

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA, ILLINOIS HELD MONDAY,
MAY 23, 2016 IN THE COUNCIL ROOM OF CITY HALL**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chairman Niemietz 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: Acting Chairman Niemietz and Committee Members - Aldermen Agne, Roessler, Huch, Reis, and Holtkamp.

Absent: Mayor Hutchinson and Aldermen Ebersohl and Martens.

Quorum Present. Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Administrative Staff Present: City Administrator James Morani, City Engineer Chris Smith, Accounting Manager Linda Sharp, Building Official Justin Osterhage, Chief of Police Jerry Paul, City Clerk Wes Hoeffken, and Deputy Clerk Donna Mehaffey.

Guests Present: Mr. Dennis Kircher, Chairman of the Street Graphics Advisory Committee.

Acting Chairman Niemietz stated the meeting was called for the purpose of discussing: (1) Approval of minutes from the May 9, 2016 Committee of the Whole committee meeting; (2) Approval of Executive Session minutes from the May 9, 2016 Committee of the Whole committee meeting; (3) Amendment to Sign Code (Electronic Message Boards); (4) Mowing Bids; (5) Columbia Centre Drive Parking Restrictions; (6) Water Customer Notices; (7) Elected Officials Salaries; (8) Western Egyptian Lease Agreement; (9) Elected Officials Participation at Advisory Board Meetings; (10) Other items to be considered; (11) Citizen Comments; and (12) Executive Session – 5 ILCS 120/2(c).

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II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MAY 9, 2016 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE COMMITTEE MEETING

The minutes of the May 9, 2016 Committee of the Whole committee meeting were submitted for approval.

MOTION:

It was moved by Alderman Roessler and seconded by Alderman Reis, to approve the minutes of the May 9, 2016 Committee of the Whole committee meeting. Upon Roll Call vote, Acting Chairman Niemietz and Aldermen Agne, Roessler, Reis, and Holtkamp voted yea. Alderman Huch abstained. **MOTION CARRIED.**

III. APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES FROM THE MAY 9, 2016 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE COMMITTEE MEETING

The Executive Session minutes of the May 9, 2016 Committee of the Whole committee meeting were submitted for approval.

MOTION:

It was moved by Alderman Reis and seconded by Alderman Roessler, to approve the Executive Session minutes of the May 9, 2016 Committee of the Whole committee meeting. Upon Roll Call vote, Acting Chairman Niemietz and Aldermen Agne, Roessler, Reis, and Holtkamp voted yea. Alderman Huch abstained. **MOTION CARRIED.**

IV. AMENDMENT TO SIGN CODE (ELECTRONIC MESSAGE BOARDS)

Acting Chairman Niemietz said the amendment to the sign code - electronic message boards was tabled from the last City Council meeting and that Alderman Holtkamp wanted to take a look at item (d) No more than one such sign per lot and (m) Such sign shall only be displayed on the street front corridors of Admiral Parkway (Route 3), Admiral Weinel Boulevard, Admiral Trost Road, Valmeyer Road, Old State Route 3 and Frontage Road. Alderman Holtkamp said he attended a subdivision meeting and everyone at the meeting said the location of the proposed electronic message boards is important and wanted them only to be on the street corridors mentioned above and not on Main Street.

Building Official Justin Osterhage explained the history of items (d) and (m) of the sign code amendment memo dated May 4, 2016. Mr. Osterhage said if something needs to be added

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later on, it will be easier to add than to remove. It will be more restrictive than the ordinance tabled at the previous council meeting. Mr. Osterhage added that the maximum height of the proposed electronic message boards can only be six feet, total sign area of 100 square feet and the electronic message board can only occupy no more than 40% of the applicable sign face.

Mr. Dennis Kircher, Chairman of the Street Graphics Advisory Committee was in attendance and said he has been against the electronic message boards since the beginning but believes the Street Graphics Advisory Committee would be comfortable with the addition of items (d) and (m) as they were in the original draft of the recommended sign code amendment.

There was an inquiry about the development in the Bottoms area for the electronic message boards since that will be a future development. Mr. Morani said the City's Zoning Code will be revised soon, the Bottom areas will be included with the revision, and is premature at this time. There was also a discussion on whether or not the latest amendments needed to go back to the Street Graphics Advisory Committee, then to Committee and then to the City Council.

Alderman Agne stated he is still against the proposed electronic message signage, wants to keep the parkway attractive and it will be hard to go back if the City approves the electronic message boards. He added that he just cannot vote for the degrading of the ordinance.

City Administrator James Morani recommended a compromise to revise Section 15.44.190 of the Municipal Code adding items (d) and (m). It was the consensus of the committee to add items (d) No more than one such sign per lot and (m) Such sign shall only be displayed on the street front corridors of Admiral Parkway (Route 3), Admiral Weinel Boulevard, Admiral Trost Road, Valmeyer Road, Old State Route 3 and Frontage Road to the proposed electronic message boards sign code amendment for consideration at the next City Council meeting on June 6.

Alderman Holtkamp inquired if the State Bank of Waterloo will have to get another variance as the variance they received was not given under the proposed revisions to the Sign Code Amendment. Mr. Morani said it probably will not make a difference, but he will check with the City Attorney before the council considers the proposed ordinance.

V. MOWING BIDS

City Engineer Chris Smith reviewed with the committee the two pages of bids and the City of Columbia Operating Costs for Mowing. Mr. Smith said the low bidder did not provide a bid bond. Mr. Smith also noted there is no money in this year's budget for grass mowing services. The City's cost for mowing which included labor, fuel and parts/repairs was \$92,962.84. With the grass mowing services bids received, it would cost \$170,000.00 to \$187,000.00 for a full year of mowing. Mr. Morani said if the City would go with the grass mowing services, it would free up Public Works employees to work on other projects which would end up costing the City more money as supplies for the projects would need to be purchased. Mr. Morani also said the City's costs do not take into account every five years the expenses for new mowers. Mr. Smith will get together a list of the City's mowers. Acting Chairman Niemietz stated the grass mowing services will not be for this year and will be discussed for the future. Mr. Smith said the City has 45 days to make a decision on the bids.

It was the consensus of the Committee to get the City's mowing equipment list and bring it back to the committee for further discussion.

VI. COLUMBIA CENTRE DRIVE PARKING RESTRICTIONS

Mr. Smith said there have been complaints of tractor trailer vehicles parking on Columbia Centre Drive between the rear of McDonald's restaurant and Columbia Firestone. Mr. Smith said there is only pavement width of 24 feet. Alderman Reis added that tractor trailer vehicles destroyed the road. It was noted there was no reason to have weight restrictions on the road. Alderman Roessler mentioned that Mr. Koppeis placed large rocks by the side of the road to deter parking.

It was the consensus of the committee to have the proposed ordinance for a parking restriction from Veterans Parkway to the Columbia National Bank entrance on the June 6 City Council meeting agenda for consideration. Mr. Smith said if the ordinance is approved, the area will get new signage.

VII. WATER CUSTOMER NOTICES

Mr. Smith informed the committee for informational purposes only that the City has to notify water customers before beginning water line maintenance and/or a construction project in the City that may affect the lead content in their drinking water. Mr. Smith said the resident may have lead pipes in their home and construction or maintenance could cause lead levels to rise

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in their drinking water. Mr. Smith said the letter came from the EPA and it is for informational purposes only. It will be used the first time for the Riebeling Street water line project.

VIII. ELECTED OFFICIALS SALARIES

Mr. Morani reviewed with the committee the proposed adjustments to the elected officials salaries for fiscal year ending 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021. The proposed recommendation is for no increase for FY 2017-2018 and FY 2018-2019 and a 3% increase for FY 2019-2020 and FY 2020-2021. There were no comments from the committee. The proposed ordinance will be on the June 6 agenda for consideration. It was noted to make sure to consider another ordinance in two years when the four staggered aldermanic terms end April 30, 2019.

IX. WESTERN EGYPTIAN LEASE AGREEMENT

Mr. Morani informed the committee that the City does not have a lease agreement for the Senior Center to be located in the City Hall Community Room. Mr. Morani said the Western Egyptian Economic Opportunity Council was recently awarded the three year grant for Monroe County. Mr. Morani referenced the proposed lease agreement and that it has been revised and discussed with the Mayor, Buildings Committee Chairman Holtkamp, City Attorney, and Director of Community and Economic Development Paul Ellis. Mr. Morani went on to say that there were some instances where City staff had to take responsibility for the safety of the seniors (example: call for an ambulance and tend to a senior citizen who had fallen and there were no Western Egyptian staff members on site). Mr. Morani also said it has been challenging for City staff to be productive (due to disruptions) since the center is adjacent to administrative offices. Mr. Morani stressed that at least one staff member from Western Egyptian should be on site, which is in the proposed agreement. Mr. Morani added the City is running out of room especially in the Building and Zoning Department. The plan was for the center to be moved to the Oak Street building, but there are no funds to renovate the building at this time. Mr. Morani said that the first goal is to get an agreement in writing for one year. Mr. Morani will follow up with Executive Director Paulette Hamlin who currently has the proposed agreement and added that Western Egyptian has been very receptive to the terms.

It was the consensus of the committee to move forward with the proposed one year lease agreement with Western Egyptian.

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X. ELECTED OFFICIALS PARTICIPATION AT ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS

Acting Chairman Niemietz gave a brief history of elected officials attending advisory board meetings especially if the matter was located in their ward. Mr. Morani reported that any citizen can attend an advisory board meeting, you can offer your opinion, but you are offering your opinion as a citizen of the City of Columbia. Mr. Morani said that it would be improper for an elected official to inject their opinion or try to influence the members at an advisory board meeting while doing as a representative of the City. Mr. Morani added that citizens can make their case at the advisory board meetings since it is their First Amendment right. Mr. Morani also informed the elected officials to be cautious; they can attend a zoning variance public hearing if the subject matter is in their ward, but warned just not to speak unless it directly affects their property. In this instance, it would be proper to recuse themselves from the council vote.

All present were given the opportunity to ask questions and offer comments. Some of the other items discussed were: elected officials should use their best judgment; City staff should staff the meetings, information should be funneled through City staff, possibly have training sessions, need to properly educate board and commission members, verbatim meeting transcripts (public hearings) need to have less interruptions and be easier to read, advisory board public hearings need to be a quasi-judicial format, no ex parte communications and is inappropriate for elected officials to interfere with the public hearing.

Lastly, Mr. Morani said once the current restructuring is complete, a dedicated staff member will be covering each advisory board meeting and the process will be improved.

XI. OTHER ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED

A. Proposed Resolution for Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) Funds

Mr. Smith presented the proposed MFT Resolution for May 1, 2015 to December 31, 2016 to the Committee. The resolution will be on the June 6 City Council meeting agenda for consideration

B. Proposed Bolm-Schuhkraft Memorial Park Plaque

Acting Chairman Niemietz informed the committee that she has been planning to get a plaque for the Bolm-Schuhkraft Memorial Park dedication. She is working on getting the verbiage together from Mrs. Florence Haberl. She said she would need approximately

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\$3,000.00 for the plaque and if the City does not have the funds, she will go out and solicit funds for it. Mr. Morani said there should be money available for the plaque in this fiscal year's budget. This item will be brought back to the Committee at a future date.

C. St. Clair County Health Department Letter

Acting Chairman Niemietz mentioned that she received a letter in the mail from the St. Clair County Health Department. All of the elected officials received the letter.

XII. CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – 5 ILCS 120/2(c)

There was no call for Executive Session.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION:

It was moved by Alderman Roessler and seconded by Alderman Reis to adjourn the Committee of the Whole committee meeting of the City Council of the City of Columbia, Illinois held Monday, May 23, 2016 at 8:30 P.M. Upon voice vote, Acting Chairman Niemietz and Aldermen Agne, Roessler, Huch, Reis, and Holtkamp voted yea. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Minutes taken by:



Mary Ellen Niemietz *Donna Mehaffey*
Alderman Mary Ellen Niemietz Donna Mehaffey, Deputy Clerk
Acting Chairman
Committee of the Whole