

COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Council Chambers
C. E. "Red" McDaniel City Services Center- Second Floor
3111 Citizens Way, Columbus, GA 31906

November 29, 2022
9:00 AM
Regular Meeting / Work Session

MAYOR'S AGENDA

PRESENT: Mayor Pro Tem R. Gary Allen and Councilors Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Charmaine Crabb, Glenn Davis, R. Walker Garrett, John M. House, Bruce Huff, Judy W. Thomas, Toyia Tucker and Evelyn "Mimi" Woodson. City Manager Isaiah Hugley, City Attorney Clifton Fay, Clerk of Council Sandra T. Davis, and Deputy Clerk of Council Lindsey G. McLemore were present.

ABSENT: Mayor B. H. "Skip" Henderson, III was absent.

The following documents have been included as a part of the electronic Agenda Packet: (1) Liberty Theatre Cultural Center Presentation; (2) CORTA – Changing Live Through Tennis Presentation; (3) Columbus Police Department Presentation; (4) Georgia Power Presentation; (5) American Rescue Plan (ARP) Presentation

The following documents were distributed to the members of Council: (1) Apalachicola Chattahoochee Flint River Basin (ACF) Presentation

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Pro Tem R. Gary Allen, Presiding

INVOCATION: Offered by Dr. Jimmy Elder from First Baptist Church of Columbus, Georgia

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Mayor Pro Tem Allen

MINUTES

1. Approval of minutes for the November 15, 2022, Council Meeting. Councilor Tucker made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Councilor House and carried unanimously by the ten members present. (*Councilor Woodson was not seated at the time of this vote; however, indicated to the Clerk that her vote be cast in the affirmative.*)

PUBLIC AGENDA

1. Mr. Adrian Chester, Re: The Liberty Theatre.

Councilor Woodson then made a motion to bring forward Item #3 on the City Manager's Agenda, which is a resolution authorizing the City Manager to accept ownership of the Liberty Theatre upon its transfer to the Columbus Consolidated Government, seconded by Councilor Tucker and carried unanimously by the ten members present.

CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA

3. WORK SESSION AGENDA

- C. Liberty Theatre Cultural Arts Center Proposed Transfer of Ownership to City and Grant Opportunity- Pam Hodge, Deputy City Manager of Finance, Planning and Development

Deputy City Manager Pam Hodge approached the rostrum to provide information on the proposed ownership transfer of the Liberty Theatre Cultural Arts Center to the City of Columbus and the grant opportunities that would be available as a result.

City Manager Isaiah Hugley stated if Council considers the request, he ensures the Liberty Theatre Cultural Arts Center would retain its identity because of its cultural and historical significance.

Resolution (379-22): A resolution authorizing the City Manager to accept ownership of the Liberty Theatre upon its transfer to the Columbus Consolidated Government. Councilor Woodson made a motion to approve a resolution authorizing the transfer of ownership of the Liberty Theatre Cultural Arts Center to the City of Columbus, seconded by Councilor Tucker and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

1. Memorandum of Understanding with the Greater Columbus Georgia Chamber of Commerce for Small Business and Non-Profit Grant Program Administration Services

Resolution (380-22): A resolution authorizing the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Greater Columbus Georgia Chamber of Commerce to administer the Columbus Consolidated Government Small Business and Non-Profit Grant Programs funded by State Fiscal Recovery Funds under the American Rescue Plan. Councilor Tucker made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Woodson and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

2. PURCHASES

- A. Three (3) Ford Explorers for the Fire & EMS Department – Georgia Statewide Contract Cooperative Purchase

Resolution (381-22): A resolution authorizing the purchase of three (3) 2023 Ford Explorers for the Fire & EMS Department, from Allan Vigil Ford (Morrow, GA), by cooperative purchase via Georgia Statewide Contract #99999-SPD-ES40199373-002, as follows: one (1) unit at a total cost of \$36,958.00, and two (2) units at a cost of \$33,983.00 each, totaling \$67,966.00; with a grand total for all three vehicles at \$104,924.00. Councilor Woodson made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Garrett and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

EMERGENCY PURCHASES - INFORMATION ONLY

1. FORD F-250 4x4 PICKUP FOR HOMELAND SECURITY

On November 10, 2022, the City Manager approved the emergency purchase of one (1) Ford F-250 4x4 Pickup for Homeland Security, due to exigent circumstances, per the Procurement Ordinance, Article 3-115, Emergency Procurement.

This vehicle was approved in the FY23 Budget for use by staff in the performance of their daily duties. The State Contract vendor, Allan Vigil Ford, notified the Public Works Director on November 9, 2022, that the Order Bank for these vehicles will open and close on November 14, 2022. Consequently, the vehicle had to be ordered as soon as possible.

The vehicle will be purchased from Allan Vigil Ford at a unit price of \$51,376.00 by Cooperative Purchase via Georgia Statewide Contract #99999-SPD-ES40199373-002. This is a new vehicle.

Funding is available in the FY23 Budget: General Fund – Homeland Security – Homeland Security – Light Trucks; 0101-450-1000-HSEC-7722.

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2. **2023 CHEVROLET TAHOE FOR MUSCOGEE COUNTY PRISON**

On November 16, 2022, the City Manager approved the emergency purchase of one (1) 2023 Chevrolet Tahoe for Muscogee County Prison, due to exigent circumstances, per the Procurement Ordinance, Article 3-115, Emergency Procurement.

This vehicle was approved in the FY23 Budget for use by Warden Herbert Walker. The State Contract vendor, Hardy Chevrolet, notified the Public Works Director on November 1, 2022, that the Order Bank for these vehicles will open and close between November 16, 2022 and November 18, 2022, but that the specific vehicle is available on their lot. Therefore, due to the order bank closing a request to purchase the vehicle was made due to its immediate availability.

The vehicle will be purchased from Hardy Chevrolet at a unit price of \$38,201.00 by Cooperative Purchase via Georgia Statewide Contract #99999-SPD0000183-0002. This is a new vehicle.

Funding is available in the FY23 Budget: General Fund – MCP – Warden – Light Trucks; 0101-420-1000-MCCI-7722.

3. **WORK SESSION AGENDA**

- A. Restoring Locks & Dams on ACF – Phillip Clayton, Director of Economic Development & Executive Director, TriRivers Waterway Development Association

Executive Director Phillip Clayton (TriRivers Waterway Development Association) approached the rostrum to provide a presentation on a project to restore the locks and dams of the inland waterways to allow the transportation of freight. He requested Council to approve a resolution, asking the local delegation to encourage the Army Corps of Engineers to direct \$136 million of Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding to repair the system.

REFERRAL(S):

FOR THE CITY MANAGER:

- Bring a resolution back to Council for consideration, as requested by Executive Director Clayton.
(Request of Councilor Thomas)

RESOLUTION ON TRANSPARENCY:

Councilor R. Walker Garrett stated during the meeting on November 8, 2022, he requested a resolution on transparency in government, where important items for Council's consideration would be provided a week prior to the meeting. He expressed his concerns regarding a resolution that came before Council as a last-minute add-on at the November 15, 2022 meeting, and stated several Councilors were not aware of what was going on at the time when the vote was called.

- B. Cooper Creek Tennis Center Update - CORTA Board President Michelle Fuller and Judy Pearce

CORTA Board President Michelle Fuller approached the rostrum to provide a presentation on the history of the Columbus Regional Tennis Association, Inc. (CORTA), partnerships, leagues, and the community programs it has implemented over the years. She also provided information on the future enhancement projects for the Cooper Creek Tennis Center. She explained through another public/private partnership between CORTA and the Columbus Consolidated Government, the aging areas of the complex and the addition of enhancements can be achieved.

Deputy City Manager Pam Hodge approached the rostrum to explain there is funding available in the SPLOST to assist; since, one of the projects on the list does include improvements at Cooper Creek.

- D. 2023 Legislative Agenda – Add Ons: Approval is requested of the add on resolutions for the 2023 Legislative Session of the Georgia General Assembly, which the Mayor and Council deem appropriate.

Item #1- Designation of Muscogee County as A Single County Judicial Circuit

Councilor Woodson made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Tucker and opened for discussion.

District Attorney Stacey Jackson approached the rostrum to speak in opposition to the designation of Muscogee County as a single county judicial circuit. He expressed concerns with losing State resources as a single county judicial circuit.

City Manager Isaiah Hugley stated he would have his staff verify the information provided by District Attorney Jackson and bring back to Council. He suggested Council delay this item to allow time for more information to be provided and Council will be able to make an informed decision.

Councilor Woodson withdrew her motion to approve.

Councilor Tucker made a motion to allow NAACP President Wane Hailes to speak on this item, seconded by Councilor Woodson, and carried by a six-to-four vote, with Councilors Barnes, Davis, Garrett, Huff, Tucker, and Woodson voting in favor, and Mayor Pro Tem Allen and Councilors Crabb, House and Thomas voting no.

NAACP President Wane Hailes approached the rostrum to speak in favor of the resolution. He then suggested public hearings be held to inform the public of the information provided by District Attorney Jackson and all other information to allow everyone an understanding of how this would impact Muscogee County.

Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to amend the resolution to request the local legislative delegation to study Muscogee County as a one Judicial Circuit, seconded by Councilor Tucker and carried by an eight-to-two vote, with Mayor Pro Tem Allen and Councilors Barnes, Davis, Garrett, House, Huff, Tucker, and Woodson voting in favor, and Councilor Crabb and Thomas voting in opposition.

Councilor Tucker then made a motion to approve the resolution as amended, seconded by Councilor Woodson and defeated by a three-to-seven vote, with Councilors Barnes, Tucker, and Woodson voting in favor, and Mayor Pro Tem Allen and Councilors Crabb, Davis, Garrett, House, Huff, and Thomas voting in opposition.

Item #2- Casino Gaming Referendum

Resolution (382-22): A resolution requesting that the Local Legislative Delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce or support legislation to authorize a referendum to allow Georgia citizens to vote as to whether casino gaming should be allowed in Georgia for the purpose of Hope Scholarship funding and to provide for a local referendum in Muscogee County in the event that casino gaming is approved in the statewide referendum and a casino is proposed for Columbus. Councilor Garrett made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Tucker and carried by a seven-to-three vote, with Mayor Pro Tem Allen and Councilors Barnes, Garrett, Huff, Thomas, Tucker, and Woodson voting in favor, and Councilors Crabb, Davis and House voting no.

Item #3- Legitimation Procedures

Resolution (383-22): A resolution requesting that the Local Legislative Delegation to the Georgia General Assembly introduce or expressing support for making legitimation procedures more easily accessible to biological fathers. Councilor House made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Woodson and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

Item #4- Municipal Court Jurisdiction

Resolution (384-22): A resolution requesting that the Local Legislative Delegation amend an Act establishing the Municipal Court of Columbus, Georgia, approved August 12, 1915 (GA. L. 1915, P. 63), as amended, particularly by an Act approved March 29, 1983 (GA. L. 1983, P. 4443), so as to increase the civil jurisdiction amount of said court to \$50,000; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes. Councilor Garrett made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor House and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

Item #5- Housing Affordability

Councilor Toyia Tucker requested that the resolution be amended to request enhancing the housing affordability study to include urban, rural and suburban areas.

Item #6- Mayor/Mayor Pro Tem Compensation

City Manager Isaiah Hugley explained that he requested this item since the Columbus Consolidated Government went through a new pay study. He stated those subordinates to the Mayor make significantly more and he believes it is appropriate to address this issue. He explained he is suggesting the Mayor be paid 70% of the City Manager's salary and the salary of the Mayor Pro Tem be set at 35% of the salary of the Mayor.

REFERRAL(S):

FOR THE CITY MANAGER:

- Bring this back as a recommendation at the next budget session. (*Request of Councilor Thomas*)
- Include the pay for the City Council at next budget session. (*Request of Councilor Woodson*)

Item #7- New Options Waiver Program and Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program

Resolution (385-22): A resolution requesting that the Local Legislative Delegation evaluate and appropriately fund operation of the New Options Waiver (NOW) and the Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP), which offer home and community-based services for people with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) or Developmental Disabilities (DD). Councilor House made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Allen and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

G. Police Crime Prevention Update - Freddie Blackmon, Chief of Columbus Police Department

Columbus Police Chief Freddie Blackmon approached the rostrum to provide information on the 2022 crime suppression detail statistics for the Patrol Division and crime prevention. He also provided information on changes within the Columbus Police Department to address the officer retention issue.

REFERRAL(S):

FOR THE POLICE CHIEF AND SHERIFF:

- Police Chief, Sheriff, Chief of the Schools, the Chief of CSU (Columbus State University) and all other available law enforcement to all get together to see how you can work together to use each other's resources and assets for a comprehensive crime plan. (*Request of Councilor Garrett*)

NOTE: Councilor Garrett left the Council Chambers at approximately 12:36 pm and returned to the meeting virtually for the remainder of the meeting.

H. Sheriff's Crime Prevention Update - Greg Countryman, Sheriff

Muscogee County Sheriff Greg Countryman approached the rostrum to provide an update on the Muscogee County Sheriff's Office. He explained how his department works with federal agencies to make arrest and address crime in the community.

E. Lighting Upgrade Update- Pamela Hodge, Deputy City Manager of Finance, Planning & Development & Georgia Power

External Affairs Manager Robert Watkins (Georgia Power) came forward to introduce the presentation by Georgia Power.

Lighting Executive Nealy Scott (Georgia Power) approached the rostrum to provide a presentation to show the benefits of Smart L.E.D Lighting in community safety. He asked the City Council to review and decide whether they believe it is time to partner with Georgia Power to upgrade the lighting around the community.

Deputy City Manager Pam Hodge approached the rostrum to provide information on the options available to allow the City of Columbus to take part in the lighting program. She explained with the new road projects, the new lighting would be installed, but the City of Columbus would have to update the lighting standards for new development.

F. ARP Phase 2 Update- Pamela Hodge, Deputy City Manager of Finance, Planning & Development

Deputy City Manager Pam Hodge approached the rostrum to provide an update and recommendations on Phase 2 of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021.

BID ADVERTISEMENT

November 30, 2022

1. **PI 0011435 – Metra Park and Ride Facility – RFB No. 23-0019**

Scope of Bid

Provide a park and ride facility for METRA Transit System. The project consists of grading a vacant lot and installing a parking lot and features for METRA Transit System. The project location is 1646 9th Avenue in Columbus, GA.

2. **Service Contract for Various Types of Transmissions (Annual Contract) – RFB No. 23-0020**

Scope of Bid

Columbus Consolidated Government (the City) is requesting bids to repair and rebuild B400R and 6R140 transmissions for METRA Transit System. The services will be procured on an as-needed basis. The City reserves the right to add additional transmissions as METRA Transit System receives new vehicles within the contract period.

The contract period shall be for three years.

3. **Protective Driver Door Shields for Mass Transit Buses – RFB No. 23-0022**

Scope of Bid

The Consolidated Government of Columbus, Georgia, is seeking bids from qualified vendors to provide and install twenty-two (22) protective driver door shields for mass transit buses operated by the METRA Transit System.

4. **Backhoe Loader Rental (Annual Contract) – RFB No. 23-0021**

Scope of Bid

Provide rental of a backhoe on an “as needed” basis. The backhoe will be used by the Public Works Department for various projects. The contract term will be for two (2) years, with the option to renew for three additional twelve-month periods.

December 7, 2022

1. **Watershed Fertilization (Annual Contract) – RFB No. 23-0023**

Scope of Bid

The Columbus Consolidated Government is seeking bids from vendors to provide erosion control at various watershed lakes.

The initial term of the contract will be for two years, with the option to renew for three additional twelve-month periods. Contract renewal shall be contingent upon the mutual agreement of the City and the Contractor.

2. **Metal Storage Shed for METRA – PQ No. 23-0007**

Scope of Quote

The Columbus Consolidated Government (the City) is seeking quotes from qualified vendors to provide one (1) metal storage shed (complete set) of commercial grade metal, for outdoor use at the Department of Transportation/METRA Transfer Center.

3. **Dumpster/Roll Off Container Rental and Servicing (Annual Contract) – RFB No. 23-0016**

Scope of Bid

The Consolidated Government of Columbus, Georgia (the City) is seeking vendors to provide dumpsters/roll-off containers on a rental basis, to include servicing the equipment on an “as needed” basis. Services will be procured both during the week and on weekends.

The contract term will be for two (2) years, with the option to renew for three (3) additional twelve-month periods.

December 9, 2022

1. Grounds Maintenance Services (Annual Contract) – RFP No. 23-0013

Scope of RFP

Provide routine grounds maintenance services on a weekly, monthly and yearly basis, to include fertilizing, weekly mowing, edging, weed control, irrigation, pruning, mulching, disease and insect control, etc. The Public Works Department manages one hundred and eleven (111) grounds maintenance sites within nine contract areas in Muscogee County. These areas enhance the appearance of major road arteries and high visibility areas and improve the quality of life for citizens.

The initial term of the contract will be for two years, with the option to renew for three additional twelve-month periods. Contract renewal shall be contingent upon the mutual agreement of the City and the Contractor.

2. Court Reporter Services for Recorder’s Court (Annual Contract) – RFP No. 23-0014

Scope of RFP

Columbus Consolidated Government (the City) is requesting proposals for court reporter services for all preliminary felony hearings at Recorder’s Court. The court reporter shall also provide services for Advisement of Rights sessions that are held at 8 A.M. on Saturdays and some holidays. The services will be procured on an as-needed basis, and the contract shall commence on February 1, 2023 (date subject to change). **Existing City employees are prohibited from providing court reporting services for Recorder’s Court.**

The initial term of the contract will be for two years, with the option to renew for three additional twelve-month periods. Contract renewal shall be contingent upon the mutual agreement of the City and the Contractor.

CLERK OF COUNCIL’S AGENDA

ENCLOSURES - ACTION REQUESTED

1. Email Correspondence from Ms. Patricia Montgomery resigning from her seat on the Animal Control Advisory Board. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to receive the resignation with regrets, seconded by Councilor House and carried unanimously by the eight members present, with Councilors Davis and Woodson being absent for the vote.

2. Minutes of the following boards:

Board of Tax Assessors, #34-22

Convention & Visitors Bureau, Board of Commissioners, August 18, 2022

Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to receive the minutes of various boards, seconded by Councilor Crabb and carried unanimously by the eight members present, with Councilors Davis and Woodson being absent for the vote.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS - ACTION REQUESTED

3. **MAYOR’S APPOINTMENTS- ANY NOMINATIONS MAY BE CONFIRMED FOR THIS MEETING:**

A. PENSION FUND, EMPLOYEES' BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

A nominee for the seat of Elizabeth Raines Cook (*Eligible to succeed- Interested in serving*) for a term that expired on June 30, 2022, as the Business Community Representative on the Pension Fund, Employees' Board of Trustees (*Mayor's Appointment*). Clerk of Council Davis stated Mayor Henderson wishes to renominate Elizabeth Raines Cook to serve another term. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion for confirmation, seconded by Councilor Crabb and carried unanimously by the eight members present, with Councilors Davis and Woodson being absent for the vote.

4. COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS- READY FOR CONFIRMATION:

A. COLUMBUS AQUATICS COMMISSION: Ms. Janet Bussey was nominated to serve another term of office. (*Councilor Woodson's nominee*) New Term expires: June 30, 2024. Councilor Huff made a motion for confirmation, seconded by Councilor House and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Davis being absent for the vote.

B. COLUMBUS AQUATICS COMMISSION: Mr. Richard Leary was nominated to serve another term of office as the Columbus Hurricane Representative. (*Councilor Woodson's nominee*) New Term expires: June 30, 2024. Councilor Huff made a motion for confirmation, seconded by Councilor House and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Davis being absent for the vote.

C. TREE BOARD: Ms. Kristin Youngquist was nominated to serve another term of office in the At-Large seat. (*Councilor Huff's nominee*) New Term expires: December 31, 2025. Councilor Huff made a motion for confirmation, seconded by Councilor House and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Davis being absent for the vote.

D. TREE BOARD: Ms. Lisa Thomas-Cutts was nominated to serve another term of office in the KCBC Director or Commissioner seat. (*Councilor Huff's nominee*) New Term expires: December 31, 2025. Councilor Huff made a motion for confirmation, seconded by Councilor House and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Davis being absent for the vote.

E. TREE BOARD: Ms. Tannis Danley was nominated to serve another term of office in the Landscape / Forestry seat. (*Councilor Huff's nominee*) New Term expires: December 31, 2025. Councilor Huff made a motion for confirmation, seconded by Councilor House and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Davis being absent for the vote.

F. TREE BOARD: Ms. Catherine Trotter was nominated to serve another term of office in the At-Large seat. (*Councilor Huff's nominee*) New Term expires: December 31, 2025. Councilor Huff made a motion for confirmation, seconded by Councilor House and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Davis being absent for the vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mayor Pro Tem Allen entertained a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss matters of personnel as requested earlier in the meeting by City Attorney Fay. Councilor Thomas made a motion to go into Executive Session, seconded by Councilor House and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Davis being absent for the vote, and the time being 2:14 p.m.

The regular meeting reconvened at 2:56 p.m., at which time, Mayor Pro Tem Allen announced that the Council did meet in executive session to discuss matters of personnel; however, there were no votes taken.

With there being no further business to discuss, Mayor Pro Tem Allen entertained a motion for adjournment. Motion by Councilor Barnes to adjourn the November 29, 2022 Regular Council Meeting / Work Session, seconded by Councilor Woodson and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Davis being absent for the vote, and the time being 2:56 p.m.

Sandra T. Davis, CMC
Clerk of Council
Council of Columbus, Georgia