

**COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2023
6:00 PM**

Mayor Ryan Daniel – Present
Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle – Present
Attorney Marcia McNagny – Present via phone

Council Members

Walter Crowder – Present
Jennifer Middleton – Absent
Jennifer Romano – Present via phone
Tad Varga – Present
Daniel Weigold – Present

The Columbia City Common Council met in regular session with all members except Jennifer Middleton present, Mayor Daniel presiding.

MINUTES Approval of the minutes was postponed until the next meeting.

REZONE – KRJ PROPERTIES – ORDINANCE 2023-9: 1ST READING Mayor Daniel advised Nathan Bilger was not able to be present but there was a full report submitted in the agenda packet. He shared it went through the Plan Commission and was sent to City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to read Ordinance 2023-9 by title only, Walt Crowder seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2023-9 an ordinance amending the zoning classification of certain property from the “R-1” Single-Family residential district to the “R-3” multi-family residential district.

Dan Weigold advised there were a lot of questions asked at the Plan Commission and were all answered by the developer.

Tad Varga questioned what some of the plans were for multi-family. Connie Dye of 1660 E. 250 N., explained there could be single family homes, duplexes, townhouses with up to 4 connected homes. Tad Varga confirmed by rezoning it to R-3 it would cover all those options. Mayor Daniel advised that was correct. Connie Dye shared they were looking to see what the demand of the community was going to be.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to approve Ordinance 2023-9 on first reading, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATEMENT OF BENEFITS – DOT AMERICA AND B & R REALTY Dale Buuck gave an update on the progress of DOT America to date. He advised they, like many others, were struggling to find employees and were doing their best to meet the estimate put on their SB-1. He praised them for always being the first to have their forms in and never having to be reminded.

Dale Buuck explained B & R Realty was for the Verizon and Jimmy John's building. He advised they were given an abatement several years ago but missed getting forms submitted last year due to major health reasons. He reported they were back on schedule and were requesting their abatement get going again. Mayor Daniel confirmed they were asking to pick up on the current schedule and not be retroactive. Mr. Buuck advised that was correct.

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to find DOT in compliance and grant an additional year of abatement for their 2014 Real Property, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

Motion was made by Tad Varga to find DOT in compliance and grant an additional year of abatement for their 2014 Personal Property, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye.

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to find DOT in compliance and grant an additional year of abatement for their 2017 Real Property, Walt Crowder seconded the motion, all voted aye.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to find DOT in compliance and grant an additional year of abatement for their 2017 Personal Property, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

Motion was made by Tad Varga to find DOT in compliance and grant an additional year of abatement for their 2018 Personal Property, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye.

Motion was made by Dan Weigold to find DOT in compliance and grant an additional year of abatement for their 2018 Real Property, Walt Crowder seconded the motion, all voted aye.

RATE ADJUSTMENTS Mayor Daniel advised there has been a lot of discussion on this. He shared the Utility Rate Advisory Board has come forward with a suggestion of a 2% rate adjustment across the board for all utilities. He reviewed some of the cost increases our departments are seeing. He advised we are hurting because the cost of materials are continually going up. He explained the way in which we have done things in the past is we would wait until the last moment and do a big increase but instead, last year, made the determination that we wanted to do a yearly review.

ELECTRIC RATE ADJUSTMENT – ORDINANCE 2023-5: 1ST READING Motion was made by Dan Weigold to read Ordinance 2023-5 by title only, Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2023-5 an ordinance amending the rates and charges for the City of Columbia City Municipal Electric Utility.

Mayor Daniel noted this does not include the Tracking Factor, which is the cost of generation that is passed on to our customers from our power generators.

Rosie Coyle reported the public hearing will be held at the June 13 meeting and if the ordinances are approved, rates will go into effect in July.

Walt Crowder questioned if notification would be sent out to our customers. Rosie Coyle explained notification has already been sent out to our customers as required by law. She advised notification would also be in the newspaper.

Motion was made to approve Ordinance 2023-5 on first reading, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye.

WATER RATE ADJUSTMENT – ORDINANCE 2023-6: 1ST READING Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to read Ordinance 2023-6 by title only, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2023-6 an ordinance amending the rates and charges for the City of Columbia City Municipal Water Utility.

Motion was made by Walt Crowder to approve Ordinance 2023-6 on first reading, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye.

SEWER RATE ADJUSTMENT – ORDINANCE 2023-7: 1ST READING Motion was made by Tad Varga to read Ordinance 2023-7 by title only, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2023-7 an ordinance amending the rates and charges for the City of Columbia City Municipal Sewer Utility.

Motion was made by Tad Varga to approve Ordinance 2023-7 on first reading, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye.

STORMWATER RATE ADJUSTMENT – ORDINANCE 2023-8: 1ST READING Motion was made by Walt Crowder to read Ordinance 2023-8 by title only, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2023-8 an ordinance amending the rates and charges for the City of Columbia City Municipal Stormwater Utility.

Mayor Daniel thought this was the first time since 2010 that the stormwater rates have been adjusted.

Motion was made by Tad Varga to approve Ordinance 2023-8 on first reading, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye.

CHICKENS Melanie Love of 113 E. Market Street was present to share information about a chicken program in a city in Belgium that helped to decrease food waste in the landfill.

ED RODRIGUEZ – SENATE BILL 248 Ed Rodriguez was present hoping to get Council's support of Senate Bill 248 by the way of passing a Resolution. He reminded Council this Bill would allow folks the ability to apply for a driving privilege card who cannot qualify for a state issued driver's license.

Tad Varga advised he has had multiple conversations regarding this with people he has come into contact with. He questioned what the obstacles were for those people to just go through the chain of getting documented and becoming a citizen. He shared he has a sister-in-law from Indonesia who went through every step of the process, which took about 4 years, to become an

American citizen. He advised in talking with her, it was a real sticking point for her, and others, in that they went through the process and questioned why others cannot. Mr. Rodriguez explained the procedure to gain citizenship in the U.S. was very arduous, long and expensive. He advised COVID caused a major, major backlog. He shared they work with an immigration attorney out of Goshen who has had folks, that for 27 to 40 years, have been in the U.S. working and were law-abiding citizens but were afraid to even take those steps because if they would present themselves, they would be gone. He shared that was the biggest reason. Mr. Rodriguez explained the Federal Government will allot a certain number of folks per year from different countries that have to be vetted and follow procedures. He advised with the backlog, and the number of folks asking for asylum today, has really caused more and more panic for those trying to gain citizenship. He shared there were 2 Senators who were adamant about this same position and were questioned why they would not vote 'yes' on the Bill. He explained it was because there was nothing in the Bill, but will be present in 2024, that is asking for documentation that the individual will have to sign stating when citizenship is made available, they must register to become a citizen of the United States. He noted everyone wants to be a citizen of the United States of America, it's just those obstacles that are so difficult to overcome.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Chip Hill** – pool opening by Memorial Day. **Gary Parrett** – update on the Police hiring process, busy with high grass violations, Operation Pull Over program getting started, First Friday went well, update on Dispatch hiring process. **Mike Cook** – Main and Jefferson Street force main project went out for bid, update on CSO 19 concrete repair, completed construction permit for force main project, contacted local schools for the intern program. **Mike Shoda** – installing new meters, fused together pipe in Morsches Park, hooked up new services. **Tom LaRue** – bay floors redone, repairs to 101, update on hiring process, probable increase in turn-out gear, technician coming in to hook up gas meters.

YOUTH COUNCIL Mason Straub was present representing the Youth Council. He reported they met with the 5th graders at Northern Heights and Coesse to present what they have learned about government.

MAYOR REPORT Mayor Daniel reported he attended the Eagle Glen Association meeting, he and Chip Hill met with the consultants over the upcoming downtown plan, they will be updating the CGI videos that are on the City website, they will be holding interviews for the Park Director's position.

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING Mayor Daniel reminded members the next Council meeting will be bumped up to 5:00 pm.

REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION Tad Varga reported the Redevelopment Commission awarded a couple grants; one for signage for The Square and one to Columbia City Connect to advance their program.

ARTS COMMISSION Jennifer Romano reported the Arts Commission was partnering with Columbia City Connect and WCCS for the Art Crawl that will be happening downtown on May 18.

Having no further business to discuss, Mayor Daniel called the meeting adjourned.

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle