

**COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2026
6:00 PM**

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

Council Members

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

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

MINUTES Mayor Daniel noted a spelling correction under the Youth Council discussion.

Tad Varga made a motion to approve the April 28, 2026 meeting minutes with the noted change. Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT There were no public comments.

DAVE HERRON RECOGNITION FOR 50 YEARS OF SERVICE Mayor Daniel read a proclamation declaring May 12, 2026 as Dave Herron Day in the City of Columbia City.

BS & A SOFTWARE PRESENTATION Parker Bright with BS&A/Boyce Systems was present to discuss the new software system proposal and the importance of moving to the cloud-based system. He shared that Columbia City has been a customer for close to 40 years and hopes to continue serving Columbia City for the next 20-30 years with this investment. He advised with the waived migration fees they have seen a large number of customers move this route, not only because of the financial incentive but also for security and compliance purposes and the ability to decentralize a lot of the work out of the Clerk Treasurer's office to truly be one system for the entire City.

Leslee Robinson advised that she included proposal information in the agenda packet and also shared that Parker and his team came in to do a demo of the system with her office and the departments who felt they could benefit from this system. She shared many features of the program modules and stressed that the efficiencies of the system were incredible. Parker Bright noted that another important thing to think about when looking at the efficiencies of the system were the efficiencies that the public will benefit from as well. He shared that not only will this be important internally, but it will also look and feel great externally to the residents because they will have options available to them that they did not have before. He explained specifically when it comes to utility billing payments, with the current payment provider, everything is next day but with this new system everything happens in real time. He advised another benefit of the BS&A payment system is when payments are made online with a bank account their system is hitting the account in real time which will lower the number of chargebacks and NSF's. He also shared that if a resident has a credit card stored for payment purposes and the card expires, the system will automatically update that information on the back end so that transactions are not declined.

Parker Bright touched a little bit on the Payroll program and shared that one of the benefits was the employee self-service portal that will allow employees to track their own information, view deposit advices and W2's.

Dan Weigold questioned if we knew the percentage of customers who pay online versus those who pay in the office. Leslee Robinson advised that we still get stacks of checks but are trying to be more proactive in getting customers to sign up for direct deposit through our office. She shared that we offer it as a free service as opposed to Invoice Cloud who charges \$4.95 each month.

Parker Bright shared some history on the current program and reported that Keystone was coded and created back in 1989. He advised it has been a great product for a long time but did not believe there were many things left operating in any city or town dating back to then. He advised this system is what will lead us into the future.

Tad Varga questioned if the outward facing part would still connect to the city website. Parker explained it would depend on how it is set up to interact and if we want customers to be able to pay from the website then they could provide a link to the payment portal. Leslee noted that is how we have it set up now; there is a link on the city website that goes to the Invoice Cloud payment portal. Tad Varga questioned if the customers would set up a user account. Parker advised they would and explained that when this gets introduced there will be information on the bills stating that Columbia City Utilities is now using BS&A Software, it will tell them where to go to set up their account and will also include a PIN. Tad Varga confirmed this was a full enterprise type system. Parker advised it was.

Jennifer Romano questioned the safety and security of our information. Parker explained that the system is hosted in Microsoft Azure, so they have to follow all of Microsoft's compliances in terms of rules and regulations, so the data is locked down pretty tight. He shared that they have two different data centers: one in Virginia and one in Arizona.

Leslee Robinson shared that she wanted to be sure we were taking the right steps to put a system in place that is going to work for all of us as well be a system that we are going to have for years. She asked for the Council's approval on the system and if we could make the decision before the end of the month, the \$87,110 in migration fees would be waived.

Parker Bright reported in terms of statistics, they started selling the cloud-based system last year and were able to get 20 cities/towns live last year alone; they should have another 10 to 15 live this year and are looking at probably 35 live next year, making it well over 100 that will have signed up to move to the cloud system. He noted that in looking at the numbers in the quote, in terms of training and implementation, that number could vary depending on how long it takes to get everyone trained. He stated that if Council decides to move forward and the contract is signed, he could send staff over to their virtual training site so that they can begin to get familiar with the programs.

Tad Varga questioned what the transition period would be. Parker explained for a city our size, it would typically be a 4-to-6-month implementation but they are currently back logged and were scheduling about a year out.

Dan Weigold confirmed the total proposed amount was \$206,015. Leslee Robinson advised there were some items that were going to be removed from the quote so the true cost would be \$197,910. Mayor Daniel noted that the \$67,000 would be up to us when it comes to the training, so probably should be a not to exceed \$197,910. Leslee advised that was correct.

Jennifer Romano confirmed it would be for three years. Parker explained that they use evergreen contracts which automatically renew every year, but there is a 90-day window to cancel if it is decided to not move forward with the system.

Dan Weigold confirmed that the data stays here and was not housed anywhere else. Parker explained that the data does not stay here and is hosted under Microsoft Azure,

but the city owns the data. Dan confirmed that they could not sell our data. Parker advised that they could not and is specifically stated in the contract that your data is your data.

Discussion took place regarding some of the areas of savings.

Mayor Daniel shared that when looking at the total operations of Leslee's Office, they were talking about a wholesale change; it is going to be night and day from what they currently have. He mentioned the notes included in the packet from the staff members and shared that there has not been a time when he has come into the office and not heard there was an issue with Keystone. He expressed that in all seriousness, there has been a lot of work by lots of individuals trying to figure out how we become more nimble as government but also making sure we are protecting our citizens and our customers, all the while really moving into the current century.

Tad Varga shared that his company made a transition like this about four years ago where they went to a full enterprise, cloud-based, off-site server system, and it totally revolutionized how they got things done; more efficiently and effectively. He advised that he was in favor of it.

Mayor Daniel questioned Leslee if she was requesting the council give approval this evening so that the process could be started, knowing that we have a year to really get full implementation in place. Leslee advised that was correct. She shared that we need to give Parker an answer before the end of the month; otherwise, if we wait, then we will have to pay the migration fees.

Tad Varga made a motion to approve a not to exceed number of \$197,910 for the migration to the new system. Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATEMENT OF BENEFITS – VERIZON CENTER

Mayor Daniel advised this was for BR Real Estate LLC. He noted that they have been going since 2018 so just have a couple of years left on that tax abatement. He felt the numbers speak for themselves.

Tad Varga made a motion to find them in compliance and grant an additional year of abatement. Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE 2026-12 AUTHORIZING PREPAYMENT OF CERTAIN

CLAIMS Dan Weigold made a motion to read Ordinance 2026-12 by title only. Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously. Leslee Robinson read Ordinance 2026-12, an ordinance authorizing repayment of certain claims.

Mayor Daniel advised that this was in front of the council last time and explained that it was adjustments that Leslee was suggesting based on her clerk's conference training and some of the state laws.

Jennifer Romano made a motion to approve Ordinance 2026-12 on 2nd and final reading. Tad Varga seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DISCUSSION

Matt O'Rourke with American Structurepoint was present to review the updated comprehensive plan structure, the future land use map and the major milestones of how the plan came together, as well as the bigger pieces of the plan.

Jennifer Romano expressed her excitement in that it was finally to this point. She shared that when she was new to council, she realized just how critical having a comprehensive plan was and how it has been used as an instruction manual in making a lot of decisions over the past 10 - 11 years. She felt that this sets up future administrations in a really good way by providing a framework for what we as a

community agree on what we want it to be. She stressed that there was a lot of work put in ahead of time and is such an advantage to have the plan to be able to pull it off the shelf and use it as a filter for making decisions.

Mayor Daniel advised he was really proud of the presentation boards that show what goals were accomplished from the 2015 plan. He noted that it was not necessarily all-encompassing, but it did hit on a lot of the things. He shared that he really liked the fact that the plan has been updated; it builds on the success, and it builds on the plans that we have or had for Columbia City going into the future.

Nathan Bilger, Planning and Building Director, explained from a procedural standpoint, there is a resolution before council and was hopeful that it would be adopted so that the plan can be put to work. He reported that it goes without saying that the Plan Commission sends this to council with a favorable recommendation.

Dan Weigold stated that the Planning Commission was absolutely in favor of this. He shared that after the presentation Matt gave; they were all very excited about the future of what is possibly going to be happening. He advised that American Structurepoint put everything together in a very, very professional way and was thankful for all the work everyone put into it. Matt O'Rourke shared that this is not a very typical way they write these updates, but it was just so self-evident when they got into the process and wanted to make sure it got documented in the way that they did.

RESOLUTION 2026-15 AMENDMENT TO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN Jennifer Romano made a motion to read resolution 2026-15 by title only. Dan Weigold seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously. Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson read Resolution 2026-15, a resolution amending the comprehensive plan of the City of Columbia City.

Jennifer Romano made a motion to approve Resolution 2026-15 on first and final reading. Dan Weigold seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2026-14 AMENDMENT TO CHAPTER 52 – EPA LEAD LINES

Tad Varga made a motion to read Ordinance 2026-14 by title only. Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously. Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson read Ordinance 2026-14, an ordinance receiving and amending Chapter 52 of Title V of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Columbia City.

Chip Hill explained that this ordinance gives the water department the right to go on someone's property to pothole and inspect their lines to see if they are lead and if so, then go in and replace lead lines. He shared that they are running into individuals who are not allowing us on their property or in their house to inspect the lines.

Mayor Daniel advised that the rationale behind this has to do with the fact that the city is being mandated by the federal and state government to address this; it was not something we are doing for funnies, we do not have a choice.

Chip Hill noted that this was an EPA ordinance that they passed down and is being spread throughout the country.

Tad Varga questioned if this has been shared with those not allowing us in. Chip Hill advised they have not yet been informed. He explained that we are trying to get federal funding which involves different steps, and this was one of them. Mayor Daniel reiterated that we try to work with the homeowner first and foremost, but this would be for those who are obstinate and do not want us on their property.

Tad Varga made a motion to approve Ordinance 2026-14 on first reading. Dan Weigold seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

AMPHITHEATER PROJECT AND TAXPAYER PETITION Mayor Daniel advised he was going to table these items until the next meeting. He shared that Attorney McNagny, Chip Hill and he had a great conversation with Lisa Lee, our Bond Attorney at Ice Miller and there are some things we need to make sure that we have squared away.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Nathan Bilger** – Valvoline received their occupancy permit and were aiming for Memorial Day to open, Plan Commission approved a primary class for new apartments up near Countryside, he led historic tours in the downtown. **Chip Hill** - working on the amphitheater project and liquidating the jail. **Matt Heiden** - getting ready for Memorial Day, have a 50 team tournament coming in next weekend. **Shawn Lickey** - making preparations for the high school CTE building, still working on changing out polls and had a couple good meetings last week. **Gary Parrett** – officer updates, Friday Friday’s and Farmers' Market went pretty smooth after a couple minor issues, Operation Prom went well. **Mike Cook** – meeting with IDEM regarding pneumonia, new hire starts May 18th, staff changed out a very large and heavy valve. **Terry Wherry** – SOS finished the internet installation in the fire training room, met with Koorsen Fire at the jail to try and get the fire system monitoring.

YOUTH COUNCIL Erin Devito was present to give an update on the Youth Council activities.

FIRE TRUCK – US BOND BANK Leslee Robinson reported that the Board of Works gave approval to move forward with US Bancorp for the bond on the fire truck and requested approval from the Council as well.

Dan Weigold made a motion to approve U.S. Bancorp's financing of our new fire truck. Jennifer Romano seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously.

MAYOR REPORT Mayor Daniel reported that they opened bids for the Westgate Subdivision at the Board of Works meeting and shared that the bids ranged from \$1.69 million to \$2.14 million. He reported that Mark Jesse took the bids to review and will bring back to the Board of Works for approval. He advised he had Youth Council on Thursday and Wednesday he will be hosting the Mayor's and Commissioners' Caucus of Northeast Indiana at the Aquatic Center. He reminded everyone that we would be closed Monday the 25th for Memorial Day. He shared that we would be doing a lighting contest for America 250 and will open the time capsule on July 4th.

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

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Leslee Robinson

