

COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026
6:00 P.M.

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

Council Members

Ryan Adamson – Present
Brent Bockelman – Present
Jennifer Romano – Present
Tad Varga – Present
Daniel Weigold – Present

The Columbia City Common Council met in regular session with all members present. Council President Dan Weigold presided over the meeting.

MINUTES Jennifer Romano made a motion to approve the March 10, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. Ryan Adamson, Brent Bockelman, Jennifer Romano and Dan Weigold approved, Tad Varga abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENT Dan Weigold shared that he received a phone call from a citizen requesting that we put signage up on the trail stating that dogs must be on a leash. He reported that he brought it up in Board of Works and Matt Heiden advised he could put signs up at the entrances to the trail to help remind people of that. He suggested people may be coming in from the county who may not be familiar with our ordinance.

Matt Heiden advised they had to put signs up at Eagle Park because they had people who would shut the gates and let their dogs run on the football field, which is not allowed. He advised they also put signs up at Morsches Park.

ENTERPRISE PRESENTATION Alex Rinearson, Client Strategy Manager, was present to review their model for the city and to go through some numbers. He explained that the first model is basically what they do for the city, they want to manage the fleet of vehicles from acquisition to resale. He advised they use data-based driven opportunities in terms of when to replace vehicles and explained that the data is based off, not only Columbia City's data, but with Enterprise being a larger company, they have millions of vehicles to collect data from. He advised they try to make sure the vehicles are replaced when they are at the lowest total cost of ownership. He explained that the optimal time to replace a vehicle is when there is still significant resale value in the vehicle, using that equity towards the next vehicle to keep those costs down.

Mr. Rinearson went on to review the different funding models they use and how they work. He shared that when it comes to funding a vehicle, they do not care and leave it up to the client to decide. He advised that they do typically recommend a market finance, which is also known as an open-ended leasing model and is what Columbia City is currently using. He reported for Columbia City they were currently tracking 35 vehicles in their system with a total fleet value of just north of \$1 million and an average vehicle age just shy of 4 years. He advised that Columbia City averages 5 purchases per year and an average holding period of 7 years, which means if we continue purchasing 5 vehicles per year it will take 7 years to cycle through the 35 vehicles. He stated from a fleet health perspective, Columbia City is one of the best there is in the state of Indiana. He reported that 31 of the 35 vehicles were under 50,000 miles, 3 vehicles were between the 50,000- and 100,000-mile mark and only 1 over the 150,000 mile mark. He shared that our average odometer is just north of 17,000, so essentially our vehicles are dependable, up to safety standards and codes. He continued to review lease expenses and resale performance.

Dan Weigold commented that one of the things he gets hit up on a lot is that we always have new vehicles, but felt it was because the public does not understand how the system works.

Mr. Rinearson explained the best part about this program is that government usually gets the best incentives, the best purchasing power. He advised they still go out to the market and sell for the highest dollar and felt the numbers proved they were doing the right thing.

Dan Weigold expressed his appreciation to Mr. Rinearson for being present. He shared that we have a couple new councilmen and felt this would help them understand how the system works.

Tad Varga questioned how many years we had been in this program. Mr. Rinearson advised this was the eighth year.

FIRE DEPARTMENT RADIO PRESENTATION Toby Fralick reported that he also presented the justification of the radio purchase to the Board of Works. He shared that he and Rhys Perry had done a lot of research regarding this, from initiating all the quotes and setting up meetings to demoing the radios. He advised the two quotes they were mainly looking at were Motorola, and Kenwood through J & K. He noted that they did look at L3Harris initially, but they came in at a very high price point plus their radios did not have the infrastructure built in, so they were mainly focused on the Kenwood and Motorola. He advised they have had both radios in hand for about three weeks, with the versions of what they were looking at purchasing. He shared that they did some testing with air packs and masks in buildings in areas of the city that they struggle to reach signal and hands down, across the board, the guys and gal agree that Motorola is the way to go. He reported that the police have been using them for 15 years and the dispatch consoles were Motorola, which they all work hand in hand very well together. He advised that Motorola has a backbone on the state system that is built out for redundancy. He explained if they are trying to reach communications or their IC on scene, and the signal to the tower fails, the radio has built in technology that it will fall back on cellular technology and then if that fails, there is also Wi-Fi capabilities that are programmable on the radios as well, so there are three different systems this radio can fall back on to help them communicate. He reported that these radios are a tri-band radio, so they will work on their current VHS system, the 800 side and then it has a UHF option as well. He advised that they were looking at maintaining their old radios because they are not able to purchase enough of the new radios to give everybody one on the department. He shared that this would effectively put a radio in the hands of all the full-time staff, all the command staff, all volunteer command staff, as well as be able to have a couple spares on each of the trucks. He advised they would still be utilizing the VHF radios in the meantime.

Leslee Robinson shared that she had the pleasure of sitting in all the meetings and stressed that the fallback capability of these radios was huge when talking public safety, especially because there were several areas that we could be assisting where there is no normal reception available. She noted that capability was already built in to these radios and pointed out when looking at the other quotes we would have to get MiFi boxes and other things to be able to fall back on LTE system, so there would be additional expense if we would go with the other radios. She advised they already had discussions surrounding this and knew from the get-go that they were working towards including the lease of the radios in with the lease of the fire truck. She advised they were looking at a 10-year lease or bond on the fire truck, and felt it only made sense to do so. She reported that they talked to all the vendors about lease options and although they offered this option, none of them came close to the initial numbers we received from Indiana Bond Bank. She shared at this point in time, they were really just letting Council know that this is coming but are unsure when. She explained we were not able to get our final numbers from any of the banks until 90 days prior to receiving our new fire truck, and we do not know when that date is actually going to be yet. She reiterated that the police department has used the Motorola radios for 15

plus years so they would have these radios for a long tenure and not be something that in 10 years they would come back asking for new radios.

Dan Weigold shared that the Board of Works gave a blessing to move forward with the Motorola quote.

Ryan Adamson confirmed the Motorola quote was \$443,000 and the J & K was \$173,000. Toby Fralick advised that was correct and was a huge number. Dan Weigold advised the Board of Works questioned that as well, but advised it was just a better radio. Ryan Adamson agreed there was no doubt and the reception was a big deal too.

Leslee Robinson questioned how old the current radios were. Toby Fralick shared that they have VHF radios and guessed them to be around 15 years old.

Brent Bockelman reported that at the County Redevelopment meeting, Ed Scott from EMA, did a presentation on a proposal regarding communication and tower locations. He questioned if that goes through to where we would have new tower locations, would, as far as coverage goes in South Whitley, Larwill, and those locations where we have major communication issues currently, would the lower cost radios work better. He questioned if part of the concern was that we do not have enough towers and signal for the lower cost radios to operate properly. Toby Fralick advised it can be complicated. He explained that 800 radios were not as powerful a radio signal to penetrate through buildings and was some of Chief LaRue's reluctance in switching, along with the huge cost. He advised they kind of drug their feet a little bit on switching to the 800 system initially because they were more worried about staffing but at this point, the majority of the county has switched over to 800 radios and paging, hence the need to get good coverage in South Whitley. He stated that the long and short of the questions was, no. He shared that the backbone of the Motorola radios just adds more redundancy and in areas such as South Whitley the radios can bounce between systems seamlessly, which is very important for our guys. He explained that if they were stuck inside a structure and cannot radio out, they do not have to manually make a change on their radio, these will do it for them. He added and was not sure it was highlighted in the paperwork, that this is a 7-year plan so there would not be fees next year and so on. Brent Bockelman advised if it saves someone's life, that \$400,000 is going to look like nothing. He advised he just wanted to make sure he was understanding the communication of radios correctly in his mind.

Ryan Adamson confirmed these were the only radios that have cell signal built into them. Toby Fralick advised they were. Leslee Robinson stressed the importance of that; if our guys are inside the school or the hospital and there is no service, they are not having to manually change the channel to get to another channel. She agreed with Brent that if it saves one of our firefighters' lives, that \$400,000, to make sure that those guys are protected and continue to be protected. Brent Bockelman shared a scenario presented this morning, was if we have one of our department members fall through the floor of a building that is burning and does not have communication, and we could have prevented that by spending a little bit more money. Jennifer Romano added that even the amount of time it would take to change to the different channels, the guys might not have the presence of thought or the ability to do that. Ryan Adamson thought the radios could be programmed to where once the guys reach inside the building, the radio automatically connects to the Wi-Fi.

Toby Fralick advised that they will have over-the-air programming available too and explained that if they have a channel change or something that they need to send out to all the radios, they can push it out through the software in the radio and not have to take it out of service to have it programmed and then pay a fee. They will have the software to be able to maintain updates in-house.

Ryan Adamson mentioned that he had conversations with Chief Parrett about new radios for the police department and maybe getting a better deal if they would order a larger amount. Chief Parrett advised their radios were working great right now but

they were 15 years and was just trying to prepare ahead. He said that he would like to get on board for 25 more to see if we could get a better price. Jennifer Romano questioned if we would have to finance that differently. Leslee Robinson advised we would. Chief Parrett advised he would get a hold of Motorola and compare their prices with what these prices are.

Dan Weigold shared that this was just informational to let Council know it will be coming but not sure exactly when. Leslee Robinson advised that once we have a delivery date, she would get updated quotes.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Mike Cook** - started UV system up, started biomonitoring, reviewing applications for our position that we have open. **Toby Fralick** – truck 101 repairs, breathing air compressor is advertised for sale on The Garage, new compressor should be here sometime in April, took truck 107 down to Indy for repairs. **Matt Heiden** - still hiring summer help, passed out applications at the high school career fair, putting baseball and softball teams together and opening day is April 25th, Park Board approved the dog park fence and the resealing of the pickleball and basketball courts at the pool. **Gary Parrett** – update on newest officers, tornado sirens are functioning properly, thanked Mission Barbecue for bringing lunch for dispatch and police as a token of their appreciation for our service, conducted Operation Pull Over which resulted in 27 citations, 5 criminal charges and several issued warnings. **Kelly Cearbaugh** – helping electric department with tree removal, crew working at the cemetery to get things cleaning up before Good Friday, grating alleys. **Terry Wherry** - working with Koorsen Fire Systems and SOS Communications so that we can monitor the fire system at the old jail, ENTRUST was in to work on our SCADA system.

CLERK TREASURER REPORT Leslee Robinson thanked the Council for allowing her to go down for training two weeks ago. She advised she had a really good five days of training with other clerk treasurers and brought back a lot of new information. She shared that she will be working on some modernization changes and has already started to implement some of those changes. She reported on the BS & A demo, which is the cloud version of Keystone, our software system used for all of our financials and utility billings. She advised that she would be coming to Council in May to hopefully get approval to move forward with transferring to that software.

Having no further business to discuss, Dan Weigold called the meeting adjourned.

Council President Daniel Weigold

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson

