

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE COMMITTEE MEETING OF  
THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, ILLINOIS HELD MONDAY,  
OCTOBER 8, 2018 IN THE COUNCIL ROOM OF CITY HALL**

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**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Ebersohl called the Committee of the Whole committee meeting of the City Council of the City of Columbia, Illinois to order at 7:00 P.M.

Upon Roll Call, the following members were:

Present: Committee Members - Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz (arrived at 7:03 P.M.) Roessler, Huch, Reis, Holtkamp, and Martens.

Absent: Mayor Hutchinson.

Quorum Present.

Administrative Staff Present: City Administrator James Morani, City Attorney Terry Bruckert, City Clerk and Director of EMA Wes Hoeffken, Accounting Manager Linda Sharp, City Engineer Chris Smith, Director of Community Development Scott Dunakey (arrived at 7:02 P.M.), Police Chief Jerry Paul, Deputy Chief of Police Jason Donjon, Plan Commission Chairman William Seibel (arrived at 7:10 P.M.) EMS Chief Kim Lamprecht, and Deputy Clerk Donna Mehaffey.

Guests: Mr. Mark Scoggins of the Sophia and Elmer Oerter Charitable Foundation, Mr. John Conrad, Vice Chairperson of the Play Foundation, Ms. Lisa Fallon, Monroe County Circuit Clerk, and Mr. James Schmersahl of Schorb & Schmersahl, LLC.

**VETERANS' MEMORIAL RE-DEDICATION - SOPHIA AND ELMER OERTER CHARITABLE FOUNDATION**

Mayor Pro Tem Gene Ebersohl read the Veterans' Memorial Re-Dedication Proclamation. The Veterans' Memorial has been redesigned by the Sophia and Elmer Oerter Charitable Foundation and was re-dedicated today. A check in the amount of \$68,289.66 was presented to the City of Columbia from the PLAY Foundation which originally came from the Sophia and Elmer Oerter Charitable Foundation for the monument enhancements. Mayor Pro Tem Ebersohl and Parks and Recreation Chairman Mary Ellen Niemietz accepted the check on behalf of the City of Columbia. Vice Chairperson of the PLAY Foundation, Mr. John Conrad and Mr. Mark Scoggins of the Sophia and Elmer Oerter Charitable Foundation were also present during the presentation.

Chairman Ebersohl stated the meeting was called for the purpose of discussing: (1) Approval of the Executive Session Minutes from the August 27, 2018 Committee of the Whole Meeting; (2) Approval of Minutes from the September 10, 2018 Committee of the Whole Meeting; (3) FY 2017-2018 Audit Presentation; (4) Special Event - Halloween Party (Reifschneider's Grill & Grape); (5) Hotel and Motel Tax Rebate Agreement (Hampton Inn); (6) Mobile Home Park Licensing Requirements; (7) Electronic Message Board Variances (City of Columbia); (8) RFP for Gateway/POP-UP SHOP Sign; (9) Zoning Hearing Officer; (10) MOU with Monroe County Circuit Clerk (Digital Ticket System for Police Department); (11) Other Items to be Considered; (12) Public Comments; and (13) Executive Session – 5 ILCS 120/2(c).

**II. APPROVAL OF THE EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 27, 2018 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING**

The Executive Session minutes from the August 27, 2018 Committee of the Whole committee meeting were submitted for approval.

**MOTION:**

It was moved by Alderman Reis and seconded by Alderman Martens, to approve the Executive Session minutes from the August 27, 2018 Committee of the Whole committee meeting. Upon Roll Call vote, Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Huch, Reis, Holtkamp and Martens voted yea. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2018 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING**

The minutes from the September 10, 2018 Committee of the Whole committee meeting were submitted for approval.

**MOTION:**

It was moved by Alderman Reis and seconded by Alderman Martens, to approve the minutes from the September 10, 2018 Committee of the Whole committee meeting. Upon Roll Call vote, Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Huch, Reis, Holtkamp and Martens voted yea. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**IV. MOU WITH MONROE COUNTY CIRCUIT CLERK (DIGITAL TICKET SYSTEM FOR POLICE DEPARTMENT)**

Police Chief Jerry Paul discussed with the Committee a proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Monroe County Circuit Clerk (Digital Ticket System for Police Department) and the City of Columbia. Ms. Lisa Fallon, Monroe County Circuit Clerk, was also in attendance.

Chief Paul explained that since February, the police department has been writing substantially more ticket violations. The digital ticket system would be better than paper tickets and the tickets would be printed in the police car from the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system which would be more efficient for the officer. Chief Paul said the tickets would be sent to the Circuit Clerk's office electronically, the clerks won't have to re-type the data, and will make the Circuit Clerk's office run more smoothly.

Ms. Fallon said this is a program she has wanted to implement since she took office two years ago as everything is going more digital. She added this is also for the safety of the police officers. Ms. Fallon said an average traffic stop takes 15 minutes, but with the digital ticket system, it could be cut down to five minutes. She said the implementation will make her office run more efficiently and her office has the money for it. She said there has been an automation fund that has been collected for several years so there is money to get the program started.

Alderman Holtkamp questioned if the ticket system will be integrated with any other software with regard to showing any outstanding warrants. Ms. Fallon said the driver's license will have to be scanned and will populate information on the driver. Chief Paul said the CAD system in the officer's police car would show any outstanding warrants, but verification with the Police Dispatcher may be needed.

Chief Paul said the approximate cost to the Circuit Clerk's office will be \$45,000 and the approximate cost for the City of Columbia will be \$20,000. It was noted the City of Columbia will be the first police department to have it in Monroe County.

It was the consensus of the Committee to move forward with the Digital Ticket System for the Columbia Police Department through the Monroe County Circuit Clerk's Office. City Attorney Terry Bruckert will be responsible for preparing the MOU between the City of Columbia and the Monroe County Circuit Clerk's office.

## **V. FY 2017-2018 AUDIT PRESENTATION**

Mr. James Schmersahl of Schorb & Schmersahl, LLC presented the drafts of the 2017-2018 Annual Financial Report and Tax Increment Financing District Fund Financial Statements to the Committee for their review. Mr. Schmersahl gave the City of Columbia a clean opinion on the report and statements.

Mr. Schmersahl reviewed the Tax Increment Financing District Fund Financial Statements on page 3 - Attachment K and said the TIF District is operating very well.

Mr. Schmersahl reviewed the 2017-2018 Annual Financial Report. He said the City's Statement of Net Position on page 11 is very strong and is stronger now than one year ago. He said the City is doing a good job of keeping expenses down on page 12,

Statement of Activities. He also noted the Fire Protection District Reimbursement on the same page was for four years of payments. Accounting Manager Linda Sharp said the Fire Protection District paid the four years in advance because it shortens the life of the note for the district. On page 17, Statement of Net Position Proprietary Funds, the Water and Sewer total net position has grown, but the Garbage and Ambulance have broke even. On page 18, Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net Position - Proprietary Funds, the Ambulance costs are up, but lost \$111,000 for the fiscal year. On page 40, the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) is in compliance with Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) 68 and the Net Pension Liability has a surplus right now, but will depend on the future of the market. Mr. Morani noted that the IMRF Preliminary Notice of the IMRF Contribution Rate for Calendar Year 2019 has gone down to 5.30% and is the lowest he has ever seen. On page 50, Mr. Schmersahl said the Police Pension Fund is significantly underfunded and needs to be addressed further. Mr. Morani suggested to possibly relocate some of the IMRF savings to the Police Pension Fund.

The Committee thanked Mr. Schmersahl for his presentation. Mrs. Sharp said the 2017-2018 Annual Financial Report and Tax Increment Financing District Fund Financial Statements will be ready for the next City Council meeting. Schorb & Schmersahl, LLC will also have their letter of engagement for the next Council meeting.

**VI. SPECIAL EVENT - HALLOWEEN PARTY (REIFSCHNEIDER'S GRILL & GRAPE)**

Director of Community Development Scott Dunakey presented a new special event - Halloween Party for Reifschneider's Grill and Grape to be held on October 27 for the Committee's review. Since this is a new event, Mr. Dunakey wanted to inform the Committee. Alderman Niemietz pointed out that the end time for the event should be 11:00 P.M., not 12:00 A.M., due to other events having to stop at 11:00 P.M. because of the noise ordinance. Mr. Morani said he will make sure the music will be stopped at 11:00 P.M.

It was the consensus of the Committee to recommend to the City Council for consideration the new Special Event for Reifschneider's Grill & Grape to have a Halloween Party on October 27, 2018 with the event ending at 11:00 P.M.

**VII. HOTEL AND MOTEL TAX REBATE AGREEMENT (HAMPTON INN)**

City Administrator James Morani presented a draft ordinance to the Committee to authorize the assignment of the hotel and motel accommodation Tax Rebate Financing Agreement between the City of Columbia and MMCP, LLC to Pramukhraj Irving, LLC.

Mr. Morani said that Midas Hospitality will still manage the hotel, but the business will have a new owner. Mr. Morani added the City is not losing any proceeds; the City is simply assigning the same rebate incentives. The hotel will remain the same brand, Hampton Inn, and the sale of the Hampton Inn closed last week.

Alderman Roessler asked about the length of the agreement. The original tax rebate agreement is for a rebate from hotel and motel accommodation taxes paid for up to 84 months (seven years) or until a total of \$350,000 has been rebated (whichever was to occur first). Mr. Morani said he will research the length of the agreement. Mr. Morani pointed out the agreement was extended for an additional 60 months (five years), there is a few years remaining, but thought they would reach the \$350,000 first. City Attorney Terry Bruckert said it is best to have the extra time on the agreement as it keeps the quality of the hotel as a Hampton Inn.

Alderman Holtkamp questioned the text of the ordinance; 84 months (seven years) or until a total of \$350,000 has been rebated (whichever was to occur first). He was concerned if the 84 months occurs first, then the City will never get the \$350,000 and inquired if the ordinance needed to be changed. Mr. Morani looked up Ordinance 3166 from 2015 and concurred the agreement was extended another 60 months (five years) through February 2020 to receive the tax rebate or until a total of \$350,000 has been rebated, whichever was to occur first. This additional verbiage will be added to the proposed ordinance in the paragraph regarding Ordinance 3166 which will clarify the term of the rebate per the extension approved by that ordinance.

It was the consensus of the Committee to recommend to the City Council at their next meeting for consideration the proposed ordinance to authorize the assignment of the hotel and motel accommodation for the Tax Rebate Financing Agreement between the City of Columbia and MMCP, LLC to Pramukhraj Irving, LLC.

## **VIII. MOBILE HOME PARK LICENSING REGULATIONS**

Mr. Dunakey presented the draft ordinance for the Mobile Home Park Licensing Regulations entitled, "An Ordinance Amending Sections 05.04 Business Licensing and Regulation and 18.115 Business License Fees of the City of Columbia Municipal Code to modify Business Licensing Requirements and Related Fees for Mobile Home Parks".

Mr. Dunakey said this is a follow up discussion from the last Committee Meeting where this was discussed. He added the proposed ordinance will tie the licensing to the inspection requirements and will be more consistent to the Illinois State Statutes. He noted a minor grammatical change on the ordinance will be corrected. The fee for Mobile Home Parks will also be included in the proposed ordinance of \$50.00.

It was the consensus of the Committee to recommend to the City Council at their next meeting for consideration the proposed amended ordinance, "An Ordinance Amending Sections 05.04 Business Licensing and Regulation and 18.115 Business License Fees of the City of Columbia Municipal Code to modify Business Licensing Requirements and Related Fees for Mobile Home Parks".

**IX. ELECTRONIC MESSAGE BOARD VARIANCES (CITY OF COLUMBIA)**

Mr. Dunakey addressed the Committee on the two sign variances requested for the City of Columbia.

The first one is requesting a sign variance from Section 15.44.070 "Definitions". The City of Columbia is requesting to construct a monument sign with the total height of 10 lineal feet. The address is 6 Gall Road and is located in a C-3 (Highway Business) Zoning District. A Street Graphics Advisory Committee public hearing and meeting was held on September 27. The members of the Street Graphics Advisory Committee voted unanimously 4 to 0 to accept. The Street Graphics Advisory Board is requesting City Council recommendation.

The second one is requesting a sign variance from Section 15.44.190(J)(12)(D) "Electrical Message Board". The City of Columbia is requesting to construct a monument sign with a zero foot setback from the established property line. The address is 6 Gall Road and is located in a C-3 (Highway Business) Zoning District. A Street Graphics Advisory Committee public hearing and meeting was held on September 27. The members of the Street Graphics Advisory Committee voted unanimously 4 to 0 to accept. The Street Graphics Advisory Board is requesting City Council recommendation.

It was the consensus of the Committee to recommend to the City Council at their next meeting for consideration the two sign variances (Monument sign total height of 10 lineal feet and zero foot setback from the established property line) for the City of Columbia.

**X. RFP FOR GATEWAY /POP-UP SHOP SIGN**

Mr. Dunakey presented the proposed Request for Proposals (RFP) for Gateway/POP-UP SHOP Sign for the Committee's review. This was a follow-up from the last Committee Meeting where it was discussed.

Mr. Dunakey explained the Required Proposal Content which includes two design concepts - (1) for a 6-foot sign height and (1) for a 10-foot sign height, the Evaluation Criteria, and the tentative schedule for submitting the RFP. Mr. Dunakey said the low bid may need to be waived since the lowest bid may not be the best design. Alderman Holtkamp questioned submitting multiple design concepts. After discussion, the RFP will be changed to submit multiple design concepts if the sign vendor so chooses.

It was the consensus of the Committee to move forward with the RFP for Gateway/POP-UP SHOP Sign with the RFP to reflect submittal of multiple designs.

## **XI. ZONING HEARING OFFICER**

Mr. Dunakey presented the proposed ordinance for the Zoning Hearing Officer entitled "An Ordinance Establishing the Office of Zoning Hearing Officer and Delegating Authority of Such Office". This is a follow up discussion from a previous Committee meeting.

Mr. Dunakey explained how the Zoning Hearing Officer position would work and said the officer would be appointed by the Mayor with the approval of the City Council. The Zoning Hearing Officer will submit a report after the public hearing, make a decision based on facts, and according to the City Municipal Code, and the state statute. Immediately following the filing of the written decision of the Zoning Hearing Officer on any appeal or variance request under the new chapter 17.08, the City Clerk shall file a report with the City Council concerning such action. Within 21 days after the Zoning Hearing Officer's decision, the City Council, upon majority vote, may exercise the power of administrative review of any Zoning Hearing Officer decision on an application for an appeal or variance. Following the review, the City Council may affirm, reverse, or modify, in whole or in part, any determination of the Zoning Hearing Officer. A favorable vote of two-thirds (2/3) of all Aldermen shall be required to overturn or modify a decision by the Zoning Hearing Officer.

There was a discussion regarding the two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Aldermen. The two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Aldermen is the Aldermen holding office and not the Aldermen present for the meeting. The 21 days after the Zoning Hearing Officer's decision was also discussed as there could be a gap of 21 days between the second City Council meeting of the month to the first City Council meeting of the next month. It was also questioned if the applicant could appeal the decision of the Zoning Hearing Officer. Fees were also discussed.

Mr. Dunakey said nothing has been discussed with the current Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and the ZBA disbands as soon as the ordinance is signed. Currently, there are four ZBA members and are paid a stipend per meeting attended.

Mr. Morani said that he and Mr. Dunakey will review the proposed ordinance once again. Mr. Morani added there is a qualified candidate who has expressed interest in serving as the hearing officer. Alderman Niemietz said she has heard of the Zoning Hearing Officer process before when attending the Illinois Municipal League (IML) seminar in previous years.

Mr. Dunakey said the ordinance will not be ready for consideration at the next City Council meeting, but may be ready for the first City Council meeting in November. It was the consensus of the Committee to move forward with the proposed ordinance establishing the Office of Zoning Hearing Officer and Delegating Authority to Such Office.

## **XII. OTHER ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED**

### **A. Veterans' Memorial Re-Dedication**

Chairman Ebersohl stated that the POW/MIA flag needs to be added to the re-designed Veterans' Memorial by the Sophia and Elmer Oerter Charitable Foundation.

### **B. 50/50 Sidewalk Program**

City Engineer Chris Smith reported to the Committee that a Homeowner's Association has applied for the 50/50 Sidewalk Program for approximately 2,000 feet of sidewalk in a public right-of-way on common ground in the subdivision. This would not be for a residence. Mr. Smith wanted to bring this item before the Committee and wanted to know what was the spirit of the program. He also wanted to know if it was always necessary to review these applications with the Committee each time. Mr. Morani said if the cost is under \$10,000, he can approve the expenditure if it falls within budget.

There being no questions or concerns, it was the consensus of the Committee to move forward with the HOA application for the 50/50 Sidewalk Program.

### **C. FSA/HSA/Vision Care HRA**

Mr. Morani informed the Committee that he has been speaking with the City's health insurance broker/consultants about our plans. He would like, in addition to the Flexible Spending Account (FSA) which some employees now utilize, offer a Health Savings Account (HSA) with a high deductible plan as a voluntary option for employees. He noted an employee can only have one or the other (FSA or HSA), but not both. The benefit of the HSA is that the amount of money you place in that account (more than an FSA) can be rolled over year to year. Mr. Morani would also like to consider eliminating the City's Vision Care Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) for the employees and offer a regular vision plan as the current plan is confusing to many employees. Mr. Morani would also like to get the health plan years aligned with the annual deductible and FSA plan year.

It was the consensus of the Committee for Mr. Morani to continue to obtain information on the FSA, HSA, and a new vision care plan and bring it back to the Committee in November for further discussion.



D. Recycling

Alderman Agne stated that the plastic grocery bags that have been contaminating the recycling can be recycled for railroad ties. It was noted that the Schnucks grocery store in Columbia will take plastic grocery bags for recycling.

**XIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION - 5 ILCS 120/2(c)**

Chairman Ebersohl inquired if there was a need to go into Executive Session. There was none.

**XV. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:**

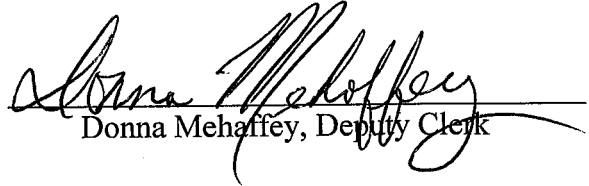
It was moved by Alderman Reis and seconded by Alderman Huch to adjourn the Committee of the Whole committee meeting of the City Council of the City of Columbia, Illinois held Monday, October 8, 2018 at 8:55 P.M. Upon voice vote, Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Huch, Reis, Holtkamp and Martens voted yea.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

Minutes taken by:



Chairman Gene Ebersohl  
Committee of the Whole



Donna Mehaffey, Deputy Clerk