

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

January 28, 2025
5:30 PM
Regular Meeting

MAYOR'S AGENDA

PRESENT: Mayor B. H. "Skip" Henderson, III and Mayor Pro Tem R. Gary Allen and Councilors Travis L. Chambers, Joanne Cogle, Charmaine Crabb, Glenn Davis, R. Walker Garrett, Byron Hickey, Bruce Huff and Toyia Tucker. City Manager Isaiah Hugley, City Attorney Clifton Fay, Deputy Clerk of Council Lindsey G. McLemore and Deputy Clerk Pro Tem Tameka Colbert.

ABSENT: Councilor Judy W. Thomas and Clerk of Council Sandra T. Davis were absent.

The following documents have been included as a part of the electronic Agenda Packet: (1) Board of Tax Assessors HB 581 Presentation; (2) HB581 Opt Out – Public Meetings Presentation; (3) Finance Department Positions Assessment Presentation; (4) Media Release, Re: Transition of Animal Services

The following documents were distributed around the Council table: (1)

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

INVOCATION: Offered by Pastor Jimmy Elder – First Baptist Church of Columbus, Georgia

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Mayor Skip Henderson

MINUTES

1. Approval of minutes for the January 7, 2025, 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 nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA

5. UPDATES AND PRESENTATIONS

- B. Floating Homestead Options - HB581 – Suzanne Widenhouse, Chief Appraiser, Tax Assessor's Office.

Chief Appraiser Suzanne Widenhouse approached the rostrum to provide a presentation on HB 581 and responded to questions from the members of the Council.

At the request of Councilor Tucker, **City Attorney Clifton Fay** explained HB 581 does not adversely affect our local constitutional homestead freeze whether we opt in or out and will stay in place until the citizens repeal it.

Deputy City Manager Pam Hodge approached the rostrum to provide a presentation on the required public meetings.

CITY ATTORNEY'S AGENDA

ORDINANCES

1. **2nd Reading** – REZN-10-24-2210: An ordinance amending the Zoning Atlas of the Consolidated Government of Columbus, Georgia, to change certain boundaries of a district located at **5201 Macon Road** (parcel # 098-001-002) from Single Family Residential - 2 (SFR2) to Single Family Residential - 3 (SFR3) Zoning District with conditions and Residential Multifamily - 1 (RMF1) Zoning District. (Planning Department recommends conditional approval. PAC recommends denial.) (Councilor Hickey) Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to amend the ordinance by adding the conditions proposed by staff (1) Remove Condition number 7 and 8 and (2) Revise Condition number 11 to state Access onto a State Road will require compliance with both City's and GDOT requirements, seconded by Councilor Hickey and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting. Councilor Davis made a motion to allow the Applicant/Developer to speak, with no second, the motion died for lack of a second. Councilor Hickey made a motion to deny the proposed rezoning, seconded by Councilor Tucker and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

Before making a motion to amend the ordinance to include the recommended conditions from the Planning Department, **Mayor Pro Tem R. Gary Allen** explained this is a necessary step in the legal process in case the rezoning is appealed.

Planning Director Will Johnson came forward to answer questions from Councilor Hickey for clarification on the conditions.

CITY ATTORNEY'S AGENDA (continued)

2. **Ordinance (25-003) – 2nd Reading-** An ordinance amending the budgets for the Fiscal Year 2025 by appropriating amounts in each fund for various operational activities. (FY25 MID-YEAR BUDGET AMENDMENT) (Budget Review Committee) Councilor Tucker made a motion to remove the additional position for the Finance Department and replace with two (2) additional License & Tax Clerks – G115, seconded by Councilor Hickey and opened for further discussion. Councilor Garrett made a substitute motion to amend the ordinance by removing various positions listed for the Finance Department: one (1) Administrative Assistant – G115 and one (1) Assistant Director – G132, seconded by Councilor Huff and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to adopt the ordinance as amended, seconded by Councilor Garrett and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

After the motion was made by Councilor Tucker to amend the ordinance, **Councilor Travis L. Chambers** requested that Human Resources Director Reather Hollowell provide the presentation on the position assessment for the Finance Department.

CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA

5. UPDATES AND PRESENTATIONS

A. Finance Position Assessment - Reather Hollowell, Director, Human Resources.

Human Resources Director Reather Hollowell approached the rostrum to provide a presentation on the position assessment conducted on the Finance Department as requested by Councilor Chambers at the January 7, 2025, Council Meeting. (*NOTE: This update was called up as the next order of business as listed on the City Manager's Agenda Item 6 "A"*)

Finance Director Angelica Alexander came forward, responding to questions on the employee training for software and the new practices in the Revenue Division to document license payments.

REFERRAL(S):

FOR THE CITY MANAGER:

- Figure out a way to fill entry-level slots to get the work done. (*Request of Councilor Chambers*)

6. **1st Reading-** REZN-11-24-2362: An Ordinance amending the Zoning Atlas of the Consolidated Government of Columbus, Georgia, to change certain boundaries of a district located at **2311 Fort Benning Road** (parcel # 062-037-003) from General Commercial (GC) Zoning District to Residential Office (RO) Zoning District. (Planning Department and PAC recommend approval.) (Councilor Cogle)

3. **Ordinance (25-004) – 2nd Reading-** An ordinance amending Section 3-5(e) of the Columbus Code, to revise a provision pertaining to the issuance of alcohol licenses; and for other purposes. (Councilors Davis and Garrett) Councilor Garrett made a motion to adopt the ordinance, seconded by Councilor Crabb and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

4. **Ordinance (25-005) – 2nd Reading-** An ordinance amending Section 2-68 of the Columbus Code to provide that the internal auditor/compliance officer shall be subject to the direction of the Columbus Council; and for other purposes. (Councilor Hickey) (Proposed substitute by Mayor Pro-Tem) Councilor Hickey made a motion to amend the ordinance by changing the first sentence of Section 2-68. – Supervision and direction to read “The internal auditor/compliance officer shall be subject to the direction of the Columbus Council” as listed in the substitute ordinance, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Allen and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting. Councilor Crabb made a motion to adopt the substitute ordinance as amended, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Allen and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

Councilor Tucker made a motion to add Councilors Chambers and Cogle to the subcommittee to oversee the internal auditor/compliance officer, seconded by Councilor Crabb and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

5. **1st Reading-** REZN-10-24-2232: An ordinance amending the Zoning Atlas of the Consolidated Government of Columbus, Georgia to change certain boundaries of a district located at **1126 30th Street** (parcel # 029-013-001) from Neighborhood Commercial (NC) Zoning District to

Residential Multifamily - 1 (RMF1) Zoning District. (Planning Department and PAC recommend approval.) (Continued on 1st Reading from 1-7-25.) (Councilor Garrett)

7. **1st Reading-** REZN-11-24-2363- An Ordinance amending the Zoning Atlas of the Consolidated Government of Columbus, Georgia to change certain boundaries of a district located at **425 3rd Avenue** (parcel #002-015-002) from Historic (HIST) Zoning District to Residential Office (RO) Zoning District with Conditions. (Planning Department and PAC recommend approval with conditions.) (Councilor Cogle)

RESOLUTIONS

8. **Resolution (019-25):** A Resolution approving a Special Exception to allow for an Oil Change Facility in the existing building located at 920 Veterans Parkway located in the Uptown (UPT) zoning district. (Planning Department and PAC recommend approval.) (Councilor Cogle) Councilor Huff made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Cogle and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.
9. **Resolution (020-25):** A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute the First Amendment to Stadium Sublease Agreement. (Councilor Davis) Councilor Tucker made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Hickey and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

PUBLIC AGENDA

1. Ms. Theresa El-Amin, representing Southern Anti-Racism Network, Re: CCG Elected Officials and Staff must be held accountable. **CANCELLED**
2. Mr. Timothy Veals, Re: Concerns about Property Owners/Landlords needing to clean their properties and trash in the streets of his neighborhood.

REFERRAL(S):

FOR THE CITY MANAGER:

- When possible, set up portable cameras at the intersection Langdon Street and Hunt Avenue to identify the individuals dumping trash. (*Request of Councilor Hickey*)

CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA

1. **Dinglewood Park Grant Extension - NRT 22(12)**

Resolution (021-25): A resolution authorizing the extension of a grant with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GDNR) to extend the lifetime of the grant to December 1, 2026. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Hickey and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

2. **Firehouse Subs Grant Agenda Report & Resolution**

Resolution (022-25): A resolution to apply for and accept if awarded a grant for a mini ambulance replacement vehicle and stretcher for Columbus Fire and Emergency Medical Services in the amount of \$38,695.00, or as otherwise awarded, from the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation with no matching funds required. The Multi-Governmental Fund will be amended by the amount of the award. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Hickey and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

3. **FY2026 Family Connection Grant**

Resolution (023-25): A resolution to continue to serve as Fiscal Agent and to submit an application and, if approved, accept a grant from the Georgia Department of Human Services in the amount of \$52,500, or as otherwise awarded, with no local match requirement, for Fiscal Year 2026, to support the Columbus/Muscogee County Family Connection collaborative for improving child health and welfare, school performance, family stability, family economic capacity, and to reduce child abuse, neglect, and teenage pregnancy, and to amend the Family Connection Partnership Fund (Fund 985) by the amount of the award. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Hickey and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

4. **Motorola Solutions Foundation Grant**

Resolution (024-25): A resolution to apply for and accept if awarded a grant for a drone and related training for Columbus Fire and Emergency Medical Services in the amount of \$37,500.00, or as otherwise awarded, from the Motorola Solutions Foundation with no matching funds required. The Multi-Governmental Fund will be amended by the amount of the award. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Hickey and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

6. **PURCHASES**

A. Three (3) Paratransit Buses for METRA – Georgia State Contract Cooperative Purchase
(NOTE: This item was pulled by the City Manager.)

B. Mobile Inmate Tracking System for the Sheriff's Office – Cooperative Contract Purchase

Resolution (025-25): A resolution authorizing the purchase of a mobile inmate tracking system from Insight Public Sector (Chandler, AZ), in the amount of \$83,721.16. The purchase will be accomplished by cooperative purchase via Omnia Partners Contract #23-6692-03; and additionally authorizing payment of applicable annual fees for the maintenance, hosting, and license for the system software. Councilor Huff made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Hickey and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

D. One (1) Chevrolet Tahoe for Homeland Security & Emergency Management

Resolution (026-25): A resolution authorizing the purchase of one Chevrolet Tahoe, for Homeland Security & Emergency Management, from Sons Chevrolet (Columbus, GA) at a cost of \$77,668.00. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Hickey and

carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

C. Consulting Services for Recycling Facility – RFP No. 25-0009

Resolution (027-25): A resolution authorizing the execution of a contract with Resource Recycling Services, Inc. (Ann Arbor, MI), to provide consulting services for recycling facility. Costs will be covered by Integrated Waste Fund Reserves. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Hickey and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

Public Works Director Drale Short came forward to respond to questions from Councilor Davis, explaining there was an incident where equipment caught fire, but the Recycling Center was not damaged.

EMERGENCY PURCHASES

1. **Emergency Purchase – Information Only**

KITCHEN EQUIPMENT FOR MUSCOGEE COUNTY PRISON

On December 18, 2024, Warden Herbert Walker identified the need to make an emergency purchase to replace a Rotisserie Oven at Muscogee County Prison. The current oven was installed over 26 years ago. Ventilation to the system requires constant repairs due to poor operation. Consequently, due to safety concerns MCP has removed the current oven from service. The oven is needed for daily meal preparation at MCP, therefore a replacement unit must be purchased expeditiously.

The replacement oven will be purchased from Mobile Fixture & Equipment (Columbus, GA) by cooperative purchase via Federal GSA Contract #GS-07F-0154V. The cost for the replacement equipment is \$55,377.57.

The City Manager approved the emergency purchase on December 18, 2024.

7. **UPDATES AND PRESENTATIONS**

- A. Finance Position Assessment - Reather Hollowell, Director, Human Resources. (*NOTE: This item was called upon earlier in the meeting during the City Attorney's Agenda.*)

- B. Floating Homestead Options - HB581 – Suzanne Widenhouse, Chief Appraiser, Tax Assessor's Office. (*NOTE: This item was called upon earlier in the meeting during the Mayor's Agenda.*)

ANNOUNCEMENT:

City Manager Isaiah Hugley made an announcement regarding the transition of animal services from Animal Care and Control to PAWS Humane, which becomes effective February 1, 2025.

BID ADVERTISEMENT

DATE: January 28, 2025
TO: Mayor and Councilors
FROM: Finance Department
SUBJECT: Advertised Bids/RFPs/RFQs

January 31, 2025

1. Drug and Alcohol Screening: After-Hours, Weekends and Holidays – RFP No. 25-0007

Scope of RFP

Provide post-accident Drug and Alcohol Screenings, to include: After-Hours, Weekends and Holidays for employees of the Columbus Consolidated Government (the City) on an “as needed” basis.

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

February 19, 2025

1. Business License Tax/Revenue Collection Services – RFP No. 25-0015

Scope of RFP

Columbus Consolidated Government is requesting proposals to establish a contract for the consulting services to provide business license tax/revenue collection services for the city.

The contract term shall be for three (3) years with an option to renew for five (5) additional twelve-month periods.

REFERRAL(S):

FOR THE CITY MANAGER:

- Have the Executive Administration work on integrating the proposed Sports & Entertainment Authority and the Civic Center. *(Request of Councilor Davis)*
- Request for a quiet zone in the Uptown District where the railroad crosses 3rd Avenue, between 16th Street and 17th Street, and 5th Avenue and 6th Avenue, between 16th Street and 17th Street. *(Request of Councilor Cogle)*
- Proceed with a resolution for the soccer complex at the State Farmer’s Market. *(Request of Councilor Cogle)*

BOARD OF HONOR REQUEST:

Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to approve the honorary designation request that was submitted for the Board of Honor to consider renaming the Public Safety Building in honor of the late Jim Wetherington, seconded by Councilor Crabb and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

CLERK OF COUNCIL'S AGENDA

ENCLOSURES - ACTION REQUESTED

1. Email from Ms. Alston Auten. resigning from her seat on the Land Bank Authority effective January 30, 2025. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to receive the resignation with regrets, seconded by Councilor Crabb and carried unanimously by the nine members, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.
2. **RESOLUTION (028-25)** – A resolution excusing Councilor Judy Thomas from the January 28, 2025 Council Meeting. Councilor Crabb made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Tucker and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

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

Airport Commission, June 28, August 28, and October 1, 2024

Board of Tax Assessors, #42-24 and #01-25

Board of Zoning Appeals, December 4, 2024

Columbus Golf Course Authority, November 19, 2024

Land Bank Authority, January 8, 2025

River Valley Regional Commission, December 11, 2024

Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to receive the minutes of various boards, seconded by Councilor Crabb and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS - ACTION REQUESTED

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

- A. **HISTORIC & ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD:** Mr. Allen Cline was nominated to succeed Mr. Alex Griggs (*Architect Representative*). (*Mayor Pro Tem Allen's nominee*) Term expires: January 31, 2028. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion for confirmation, seconded by Councilor Crabb and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

5. **COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS- ANY NOMINATIONS WOULD BE LISTED FOR THE NEXT MEETING:**

A. **BOARD OF TAX ASSESSORS:**

A nominee for the seat of Trey Carmack (*Passed Away*) for a term expiring on December 31, 2025, on the Board of Tax Assessors (*Council's Appointment*). Deputy Clerk of Council McLemore stated Councilor Crabb is nominating Doug Jefcoat to fill the unexpired term of Trey Carmack.

B. BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS:

A nominee for the seat of Alfred Hayes, Jr. (*Resigned*) for a term expiring on March 31, 2026, on the Board of Zoning Appeals (*Council's Appointment*). Deputy Clerk of Council McLemore stated Councilor Crabb is nominating Alissa Neal to fill the unexpired term of Alfred Hayes, Jr.

C. PERSONNEL REVIEW BOARD:

A nominee for the seat of Dennis Walsh (*Not Eligible to succeed*) for a term expiring on December 31, 2024, as Alternate Member 1 on the Personnel Review Board (*Council's Appointment*). There were none.

A nominee for the seat of Willie L. Belfield, Jr. (*Appointed to Regular Member seat*) for a term expiring on December 31, 2024, as Alternate Member 2 on the Personnel Review Board (*Council's Appointment*). There were none.

A nominee for the seat of Donna D. Baker (*Appointed to Regular Member seat*) for a term expiring on December 31, 2024, as Alternate Member 3 on the Personnel Review Board (*Council's Appointment*). There were none.

D. VALLEY PARTNERSHIP JOINT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:

A nominee for the seat of Monte Galbraith (*Resigned*) for a term expiring on June 30, 2026, on the Valley Partnership Joint Development Authority (*Council's Appointment*). There were none.

UPCOMING BOARD APPOINTMENTS:

- A. Board of Zoning Appeals (Council Appointment)
- B. Building Authority of Columbus (1 - Mayor Appointment / Council Confirmation) (2 - Council Appointment)
- C. Civic Center Advisory Board (Council District / Council Confirmation)
- D. Commission on International Relations and Cultural Liaison Encounters (CIRCLE) (Council Appointment)
- E. Community Development Advisory Council (3 - Mayor / Council Confirmation) (1 - Council District / Council Confirmation)
- F. Crime Prevention Board (4 - Mayor / Council Confirmation) (3 - Council Appointment)
- G. Land Bank Authority (Authority / Council Confirmation)
- H. Planning Advisory Commission (Council Appointment)

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mayor Henderson entertained a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss matters of litigation and real estate acquisition as requested by City Attorney Fay earlier in the meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Allen made a motion to go into Executive Session, seconded by Councilor Hickey and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting, and the time being 8:36 p.m.

The Regular Meeting reconvened at 9:11 p.m., at which time, Mayor Henderson announced that the Council did meet in Executive Session to discuss matters of litigation and real estate acquisition; however, there were no votes taken.

ADD-ON RESOLUTION:

Resolution (029-25): A resolution authorizing a payment of \$91,745.23 to settle all damage claims of Dickstein Law, LLC/North Highland Assembly of God stemming from the incident which occurred on June 19, 2024, and to execute all appropriate settlement documents to this effect. Councilor tucker made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Hickey and carried unanimously by the eight members present, with Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting.

With there being no further business to discuss, Mayor Henderson entertained a motion for adjournment. Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Allen to adjourn the January 28, 2025 Regular Council Meeting, seconded by Councilor Tucker and carried unanimously by the eight members present, with Councilor Garrett being absent for the vote, Councilor Thomas being absent from the meeting, and the time being 9:12 p.m.

Lindsey G. McLemore
Deputy Clerk of Council
Council of Columbus, Georgia