

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING OF THE CITY  
COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, ILLINOIS HELD MONDAY,  
JUNE 8, 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, Reis and Holtkamp. Mayor Hutchinson was also present.

Absent: Aldermen Huch and Martens.

Quorum Present.

Administrative Staff Present: City Administrator James Morani, City Attorney Terry Bruckert, Accounting Manager Linda Sharp, Chief of Police & EMS Director Joseph Edwards, Director of Community and Economic Development Paul Ellis, and Deputy Clerk Donna Mehaffey.

Guests Present: None.

Chairman Ebersohl stated the meeting was called for the purpose of discussing: (1) Approval of Minutes from the May 26, 2015 Committee of the Whole Meeting; (2) Columbia High School Parking; (3) Metro East Auto Theft Task Force; (4) Review of Noise Ordinance; (5) Community Relations/Tourism Coordinator Position; (6) Employee Health Insurance Plan; (7) Citizen Comments; (8) Other items to be considered; and (9) Executive Session – 5 ILCS 120/2(c).

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 26, 2015 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING**

The minutes of the May 26, 2015 Committee of the Whole committee meeting were submitted for approval.

**MOTION:**

It was moved by Alderman Reis and seconded by Alderman Niemietz, to approve the minutes of the May 26, 2015 Committee of the Whole committee meeting. Upon Roll Call vote, Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Reis, and Holtkamp voted yea. **MOTION CARRIED.**

### **III. COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL PARKING**

Police Chief Joe Edwards provided to the committee a background on the Columbia High School parking issue. Due to there being no additional parking spaces at the high school for new drivers, the new drivers have been parking at other areas around the high school creating a safety hazard for them walking to school, crossing busy streets, plus creating problems in the subdivision where they have been parking – i.e. parking in front of mailboxes, etc. Chief Edwards distributed a Google map to the committee showing the proposed leased parking area for the high school. Chief Edwards suggested that the parking area on the third base side of the baseball field in Bolm-Schuhkraft Park could hold 26 vehicles and the parking area would be leased to CUSD #4 from the City of Columbia for one dollar (\$1.00) per year. Chief Edwards said his goal is to get the proposed leased parking lot completed by the start of the new school year.

City Attorney Terry Bruckert added that state law would permit this type of agreement; the CUSD #4 has to provide liability insurance for the proposed parking lot, maintain the parking stalls and the lease would be year to year. Mr. Bruckert recommended the City ask the school to have the parking problem resolved in five years, put a plan in place for addressing long-term problems and submit a non-binding letter with expectations for one year. Chief Edwards stated that the school district indicated it would take four or five years for the school to construct an additional parking lot at a cost of approximately \$400,000.00 to \$500,000.00. Chief Edwards stressed that the proposed parking lot by the baseball field is clearly his idea and not the school's and that it needs to be considered for safety of the students. Chief Edwards also acknowledged that the police department and the school district have a very good relationship and there is at least one police officer per day at the school.

All in attendance were given the opportunity to ask questions, offer comments and opinions. Several of the Aldermen were in disagreement with the parking lot at the park proposal especially if after the parking lot is constructed in the park, another 20 students begin parking in other areas around the school again.

The committee agreed that City Administrator James Morani and Police Chief Joe Edwards set up a meeting with Columbia CUSD #4 Superintendent, Dr. Gina Segobiano to discuss the parking problem and proposal.

### **IV. METRO EAST AUTO THEFT TASK FORCE**

Police Chief Edwards addressed the committee on the Metro East Auto Theft Task Force. Chief Edwards explained that officer Mike Conrad is no longer on the Metro East Auto Theft Task Force and will be starting with the Drug Task Force. Chief Edwards stated that the State of Illinois will no longer be holding the money for the Metro East Auto Theft Task Force and it will be the insurance companies that will be taking care of the money. (The insurance companies collect \$1.00 for each vehicle insured in the State of Illinois.) Chief Edwards stated that the Metro East Auto Theft Task Force will be paying

100% for an additional police officer. Chief Edwards stated he would like to hire two police officers instead of one; one for the Metro East Auto Theft Task Force and one for the drug crimes. Chief Edwards added that with the addition of two additional police officers; this would free up the City's police detectives. Chief Edwards also stated he felt the two new officers will gain more experience working with other entities. Chief Edwards added that no action needs to be taken tonight as he would like to see the actual document before anything is completed.

## **V. REVIEW OF NOISE ORDINANCE**

Alderman James Agne informed the committee about a complaint from a constituent regarding a noise problem (revving dirt bike engines in a residential back yard.) Alderman Steve Reis, who also represents the same ward, received a phone call from the same constituent regarding the same problem. Section 9.24.010 Nuisances Enumerated from the Columbia Municipal Code was discussed as to which section the noise problem would fall under. The constituents (neighbors) have called the police department and officers have responded, but nothing has been done to resolve the problem. City Attorney Terry Bruckert said the current ordinance is enforceable, but the complainants would have to file a written complaint against the offenders. Alderman Agne said there is more than one neighbor involved; there are several involved as complainants. Alderman Agne will inform the constituent when it happens the next time to call the Police Department and they would have to file a written complaint against the offender.

City Administrator James Morani added that there may be a possible zoning issue for ATVs (e.g. dirt bikes) in a residential neighborhood; it could possibly be addressed as a land use issue. Attorney Terry Bruckert will research this issue as there was another city that did something similar. It was also noted that if there is a homeowner's association for that subdivision, that the issue could be enforced in that manner, but it would be a civil matter between the offender and the homeowner's association.

## **VI. COMMUNITY RELATIONS/TOURISM COORDINATOR POSITION**

City Administrator James Morani reviewed with the committee the proposed Community Relations/Tourism Coordinator position. Mr. Morani explained the job duty allocation for the position plus Mr. Morani also distributed the job responsibilities for the current part-time Administrative Assistant. Mr. Morani added that the City can use tourism money to partially fund the new position. Mr. Morani recommended there be no dual-employer role with the City in regard to the Main Street Association's part-time Executive Director Position. There was a discussion of the job duties of the part-time Administrative Assistant and the proposed full-time Community Relations/Tourism Coordinator position plus full-time versus part-time. After the discussion, it was the consensus of the committee that Mr. Morani publishes the ad for the full-time Community Relations/Tourism Coordinator position.

**VII. EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN**

City Administrator James Morani stated he had two items to discuss on the employee health insurance plan.

Mr. Morani said that he had three meetings with the City employees regarding the new health insurance plan which is due to go into effect on July 1, 2015. The meetings were mandatory.

Mr. Morani added that the City should consider giving the City employees an HRA (Health Reimbursement Account) due to, in his opinion, a flaw in the new insurance plan design. Mr. Morani said the urgent care visit co-pay coverage is 10% co-insurance after meeting the deductible and added that it did not make sense since some employees could pay less for an ER visit (\$150 co-pay).

There was a discussion on the proposed HRA and to place some sort of cap. Mr. Morani also noted that at the meetings, some of the employees were not pleased with the new insurance. No action was taken on this item.

**VIII. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

There were no citizen comments.

**IX. OTHER ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED**

**FREIGHT DISTRICT**

It was brought to the attention of the committee from Director of Community and Economic Development Paul Ellis that he is serving on the Freight District, but there have not been any meetings. Mr. Ellis also added that there will be a meeting this summer that he will be attending with the Village of Dupon and Union Pacific Railroad.

**REJIS HOURS**

City Administrator James Morani informed the committee of the REJIS hours from the Columbia CUSD #4. Mr. Morani stated that right now, the City has 700 hours at \$72.00 per hour budgeted for REJIS and the school district uses less than 200 hours per year from REJIS, but have to be billed for a minimum of 200 hours. The school district will be under the City's contract, which is capped at 1,000 hours, but will only be paying for the hours they use. This will likely be less than 200 hours. Mr. Morani added that it is basically a paper shuffle for REJIS with respect to their billing procedures. Mr. Morani will have the amendment to the services agreement ready for consideration at the next City Council meeting.

**X. EXECUTIVE SESSION – 5 ILCS 120/2(C)**

Chairman Ebersohl entertained a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss 5 ILCS 120/2(c) Collective Bargaining.

**MOTION:**

It was moved by Alderman Reis and seconded by Alderman Roessler to go into Executive Session at 9:05 P.M. to discuss 5 ILCS 120/2(c) Collective Bargaining. Upon Roll Call vote, Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Reis, and Holtkamp voted yea. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**XI. REGULAR SESSION**

**MOTION:**

It was moved by Alderman Agne and seconded by Alderman Holtkamp to return to the Regular Session of the Committee of the Whole Meeting at 10:12 P.M. Upon Roll Call vote, Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Reis, and Holtkamp voted yea. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Upon return to the Regular Session of the Committee of the Whole Meeting, the following Committee Members were present: Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, 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.

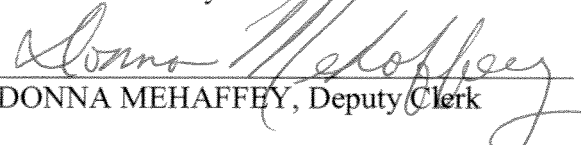
**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:**

It was moved by Alderman Reis and seconded by Alderman Roessler to adjourn the Committee of the Whole Meeting of the City Council of the City of Columbia, Illinois held Monday, June 8, 2015 at 10:13 P.M. Upon voice vote, Chairman Ebersohl and Aldermen Agne, Niemietz, Roessler, Reis, and Holtkamp voted yea. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Minutes taken by:

  
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GENE EBERSOHL, Chairman  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

  
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DONNA MEHAFFEY, Deputy Clerk