

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA,
ILLINOIS HELD MONDAY, APRIL 21, 2008 IN THE COUNCIL ROOM OF CITY HALL**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hutchinson called the Public Hearing of the City Council of Columbia, Illinois to order at 6:46 PM.

The following members were:

Present: Aldermen Ebersohl, Agne, Niemietz, Unnerstall, Row, Hejna, Oberkfell, and Stumpf.

Absent: None.

Quorum Present.

Administrative Staff Present: City Clerk Wes Hoeffken, City Administrator Anthony Traxler, City Attorney Tom Adams, Building Inspector Alan Holden, Deputy Chief of Police Jerry Paul, Part Time Assistant EMS Director Ken Buss, and Accounting Manager Linda Sharp.

II. STATED PURPOSE

Mayor Hutchinson stated the Public Hearing was scheduled to receive public comments on the proposed 2008 - 2009 Budget of the City of Columbia, Illinois.

Ms. Sharp summarized the latest changes to the proposed budget. Mayor Hutchinson then inquired if the Council had any questions or comments.

Alderman Unnerstall inquired about a line item for fund transfers for the Alternate Revenue Bonds. Ms. Sharp explained, per Mr. Adams, the first payment for the new bonds was going to be due December 2009, but due to working with the various banks and financial institutions, the first payment will be due December, 2008. Mr. Adams explained the City will need to fund 1/6 of the payment and also place 1/12 of 25% of the bond issue in a reserve fund each month. Alderman Unnerstall then inquired about the increase in property taxes. Ms. Sharp explained this is a result of two additional businesses, Domax and Maverick Technologies, being on the tax roles effective this year.

Mayor Hutchinson inquired if anyone from the public had any questions or comments. A summary of the comments follows:

Lester Schneider - 1 Oerter Lane

Two years ago, he warned the Council they can not continue spending funds without planning additional revenue enhancements. Two years later the Council does not have a plan, and next year the Council is going to be sitting here and things will be a disaster.

Gerald Carmody - Carmody MacDonald P.C. (Attorney for G.J. Grewe)

Noted budget line item of \$350,000.00 for legal fees to defend a lawsuit which the City previously had an agreement. Legal fees could be reduced if the City would enforce the agreement, act reasonably, and act in good faith. Litigation is not about anti-development, but honoring a contract. This would allow the \$350,000.00 to be spent on parks, and sewer project. Urged the City to think about generating revenue.

Al Bollinger - 623 Lakefield Drive

Initially opposed the Columbia Crossing development, after researching the development, determined it represents planned growth. Aldermen can control what goes on and the natural boundaries of the bluffs will allow the City to maintain its current qualities, while providing a revenue source.

Asked Aldermen to describe their long term plans.

Will Trowbridge - 422 W. Bottom Avenue

Asked Alderman Hejna if she thought transferring \$450,000.00 from the Capital Development Fund to the General Fund was a violation of the intent of that fund. Alderman Hejna did not respond.

Asked Alderman Stumpf if he thought cutting Police Department expenses, including a police officer and increasing fine revenue seemed right. Alderman Stumpf stated the officer cut from the budget is not currently on staff, and you have to compare Columbia to other municipalities for what they get and what they spend on services.

Susan Walla - 206 Micah Way

Given the proximity of Columbia to the Greater St. Louis Metropolitan area, does it make sense to cut police department expenses and not think it won't impact the safety of Columbia citizens.

Tom Grueninger - 405 W. Schaefer

The City currently has only a 1% return on gross revenues and inquired if the Council has any plans for revenue enhancement.

Ron Langhans - 395 North Ridge

Mr. Traxler has brought a lot of constructive things to the City. Asked Alderman Unnerstall about his public statements regarding the elimination of a salary increase for the City Administrator, and asked if this is the way his employer addresses annual increases. Alderman Unnerstall stated that being a municipal entity, there are a different set of rules and he tried to be discreet about the increase.

Gene Bergmann - 1835 Meadow Court

Read a prepared statement.

Terry Grewe - G. J. Grewe

The first time he visited Columbia, he thought it was a fantastic city. Summarized how he worked with the City Council to design the best possible development for both G. J. Grewe and the City. The current situation is personal between him and the land owners.

Chesterfield Commons will generate \$6,600,000.00 to the Rockwood School District, \$1,000,000.00 to the Special School District, and \$1,500,000.00 to the Monarch Fire Protection District. Council needs to work toward the future.

Stated he never hid behind anything and has always been honest with the City and the citizens.

There were some follow-up comments from the Aldermen.

Alderman Row stated Mr. Bergmann constantly sits in the crowd at Council meetings and holds up pictures and giggles, and inquired how he can demand respect from the Council when he himself is not respectful. Alderman Row then stated that the Council is moving forward on the Master Development Agreement and the Programmatic Agreement, and that he is not against development, but makes decisions based on what is in the best interest of the City.

Alderman Stumpf inquired about the litigation between G. J. Grewe and the cities of Fenton and O'Fallon. Mr. Grewe explained the litigation with Fenton was over the extension of Gravois Bluff Boulevard as a condition to receive approval from MoDOT to install a traffic light, and the commitment the City of Fenton had made to acquire the property required for the extension, but failed to acquire. Mr. Grewe stated G.J. Grewe had to sue Fenton to get the contract enforced. Alderman Unnerstall stated his conversations with the Mayor of Fenton yielded a different perspective. Mr. Grewe stated the real winners were the citizens of Fenton.

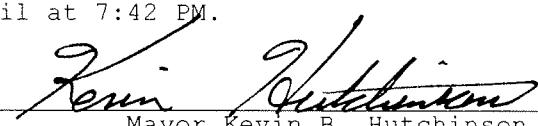
Mayor Hutchinson inquired if there were any other questions or comments. There were none.

III. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further comments from the public, Mayor Hutchinson closed the Public Hearing before the City Council at 7:42 PM.



Wesley J. Hoeffken, City Clerk



Mayor Kevin B. Hutchinson