



Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 6:30 PM

Columbus City Hall – 105 N. Dickason Boulevard

Roll Call

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

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. Discussion of City of Columbus Merit Pay Policy:

Finance Director, Kendra Riddle shared the proposed Merit Pay Policy which is designed to reward sustained high performance, achievement of strategic goals and demonstration of City values by our employees; strengthen accountability and service quality for our residents; support market competitiveness and retention and promote fairness, consistency and fiscal responsibility. Also, since this program was not in place yet for employees' 2025 evaluations, staff decided to base merit on an average of employee's scores, using a 1, 2, 3 rating scale. Employees would have to receive a 2.5, or higher, average in order to qualify for the Merit Pay Program this year. Administrator Amundson added that once Department Heads make recommendations, they would be brought to Council for review via a closed session discussion for direction. For 2026 evaluations, merit would be based on employees meeting or exceeding their smart goals.

After Committee members reviewed and discussed the policy, they asked staff to rework the criteria for merit increase and bonuses and bring back to council at the February 3, 2026, Common Council meeting. Alderperson Meier also requested the effect the Merit Pay Policy has on the budget.

2. Discussion regarding Pickleball Courts at Fireman's Park and Task Order 2026-02 with Ruekert-Mielke:

Amundson shared he has met with the Columbus Country Club Board of Directors, and they view the addition of the pickleball courts as an amenity to the park and their facility. As part of the planning process, staff will begin working with the Club on an amendment to remove the designated court area from the Club's leased area and include a 10-year extension to the existing lease agreement. Any amendments or extension would be brought forward to Council for formal consideration. The expense of the Ruekert-Mielke Task Order would be pulled from the budgeted engineering funds. Additional funding will be needed in order to complete this project. Committee members agreed to move forward to the January 20, 2026, Common Council meeting.

3. Discussion regarding 2026 Borrowing:

Finance Director, Riddle shared that the borrowing resolutions are for the 2026/2027 Capital Projects and are divided into City and Utilities. The intent to reimburse expenditures from proceeds of borrowing for the city amount to \$5,332,937, while the utilities portion is \$7,239,715. Ehlers will be attending a council meeting in March 2026 with their annual presentation. Committee agreed to move forward to the January 20, 2026, Common Council meeting.

Adjourn

Motion made by Alderperson Roelke, Seconded by Alderperson Meier to adjourn at 7:13pm. Motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.