

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

March 29, 2022
9:00 AM
Consent Agenda / Work Session

MAYOR'S AGENDA

PRESENT: Mayor B. H. "Skip" Henderson, III, and Mayor Pro Tem R. Gary Allen (via Microsoft Teams) and Councilors Charmaine Crabb, Glenn Davis (arrived at 9:01 a.m.), R. Walker Garrett, John M. House, Bruce Huff (arrived at 9:03 a.m.), Judy W. Thomas, Toyia Tucker and Evelyn "Mimi" Woodson (via Microsoft Teams). 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: Councilor Jerry "Pops" Barnes was absent.

<p><u>The following documents were distributed to the members of Council:</u> (1) Transportation Special purpose Local Option Sales Tax Update Presentation; (2) Standing Boy Creek State Park Update Presentation; (3) Critical Vacancies Update – Recruitment & Retention Strategy Presentation</p>
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CALL TO ORDER: Mayor B. H. "Skip" Henderson, III, Presiding

INVOCATION: Offered by City Manager Isaiah Hugley

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Mayor Henderson

MINUTES

1. Approval of minutes for the March 22, 2022, Council Meeting and Executive Session. Councilor Tucker made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Councilor House and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Barnes being absent for the meeting.

UPDATE:

2. An update on COVID-19

Mayor B. H. "Skip" Henderson provided an update on COVID-19 and its impact on the community. He explained though things have improved with nineteen current hospitalizations, he encourages citizens to continue to be mindful as they go on with their daily activities. He stated things are beginning to get back to what we consider normal with the spring events going on throughout the City of Columbus.

CONSENT AGENDA

ORDINANCE

1. **Ordinance (22-017) - 2nd Reading-** An ordinance extending the business and occupation tax licensing deadline established by local law for the year 2022; and for other purposes. (Mayor

Pro-Tem) Councilor Tucker made a motion to adopt the ordinance, seconded by Councilor House and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Barnes being absent for the meeting.

RESOLUTION

2. **Resolution (094-22):** A Resolution cancelling the Council Meeting for May 24, 2022, and holding a regular business meeting on May 31, 2022, at 9:00 a.m., in lieu of a Council Consent Agenda / Work Session. Councilor Tucker made a motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Councilor Crabb and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Barnes being absent for the meeting.

WORK SESSION AGENDA

I. TSPLOST Update - Pam Hodge, Deputy City Manager

Deputy City Manager Pam Hodge approached the rostrum to provide an update on the Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST). She provided an update on the various transportation projects funded through the 2012 TSPLOST. A list of the region-wide investment funding for the proposed 2023 TSPLOST and a list of transportation projects specifically for Muscogee County was provided.

City Manager Isaiah Hugley explained the importance of providing this information to the citizens, so they can make an informed decision when voting on the TSPLOST. He stated the citizens need to know if the TSPLOST is not approved, it could possibly be a decade or longer before the roadways on the project list are addressed.

Councilor Glenn Davis explained the need for citizens to understanding the 2023 TSPLOST is an opportunity to obtain a great deal of funding for transportation projects that the City of Columbus would not have otherwise.

III. Standing Boy Creek State Park Update - Pam Hodge, Deputy City Manager

Deputy City Manager Pam Hodge approached the rostrum to provide an update on the improvement project taking place in Standing Boy Creek State Park. She explained the 1,580-acre park is located at 1701 River Road, owned by the State of Georgia, and operated by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR). She stated there are various activities offered at the park such as hiking, mountain biking, limited hunted, fishing and birding. She explained CCG has been in discussions in drafting an intergovernmental agreement with DNR which would require the City of Columbus to be party to the agreement and Standing Boy, Inc. managing the park and trail system.

Chair Blake Melton (Standing Boy, Inc.) came forward to provide information on the allowable activities within the park, primarily on hunting activities. He explained there is archery hunting for deer and small game hunting permitted during the months of August to February. He stated there have been discussions on DNR taking over on the weekends when other hunting activities are held, such as turkey hunts for kids.

Councilor Glenn Davis explained he received numerous calls regarding the hunting activities that are occurring on the back portion of Green Island being adjacent to the park, especially when it comes to the use of firearms.

II. Critical Vacancies Update - Reather Hollowell, Human Resources Director

Human Resources Director Reather Hollowell approached the rostrum to provide an update on the critical vacancies throughout the Columbus Consolidated Government (CCG). She explained CCG is transitioning into a “new way of doing business” in recruitment strategies to attract and maintain a

viable workforce. She explained in the past there would be three to five hundred applications submitted for an entry level position, but with the workforce changing, only thirty to forty applicants may apply for the same position presently. With changes being made, there have been one hundred fifty-six new hires in the first quarter of 2022.

City Manager Isaiah Hugley explained the administration has learned during the COVID-19 Pandemic that we do not need every employee at their desks to be successful. He shared the efforts of the Columbus Consolidated Government to come up with attractive employment packages that are competitive to bring in talented employees.

Columbus Police Chief Freddie Blackmon approached the rostrum to provide information on the efforts of the Columbus Police Department (CPD) to recruit new police officers. He explained CPD uses a very strong approach for recruitment, which is lead by Deputy Chief Dent-Fitzpatrick and Sergeant Shelling. He shared information on the upcoming recruiting events CPD will be present for.

Deputy Police Chief Joyce Dent-Fitzpatrick came forward to explain how CPD has partnered with Fort Benning for the CSP Program to recruit men and women coming out of the military.

Sargent Stefan Shelling (CPD) came forward to share information on the recruitment efforts of CPD for officers as well as police cadets. He stated the recruitment staff has visited the high schools in the Muscogee County School District to provide information on their Cadet Program.

REFERRAL(S):

FOR THE CHIEF OF POLICE:

- Provide information on the lower cost of living in Columbus when recruiting new officers. *(Request of Councilor Garrett)*
- When recruiting new officers, provide information on some apartment complexes offering reduced or free rent to officers who serve as courtesy officers while residing in their complexes. *(Request of Councilor Garrett)*

FOR THE HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR:

- Consider utilizing ARP Funds when funding recruitment initiatives for all departments within CCG. *(Request of Councilor Tucker)*
- Have other departments such as Metra, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works to provide information pertaining to the vacancies in their departments the next time an update is presented, to inform citizens of why some of the services are behind or have been suspended. *(Request of Councilor Tucker)*

FOR THE CITY MANAGER:

- Provide information on the Brown Avenue / Amos Street matter where there are squatters and they were burning fires on the property. *(Request of Councilor Huff)*
- When the flags remain on the flagpole after sundown, they are to be illuminated. Let us know if we need to put a light out there for the flags on the property where the Citizens Service Center is located or if the flags would come down before nightfall. *(Request of Councilor Thomas)*

In response to a question of Councilor Thomas regarding the old garbage can pick up date, Deputy City Manager Lisa Goodwin advised that the dates that we have for recycling of the old cans has been changed and are provided as follows: For household waste pickup on Monday, old cans would be collected on Saturday, June 4th; household waste pickup on Tuesday, old can would be collected on Saturday, April 23rd; household waste pickup on Thursday, old cans would be collected on Saturday, May 7th; household waste pickup on Friday, old cans would be collected on Saturday, May 21, 2022.

REFERRAL(S):

FOR THE DEPUTY CITY MANAGER:

- Let's make sure to provide these new dates on the city's website. (*Request of Councilor Thomas*)

With there being no further business to discuss, Mayor Henderson entertained a motion for adjournment. Motion by Councilor Garrett to adjourn the March 29, 2022, Consent Agenda / Work Session, seconded by Councilor Huff and carried unanimously by the nine members present, with Councilor Barnes being absent for the meeting, and the time being 11:29 a.m.

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