

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS
CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 25, 2021**

The following are the minutes for the regular meeting of the City Council held at 7:00 pm on Monday, January 25, 2021 in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 590 40th Avenue N.E., Columbia Heights, Minnesota. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, this hybrid meeting was held both virtually and in-person.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Márquez Simula called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Present: Mayor Márquez Simula; Councilmember Buesgens; Councilmember Jacobs; Councilmember Murzyn, Jr.; Councilmember Novitsky

Also Present: Kelli Bourgeois, City Manager; Kevin Hansen, Public Works Director; James Hoeft, City Attorney; Joe Kloiber, Finance Director; Lorien Mueller; Will Rottler, Communications and Events Specialist; Nicole Tingley, City Clerk

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MISSION STATEMENT, Read by Mayor Márquez Simula

Our mission is to provide the highest quality public services. Services will be provided in a fair, respectful and professional manner that effectively address changing citizen and community needs in a fiscally-responsible and customer-friendly manner.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Jacobs, seconded by Councilmember Novitsky, to approve the agenda as presented. A roll call vote was taken. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

PROCLAMATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, RECOGNITION, ANNOUNCEMENTS, GUESTS

A. School Board Liaison Update

Lorien Mueller introduced herself as the vice chair of the Columbia Heights Public Schools Board and liaison to the City Council. She reported that schools will begin their third quarter using a hybrid model, with prekindergarten and kindergarten grades beginning on February 1, first and second grades hopefully on March 1 and third, fourth, fifth and LEAP grades on March 15. Students will attend four days per week and do their specials (art, music, PE) from home on the fifth day. For the third quarter, secondary (sixth, seventh and eighth grades) and high school students will participate in modified hybrid classes from home. Winter sports kicked off in January, using necessary modifications. Third quarter class materials will be available for pickup on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, January 27, 28 and 29. No classes will be held on Friday, January 29, being the end of the second quarter.

She also reported that many Columbia Heights school community members are grieving the passing of Rick Otsby, Columbia Academy assistant principal.

Mayor Márquez Simula, on behalf of the City Council and Columbia Heights, acknowledged the loss of Mr. Otsby and extended sympathy to the family, and she said students “need to be uplifted” as they go through the grieving process and are socially distant from others.

B. Centennial Celebration Update

Specialist Rottler reported that 400 Centennial calendars were ordered for 2020 and 325 have been sold to date nationwide, and he said another in 2021 may be produced. All Centennial events are identified on the calendar with the exception of recently-added “Music in the Park.” 48 of 60 banner spots have been taken, which will help fund some Centennial events, and he said he looks forward to working with City businesses and organizations.

Last Friday, long-time resident Barbara (Smith) Rue wrote a story for the City website about her visiting Kassler’s (now the Metro Transit Station) in the spring of 1953, which Councilmember Buesgens shared on Facebook and said there have been 98 “hits” on that site to date.

The first Centennial event of the new year, “Heights Snowblast,” will be held on Saturday, January 30, 3:00-6:00 pm at Huset Park East. Hour sessions are being planned, with approximately 80 to 100 attendees allowed per hour in order to adhere to social distancing. Smores will be available through HeightsNEXT, Community Grounds will be distributing free hot cocoa and the School District Recreation Department secured some snowshoes for attendees to use in Huset Park West. The Boosters, Lions, Rotary and Kiwanis are also volunteering, and Specialist Rottler thanked the Public Works Department for flooding the ice rink and maintaining the area. The City is partnering with Dave’s Sport Shop for “Centennial special” rates on skate rentals and skate sharpening.

Aaron Isaacs of the Minnesota Streetcar Museum will be giving a Zoom presentation on Saturday, February 20, at 1:00 pm about the history of streetcars in Columbia Heights and Minneapolis; sign-up information will be available on the City website within the next few weeks.

Specialist Rottler thanked the Centennial quilting group for completion of the blocks, which have been sent to the quilter; the quilt should be completed in 6-8 weeks.

City staff has postponed Trivia Night to June or July so, hopefully, an in-person event for all residents may be held at Murzyn Hall or outside, weather permitting.

Life newspaper will feature a six-part Centennial series about Columbia Heights and will be interviewing long-time residents and share their stories of yesteryears.

Centennial Coloring Page Contest pages have been distributed to students, and additional pages will be further distributed through Prodeo, ICC and Public School District. The contest will go until March.

Specialist Rottler announced that a three-part “Music in the Park” series will be held on Wednesdays: June 2, July 7 and August 4. A sign-up portal is available on the City website and Columbia Heights bands are encouraged to apply.

CONSENT AGENDA

Before the vote for Consent Agenda approval, at the request of Manager Bourgeois, Director Hansen provided specifics to the Council regarding Public Works water main projects cited below and how they would be funded and affected residents notified. Responding to Council inquiries, he said there is no tracking of lead lines and only 20% of City water mains and 30% of sewers have been updated.

Motion by Councilmember Murzyn, Jr., seconded by Councilmember Novitsky, to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented. A roll call vote was taken. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

1. Approve January 11, 2021 City Council Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Move to approve the minutes of the City Council Meeting of January 11, 2021.

2. Resolution No. 2021-09, Establishing a Local Board of Appeal and Equalization Pursuant to Minnesota Statute 274.04, Subd 3 (C)

MOTION: Move to waive the reading of Resolution No. 2021-09, there being ample copies available to the public.

MOTION: Move to adopt Resolution No. 2021-09, a resolution establishing a local board of appeal and equalization pursuant to Minnesota Statute 274.04, Subd 3 (C).

3. Resolution No. 2021-10, Accepting Feasibility Study, Approving Plans and Specifications and Ordering Advertisement for Bids for 2021 Water Main Improvements, Project 2103

MOTION: Move to waive the reading of Resolution No. 2021-10, there being ample copies available for the public.

MOTION: Move to adopt Resolution No. 2021-10, which accepts the Feasibility Report, approves the Plans and Specifications and orders the Advertisement for Bids for the replacement of water main on Buchanan Street from 37th Avenue to 39th Avenue, 39th Avenue from Buchanan Street to Johnson Street and Johnson Street from 37th Avenue to 39th Avenue.

4. Capital Equipment Replacement: Authorization to Purchase 2021 Caterpillar 27203 Ultra Wheeled Skid Steer with Attachments

MOTION: Move to authorize the purchase of one (1) new 2021 CAT 272 D3 Ultra Wheeled Skid Steer with attachments off the State of Minnesota Purchasing Contract from Ziegler CAT, Minneapolis, Minnesota at a purchase price of \$120,921.40. Funding shall be provided equally from Public Works Equipment Funds: 431-43121-5180; 431-45200-5180; 431-46100-5180; 432-49499-5180 and 433-49499-5180.

5. Capital Equipment Replacement: Authorization to Purchase 2021 Metal Pless 1248-201E Snowplow

MOTION: Move to authorize the purchase of one (1) new Metal Pless 1248-20LE Blade off the State of Minnesota Purchasing Contract from Lano Equipment located in Shakopee, Minnesota, for \$35,145.25 plus shipping.

6. Resolution No. 2021-11, Declaring the Intent to Bond for Water Main Construction, Project 2103

MOTION: Move to waive the reading of Resolution No. 2021-11, there being ample copies available to the public.

MOTION: Move to adopt Resolution No. 2021-11, being a resolution approving the declaration for the official intent of the City of Columbia Heights to bond for 2021 Water Main Construction, Project 2103.

7. Second Reading of Ordinance No. 1663, an Ordinance Amending Chapter 9.110 of the City Code of 2001 to Establish Health/Fitness Clubs Not Exceeding 4,000 Square Feet in Area as a Condition Use in the City's LB, Limited Business Zoning District

MOTION: Move to waive the reading of Ordinance No. 1663, there being ample copies available to the public.

MOTION: Move to approve Ordinance No. 1663, an ordinance amending Chapter 9.110 of the City Code of 2001 to establish health/fitness clubs not exceeding 4,000 square feet in area as a condition use in the City's LB, Limited Business Zoning District and direct staff to send a copy of the ordinance as presented for publication in the legal newspaper.

8. Approve Rental Housing License Applications

MOTION: Move to approve the items listed for rental housing license applications for January 25, 2021 in that they have met the requirements of the Property Maintenance Code.

9. License Agenda

MOTION: Move to approve the items as listed on the Business License Agenda for January 25, 2021 as presented.

10. Review of Bills

MOTION: Move that in accordance with Minnesota Statute 412.271, subd. 8, the City Council has reviewed the enclosed list of claims paid by check and by electronic funds transfer in the amount of \$966,386.17.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Ordinances and Resolutions

11. Resolution No. 2021-12, Establishing a Penalty on Utility Accounts of Services Addresses that Do Not Allow City Staff Timely Entry to Repair or Replace the Water Meter Required Under City Code Section 4.312

Director Kloiber reported that the City is scheduling appointments to convert the radio-and-meter head on approximately 300 commercial water meters. Installation is going well, with approximately 18 changeouts per day. Although compliance by commercial customers is generally very good, per his written report, staff judges that a penalty will be increasingly necessary going forward as there are nonresident commercial property owners from whom it can be difficult to obtain responses, most residential meters have reached the end of their expected life and, at the City Council's direction, rarely is water shutoff used as an enforcement tool.

Motion by Councilmember Novitsky, seconded by Councilmember Murzyn, Jr., to waive the reading of Resolution No. 2021-12, there being ample copies available to the public. A roll call vote was taken. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

Motion by Councilmember Novitsky, seconded by Councilmember Jacobs, to adopt Resolution No. 2021-12, being a resolution establishing a penalty on utility accounts of service addresses that do not allow City staff timely entry to repair or replace the water meter required under City Code Section 4.312. A roll call vote was taken. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

CITY COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Report of the City Council

Mayor Márquez Simula was a guest speaker on a phone call of newly-elected women across the nation; had her biweekly meeting with Police Chief Lenny Austin; attended the Development Committee meeting with Alexander House; with the League of Women Voters, viewed the "must-watch" TPT film "Jim Crow of the North," about redlining in Minneapolis and how people of color, Jews and Muslims weren't allowed to buy houses in certain neighborhoods in Minneapolis and surrounding suburbs; joined a group of leaders working on inclusion issues for their cities; met with Anoka County Historical Society and discussed ways to work together to make records of Columbia Heights' history now and in the future; met with MnDOT and Minneapolis Councilmembers on a public webinar to gather feedback, answer questions and discuss upcoming changes for University and Central Avenues; went through the City Council orientation; started a six-week League of Minnesota Cities training; attended webinar with ISIAH and faith leaders across the State working with elected officials including Governor Tim Walz, Speaker of the House Melissa Hortman and St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter; and attended the School District Finance Committee meeting.

Councilmember Buesgens attended the Booster Club meeting online, and she said they appear to be doing fine, in spite of COVID-19, in putting on some of their events; and watched the Columbia Heights High School theater play online. She said that she is still excited about getting three water mains replaced in the City and thinks it is a good investment.

Councilmember Jacobs continued to volunteer weekly at SACA. She did a plow ride-along with Public Works driver Janelle and acknowledged how helpful it was to gain her perspective and also acknowledged Dave Cullen for his help in explaining the plowing processes being used on City streets for snow and ice events “that put us ahead of surrounding communities”; she cited how helpful it is when residents, as an example, place their trash bins in their driveways rather than on the street; and offered “kudos” to all the drivers who are very considerate and keep residents safe. She facilitated eight reach-outs from Community members in the past two weeks and is excited to see everyone on Saturday at the “Snowblast.” Finally, she personally extended her family’s deepest gratitude to all who expressed their kindness on the sudden loss of her grandson over the weekend and said, “It means more than you can imagine.” Mayor Márquez Simula said she was unaware and offered her sympathy.

Councilmember Murzyn, Jr. attended the City Council training last week.

Councilmember Novitsky also participated in the plow ride-along in alleys and said they are a tight fit and it would help a great deal of residents would return their trash bins in a timely manner after removal; attended the Columbia Heights High School Zoom orientation, because his daughter will be in high school next year, and said it went well and was informative; and he wanted to promote the City’s website and Facebook for upcoming City events.

Report of the City Manager

Manager Bourgeois acknowledged the Public Works staff for their great work following the recent snow event and City staff for their great work regarding upcoming Centennial events; reminded residents about a virtual open house regarding the 37th Avenue reconstruction project on Thursday, January 28, with the first session 6:30-7:30 pm and the second 7:30-8:30 pm, and details can be obtained on the City website. She thanked City elected officials for their participation during the recent City orientation.

Report of the City Attorney

Attorney Hoeft had no update.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Jacobs, seconded by Councilmember Murzyn, Jr., to adjourn. A roll call vote was taken. All Ayes, Motion Carried 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:39 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Nicole Tingley, City Clerk/Council Secretary