

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING OF THE CITY  
COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, ILLINOIS HELD MONDAY,  
MARCH 23, 2015 IN THE COUNCIL ROOM OF CITY HALL**

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**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Ebersohl called the Committee of the Whole 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: Chairman Ebersohl and Committee Members - Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Huch, Mathews, Reis and Holtkamp. Mayor Hutchinson was also present.

Absent: None.

Quorum Present.

Administrative Staff Present: City Administrator James Morani, Interim Director of Public Works Tim Ahrens, Accounting Manager Linda Sharp, Director of Community and Economic Development Paul Ellis, Chief of Police and EMS Director Joseph Edwards, and Deputy Clerk Donna Mehaffey.

Guests Present: Mr. Stephen Krebel and Mr. Gerald Weilbacher representing Immaculate Conception Church Cemetery.

Chairman Ebersohl stated the meeting was called for the purpose of discussing: (1) Approval of Minutes from March 9, 2015 Committee of the Whole Meeting; (2) Agreement with Columbia Athletic Association, Columbia Khoury League, and Columbia CUSD #4; (3) ICS Cemetery Entrance (Cherry Street); (4) Employee Health Insurance Plan; (5) Telecommunications Tower Lease; (6) FY 2015-2016 Budget Update; (7) Citizen Comments; (8) Executive Session – 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1): Appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body; and (9) Other items to be considered or discussed.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 9, 2015 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING**

The minutes of the March 9, 2015 Committee of the Whole committee meeting were submitted for approval.

**MOTION:**

It was moved by Alderman Agne and seconded by Alderman Niemietz, to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2015 Committee of the Whole committee meeting as amended. Upon Roll Call vote, Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Huch, Mathews, Reis and Holtkamp voted yea. **MOTION CARRIED.**

### **III. ICS CEMETERY ENTRANCE (CHERRY STREET)**

Interim Director of Public Works Tim Ahrens and Mr. Gerald Weilbacher of the Immaculate Conception Church addressed the committee. Mr. Ahrens reported that the Immaculate Conception Church has asked the City to saw cut their Cherry Street cemetery entrance and remove the existing concrete. The IC Church will then re-construct the entrance at their expense. Mr. Ahrens explained that it would take three (3) hours of labor for two (2) Department of Public Works employees to saw cut and remove the existing concrete. Mr. Ahrens added the whole project would be completed according to City standards. Mr. Gerald Weilbacher of the IC Church explained the current problem is the exiting from the cemetery onto Cherry Street; you have to jump the curb to get out of the cemetery. Mr. Weilbacher stated the area should have been fanned out further when initially constructed, Mr. Ahrens stated the area will be 10 feet wider overall and the project is in the City's right of way. (A photo of the current Cherry Street cemetery entrance problem was passed around to all committee members for their review.)

It was the consensus of the committee to move ahead with the project and that the City's portion of the project be completed by the Public Works Department.

### **IV. EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN**

City Administrator James Morani addressed the committee and provided an update on the employee health insurance plan. Mr. Morani reviewed the City of Columbia – Comparison of Monthly Medical/Prescription Drug Premiums from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2016 worksheet. He also distributed a Health Insurance Premium Comparison worksheet (Rates effective July 1, 2015) comparing the Steelworkers Health & Welfare Fund versus the IPBC. Mr. Morani added that the City does not have the MRCT rate yet since all of the City employees have not completed the medical questionnaires for underwriting purposes. There are some employees concerned about privacy providing social security numbers, so MRCT now will accept the applications without the social security numbers. There are also some employees completing the questionnaire on a paper application. Mr. Morani stated the City needs 100% compliance to get a rate from MRCT. He has given City employees until the end of next week to complete the MRCT questionnaire. Mr. Morani stated the Steelworkers Health and Welfare Fund needs a 30 day notice of withdrawal and can be done after July 1 if needed and the IPBC needs a 90 day notice to contract with them which would make that date Monday, March 30. Mr. Morani stressed that if switching to the IPBC is not delayed by one month, the City would save \$10,000.00 to \$11,000.00 per month. The City can also go to the IPBC insurance anytime after July 1, it could be August 1 or September 1. Mr. Morani also said if the City contracts with the IPBC, they are locked in for three (3) years, but after that it is every one (1) year. There was some concern if the IPBC current rate given is guaranteed for three (3) years or for just one (1) year. Mr. Morani will get clarification from the IPBC on this issue and will also check on the Intergovernmental Act. Mr. Morani reminded the committee that it will be difficult to have the exact plan design that the City currently has and may have to go through collective bargaining, which could cause a delay. It was also noted that by switching insurance, the employees will see their insurance premiums go down. Mr. Morani added that the IPBC is an insurance pool and the City can retain its current plan design; MRCT or any other insurance company will require underwriting and it will be difficult to get the exact same plan design.

It was the consensus of the committee that Mr. Morani contact the IPBC and ask about possibly completing a resolution for the April 6, 2015 City Council meeting to begin with their insurance on July 1, 2015 and with the possibility of extending the resolution another month to begin the insurance on August 1, 2015.

**V. AGREEMENT WITH COLUMBIA ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, COLUMBIA KHOURY LEAGUE, AND COLUMBIA CUSD #4**

Director of Community and Economic Development Paul Ellis addressed the committee on the proposed agreement. Mr. Ellis distributed a handout to the committee entitled Section 5 Fees, which would replace the current Section 5 Fees section. Mr. Ellis noted he had just received the new Section 5 this morning. There were no CAA or CKL officers present at the committee meeting. Several concerns were raised by the committee namely who will be paying for the electricity for the lights at the ball fields and maintaining them; maintenance for the areas around the ball diamonds, dugouts, fences, etc.; maintenance fees should be included in the fees, certificates of insurance for teams, groups, entities, no certificates of insurance for individuals, (i.e. A family – father and son want to work on batting and fielding.); expenditures listing, and a fee schedule needs to be listed in agreement. It was also mentioned that there was a lot of redundancy in the agreement and that it could be simplified.

All in attendance were given the opportunity to ask questions, make comments and offer opinions. After discussion, it was the consensus of the committee to table the agreement.

**VI. TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWER LEASE**

City Administrator James Morani addressed the committee regarding the telecommunications tower lease. Mr. Morani said currently the City has a five (5) year lease extension from Crown Castle for a telecommunications tower located at Bremser Road that was completed about one and one half (1½) years ago. Mr. Morani added that he has had several requests to extend the lease from Crown Castle but also has had other company requests for the tower lease. Mr. Morani explained extending the lease for Crown Castle or adding other leases on the back end of the existing lease would increase City revenues. Mr. Morani would like to begin discussions with Crown Castle about the lease extension plus possible leases with other companies with the committee's approval.

It was the consensus of the committee that Mr. Morani begin discussions with Crown Castle and other companies that show interest for the telecommunications tower lease.

**VII. FY 2015-2016 BUDGET UPDATE**

Accounting Manager Linda Sharp addressed the committee on the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Budget update as well as City Administrator James Morani. Mrs. Sharp distributed a handout to the committee that showed the following: Sales Tax Receipts Summary, Income Tax Receipts, Use Tax Receipts, Charter Communications Cable TV Franchise Receipts, Utility Tax Receipts, General Fund FY 2014-2015 Receipts Analysis, Ambulance Worksheet – Receipts Vs. Disbursements FY 2014-2015, Ambulance Worksheet Receipts Vs. Disbursements FY 2014-2015 Equipment Purchases Summary, Water Receipts, Sewer

Receipts, TIF Fund (38) – Budget Projections, Capital Development Fund Multi-Year Cash Flow Projection, Water/Sewer/Trash Rates Budget Year 2015/2016 and Ambulance Rates Budget Year 2015/2016. Mrs. Sharp reviewed each fund with the committee. Mrs. Sharp pointed out a correction on the Utility Tax Receipts worksheet. The Utility Receipts at February 2015 should be corrected to \$664,814.00. With this correction, the Estimated Receipts through the end of the year is corrected to \$832,117.00. Some of the updates discussed by Mrs. Sharp and Mr. Morani were: There will be an appendix in the budget document showing budget items to be carried forward (IDOT items not invoiced to the City will be carried forward); settlement proceeds from Ameren, Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, etc. have been coming in and those proceeds will be placed in the General Fund and not in the Capital Development Fund; placement in the General Fund a 20% to 25% reduction in the FY 2015-2016 Budget income tax; water, sewer, trash rates and ambulance fees are the only fees to be increased; water rates to be increased 4.00% due to the Illinois American Water Company increase of 4.35%; Interim Director of Public Works Tim Ahrens explained how his department had contacted surrounding municipalities for the price of their water rates and Columbia had the lowest rates; 2.00 % for other water and sewer charges; 3.50% increase for sewer rates (This will bring in \$35,000.00 per year; Mr. Ahrens has a number of infrastructure projects to get completed namely the sewer linings); 3.90% increase for trash rates covering the increase from Reliable Sanitation Service; and ambulance rates increase (not a percentage increase). Mr. Morani added that on the TIF Fund (38) Budget Projections fund page, the salary projected for the Economic Development Coordinator is for 10% of the salary of the Economic Development Coordinator which can be reimbursed from the General Fund; it is not going for an additional salary of the Economic Development Coordinator. The 10% of the salary of the EDC reimbursed from the General Fund will be in all future budgets.

All in attendance were given the opportunity to ask questions, make comments or put forward opinions.

Mayor Hutchinson questioned the sewer collections reduction and Mrs. Sharp stated that is was due to the sewer winter averaging. Mrs. Sharp said they were increasing the hydraulic unit charge for the sewer by 10%, but possibly that should be increased. Mayor Hutchinson explained the winter averaging and said that the City needs to come up with the \$50,000.00 difference in sewer collections and to possibly review the sewer rates. Alderman Ebersohl suggested increasing the water rates by the 4.35% increase from the Illinois American Water Company instead of the proposed 4.00% increase.

Mrs. Sharp informed the committee of all the budget transfers to be completed plus she will have a draft of the budget completed and emailed to the City Council before the April 5 City Council meeting.

## **VIII. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

None.

**IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chairman Ebersohl entertained a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1): Appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body.

**MOTION:**

It was moved by Alderman Agne and seconded by Alderman Huch to go into Executive Session at 8:50 P.M. to discuss 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1): Appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body. Upon Roll Call vote, Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Huch, Mathews, Reis and Holtkamp voted yea. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**X. REGULAR SESSION**

**MOTION:**

It was moved by Alderman Holtkamp and seconded by Alderman Reis to return to the Regular Session of the Committee of the Whole Meeting at 8:56 P.M. Upon Roll Call vote, Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Huch, Mathews, Reis and Holtkamp voted yea. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Upon return to the Regular Session of the Committee of the Whole meeting, Mayor Hutchinson and the following committee members were present: Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Huch, Mathews, Reis and Holtkamp.

Chairman Ebersohl asked if there was any action to be taken as a result of the Executive Session of the Committee of the Whole meeting. There was none.

**XI. OTHER ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED OR DISCUSSED**


There were no other items to be considered or discussed.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

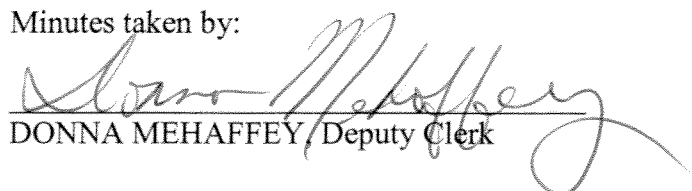
**MOTION:**

It was moved by Alderman Reis and seconded by Alderman Agne to adjourn the Committee of the Whole Meeting of the City Council of the City of Columbia, Illinois held Monday, March 23, 2015 at 8:57 P.M. Upon voice vote, Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Huch, Mathews, Reis and Holtkamp voted yea.

**MOTION CARRIED.**

  
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GENE EBERSOHL, Chairman  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Minutes taken by:

  
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DONNA MEHAFFEY, Deputy Clerk