habitation and unreasonable to repair. The City issued a Raze Order on October 15, 2024 which gave the owner 30 days to raze the building. The owner has not complied, and the Committee was presented with three options from city Attorney Johnson, which were discussed. Staff is looking for direction from the Council. Mayor Hammer asked for this to be moved forward to the December 3, 2024 regular Council meeting.

3. Discussion of Resolution No. 14-24 supporting the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Small Business Development Grant:

CED Mike Kornmann shared that this is a newer grant opportunity from WEDC which allows a municipality to create their own program to assist with business creation, retention and expansion. It would be open to downtown properties in the central business district and include interior alterations, safety issues, accessibility, electrical and utility updates, in addition to facades. This is a separate application process than the Façade Grant program. The resolution shows the the City of Columbus supports this grant and if awarded, it will accept it. Committee agreed to move forward to the 12/03/24 Regular Council meeting.

4. Discussion of Resolution No. 15-24 supporting Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Vibrant Spaces Grant:

Kornmann shared the background for the WEDC Vibrant Spaces Grant and that the Historical Landmarks and Preservation Commission is requesting \$50,000 through the grant to add improvements to the Rest Haven building in Fireman's Park. This resolution is to show city support which is required for acceptance of a WEDC Vibrant Spaces grant application and award. Committee agreed to move forward to the December 3, 2024 regular Council meeting.

5. Discussion regarding ratification of 2025 Utility Operating Budgets:

The Utility Commission passed their Electric, Water and Wastewater 2025 Utility Operating Budgets on November 21, 2024 and as part of the ordinance, the council is required to ratify them. Alder Lawson asked for clarification that the budget was prepared with a 3%, not 83% increase for all Utility wages. Amundson thanked Director Holbert and Treasurer Larson for their work on this project. Committee agreed to move forward to the December 3, 2024 regular Council meeting.

Adjourn

Motion made by Alderperson Rostad, Seconded by Alderperson Finkler to adjourn the meeting at 7:50pm.

Voting Yea: Council President Roelke, Mayor Hammer, Alderperson Motiff, Alderperson Reid, Alderperson Lawson, Alderperson Rostad, and Alderperson Finkler. Motion carried.

*A quorum of city committees and/or commissions may be present at this meeting. No action will be taken or considered by those committees and/or commissions.