

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA,
ILLINOIS HELD MONDAY, APRIL 28, 2008 IN THE COUNCIL ROOM OF CITY HALL

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hutchinson called the City Council of Columbia, Illinois to order at 7:01 PM.

Upon Roll Call, the following members were:

Present: Aldermen Ebersohl, Agne, Niemietz, Unnerstall, Row, Hejna, Oberkfell, and Stumpf.

Absent: None.

Quorum Present.

Administrative Staff Present: City Clerk Wes Hoeffken, City Administrator Anthony Traxler, Building Inspector Al Holden, Accounting Manager Linda Sharp, Deputy Chief of Police Jerry Paul, City Engineer Ron Williams, and Fire Chief Mike Roediger.

The Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. DELEGATIONS

A. FY 2008-2009 Budget - Citizen Comments

Mayor Hutchinson inquired if any of the citizens had comments regarding the proposed 2008-2009 Budget.

Mr. Gene Bergmann of 1835 Meadow Court presented a summary of the Public Hearing before the City Council held Monday, April 21, 2008, and summarized the analysis presented by Mr. Traxler. Mr. Bergman reinforced the idea the City is experiencing flat and declining revenues and stated members of the Council have gotten the City into a lose/lose situation and do not have an exit strategy. Mr. Bergmann added that failing to participate in repairs to the levee is contributing to the demise of the City. Mr. Bergmann also urged the Council to reconsider Mr. Grewe's offer to end the lawsuit.

Ms. Rita Diehl stated it is interesting the Council is willing to pass a budget that has a deficit balance, and questioned Mr. Traxler's definition of a balanced budget. Ms. Diehl added the City needs to have a black budget. Ms. Diehl explained the City can increase its revenue by learning to live within its means and doing without certain things and a citizens group could identify cuts to the current budget. Ms. Diehl also stated Mr. Grewe's comments at the Public Hearing were nothing more than an attempt at extortion.

Alderman Unnerstall stated he wanted to correct a statement that had been made. He stated the City Council was not opposed to rebuilding the levee, despite what some have claimed. Alderman Unnerstall stated the reason he believes a majority of the City Council opposed the Haines legislation was because it was not right to empower the County Commissioners to impose a sales tax without a vote of its citizens.

Ms. Sharp explained the definition of a balanced budget is the result of adding revenues and reserves, subtracting expenditures, and if there is a remaining cash balance, you have a balanced budget, which is what the City has.

III. OLD BUSINESS

A. Fire Department Agreement Discussion

Chief Roediger presented a draft of an Intergovernmental Agreement between the City of Columbia and the Columbia Rural Fire Protection District. Alderman Agne expressed concern about the per call basis for dispatching and stated the initial cost of the system should be included in the calculation. Aldermen Oberkfell and Agne stated they would like time to review the proposed agreement. Mayor Hutchinson stated they could call for a Committee meeting at the May 5, 2008 Council meeting.

Mr. Traxler inquired if Chief Roediger was recommending approval of the proposed agreement. Chief Roediger stated he was recommending approval of the agreement. Alderman Ebersohl stated he does not agree with the proposed agreement.

Alderman Ebersohl addressed Alderman Oberkfell regarding his email (attached) stating Alderman Oberkfell was not notified about the meeting with the Fire Department and the accusations Alderman Ebersohl violated procedures. Alderman Ebersohl explained he had inquired if Alderman Oberkfell was available for a meeting. Alderman Oberkfell said I did not say you did not plan a meeting. Alderman Ebersohl also explained this was not a committee meeting but a sub-committee meeting which does not require posting of a meeting notice and also only requires participation of two aldermen. Mr. Traxler stated this sub-committee was originally formed to include the Chairman of the Fire Department Committee and the Chairman of the Municipal Buildings Committee.

B. EMT Hires Approval

MOTION

It was moved by Alderman Stumpf, and seconded by Alderman Hejna, to accept the recommendation of the Part Time Assistant EMS Director Ken Buss, and employ, as part-time EMS employees, Mr. Kyle Smith as an EMT-B, Ms. Heather Middleton as an EMT-B, Mr. Aaron Cline as an EMT-B, and Mrs. Berta Perez as an EMT-B effective immediately. Upon Roll Call vote, Aldermen Ebersohl, Agne, Niemietz, Unnerstall, Row, Hejna, Oberkfell, and Stumpf voted yea. Motion Carried.

C. Ordinance No. 2651 - FY 2008-2009 Budget Approval

Ms. Sharp presented a summary of the two proposed budgets. Ms Sharp then distributed a schedule of budget cuts she was proposing. Alderman Unnerstall stated the latest changes presents a less "red" budget. Alderman Row stated he had discussed Ms. Sharp's proposed changes with her, and Mr. Williams, and agrees with the changes. Ms. Sharp recommended the expenditure for a new phone system be left in the budget since the funds will be coming out of the Capital Development Fund. Mr. Traxler and Mr. Williams expressed concern about the current phone system and recommended it be replaced. Alderman Row agreed and added budgeting \$78,000.00 for a phone system does not mean it will all be spent. Mr. Traxler stated he is also reviewing the possibility of purchasing a phone system via lease-purchase. Alderman Hejna stated the City spends a large amount of money on cell phones and suggested people contact employees via their cell phones.

Deputy Chief Paul explained the Police Department uses cell phones as a back-up in the event of lost radio communication.

Alderman Unnerstall stated the basic premise for a balanced budget is to stop spending more than the City takes in, and added his thought coming to the meeting was "if budget not in black, I'm pushing it back", but after seeing the net effect of the latest cuts, is comfortable with the proposed budget. Mayor Hutchinson stated the budget is still using a lot of cash reserves. Mr. Traxler stated if you want a black budget, you need to cut another \$600,000.00 from the budget. Alderman Niemietz stated there is

\$500,000.00 directly related to the Columbia Crossing litigation, and yet Aldermen Unnerstall and Hejna suggest cuts without discussing the proposed cuts with any of the Department Heads. Alderman Hejna stated there was a lot of money spent on the City Attorney this past year and the City also spent \$100,000.00 on Mr. Weismann, the labor attorney, and Alderman Niemietz, as Chairman of the Personnel Committee, should be concerned about those expenditures. Alderman Hejna added she has reviewed all of the invoices for the labor attorney and there were no Personnel Committee meetings called to discuss any of the issues. Alderman Niemietz stated she trusts the various department heads and Mr. Traxler to make the appropriate decisions regarding personnel issues. Mr. Traxler added that in several of the situations, the personnel situation was part of a police investigation and was not available for distribution to the aldermen. Mayor Hutchinson indicated that it is not necessary for elected officials to scrutinize the minutia of day to day operations such as how much chlorine is necessary for the lagoon. Mayor Hutchinson reminded the Council they are there to decide policy and procedures, and not micro-manage the daily operations of the City. Mayor Hutchinson also stated he doesn't need to know the details about every job in the City to understand the departments are doing their respective jobs. Alderman Oberkfell stated this is all well and good, but in order to make policy decisions, the aldermen need more information. Alderman Unnerstall stated that if an alderman has a detailed question, they should have a right to know the answer. Mr. Traxler agreed and stated that Alderman Hejna looked at the legal bills in question months ago and this was the first time he heard mention of any concerns with these bills. Mr. Traxler also stated that any elected officials have always been encouraged to come to his office anytime to discuss any issue staff is working on. Mr. Traxler stated he has never refused to discuss information with any of the aldermen.

MOTION

It was moved by Alderman Row, and seconded by Alderman Agne, to pass Ordinance No. 2651, an ordinance approving the 2008-2009 budget of the City of Columbia, including the additional cuts highlighted by the schedule provided by Linda Sharp and discussed in open session. Upon Roll Call vote, Aldermen Agne, Unnerstall, Row, Hejna, Oberkfell, and Stumpf voted yea. Aldermen Ebersohl, Niemietz, and Mayor Hutchinson voted nay. Motion Carried.

Mayor Hutchinson stated he voted nay because there is a simple solution to the current budget issue, and if the Council would follow the (MDA) Master Development Agreement the budget would have been balanced months ago. We are spending over \$500,000 fighting the MDA estimated \$200k this year and budget \$350k next year. Because of this, we are cutting cameras to watch over ICS School, Police officers, Live Scan updates to help catch criminals, cuts that affect the quality of life for Columbia. This fight is a lose lose situation. Those fighting it have no plan of what they are going to do whether they win or lose.

D. FY 2008-2009 Salary Ordinance

Mayor Hutchinson informed the Council he will be vetoing Ordinance No. 2647 and will distribute the necessary documentation at the next Council Meeting.

E. March Financial Statements Discussion

MOTION

It was moved by Alderman Hejna, and seconded by Alderman Unnerstall, to accept the March Financial Statement as submitted and on file at City Hall. Upon Roll Call vote, Aldermen Ebersohl, Agne, Niemietz, Unnerstall, Row, Hejna, Oberkfell, and Stumpf voted yea. Motion Carried.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. St. Paul UCC Street Closure Request

Mr. Traxler informed the Council the event has been cancelled and the street closure will not be required.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Hutchinson informed the Council that he would entertain a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the Columbia Crossing litigation.

MOTION:

It was moved by Alderman Unnerstall, and seconded by Alderman Niemietz, to direct the Mayor to go into Executive Session at 8:02 PM for the purpose of discussing the Columbia Crossing litigation. Upon Roll Call vote, Aldermen Ebersohl, Agne, Niemietz, Unnerstall, Row, Hejna, Oberkfell, and Stumpf voted yea. Motion Carried.

MOTION:

It was moved by Alderman Agne, and seconded by Alderman Niemietz, to return to the Special Session of the City Council at 9:40 PM. Upon Roll Call vote, Aldermen Ebersohl, Agne, Niemietz, Unnerstall, Row, Hejna, Oberkfell, and Stumpf voted yea. Motion Carried.

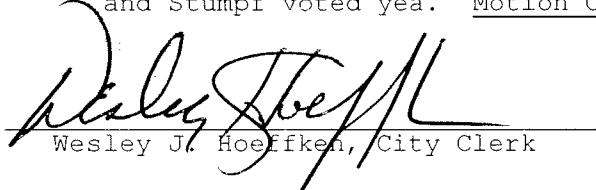
Upon return to Regular Session, Aldermen Ebersohl, Agne, Niemietz, Unnerstall, Row, Hejna, Oberkfell, Stumpf and Mayor Hutchinson were present.

Mayor Hutchinson inquired if there was any business to be brought before the Council as a result of the Executive Session. There was none.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

It was moved by Alderman Row, and seconded by Alderman Stumpf, to adjourn the Special City Council Meeting held Monday, April 28, 2008 at 9:41 PM. Upon Roll Call vote, Aldermen Ebersohl, Agne, Niemietz, Unnerstall, Row, Hejna, Oberkfell, and Stumpf voted yea. Motion Carried.



Wesley J. Hoeffken, City Clerk



Kevin B. Hutchinson

Mayor Kevin B. Hutchinson

Mehaffey, Donna

From: Hoeffken, Wes
Sent: Tuesday, April 29, 2008 9:45 PM
To: Mehaffey, Donna
Subject: FW: E-Mail Message

Donna,

This email needs to be printed and included as part of the Special Meeting of 4/28 meeting. I will be forwarding the meetings minutes tomorrow or Thursday.

"Brad Oberkfell <boberkfe@hotmail.com>

Brad Oberkfell
<boberkfe@hotmail.com>
04/23/2008 11:15 PM

To<mr6793@att.com>
cc<deoerr@htc.net>, <cvfd@htc.net>,
<sharres@stclair.k12.il.us>, <gsffarms@htc.net>,
<al@columbiaillinois.com>, Fred Stumpf
<freds@htc.net>

SubjectFire meeting

Gentleman,

I was notified this afternoon that Mr. Ebersohl had called a fire committee meeting without notifying all committee members....myself included. I want you all to know that I was absent ONLY because no notification of such a meeting was given by our chairman. I am disgusted in how this process played out and I want you all to know that I will meet with the fire department any evening with the exception of monday night council meetings. If everyone is in agreement, I would like to see this meeting be rescheduled and have our chairman send proper notification (via email) to all appropriate individuals. Your feedback would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you,

Brad Oberkfell
Alderman Ward III"

Gene

No virus found in this outgoing message.

Checked by AVG.

Version: 7.5.524 / Virus Database: 269.23.6/1402 - Release Date: 4/28/2008 1:29 PM