

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 14, 2023
9:00 AM
Regular Meeting

MAYOR'S AGENDA

PRESENT: Mayor B. H. "Skip" Henderson, III and Mayor Pro Tem R. Gary Allen and Councilors Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Tyson Begly, Joanne Cogle, Charmaine Crabb, Glenn Davis (arrived at 9:04 a.m.), R. Walker Garrett, Bruce Huff (arrived at 9:06 a.m.), Judy W. Thomas and Toyia Tucker. City Manager Isaiah Hugley, City Attorney Clifton Fay, Clerk of Council Sandra T. Davis, and Deputy Clerk of Council Lindsey G. McLemore were present.

The following documents have been included as a part of the electronic Agenda Packet: (1)
Business License Lockbox Update Presentation

The following documents were distributed around the Council table: (1) Document Submitted by Will White for Property Tax Refund Hearing

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor B. H. "Skip" Henderson, III, Presiding

INVOCATION: Offered by Pastor Wayne Anthony, Saint Peter United Methodist Church of Columbus, Georgia

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Mayor Henderson

MINUTES

1. Approval of minutes for the November 7, 2023, Council Meeting and Executive Session. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Councilor Garrett and carried unanimously by the eight members present, with Councilors Davis and Huff being absent for the vote.

PROCLAMATIONS:

2. **Proclamation:** United Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (UAPRN) of West Georgia

Received: Chandler Padgett, Columbus State University

Councilor Jerry "Pops" Barnes read the proclamation into the record, proclaiming November 12-18, 2023, as *Nurse Practitioner Week*, recognizing the vital role of Nurse Practitioners in the health care system and the lives of their patients.

3. **Proclamation:** George Walton Chapter, National Society Daughters of The American Revolution American Indians Committee

Received: Malone Moore

Councilor R. Walker Garrett read the proclamation into the record, proclaiming November 2023, as *National American Indian Heritage Month*, recognizing the significant influence that American Indians and indigenous people have had on the history, culture, and prosperity of the United States.

CITY ATTORNEY’S AGENDA

ORDINANCES

- 1. Ordinance (23-057): 2nd Reading** - An Ordinance amending Chapter 17 of the Columbus Code by repealing and replacing Section 17-25 to revise the criteria for promotion to the rank of Sergeant; and for other purposes. (Mayor Pro-Tem) Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to adopt the ordinance, seconded by Councilor Davis and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.
- 2. Ordinance (23-058): 2nd Reading** - An Ordinance amending Section 3-12(b) of the Columbus Code to revise on premise alcohol licensing requirements for senior living facilities; and for other purposes. (Councilor Thomas) Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to adopt the ordinance, seconded by Councilor Crabb and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.
- 3. 1st Reading - REZN-10-23-0171:** An Ordinance amending the Zoning Atlas of the Consolidated Government of Columbus, Georgia, to change certain boundaries of a district located at 301 42nd Street (parcel # 013-001-043) from Light Manufacturing/Industrial (LMI) Zoning District to Single Family Residential – 1 (SFR1) Zoning District. (Planning Department and PAC recommend approval) (Councilor Garrett)

CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA

- 1. FY 2024 Georgia Department of Transportation – Y410 Funds - Transportation Planning Contract**

Resolution (419-23): A resolution of the Council of Columbus, Georgia authorizing the City Manager of Columbus, Georgia to execute a contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation on behalf of the City for financial assistance to carry out the FY 2024 Y410 Planning Funds for Safe & Accessible Transportation Options – (H.R. 3684 – Sect 11206), as outlined in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and amend the Multi-Governmental Fund by the amount of the award. This funding is required to be included in the Transportation Planning Work Activities of the Columbus-Phenix City Transportation Study (C-PCTS). Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Huff and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

- 2. FY 2024 Georgia Department of Transportation – Transportation Planning Contract**

Resolution (420-23): A resolution of the Council of Columbus, Georgia, authorizing the City Manager of Columbus, Georgia to execute a contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation on behalf of the City for financial assistance to carry out the FY 2024 Transportation Planning Activities of the Columbus-Phenix City Transportation Study (C-PCTS) Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and to amend the Multi-Governmental Fund by the amount of the contract and local funds. Councilor Huff made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Allen and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

3. Dero Fixit Station Donation

Resolution (421-23): A resolution authorizing the City to approve and accept the donation of a Dero Fixit Station from River Valley Regional Commission, Bicycle Columbus and Dragonfly Trails, Inc. Councilor Tucker made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Barnes and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

REFERRAL(S):

FOR THE CITY MANAGER:

- Include in the agreement that Dragonfly Trails, Inc. will maintain the station, or the station will be removed by the Columbus Consolidated Government. (*Request of Councilor Crabb*)

4. Columbus Police Department: Donation Acceptance

Resolution (422-23): A resolution authorizing the acceptance of donated funds of \$6,000 from one anonymous donor within the City of Columbus, Georgia, with no additional funds required. Councilor Tucker made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Allen and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

5. 2023 Homeland Security GSAR (Georgia Search and Rescue) Grant

Resolution (423-23): A resolution authorizing the acceptance of a grant for equipment in the amount of \$15,000.00, or as otherwise awarded, from the Homeland Security Georgia Search and Rescue Program. These funds will be utilized for the purchase of new rescue equipment. Heavy search and rescue involve the location, rescue extrication, and the initial medical stabilization of the victims trapped in the confined space. The GSAR Team is able to respond to incidents across the state under mutual aid, and the goal of the GSAR Team is to have a four-hour response capability anywhere in the state. Councilor Tucker made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Allen and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

6. 2023 Homeland Security Hazmat Grant

Resolution (424-23): A resolution authorizing the acceptance of a grant for equipment in the amount of \$38,335.00, or as otherwise awarded, from the Homeland Security Hazmat Grant Program. These funds will be utilized for the purchase of new hazardous materials equipment. The team responds to hazardous materials emergencies in Muscogee County as well as surrounding communities to provide hazardous material containment to include chemical, radiological and biological incidents. Councilor Tucker made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Allen and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

7. **PURCHASES**

- A. Key Control Management Cabinet System for Muscogee County Prison – Georgia State Contract Cooperative Purchase

Resolution (425-23): A resolution authorizing the purchase of one (1) Morse Watchman Key Control Management Cabinet System from Mobile Communications America, Inc. (Tifton, GA) in the amount of \$34,394.90 for the Muscogee County Prison. The purchase will be accomplished by cooperative purchase via Georgia Statewide Contract #99999-SPD0000172-005. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Huff and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

B. Historic Bus Exterior Restoration and Re-Painting (Re-Bid) – RFB No. 24-0008

Resolution (426-23): A resolution authorizing the contract with Muscogee Paint and Sandblasting, Inc. (Columbus, GA) for historic bus exterior restoration and repainting at a total cost of \$39,700.00. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Huff and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

C. Ace-ID Hand-Held, Non-Contact Chemical Identifier with Accessories for Fire & EMS – New York State Cooperative Contract

Resolution (427-23): A resolution authorizing the purchase of an Ace-ID hand-held, non-contact chemical identifier with accessories for the Fire & EMS Department, from Smith Detection (Edgewood, MD), in the amount of \$32,376.00. The purchase will be accomplished by cooperative purchase via New York State Office of General Services, Bid Number 23173/Contract #PC69033. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Huff and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

D. One 2024 Ford F-250 Super Duty Pick-up Truck for Muscogee County Prison -Georgia State Contract Cooperative Purchase

Resolution (428-23): A resolution authorizing the purchase of one (1) 2024 Ford F-250 Super Duty pick-up truck for Muscogee County Prison, from Allan Vigil Ford-Lincoln (Morrow, GA), by cooperative purchase via Georgia Statewide Contract #99999-SPD-ES40199373-002, at a unit price of \$45,341.00. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Huff and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

F. Upgrade or Replacement of Existing Equipment for CCG-TV Operations – Sourcewell Cooperative Purchase

Resolution (429-23): A resolution authorizing the upgrade and replacement of existing equipment for CCG-TV operations from CDW-G (Vernon Hills, IL) in the amount of \$745,927.18. The purchase will be accomplished by cooperative purchase via Sourcewell Contract #081419-CDW. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Huff and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

E. Automated Speed Detection for School Zone Safety Enforcement (Annual Contract) – RFP No. 23-0036

Resolution (430-23): A resolution authorizing the negotiation of an annual contract with RedSpeed@ Georgia, LLC (Roswell, GA) for equipment and services required for automated speed detection for school zone safety enforcement; and also authorizing the execution of school zone camera license agreement, which will be required for each school zone location. The vendor will share the revenue from payment of issued citations with the City and the Muscogee County School District. Councilor Tucker made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Allen and carried unanimously by eight members with Councilors Crabb and Davis being absent for the vote.

Finance Director Angelica Alexander approached the rostrum to respond to questions from the Council regarding the revenue that will be received from the automated speed detection devices.

REFERRAL(S):

FOR THE CITY MANAGER:

- Provide the revenue information from the devices with the monthly financial snapshot. *(Request of Councilor Tucker)*
- Make sure there is appropriate signage as drivers approach the devices. *(Request of Councilor Davis)*

8. UPDATES AND PRESENTATIONS

A. Business License Lockbox Update - Angelica Alexander, Finance Director

Finance Director Angelica Alexander approached the rostrum to provide an update on the business license lockbox. She explained that the Finance Department was notified by Synovus Bank in June 2022 of a potential change to their lockbox operations but delayed the implementation on multiple occasions. She stated they were notified in August 2023 that the bank will be closing their local lockbox operations in December 2023 and provided the new mailing address for business license renewals.

REFERRAL(S):

FOR THE CITY MANAGER:

- Provide update on the demolition list from Inspections & Code. *(Request of Councilor Tucker)*
- Property located on Carmel Court (Referral #19) was on the demolition list two years ago but was taken off due to repairs. Put the property back on the list where it was two years ago before it was removed. *(Request of Councilor Tucker)*
- Provide update on Animal Control (Referral #23) at the December 5, 2023 Council Meeting. *(Request of Councilor Cogle)*
- Provide documents from the state inspections conducted on Animal Control over the past few years. *(Request of Councilor Davis)*
- Highlight the euthanasia process regarding state law, how the veterinarian is involved, etc. *(Request of Councilor Davis)*

AUTOMATED SPEED DETECTION DEVICES:

Police Chief Stoney Mathis approached the rostrum to speak on City Manager Agenda Item CM#7(E). He explained he will be meeting with the Muscogee County School District and reviewing the traffic studies to determine the four school zone locations where the devices will be installed.

BID ADVERTISEMENT

DATE: November 14, 2023

November 15, 2023

1. 1st Avenue Sidewalk Improvement Project – RFB No. 24-0014

Scope of Bid

The scope of work includes clearing, excavation and removal, earthwork and grading, pavement and miscellaneous site improvements, soil erosion control measures, landscaping and tree planting.

This is a U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funded project, which utilizes Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. The awarded contractor shall adhere to all HUD and CDBG project requirements, including Section 3. The requirements are listed on pages 15 - 35 of the Request for Bids (RFB) document.

November 17, 2023

1. Ambulance Billing and Collection Services for Columbus Fire & EMS Department (Annual Contract) – RFP No. 24-0004

Scope of RFP

Columbus Consolidated Government (the City) invites qualified vendors to provide billing and collection services for the Columbus Fire & EMS Department. The services are required to enhance and develop an internal revenue cycle and will be procured on an as-needed basis.

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.

December 6, 2023

1. Steel Signal Strain Poles (Annual Contract) – RFB No. 24-0017

Scope of RFB

It is the intent of the Columbus Consolidated Government (City) to establish an annual contract with a qualified vendor to provide steel signal strain poles on an “as needed” basis to be delivered to Traffic Engineering Division for the City of Columbus, GA. This bid includes unit costs for a variety of steel signal strain poles that the City may need for traffic signal projects. As information to Vendors, the City averages three to four new/upgrade signal projects each year. The quantity of steel signal strain poles purchased thru this annual contract will vary from year to year, depending on the number of roadway and/or traffic signal projects that are funded.

The term of contract shall be for two (2) years, with the option to renew for three (3) additional twelve-month periods. Contract renewal will be contingent upon the mutual agreement of the City and the Contractor.

December 8, 2023

1. General Contractor Services and Housing Inspection Services for the Community Reinvestment Department (Annual Contract) – RFP No. 24-0012

Scope of RFP

Columbus Consolidated Government (the City) invites qualified vendors to provide general contractor services (Option A) and housing inspection services (Option B) for rehabilitative single-family housing located throughout Columbus-Muscogee County. The Community Reinvestment Department will procure the services on an as-needed basis. **Vendors may submit proposals for one, both or all options.**

Some activities could be a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funded project which utilizes Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Contracts utilizing CDBG funding are subject to state and local laws, as well as federal regulations found in §2 CFR 200.317 through §2 CFR 300.327 and §24 CFR 570.611. Potential bidders must assure that all project activities will be administered in compliance with labor and civil rights laws and regulations for CDBG funded projects.

The initial term of the contract will be for two (2) years, with the option to renew for three (3) additional twelve-month periods. Contract renewal shall be contingent upon the mutual agreement of the City and the Contractor.

ENCLOSURES - INFORMATION ONLY

1. Lakebottom Park Trail Public Forum

REFERRALS:

Referrals: 11.7.23

CLERK OF COUNCIL'S AGENDA

ENCLOSURES - ACTION REQUESTED

1. **RESOLUTION (431-23)** - A resolution excusing Councilor Joanne Cogle from the November 7, 2023, Council Meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Tucker and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

2. **Minutes of the following boards:**

Board of Elections & Registration, October 5, 2023

Board of Tax Assessors, #37-23

Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to receive the minutes of various boards, seconded by Councilor Tucker and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

ENCLOSURES - ACTION REQUESTED

3. **COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS- READY FOR CONFIRMATION:**

A. ANIMAL CONTROL ADVISORY BOARD: Ms. Nancy A. Anderson was nominated to succeed Ms. Jayne Dunn. (*Councilor Garrett's nominee*) Term expires: October 15, 2025. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion for confirmation, seconded by Councilor Huff and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

B. BOARD OF HEALTH: Dr. Bantwal Baliga was nominated to succeed Dr. James Lopez. (*Councilor Barnes' nominee*) Term expires: December 31, 2028. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion for confirmation, seconded by Councilor Barnes and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

UPCOMING BOARD APPOINTMENT:

4. Historic & Architectural Review Board – (Council Appointments / Liberty Cultural Center, Inc. Recommendation)

COUNCIL HEARING:

5. Request for Refund of Property Tax as submitted by Mr. Will White, on behalf of Ms. Elizabeth Heard, for two properties located at: 7636 Schomburg Road and 7381 Blackmon Road.

Mr. Will White approached the rostrum to represent his mother, Ms. Elizabeth Heard, to request a refund of ad valorem taxes for the past three years on two parcels she owns. He stated that he is

specifically requesting a refund for the difference in the taxes charged for the two parcels and what the assessment value should have been under the Conservation Use Valuation for the years 2020, 2021 and 2022. He went on to state his mother's Conservation Use Valuation Application was inaccurately denied by the Tax Assessor's Office for those years.

Tax Assessor Suzanne Widenhouse approached the rostrum to speak on the refund request. She explained there was a medical office building on one of the properties which does not qualify for conservation use, and in 2020, Mr. White appealed the decision that then went to the Board of Equalization, where they sided with the Board of Tax Assessors. She stated Mr. White then appealed to Superior Court on behalf of his mother and a mandatory settlement conference was held and Mr. White failed to pay his certification to continue his appeal. She explained the appeal on the second property was also denied in 2020, since there was not a qualifying use on the property.

City Attorney Clifton Fay stated he would advise Council to wait to get a ruling by the Superior Court for the appeal filed for Tax Year 2022.

Councilor Thomas made a motion to hire an independent third-party environmental attorney to get an opinion on the qualifying use and criteria for Conservation Use Valuation Assessment (CUVA), seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Allen and carried unanimously by the ten members of Council.

With there being no further business to discuss, Mayor Henderson entertained a motion for adjournment. Motion by Councilor Tucker to adjourn the November 14, 2023 Regular Council Meeting, seconded by Councilor Crabb and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Davis being absent for the vote, and the time being 11:32 a.m.

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