

**COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2025
6:00 PM**

Mayor Ryan Daniel – Present
Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson – Present
Attorney Marcia McNagny – Present

Council Members

Brent Bockelman – Present
Jennifer Middleton – Present
Jennifer Romano – Present
Tad Varga – Present
Dan Weigold – Present

The Columbia City Common Council met in regular session with all members present. Mayor Daniel called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All stood to say the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES Mayor Daniel requested a notation as to when Tad Varga was in attendance virtually to clarify that voice votes were not needed. He also noted a spelling correction under the Mayor's report.

Jennifer Romano made a motion to approve the July 8, 2025, meeting minutes as corrected. Jennifer Middleton seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE 2025-9 AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 71 – TRUCK PARKING – 2ND

READING Brent Bockelman made a motion to read Ordinance 2025-9 by title only. Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously. Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson read Ordinance 2025-9 an Ordinance modifying Chapter 71, Title VII, of the City of Columbia City, Indiana, Municipal Code.

Mayor Daniel explained this was regarding the angle parking on Line Street just South of Market Street, next to the city parking lot, and not allowing truck parking. He advised this was to make sure there was good line of sight.

Tad Varga made a motion to approve Ordinance 2025-9 on second and final reading. Jennifer Middleton seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

DALE BUUCK – DOT AMERICA - PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT Dale Buuck shared that this was for a personal property abatement and may be the last time depending on what comes of Senate Bill 1. He reported that DOT America continues to be a phenomenal success, not only in the medical device industry but for Columbia City as well. He shared that Zimmer is a very big customer of theirs and they would like DOT to do more work for them, but it entails the purchase of a \$2 million vacuum chamber. He shared that their German parent company was a little concerned because they still have some openings, and this purchase would require them to hire an additional 20 people over the next year. He shared with this current effort, the State of Indiana has given them a small tax credit for the new employment. He added that he

would like to request the Council approve a 3-year personal property tax abatement. He understood that it may not mean anything but depending on if the State reverses some of the legislation they passed in April, it could be back in force. He expressed to Council that if they would pass this abatement, it would go a long way for the DOT back in Germany.

Mayor Daniel reminded the Council that there was a lot of changes that happened to the Business Personal Property Tax at the legislature this year but advised there were still discussions about tweaking things here and there. He felt that at the end of the day it would be a good faith sign to the German parent company that we support DOT America.

Tad Varga advised he would certainly be in favor of it as they have historically overperformed on everything they have ever committed to.

Brent Bockelman made a motion to read Resolution 2025-10 by title only. Dan Weigold seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously. Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson read Resolution 2025-10 a Resolution of the Columbia City Common Council approving the deduction of assessed valuation for personal property improvements.

Mayor Daniel explained this would be a stair-stepped approach over the three years. Dale advised the deduction would be 100%, 95%, then 90%.

Jennifer Romano made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-10 and grant three years abatement. Tad Varga seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

POLICY CHANGE – HARASSMENT/MOLESTATION OF MINORS AND VULNERABLE ADULT

Beth Igney explained our Workman's Comp carrier informed us that we needed a policy addressing this. She advised this was mostly for our Park Department but has expanded it to include interns and part time employees. She shared that Attorney McNagny has reviewed the policy, as well as the Park Board.

Mayor Daniel confirmed this policy outlines the process we would take, as well as the victim and accused. Beth Igney advised that was correct.

Jennifer Romano made a motion to approve the policy against harassment and molestation of minors and vulnerable adults as presented. Jennifer Middleton seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

POLICY CHANGE – RETIREMENT – PUBLIC SAFETY Beth Igney pointed out that an addition was made to the policy regarding police retirees. She explained they would like the officer to be able to retain their firearm if they meet certain restrictions or in the event of the death of an officer, then the family would have that option.

Mayor Daniel explained this was a very common policy among municipalities across the board. He noted this was something we have been doing but felt it needed to be part of the policy.

Jennifer Middleton made a motion to approve Policy 5.12 Retirement as presented. Tad Varga seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

POLICY CHANGE – HOLIDAYS – CIVIL AND PUBLIC SAFETY Beth Igney explained, for the civil policy, this change included the addition of Juneteenth as a holiday as well as adding the term ‘Indiana’ to the election day holiday. She pointed out a change in the terminology from ‘observed’ to ‘actual’ and the addition/removal of a few points in the civil holidays policy.

Jennifer Romano made a motion to approve Policy 5.7 Holidays for the civil policy manual. Tad Varga seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

Beth Igney noted the changes for the public safety policy.

Jennifer Middleton made a motion to approve Policy 5.7 Holidays for public safety. Brent Bockelman seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

POLICY CHANGE – BEREAVEMENT LEAVE – CIVIL AND PUBLIC SAFETY Beth Igney pointed out changes in the civil policy to add the word “consecutive” in point #3 as well as great-grandparent and great-grandchild to be included for bereavement leave.

Tad Varga made a motion to approve Policy 5.8 Bereavement Leave for the civil policy manual. Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

Beth Igney reviewed the changes to the public safety policy regarding the Fire Department to add the verbiage ‘consecutive 24 hour work shifts’ under each section of the policy as well as to include great-grandparent or great-grandchild.

Jennifer Middleton made a motion to approve Policy 5.8 Bereavement Leave for the public safety manual. Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

MEETING DATES – RESCHEDULE Mayor Daniel noted that November 11th was Veteran's Day and City Hall will be closed and then December 23rd was usually the meeting we push back in order to get closer to the end of the year. He questioned Council members if they would be willing to adjust those meeting dates. He advised the Board of Works would follow whatever Council decides.

After some discussion, it was decided to move the November 11 meeting to November 12 and would plan to move the December 23 meeting to December 30.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Beth Igney** – changes in Nurse Practitioners at the clinic as well as the days the clinic is available, continue Wellness Committee and Safety Committee meetings, Supervisor leadership networking sessions continue and working on policy updates. **Mike Shoda** – fixed storm drains in the Eagle Park parking lot and on Columbia Parkway West, starting the water main project on Jeffrey Drive. **Mike Cook** – force main project complete, sludge storage tank pretty much cleaned out and parts on order for repairs, meeting with the supplier and contractor on the Dystor project. **Tom LaRue** – continue having issues with the breathing air compressor, newest cadet passed Public Safety Medical and has been sent on to the PERF Board

for approval, Toby and Zach have been working with ESO Software which is the new reporting software, delivery for the new engine has been moved up to possibly March, working to get some quotes to repair Truck 107. **Kelly Cearbaugh** – update on paving project, concrete guys completed a job over on Whitley Street at Eagle Park, have several 50/50 sidewalk projects coming up and concrete work in a cul-de-sac at the end of Whispering Trail, working in the alleys trimming limbs back and will transition to the streets. **Mayor Daniel** - shared department reports for Shawn Lickey, Terry Wherry, Matt Heiden and Gary Parrett.

MAYOR REPORT Mayor Daniel reported he had a meeting with Gary and Scott on some ordinance code enforcement things and also working with Leslee, Sally and Gary on some comp time/flex time policy changes that will eventually come in front of Council. He advised he and the department heads were working on what was needed in the GIS position and to make sure the job description adequately reflects that. He reported that he would be at the Indiana Conference of Mayors the 30th through the 1st.

SIDEWALKS Lisa O'Dell of 317 N. Chauncey Street was present to thank Mayor Daniel for protecting our historic sidewalks from being dug up by SURF. She advised they came again yesterday and tried to dig them up, but the tech never read the notes that he was given. She shared that as long as they show up when either her husband or she were home, they would be able to save the sidewalk.

Mayor Daniel advised he would get in contact with them again.

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

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson