



Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, July 15, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Roll Call

Council President Molly Finkler called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Members present included Council President Molly Finkler, Alderperson Michael Lawson, Alderperson Marcus Meier, Alderperson Trina Reid, and Alderperson Ryan Rostad. Mayor Joe Hammer was excused and Alderperson Amy Roelke was absent.

Notice of Open Meeting

Noted as posted.

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Alderperson Rostad, Seconded by Alderperson Meier to approve the agenda. Motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

Public Comment

None.

New Business

1. Presentation by Jason Lietha of Ruekert-Mielke regarding the City's street plan:

City Engineer, Jason Lietha shared some information on road rating practices and how our maintenance strategy helps with year-to-year planning. He feels the City of Columbus does a great job maintaining the roads with respect to budgeting and planning. The 2026 School Street project will include both street and utility work and a LRIP Grant has been applied for to help with the expenses if the city receives it. A similar rating system is being developed by staff for the sidewalks and trails working towards a quadrant program/layout.

2. Consideration of Tower Drive Housing Project Concepts:

Community and Economic Development Director Kornmann shared that the city staff have been working with Vandewalle & Associates to come up with two concept designs for the Tower Drive property. Concept #1 includes a 45-unit apartment building with 16 town homes, and Concept #2 includes 8 town homes with an additional 12 duplexes. There will be a Public Information Meeting on July 31, 2025 at Zion Lutheran and the presentation boards will also be displayed at National Night Out on August 5th. The city website has more information and shares the concepts and provides a comment form for the public to share their thoughts. The results of the feedback will be shared at the August 6, 2025 Committee of the Whole and Council meetings.

3. Consideration of membership in the National Volunteer Fire Council:

Administrator Amundson stated that members of the Fire Department have approached staff asking if there are other additional means to receive mental health resources. Our current Employee Assistance Program (EAP) will provide three sessions with a counselor but anything beyond that is the responsibility of the individual. Interim Finance Director, Kendra Riddle found a cost effective program with the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) that offers more benefits

including a helpline, online forum and specific trainings. Alder Lawson appreciated the find but would like to see something like this program available for all employees, not just our fire personnel. Alder Meier agreed, and added that this would also benefit our police officers. Alder Rostad shared that full-time employees currently have other means within their benefits to receive additional care. Riddle also shared that she is currently trying to secure additional benefits for all employees at cost effective rates beginning in the next year. Members agreed to move forward to the July 15, 2025 Common Council meeting.

4. Consideration of Mission, Vision, and Value Statements of the City of Columbus:

Amundson shared the summary of the Mission, Vision and Value Statements received from Innovative Public Advisors that came out of the council and department head retreat held on June 24, 2025. This resulted in a listing of the City of Columbus Core Values. Riddle has adopted the expression "Columbus to the Core" in her monthly employee newsletter. Amundson suggested a potential future workshop to discuss this further. Committee members agreed that a future workshop between council and department heads would be welcome. Staff will schedule it for August, 2025.

Convene to Closed Session

Motion made by Alderperson Meier, Seconded by Alderperson Rostad to convene into Closed Session at 7:26 p.m. pursuant to section §19.85(1)(g), to confer with legal counsel for the governmental body who is rendering oral or written advice concerning strategy to be adopted by the body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved, specifically to discuss claims of excessive assessment filed pursuant to section 74.37, Stats. Motion carried on a 5-0 Roll Call vote. Voting Yea: Council President Finkler, Alderperson Lawson, Alderperson Meier, Alderperson Reid, and Alderperson Rostad.

Reconvene to Open Session

Motion made by Alderperson Rostad, Seconded by Alderperson Meier to reconvene into Open Session at 7:44p.m. Motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

Adjourn

Motion made by Alderperson Rostad, Seconded by Alderperson Lawson to adjourn at 7:45p.m. Motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

*A quorum of city committees and/or commissions may be present at this meeting. No action will be taken or considered by those committees and/or commissions.