

**COMMON COUNCIL**  
**TUESDAY, AUGUST 29, 2023**  
**6:00 PM**

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

**Council Members**

Walter Crowder – Present  
Jennifer Middleton – Present  
Jennifer Romano – Present  
Tad Varga – Present  
Daniel Weigold – Present

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

**MINUTES** Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve an overview of the August 8, 2023, meeting minutes as presented, Dan Weigold seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**SWEARING IN OF FIREFIGHTER – TROY KNEFELKAMP** Rosie Coyle performed the swearing in ceremony for new Firefighter Troy Knefelkamp.

**UPDATES OF EMPLOYEE POLICY BOOK** Beth Igney, Human Resources Director, was present to review updates that were needed to the Employee Policy Book to comply with Federal Law.

Motion was made by Jennifer Romano to approve policy 4.6 and policy 2.2 as presented, Tad Varga seconded the motion, all voted aye.

**DISCUSSION ON CHICKENS** Jennifer Romano shared over the last year and half there has been a lot of time spent researching this topic and felt it was time to make some sort of decision. She reminded Council this was presented to the Ordinance Committee but there was no interest in passing an ordinance on the matter so it could only come to Council at this point. She shared any time we have wanted to change something that has been in the ordinances of the City, it has never been a quick decision and deserves Council's time and thoughtful consideration.

Jennifer Middleton shared she was for it and in doing the research found there to be a lot of things that could be an issue if chickens were allowed in the City limits.

Walt Crowder shared there has been discussions with the Humane Society about what to do with chickens that get out but was determined that they will not take them. He explained that then becomes a challenge of how to handle those situations, without putting more of a burden on the Police Department. He shared with the manpower we have it is just not feasible.

Dan Weigold shared that he appreciated the passion Ms. Love shares for chickens as well as the education he has received but felt residents were too close together. He added there was more to it than just having chickens. He shared has heard from residents who did not have a preference but the majority of those he has heard from did not want chickens.

Walt Crowder shared this was not unique to Columbia City and are finding there is no way to be consistent in how it was being managed. He, as well, appreciated Ms. Love's hard work but did not feel it was a fit for the City of Columbia City.

Motion was made by Walt Crowder that the topic of chickens be closed, Dan Weigold seconded the motion.

Tad Varga was not sure the topic should be completely stricken from ever being discussed again. He advised he has been on both sides of the fence in regard to the topic. He felt in order to go further with it there needed to be some sort of infrastructure in place in order to manage it, which we do not have at this point. Jennifer Romano felt it would be possible to make an ordinance that would be very restrictive that could work for people but that would take some work. Dan Weigold did not feel they should invest in having Attorney McNagny develop an ordinance if there is not the majority in support of it. Walt Crowder appreciated Tad Varga's point but felt a lot of things would need to change in order to change the discussion from today. He shared the topic can always be brought back for discussion which could open the door for new direction. He did not mean for his comments to come across harsh but was identifying that a lot of people are involved who have spent a lot of time and felt the process should be denied going forward for now. Mayor Daniel confirmed his interpretation of what Walt was saying was that they were not going to bring the topic up until another time in the future, whenever that may be. Walt Crowder agreed that was a fair comment. Dan Weigold noted the public could bring it up at any time. Mayor Daniel advised there was always public comment. Jennifer Middleton suggested the topic be pulled from the table for now and reviewed at a later date as we do not know what is going to happen with the Humane Society. Mayor Daniel concurred and confirmed that was the general understanding of the Council. Council concurred.

Upon the motion, Jennifer Middleton, Tad Varga, Dan Weigold and Walt Crowder voted aye, Jennifer Romano voted nay.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS** **Beth Igney** – Safety Committee conducting workplace surveys, Wellness Committee reviewing EAP, getting ready for insurance renewal, employee clinic is now able to offer CDL Physicals. **Chip Hill** – Board of Works approved 100 S. sewer project. **Terry Wherry** – fiber being installed at new park office, equipment in for water booster station. **Shawn Lickey** – finished electric installation at new jail, working on Morsches Road, rehired Eli Stangland to fill open position. **Matt Heiden** – quotes for digital sign installation at Eagle Park, baseball agreement approved by Park Board. **Gary Parrett** – updates on new police officers, update on current hiring process, replaced TV's and computers in dispatch. **Mike Shoda** – tank inspections, Board of Works approved hiring additional employee. **Mike Cook** – new PCL installed on gravity belt thickener, splash pad inspection, update on force main project. **Kelly Cearbaugh** – poured concrete at Water Department, fixed water problem on North Oak Street, trimming limbs in alley, update on street paving project. **Tom Larue** – update on new firefighters, sprinkler system reporting upgrade.

**MAYOR REPORT** Mayor Daniel reported he would be holding the first Youth Council meeting of the year. He had conversations with Nathan Bilger and Larry Weiss about the extra-territorial jurisdiction. He held a Board's and Commission's training session to go over the basics of holding and being a part of a Board or Commission. He advised CGI was in town recording different places in the City to make upgrades to our promotional videos.

**CHICKENS – MELANIE LOVE** Melanie Love of 113 E. Market Street expressed her disappointment in Council's decision regarding chickens and blanket 'no's'.

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

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Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

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Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle