

COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2025
6:00 P.M.

Mayor Ryan Daniel – Present
Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson – Present
Attorney Marcia McNaghy – Absent

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 6:01 p.m. All stood to say the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES Mayor Daniel noted a correction under his report in that it should read Senate Enrolled Act 1. Jennifer Romano made a motion to approve the September 9, 2025 meeting minutes as corrected. Jennifer Middleton seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Mike Shoda** – update on Well 9, GLO is back in town going door to door for the next two or three days. **Shawn Lickey** – continue with pole changing project, project for the co-use poles on SR 9 between 500 North and 600 North/Bair Road has started, two guys are at line school this week and also have two guys going to climbing lab the week after, he reported that he and Matt Maggart were going to be teaching some of the courses, he reported on the new location of the Indiana Municipal Electric Association lineman training school, started working on some engineering for projects coming up. **Mike Cook** - still working on cleaning digester out, guys started the third quarter pigging of the force main at SDI, installing new ARV and shutoff valve at SDI. **Tom LaRue** - started training all the shift guys on the new ESO software, Toby still working on Sierra Wireless stuff, Truck 107 is back in service, Firefighter's Fighting Hunger campaign with Kroger went well, update on new firefighter Landon Timm, the burn tower went through its inspection last week and passed with flying colors, did pump testing on Truck 101 and 107 and failed the vacuum portion so Arms Inc. will be in to do repairs on October 7th. **Gary Parrett** – update on hiring process, had a minor issue at Prism Fest but it was addressed promptly with no issues after that, tornado sirens were installed but now have to replace the batteries, working on Comp Time policy. **Matt Heiden** - slides refinished at the pool to remove the calcium build up, had the office parking lot sealed and striped for parking spaces as well as the pool lot, Street Department is helping out by making a concrete path between River Run Court and Columbia Parkway, speed limit signs are now up in both Eagle Park and Morsches Park, Lifewise put on a pickleball tournament September 13 to help their programs, JFL and soccer games are going on. **Terry Wherry** - Two major projects he has are either finished or on hold but the day-to-day stuff has been keeping him busy. **Chip Hill** - Blue River Trail is about 99% complete and have a plan for the railroad crossing, has been working on Request for Proposals for the jail, working with the Mayor on the possibility of having an amphitheater at Eagle Park and working with HWC Engineering Firm on getting the

downtown plan completed. **Street Dept.** – Mayor Daniel reported that Kelly Cearbaugh was at the Street Commissioners' Conference this week, the concrete crew was working on the walk path for the Park, Brooks Construction would be in again for milling and repaving a section of Stone Ridge Drive out at Deer Chase since there were some issues with it.

Mayor Daniel commented on the amphitheater and downtown plan projects. He shared that they had some preliminary estimates presented by JPR Engineering Firm for the Eagle Park amphitheater, which came in a little higher than expected, but felt there were some ways we could both control costs as well as try to ensure that the work stays local. He stated there was a process called BOT, which is build, operate, transfer that they have been looking into, and is a little different than our typical design, bid, build process. He explained that he and Chip have been working on that process just trying to understand how it works. He stated that many communities were moving that direction because it gives a little bit more flexibility in the process and felt that we were going to potentially go through that process. He advised there was a resolution that the Council has to approve ahead of time that states they are okay with going through the BOT process. He stated he would have more information at the next meeting but wanted to at least give Council a forewarning that this was kind of the direction they were heading.

Mayor Daniel shared, in terms of the downtown plan, they have re-engaged HWC Engineering to consider putting together a Preliminary Engineering Report for that project. He explained the concept right now, from a financial perspective, is to look at what he is calling the plus, which is Van Buren from Main Street to Line Street, and then one block North and South on Chauncey. He advised he just wanted to give a forewarning that they were looking at maybe 2027 for a downtown project. He shared the hope is that we can partner with multiple funding opportunities to make that work, such as Community Crossings and maybe Main Street Revitalization Program through OCRA. He reported that Lori Shipman was looking into grant opportunities.

YOUTH COUNCIL Olivia More was present representing the Youth Council. She explained that at their last meeting they welcomed the new sophomores, did some brainstorming on possible service projects for the year and held elections for their president, vice president, and secretary positions. She advised they met with the department heads for lunch and for their service project they cleaned up around the Columbia City signs.

ORDINANCE 2025-13 – STORMWATER RUNOFF – 1ST READING Jennifer Middleton made a motion to read ordinance 2025-13 by title only. Tad Varga seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously. Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson read Ordinance 2025-13 an ordinance amending Chapter 156, Control of Closed Construction Stormwater Runoff, of Title XV of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia City, Indiana.

Mayor Daniel reminded the Council that Jon Gotz was at the last meeting to talk about this.

Jennifer Romano made a motion to approve Ordinance 2025-13 on first reading. Tad Varga seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE 2025-15 – STORMWATER SYSTEM – 1ST READING Jennifer Middleton

made a motion to read Ordinance 2025-15. Dan Weigold seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously. Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson read Ordinance 2025-15, an ordinance amending Chapter 56, Illicit Discharge and Connection to the Municipal Stormwater System, of Title V of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia City, Indiana.

Mayor Daniel advised this was also described by Mr. Gotz at the last meeting and is in regard to stormwater in the City and how it is handled, specifically for construction projects and other things to that effect. He stated that the vast majority of the changes were based on Federal or State mandates that have come down.

Dan Weigold questioned who enforces these things. Mayor Daniel explained we have contracted with the Soil and Water Conservation District, and it is Jon Gotz who goes out and enforces these rules and regulations. He was not sure how much of that goes through Planning and Building. Brent Bockelman advised they get updated inspection reports from Jon as he goes out and does his routine inspections throughout the process. Mayor Daniel questioned who the enforcement mechanism was, Jon or Planning and Building. Brent Bockelman was not sure that they have had to do any enforcement, so could not really answer that but assumed it would probably be their office that would do the enforcing, but also would depend on how in depth of a violation it was.

Brent Bockelman made a motion to approve Ordinance 2025-15 on first reading. Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

UPDATED PARK DEPARTMENT JOB DESCRIPTIONS Matt Heiden, Park Director, requested that Council approve the proposed updated job descriptions. He shared a flow chart showing how it currently is and then a second chart showing how they hope to have it for the future.

Mayor Daniel reviewed the changes for the position of Program Supervisor to include changing the title to Events and Recreation Supervisor. He noted the maintenance side did not change, it was really the programmatic side that was changing. He explained that previously, we had an Aquatic Center Manager that for three or four months of the year was pretty busy, but the rest of the year was not as busy as it probably could be. He added that Andrea, who is the Program Coordinator, has been really taking on a deeper role. Matt Heiden advised that she has been coordinating events such as the Indiana Wild and the Animal Grams from North Manchester. He mentioned, to the Mayor's point, that they have gone the last two years without an Aquatic Manager; they have two outstanding people that have come back every year, Tyler Kissinger and Dave Peterson, and in coordination with Melinda, the pool has been running just fine the last two years. Mayor Daniel confirmed Tyler and Dave were considered assistant managers. Matt advised they were.

Mayor Daniel explained that Matt and the park system continues to diversify the programs we are offering, and as we continue to improve Eagle Park and some of the programs there, it made a lot of sense to have kind of a recreation coordinator type position that would manage the different programs.

Matt Heiden shared that they currently have a baseball coordinator who helps Melinda during the baseball/softball season, which takes a big chunk off of her, so that she is able to help with the pool during the summer, as well as Andrea. He advised they are going to take over the JFL

program and then may possibly look into doing something with pickleball. He stated they were approached last year about possibly having skate instructions.

Mayor Daniel stressed that this was not a new position; they were just taking the Aquatics Manager job description, changing the title and broadening it. He advised there has always been at least one, if not two, assistant managers at the aquatics center and so those positions have continued. He noted dollars have already been appropriated for the position, it just has not been filled.

Dan Weigold questioned whether they will have to approve the job description and salary. Mayor Daniel advised Council would have to approve the job description tonight, and then when the salary ordinance comes up, Council will have to approve the salary range.

Dan Weigold made a motion to approve all three of the position description for the Parks Department including Recreation Coordinator, Recreation and Events Supervisor and Events Coordinator as presented. Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

MAYOR REPORT Mayor Daniel commented on the passing of County Commissioner Chad Banks and expressed condolences to the family. He reported that the Youth Council will be meeting tomorrow, Little Turtle Elementary third graders will be coming in on Thursday and he has Mayor's Roundtable on Friday in Auburn. He shared that on Saturday, we have the Family Safety Festival downtown.

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

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson