



Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 15, 2026 at 6:30 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Roll Call

Council President Finkler called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. The following members were present: Mayor Joe Hammer, Council President Molly Finkler, Alderperson Rhonda Fuller, Alderperson Michael Lawson, Alderperson Trina Reid and Alderperson Ryan Rostad. Alderperson Amy Roelke was excused.

Notice of Open Meeting

Noted as posted.

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Alderperson Rostad, Seconded by Mayor Hammer to approve the agenda. Motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

Public Comment *(Public comments will be limited to three (3) minutes per speaker. Speakers must begin by stating their name and address for the record. To ensure that all individuals have an opportunity to be heard, the presiding officer may enforce the time limit and may call speakers to conclude their remarks when their time has expired.)*

None.

New Business

1. Discussion of the 2027 Dodge County Humane Society Stray Animal Contract:

Clerk Caine shared that the 2027 Dodge County Humane Society Stray Animal service fee will increase \$200 over last year to \$2,000. This covers up to five stray animals. The city can specify five stray "dogs, only." In addition, the city can approve that the Humane Society must have approval before accepting any animal, as we have done in prior years. Committee members agreed to move forward to the September 15, 2026 Common Council meeting.

2. Discuss and consider approving the Columbus Police Department to start fundraising efforts for a K9 unit:

Chief Weiner and Officer Seely shared that the Police Department would like to start a fundraising campaign to raise monies towards a K9 Unit for the department as a way to increase retention and recruitment efforts. They would like to run the program on donations, sponsorships and fundraising and once about \$50,000 in funding is secured, post for the K9 Officer position. Chief Weiner also shared that the section referring to K9 is currently blank within their union contract. Committee members agreed to move forward to the September 15, 2026 Common Council meeting.

3. Discussion of Revised Administrative Assistant Job Description and Police Clerk Job Description Updated to Public Safety Clerk:

Finance Director Riddle shared the revised Administrative Assistant Job Description to include duties that benefit Finance, DPW, Recreation and the Clerk. Fire Department duties previously handled by the position will revert back to the Police Clerk who would be retitled Public Safety Clerk. Both positions were budgeted for full time in 2026. This is a restructure. She is asking for

consideration of these changes. Committee members agreed to move forward to the September 15, 2026 Common Council meeting.

4. Discussion of 2027 Budget and Council Direction:

Riddle presented the 2027 Budget Overview to the committee, asking for input and direction from the Committee Members. The Draft Budget will be presented at the October 6, 2026 Council meeting with Department Heads, with the Final Budget Presentation to follow on October 15, 2026. The Public Hearing and final approval is set for November 4, 2026. Riddle shared that the Library staff is set to receive a 3.6% COLA payroll increase in 2027, as approved by the Library Board. A city payroll overview from 2026 to 2027 was also included in the presentation.

Department staffing requests include a full-time Fire Inspector or a full-time Fire Chief, a Patrol Officer, and a DPW Maintenance Worker II or a Parks Lead. In-depth discussion on the CIP, borrowing and other needs for the city will also take place at the October 6, 2026 Common Council meeting.

Discussion took place regarding additional staffing, esp. a Parks Lead; contracting services; additional funding resources/options, including grants; working more with the Columbus School District; and a potential COLA increase.

This feedback will be taken into consideration when compiling the Draft Budget.

Adjourn

Motion made by Alderperson Rostad, Seconded by Alderperson Fuller to adjourn at 7:53pm. Motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

*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.