

**COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2024
6:00 PM**

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

Council Members

Jennifer Middleton – Present
Leslee Robinson - 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 called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm. All stood to say the Pledge of Allegiance led by Conrad and Rebecca Day.

MINUTES Mayor Daniel noted a spelling correction under his report. Hearing no further corrections, Dan Weigold made a motion to approve the September 10, 2024, meeting minutes as corrected. Leslee Robinson seconded the motion, Dan Weigold, Tad Varga and Leslee Robinson voted unanimously, Jennifer Romano and Jennifer Middleton abstained.

PUBLIC HEARING ON 2025 BUDGET Mayor Daniel reviewed a few things that may stand out more than others. He advised he was proposing a change in longevity as a way in which to reward individuals for sticking around. He shared as they looked at other cities and towns, especially police and fire departments, it was found that we were woefully behind, which can really make a big difference on the pension side. He reported they also looked at our non-public safety individuals and came up with a new schedule for what that could look like. He noted that obviously would have to be a policy change approved by the Council and is probably one of the biggest changes that is being proposed.

Mayor Daniel reported that a couple new positions were also being proposed for next year to accommodate the growth that we are having; #1 is a Code Enforcement position. He explained this position was something that has been talked about for a while now and would be someone who would effectively be able to help steer individuals if they are doing something that is against an ordinance. He added this person would also work as a liaison between the resident and the Building Inspector; basically, come alongside individuals to help clean up our community a little bit. He advised another position that has been talked about for a while was a full-time Deputy Fire Chief. He shared because of how our community has grown it is a lot to place on a single Chief.

Mayor Daniel shared there are always multiple little things like improving buildings and buying pieces of equipment. He advised he was proposing we continue with the Enterprise system where we are able to effectively use Enterprise to purchase vehicles with our municipal discount, drive them for a year or multiple years and then sell them and roll that equity back in. He reported he put money aside for next year to construct a dog park, which is something that our community has wanted for a while now.

He shared a couple of things with CEDIT that are planned, including a comprehensive plan update and some updates to our website and our promotional video. He advised there were no major building projects at the moment but were still looking at the current jail and doing a little bit of analysis with Baker Tilly to figure out what opportunities or options we have with developing that into something community based.

Dan Weigold felt it was important for the public to know that Council has already gone through the budget and were not looking at it for the first time this evening.

Mayor Daniel recessed the Common Council meeting and opened the public hearing. Hearing no comments or questions, Mayor Daniel concluded the public hearing.

Rosie Coyle advised there would be one reading and is scheduled for the October 14th meeting. Mayor Daniel reminded Council that the next Council meeting will not be on the 8th due to the AIM Ideas Summit and is scheduled for October 14th.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Kelly Cearbaugh** – update on storm damage, last limb pick up will be October 7th, inspection work for sewer continues over at Timber’s Edge, street sign maintenance, leaf pick up is scheduled to start October 21st but may start earlier. **Chip Hill** – Westgate near completion with ribbon cutting on October 2nd at 6:00 p.m., opening pickleball courts on Saturday at Eagle Park and the swing is complete, ribbon cutting for Eagle Park is October 3rd at noon, pre-bid meeting was held for the Blue River Trail expansion with bid opening on October 14th at 5:00 p.m. **Matt Heiden** – Mother/Son tickets went on sale this week, Eagle Park was a very busy area on Saturday with the Shriners parade, JFL and soccer going on and noted as we keep moving activities over there the parking lot is going to start getting really congested so will need to look at that in the future, irrigation system going for the football fields, HANDS group from the Community Foundation came out and painted the rest of the concrete balls back at the pond, installing new padding at the pool on Friday. **Gary Parrett** - Austin Sturgess has started his FTO process and seems to be doing very well, hired Madison Elliott, Consuelo Bridge and Larissa Taylor for Communications, they have all started and seem to be working out well also, have 4 applicants in the police interview process and with our SRO’s both retiring next year he was approved to hire a couple extra guys, have ‘No Parking’ signs over on Whitley and Van Buren and have been monitoring traffic to see how things are working through there, Shriners’ parade went pretty well, getting the new Milo range system set up and will be training the first week of October, holding an Emergency Vehicle Operation Course on Towerview Drive on Sunday, October 6th. **Mike Shoda** – changed out 30 meters and have about 5 to 10 more to go that are not reading, they are still having problems with the collector system, main break at Park Street and Park Drive, repaired 2 fire hydrants - one at the Fire Museum and the other out at Essex Metal. **Mike Cook** – received draft permit from IDEM regarding cyanide and will be under the review process for 30 days, sludge storage tank out of service, CSO audit with IDEM and are waiting to see what needs to be corrected, update on pumps for force main project. **Terry Wherry** – finished work on the Granite software that the Street Department uses to televise lines, installed new access point in the Fire Department Engineers room so the guys that have laptops can connect to the network, decommissioned one of the Exchange Servers and pushed all of its functions to the cloud, have fiber and parts ordered for both the Test Kitchen and Eagle Park. **Tom LaRue** – Truck 102 electrical issues are back, windows on upstairs of the Firehouse are half replaced, air conditioning unit on top of City Hall was replaced late last week, Board of Works gave permission to begin hiring process to replace Chris LaRue who turned in his intent to retire March 21, 2025.

MAYOR REPORT Mayor Daniel shared a department report for Shawn Lickey. He also reported he issued a burn ban on Friday and three hours later it rained. He advised he has been in conversation with Amy Biggs, our EMA Director, who advised it was the consensus of the Fire Chief’s Association to wait until Thursday to render the decision to either continue or lift the ban. He reported he and Lee Baatz gave a presentation to the Rotary regarding the Utility Rate Advisory Board on how it that came to be and their purpose. He shared he had a Domestic Violence Awareness month proclamation and on Monday, four groups of third graders from Northern Heights toured City Hall. He reported he has Youth Council on Thursday as well as Moake Park Group would be doing an evaluation of the current jail to help make a decision on what we should do or what opportunity is there. He advised he would be out of the office from Friday through next Wednesday and shared that the Community Foundation will be hosting a candlelight ceremony remembering suicide victims on the night of October 3rd.

ARTS COMMISSION Jennifer Romano reported on their studio art tour. She advised it was a great day for the artists and for the community of people who came to check

things out. She advised they will be having a retreat to plan for future activities.

Having no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Daniel called the meeting adjourned.

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle