

MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL CITY OF COLUMBUS, MS February 18, 2025

The Mayor and City Council met in Regular Session on Tuesday, February 18, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. in the Court Chambers of the Municipal Complex. Mayor Keith Gaskin presided over the meeting and all Council Members were present. Also present were the General Counsel, the COO, CFO, the Police Chief, HR Director, and all other Department Heads.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION:

Mayor Gaskin called the meeting to order and called on Rev. Leonardo Dismukes to offer the Invocation.

II. CONFIRMATION OF/OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

Council Member Jones requested to add "Resolution to Keep MSMS in Columbus, MS" to the Policy Agenda.

Councilwoman DiCicco made a motion to approve the Agenda as amended. Councilwoman Stewart seconded the motion. The Mayor called for discussion, and there being none, all Council Members voted in favor of same, with a unanimous vote, 6/0.

III. APPROVE MINUTES FOR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 4, 2025, MINUTES FOR THE SPECIAL MEETINGS OF JANUARY 30, 2025 AND FEBRUARY 6, 2025.

Councilwoman DiCicco made a motion to approve the Minutes for the Meeting of February 4, 2025, Minutes for the Special Meetings of January 30, 2025 and February 6, 2025. Councilwoman Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA:

A. Approve permit request submitted by Jyl Barefield, on behalf of Columbus-Lowndes Humane Society, to host "Zachary's St. Patty's Day Pawty" to be

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held on March 16, 2025, from 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., blocking 5th Street North at 2nd Avenue North and 3rd Avenue North and 2nd Avenue North to the driveway/alley opening at the Trotter Convention Center.

- B. Approve request for Police Officers Kimberly Hayes and William Henderson to attend the “2025 MLEOA Motor Officer Class” to be held in Flowood, MS and approve payment of membership fees, use of city vehicle for travel, lodging and reimbursement of meal expenses in the estimated total cost of \$3,574.60 for two (2) weeks.
- C. Approve request for Public Works Office Manager, Tabitha Price, to attend the “Administrative Professional Day Conference” to be held in Athens, GA and approve payment of registration, lodging, travel and reimbursement of meal expenses, in the estimated total cost of \$1,147.78.
- D. Approve request for Fire and Rescue personnel, Marco Rodriguez, to attend “Truck Company Operations” to be held in Jackson, MS, and approve payment of registration, lodging, use of city vehicle for travel, books, and reimbursement of meal expenses, in the estimated total cost of \$500.00.
- E. Accept request for three (3) Fire and Rescue personnel, Preston Long, DeAndra Lewis, and Alan Lewis to attend “Mississippi Trainee Agility Test (MSTAT)” to be held in Jackson, MS, and approve payment of registration, lodging, use of city vehicle for travel, books and reimbursement of meal expenses, in the estimated total cost of \$40.00.
- F. Approve request of use of the Municipal Complex Courtroom by the Lowndes County Federation of Democratic Women to host political forum on March 11, 2025, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- G. Approve request of complimentary use of the stage near the Tennessee Williams House Museum and Welcome Center for Catfish in the Alley Festival on April 11th from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Councilwoman DiCicco made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Councilwoman Stewart seconded the motion. The Mayor called for discussion. Council Member Beard remarked that he has read on social media that a political debate is scheduled to be held in the Municipal Courtroom, but he has not seen a request. The COO responded by stating that Representative Karriem has spoken to her and the Court Administrator, but has not submitted a request in writing. In the past, it has been done both ways, with and without a written request. The Court Administrator came forth and stated that she received an e-mail from Representative Karriem on February 13, 2025 about using the Courtroom. She requested a letter in

writing, but Representative Karriem stated that he needed to confirm the date in question and report back. The e-mail was forwarded to the COO. Mayor Gaskin asked if there were any objections and there being none, all Council Members voted in favor of same, with a unanimous vote, 6/0.

V. APPROVE DOCKET OF CLAIMS:

Councilwoman Stewart made a motion to approve the Docket of Claims for February 18, 2025, in the amount of \$1,888,889.47. Council Member Beard seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

VI. REPORTS, PROCLAMATIONS, RECOGNITIONS AGENDA:

A. Mayor Keith Gaskin asked Council Members if they had announcements or comments.

Mayor Gaskin then thanked everyone for coming out on January 20 for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration and also thanked everyone that worked hard in coordinating this event.

- Mayor Gaskin reminded everyone that the deadline to accept cans of soup will be February 21, 2025 can be dropped off in City Hall, Fire Station #1 or the Police Department. We will be competing against other cities in North Mississippi who will be collecting other items. At the end of the event, Helping Hands in Columbus will be the beneficiary of a variety of the foods collected.
- Councilwoman Stewart sponsored Soul Food at Townsend Community Center. The event was well attended and the COO was the guest speaker. This event was in celebration of Black History Month.
- Ms. Garrett announced that on Monday, March 3, 2025, Poll Workers Training will be held in the City Hall Courtroom, located on the 2nd Floor. Citizens interested in serving as Poll Workers must participate in this training, one of the three (3) scheduled times: 9:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Also, the Resolution Board Training will be held on March 3, 2025 at 2:30 p.m.

B. Promotion Pinning of Lieutenant Samuel Jackson

Chief Daughtry presented Lieutenant Samuel Jackson, who was recently promoted; however, his family could not be present at the time of promotion. His children pinned on his Lieutenant Bars and his wife pinned on his badge. The youngest child presented him with a Certificate of promotion. Lieutenant Jackson was congratulated by several former co-workers.

Mayor Gaskin asked the Council if they had questions for the Department Heads.

C. Building Inspection Department – January 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Building Inspection Department for January 2025 was presented. Council Member Mickens requested the Building Official to review the Ordinance about having a business in a R-1 Single Family Residential District. No action was taken.

D. Recreation Department – January 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Community Outreach Department for January 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

E. Garage – January 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Garage Department for January 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

F. Public Works Department – January 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Public Works Department for January 2025 was presented. Council Member Beard asked the Public Works Director if he had necessary equipment to keep drains clean. Mr. Bush answered by saying “No” that he needs a Leaf Vacuum Truck and provided a brochure to the Mayor and Council. The cost for a new vacuum truck is around \$300,000; however, it was not budgeted. The CFO was asked if there were any funds and he responded, \$190,000 that was received from the State for the Southside Box Culvert. No action was taken.

G. Code Enforcement Department – January 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Code Enforcement Department for January 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

H. James M. Trotter Convention Center/Cemeteries – January 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the James M. Trotter Convention Center/ Cemeteries Department for January 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

I. Community Outreach – January 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Community Outreach Department for January 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

J. Columbus Fire & Rescue Department – January 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Columbus Fire & Rescue Department for January 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

K. Columbus Police Department – January 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Columbus Police Department for January 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

L. Planning and Community Development – January 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Planning and Community Development Department for January 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

M. Human Resources Department – January 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Human Resources Department for January 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

N. Municipal Court Department – January 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Municipal Court Department for January 2025 was presented. Councilwoman DiCicco noted that the sum of \$55,000 was received for collection of fines. No action was taken.

O. Information Technology – January 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Information Technology Department for January 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

P. Finance – January 2025 Monthly Report

Jim Brigham, CFO, distributed the Monthly Financial Report for January 2025 that includes the General Fund cash balance of \$7,639,037.35, which

is a decrease of \$304,928.07 compared to the same time last year. The Sales Tax Receipts for December were \$966,045, which is an increase of \$23,909.00 compared to the same time last year. The balance in the Major Projects (ARPA) is \$3,3349,216.77. The City-wide Park Improvement project has a balance of \$2,182,657.43. The Modernization Use Tax has a balance of \$5,148,741.62. The balance in the Pedestrian Bridge Repair fund is \$265,234.57 and the Amphitheater balance is \$1,000,000.00. No action was taken

Council Member Jones asked the Grant Writer/Administrator some questions about the \$20,000,000.00 Re-Imagine Columbus Grant regarding furniture purchase included in the amount and asked her to report back.

Q. Board Vacancies

Jammie Garrett, COO announced vacancies on various boards, as follows:

COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

1 Vacancy, 5-Year Term, Telisa Young's Term Expires 3/03/2025.
Appointment will be made February 18, 2025.

APPLICANT:

Telisa Young

Councilwoman Stewart made a motion to reappoint Telisa Young to the Columbus Municipal School District for a 5-Year Term, until 3/03/2030. Council Member Mickens seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0..

TREE BOARD

2 Vacancies, 3-Year Terms, Expired January 2, 2025.

There are no applicants at this time.

Mayor Gaskin encouraged citizens to submit an application to serve as a member on this board.

CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

1 Vacancy, 3-Year Term, Jay Patel's Term expires 3/05/2025.
Appointment will be made March 4, 2025.

APPLICANTS:

Jay Patel
David Armstrong

Board of Adjustment & Appeals of Development Codes

1 Vacancy, 3-Year Term, Kevin Stafford's Term expires 3/01/2025.
Appointment will be made March 4, 2025.

APPLICANTS:

Kevin Stafford

VII. CITIZENS INPUT AGENDA:

ERIN BUSBEA – Columbus-Lowndes Public Library System strategic Planning

Ms. Erin Busbea came before the Mayor and Council on behalf of the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library System strategic Planning and invited the Mayor and Council to participate in the focus groups that will be taking place in March 2025. No action taken.

VIII. POLICY AGENDA:

A. Discuss/Approve Derelict Property Docket

KEVIN L. JONES / SYBIL D. BILLUPS

301 S. Pickensville Road

CASE NUMBER: 25-0016 Property Maintenance Code Violation

The General Counsel called cause number **25-0016**. The Code Enforcement Officer, Sasha James, reported that this property has changed ownership and requested a **45-day** extension to remediate the property. The property is in such a state of uncleanliness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code. Councilwoman Stewart made a motion to give the property owner a **45-day extension** to remediate the property. Ms. James also recommends that an Order be issued for the property in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, stating the City may remove dilapidated buildings or dilapidated fences up to six (6) more times in the twelve (12) month period immediately following the Order and cutting grass and weeds and remove rubbish, personal property and other debris no more than twelve (12) times in a twenty-four (24) month period. Council Member Greene seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0

ADARTHA WILLIAMS

1319 13th Avenue South

CASE NUMBER: 25-0017 Property Maintenance Code Violation

The General Counsel called cause number **25-0017**. Mrs. Adartha Williams appeared before the Mayor and Council and stated that due to family members' illness and the passing of another sibling, they have decided to sell the property "as is." Council Member Beard made a motion to table action on this case until it is determined if the property qualifies for the Blight Elimination Program. Council Member Mickens seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

C L. CLAY

1315 7th Avenue North

CASE NUMBER: 25-0018 Property Maintenance Code Violation

The General Counsel called cause number **25-0018**. Council Member Jones made a motion to table action on this Case Number to determine if the property qualifies for the Blight Elimination Program or if it can be burned by the Fire Department for training purposes. Council Member Beard seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

CHRISTOPHER MORGAN

1913 14th Avenue North

CASE NUMBER: 25-0019 Property Maintenance Code Violation

The General Counsel called cause number **25-0019**. The Code Enforcement Officer, Sasha James, reported that the property owner has requested an extension of time to apply for a building permit and remediate this property. Ms. James requested a **45-day** extension to remediate the property. The property is in such a state of uncleanness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code. Council Member Beard made a motion to give the property owner a **45-day extension** to remediate the property. Ms. James also recommends that an Order be issued for the

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property in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, stating the City may remove dilapidated buildings or dilapidated fences up to six (6) more times in the twelve (12) month period immediately following the Order and cutting grass and weeds and remove rubbish, personal property and other debris no more than twelve (12) times in a twenty-four (24) month period. Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0

\$250.00 OR LESS CASES:

Code Enforcement Officer, Sasha James, presented one (1) case, \$250.00 or less for adjudication. Councilwoman Stewart made a motion to accept the notice for property clean-up of properties \$250.00 and less to be adjudicated according to statute. Council Member Beard seconded the motion.

All Council Members present voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

THE LIST FOLLOWS:

\$250 OR LESS Derelict Properties for February 18, 2025 Mayor and City Council Meeting

Case # and Violation	Ward	Name and Address	Notes
25-0021 <i>Accumulation of Rubbish & Garbage</i>	5	GLYNIS MATTHEWS 909 10 th Street North	

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MATTHEWS GYNISS
1008 RAMSEY LANE
MCCOMB, MS 39448

NUISANCE PROPERTY NOTICE TO OWNER - PURSUANT TO
SECTION 21-19-11(2) OF THE MISSISSIPPI CODE (Effective 7/1/2022)

RE: 909 10TH ST N
APN: 61W08-00-01900
Case No: CE-25-0021
Officer: Sasha James - Ward 5

Date: February 3, 2025

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Columbus (the "Governing Authority"), having a population over one thousand five hundred (1500), has authorized the City of Columbus Code Enforcement Director and/or her assistant to determine whether the property or parcel of land is in such a state of uncleanness as to be a menace to the public health, safety and welfare of the community when the fee or cost to clean property or a parcel of land that is one (1) acre or less does not exceed Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00), excluding administrative costs.

The particular condition(s) as determined by the authorized municipal employee existing as of the date of this notice is/are one or more of the following:

- ☐ The presence of overgrowth of weeds, grass or other vegetation
- ☒ The presence of rubbish/garbage and other debris
- ☐ The presence of abandoned building
- ☐ The presence of abandoned or dilapidated fence(s)
- ☐ The presence of burned structure
- ☐ The presence of dilapidated building(s), slabs or personal property
- ☐ The presence of property maintenance code violation
- ☐ The presence of standing water in cesspools
- ☐ The presence of cistern(s), standing water and cesspools

You are hereby advised that by this correspondence a determination has been made that the condition of property or parcel of land as described is a menace to the public health, safety and welfare of the community, and as such the governing authority of the City of Columbus, if the owner does not do so himself, on or before the 10th day of February, 2025, shall proceed to clean the land, by the use of municipal employees or by contract, by cutting grass and weeds, filling cisterns, removing rubbish, abandoned or dilapidated fences, outside toilets, abandoned or dilapidated buildings, slabs, personal property, which removal of personal property shall not be subject to the provisions of Section 21-39-21, and other debris, and draining cesspools and standing water therefrom.

Code Section:	Corrective Action:	Compliance Date:
307.1 - Accumulation of Rubbish and Garbage	Remove all trash and debris from the property. All equipment, appliance, and/or material must be stored away from public view and/or stored in an enclosed structure. Generally, any equipment, materials or furnishings that would ordinarily not be used outdoors may not be stored outdoors.	February 10, 2025

YOU ARE ADVISED THAT A FINDING BY THE MUNICIPAL OFFICIAL THAT THE PROPERTY OR PARCEL OF LAND IS IN NEED OF CLEANING WILL AUTHORIZE THE MUNICIPALITY TO REENTER THE PROPERTY OR PARCEL OF LAND FOR A PERIOD OF TWO (2) YEARS AFTER THE MUNICIPAL OFFICIAL'S DETERMINATION WITHOUT ANY FURTHER HEARING OR ACTION IF NOTICE IS POSTED ON THE PROPERTY OR PARCEL OF LAND AND AT CITY HALL OR ANOTHER PLACE IN THE MUNICIPALITY WHERE SUCH NOTICES ARE GENERALLY POSTED AT LEAST SEVEN (7) DAYS BEFORE THE PROPERTY OR PARCEL OF LAND IS REENTERED FOR CLEANING. A COPY OF THE REQUIRED NOTICE MAILED AND POSTED AS REQUIRED BY MCA SECTION 21-19-11(2) (a)&(b) SHALL BE RECORDED IN THE MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING AUTHORITY IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE HEARING REQUIRED BY SAID SECTION.

Thereafter, the governing authority shall by resolution adjudicate the actual cost of cleaning the property under this provision, provided the same does not exceed Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) and may also impose a penalty not to exceed One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) or one hundred percent (100%) of the actual cost of cleaning the property, whichever is more.

The cost and any penalty imposed may become a civil debt against the property owner, and/or, at the option of the governing authority, an assessment against the property. The "cost assessed against the property" means either the cost to the municipality of using its own employees to do the work or the cost to the municipality of any contract executed by the municipality to have the work done, and additionally may include administrative costs of the municipality not to exceed Fifty Dollars (\$50.00). For subsequent cleaning within the one-year period, upon seven (7) days' notice posted both on the property or parcel of land adjudicated in need of cleaning and at city hall or another place in the municipality where such notices are generally posted, and consistent with the municipal official's determination as authorized, a municipality may require the property or parcel of land to maintain cleanliness without further notice or hearing no more than six (6) times in any twelve-month period with respect to removing abandoned or dilapidated buildings, slabs, dilapidated fences and outside toilets, and no more than twelve (12) times in any twenty-four-month period with respect to cutting grass and weeds and removing rubbish, personal property and other debris on the land, and the expense of cleaning of the property shall not exceed an aggregate amount of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) per year. The governing authority may assess the same actual costs, administrative costs, and penalty for each time the property or land is cleaned as otherwise provided. The penalty provided herein shall not be assessed against the State of Mississippi upon request for reimbursement under Section 29-1-145, nor shall a municipality clean a parcel owned by the State of Mississippi without first giving notice. Upon written notification process that is prescribed in this subsection and proceed to clean the properties and assess costs as prescribed in this subsection, except that, penalties shall not be assessed against the State of Mississippi. A determination made by an appropriate municipal employee under this subsection (2) that the state or condition of property or a parcel of land is a menace to the public health, safety and welfare of the community shall not subsequently be used to replace a hearing if Section 21-19-11(1) is later utilized by a municipality when the prerequisites of Section 21-19-11(2) are not satisfied.

An appeal of this decision may be made to the Governing Authority of the City of Columbus and such appeal shall be in writing, state the basis for the appeal and be filed with the city clerk no later than seven (7) days from the latest date of notice required under MCA 21-19-11(2).

For any questions, please call Sasha James, the Code Enforcement Director for the City of Columbus at 662-245-5063 or 662-245-5070.

This 3rd day of February, 2025.

Sasha James,
City of Columbus Director of Code Enforcement

A copy of this notice shall be recorded in the minutes of the governing authority in conjunction with MCA Section 21-19-11 (2).

At least seven (7) days before the date of cleaning, this notice is required to be posted on the property or parcel of land identified herein AND at city hall or such other place in the municipality where such notices are posted AND is required to be mailed, via United States Mail, postage prepaid, to the address of the property or parcel of land identified herein except where the land or structure(s) is apparently vacant, AND to the address where the ad valorem tax notice for the property or parcel of land identified herein is sent by the office charged with collecting ad valorem taxes for the subject property or parcel of land identified herein.

This Notice was posted on the subject property on: February 3, 2025

By: Sasha James, City of Columbus Director of Code Enforcement

This Notice was posted at the City Building Inspection Office on: February 3, 2025

By: Sasha James, City of Columbus Director of Code Enforcement

This Notice was mailed via United States Mail, postage prepaid, to each address identified above on: February 3, 2025

By: Sasha James, City of Columbus Director of Code Enforcement

B. Discuss/Approve Recommendations from the February 10, 2025

Permitted Use Case No. 24-11 (*This was originally heard on December 9, 2024*)

The Property is owned by Lowndes County

Location: 703 2nd Street North

On behalf of Cingular Wireless & A T & T

Tax Parcel 60W05-00-06300

C-3 Highway Commercial

Request is to install a 155-foot monopole telecommunication tower.

Finding of the Facts:

With a unanimous vote of 5 to 0, the Planning Commission recommended denial of the request. The Commission based their decision on a large public outcry and approval would not be in harmony with the community.

Council Member Beard moved that the facts and findings of the Planning Commission be adopted as the facts and findings of the Mayor and City Council, and that the recommendation of the Planning Commission to deny the request to install a 155-foot monopole telecommunication tower be denied. Council Member Greene seconded the motion. There followed discussion, consideration, and review by the Council of the issues and facts presented by this request and the action taken by the City of Columbus Planning Commission.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION:

Councilwoman Stewart made a motion to not accept the Planning Commission's recommendation to deny the request to install a 155-foot monopole telecommunication tower. Council Member Jones seconded the motion.

Councilwoman Stewart offered remarks, stating that the citizens are in need of the services. A T & T Regional Manager, C. D. Smith, came forward and stated that we do not have a suitable alternative.

The vote to accept the Planning Commission's request to deny the request are based on aesthetics concerns and location. There are other locations that A T & T can look at. Patton Hawn stated that the location meets the terms and conditions of the City's Ordinance; the aesthetics are near a highway, the tower will not have a negative effect on property values and they have contacted the Department of Archives and History and have received clearance.

Mayor Gaskin invited members in the audience who object to this request.

Attorney Amanda Meadows remarked that she has been retained by a client who owns a business in the area and her client is in opposition of locating the tower at this location.

Becky Boyd came forth and voiced objections, stating she is not against a cell phone tower, but she is in opposition of the location.

There were other citizens/business owners in the audience who were in opposition, but did not comment.

Mayor Gaskin called for the vote. Council Members Stewart, Mickens and Jones voted in favor of the substitute motion not to accept the Planning Commission's recommendation to deny the request to install a 155-foot monopole telecommunication tower. Council Members Greene, Beard and DiCicco opposed the substitute motion. Mayor Gaskin voted in opposition of the substitute motion.

The substitute motion failed 3 / 4.

C. Discuss/Approve hiring two (2) Certified Police Officers, contingent upon successful completion of preliminary testing.

Council Member Mickens made a motion to approve the request to hire two (2) Certified Police Officers: Patrick Ghoston and Scote Renfro, contingent on successful completion of preliminary testing.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

Council Member Beard exited the meeting.

D. Discuss/Approve Resolution Ordering That Certain Specified Police Vehicles be Unmarked Pursuant to MS Code Section 25-1-87.

Council Member Mickens made a motion to approve the Resolution Ordering That Certain Specified Police Vehicles be Unmarked Pursuant to MS Code Section 25-1-87. Councilwoman Stewart seconded the motion. After a thorough discussion on the matter, the Mayor called for a vote on the motion and recorded the votes as follows:

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Council Member Stewart	voted: <u>YES</u>
Council Member Mickens	voted: <u>YES</u>
Council Member Greene	voted: <u>YES</u>
Council Member Beard	voted: <u>ABSENT</u>
Council Member Jones	voted: <u>YES</u>
Council Member DiCicco	voted: <u>YES</u>

The Mayor then announced that the motion carried and the Resolution was duly adopted on this the 18th day of February, 2025.

THE RESOLUTION FOLLOWS:

(THIS SPACE LEFT BLANK INTENTIONALLY)

**RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE
CITY OF COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI ORDERING THAT CERTAIN SPECIFIED
POLICE VEHICLES BE UNMARKED
PURSUANT TO MISSISSIPPI CODE SECTION 25-1-87**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Mississippi Code Section 21-21-3, the City of Columbus (“City”) employs, regulates, and supports a sufficient police force and to furnish and supply all suitable and necessary equipment therefore; and

WHEREAS, the City’s support of the police force includes providing vehicles for use by the police to assist with maintaining order and peace, which, includes, but is not limited to conducting official criminal investigations; and

WHEREAS, the Chief of Police of the City has recommended to the Mayor and City Council of the City, pursuant to Section 25-1-87 of the Mississippi Code that certain City Police vehicles, identified and described on Exhibit A attached hereto, should be unmarked because identifying marks would hinder official criminal investigations; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council accept the recommendation of the Chief of Police as the chief law enforcement officer of the City and his control over police officers and how investigations will proceed; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Mayor and City Council hereby adjudicate and order the following:

1. That the Mayor and City Council authorize and approve the use of the City Police vehicles identified on the list attached hereto as Exhibit A, in an unmarked status, and find that the said vehicles are exempted from the requirements of Section 25-1-87 of the Mississippi Code based upon the finding that identifying marks on such vehicles would hinder City Police criminal investigations; and

2. The City Clerk, is ordered to take any and all action to effectuate the intent of this Resolution and shall forthwith furnish the State Department of Audit a certified copy of this Resolution.

Council Member Mickens moved that the resolution be adopted and approved. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion. After a thorough discussion on the matter, the Mayor called for a vote on the motion and recorded the votes as follows:

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Council Member Stewart voted
Council Member Mickens voted
Council Member Greene voted
Council Member Beard voted
Council Member Jones voted
Council Member DiCicco voted

Yes
Yes
Yes
Absent
Yes
Yes

The Mayor then announced that the Resolution carried and was duly adopted on this the 6th day of February, 2025.


KEITH GASKIN, MAYOR, CITY OF
COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI

ATTEST:


JAMES BRIGHAM, SECRETARY TREASURER
CITY CLERK CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
COUNTY OF LOWNDES

Personally appeared before me, the undersigned notary public, in and for the aforesaid County and State, the within named JAMES BRIGHAM, who after first being sworn by me, deposed and stated that the above and foregoing Resolution was duly adopted and approved on the 6th day of June, 2023, at a regular meeting of the Mayor and City Council at which a quorum of the Council was present.


Notary Public

(SEAL)

My Commission Expires: March 02, 2026



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EXHIBIT A

Vehicle 1 Manufacturer's serial number: 4T11AK2LU893166

Vehicle 2 Manufacturer's serial number: 4T1C11AK6LU864902

Vehicle 3 Manufacturer's serial number: 4T1C11AK1MU595483

Vehicle 4 Manufacturer's serial number: 4T1B11HK9U285774

Vehicle 5 Manufacturer's serial number: 4T1C11AK3LU861729

Vehicle 6 Manufacturer's serial number: 4T1C11AK4LU880113

E. Discuss/Approve request to fill Laborer position in the Public Works Department, pending successful completion of all preliminary testing.

Councilwoman Stewart made a motion to approve the request to hire Lentie Davis as a Laborer in the Public Works Department at \$15.00 per hour, pending successful completion of all preliminary testing. Council Member Greene seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 5/0.

F. Discuss/Approve Application for Mississippi Arts Commission Project Grant.

Council Member Greene made a motion to approve the request to submit application for Mississippi Arts Commission Project Grant for FY2026 for the Recreation Department for art educational opportunities, including a storyteller and a violinist for children's programs, and a quilter for senior citizens. The grant is for \$3,650 and requires a 50% match. Councilwoman Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 5/0.

G. Discuss/Approve Resolution to Ensure Safe, Accessible, and Desirable Transportation Systems.

Council Member Greene made a motion to approve Resolution to Ensure Safe, Accessible and Desirable Transportation Systems. Councilwoman DiCicco seconded the motion. After a thorough discussion on the matter, the Mayor called for a vote on the motion and recorded the votes as follows:

Council Member Stewart	voted: <u>YES</u>
Council Member Mickens	voted: <u>YES</u>
Council Member Greene	voted: <u>YES</u>
Council Member Beard	voted: <u>ABSENT</u>
Council Member Jones	voted: <u>YES</u>
Council Member DiCicco	voted: <u>YES</u>

The Mayor then announced that the motion carried and the Resolution was duly adopted on this the 18th day of February, 2025.

THE RESOLUTION FOLLOWS:

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**RESOLUTION
OF THE COMMITMENT OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI
TO ENSURING SAFE, ACCESSIBLE, AND DESIRABLE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS FOR THE
CITIZENS OF COLUMBUS**

WHEREAS, ensuring safe, accessible, and desirable transportation in the region is central to Columbus' mission. It is important to the city that residents and workers in Columbus can use a transportation system designed to accommodate all users safely, regardless of age and ability. Safety will be incorporated as part of the entire transportation network and ultimately achieve our long-term safety goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries by Year 2040.

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council are deeply concerned about transportation safety within the city. From 2019-2023 our region had 113 fatal and suspected serious injury crashes. Additionally, there were 17 fatal and suspected serious injury crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists. These incidents are tragedies for the victims, their families, and their friends and they have profound, devastating impacts in our communities.

WHEREAS, fatal and serious injury traffic crashes are preventable, and Columbus is committed to making transportation safer for residents and visitors within the region. The Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Safety Action Plan is an important first step toward ending these avoidable deaths and injuries. As a data-driven, comprehensive, and actionable approach, the Safety Action Plan is designed to improve safety throughout the entire transportation network and achieve our long-term safety goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries by Year 2040.

WHEREAS, safe travel is not exclusive to a specific set of the community. Everyone should arrive at their destination alive and unharmed, regardless of where they live, their age, or preferred mode of transportation. The City of Columbus cannot achieve our goal without the support and engagement from local partner agencies and their communities. Residents of the area can improve the safety of our roadways every day.

WHEREAS, Columbus prioritizes safety through various aspects of our work, including plans, studies, and funding. Despite these efforts, roadway crashes are increasingly depriving individuals of their lives. The trend, tragically, is moving in the wrong direction.

WHEREAS, the Safety Action Plan will help our communities consider a broader approach to safety on the transportation network. Though our work does not end with this action plan, I am confident it will help us reduce the number of serious traffic incidents, and it will lay a solid foundation for achieving zero roadway fatalities and serious injuries.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Mayor and the City Council of the City of Columbus, Mississippi, that we are committed to ensuring safe, accessible, and desirable transportation systems for the City of Columbus.

SO ORDERED, this the 18th day of February, 2025, by the Mayor and the City Council in a regularly scheduled meeting.

The above and foregoing Resolution was moved for adoption by Council Member Greene and was thereafter seconded by Council Member DiCicco and after a discussion of the same the Mayor recorded the votes on the motion as follows:

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Council Member Stewart voted	_____
Council Member Mickens voted	_____
Council Member Greene voted	_____
Council Member Beard voted	_____
Council Member Jones voted	_____
Council Member DiCicco voted	_____

The Mayor then announced that the Resolution carried and was duly adopted on this the 18th day of February, 2025.

**KEITH GASKIN, MAYOR, CITY OF
COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI**

ATTEST:

**JAMES BRIGHAM, SECRETARY TREASURER
CITY CLERK CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
COUNTY OF LOWNDES**

Personally appeared before me, the undersigned notary public, in and for the aforesaid County and State, the within named JAMES BRIGHAM, who after first being sworn by me, deposed and stated that the above and foregoing Resolution was duly adopted and approved on the 18th day of February, 2025, at a regular meeting of the Mayor and City Council at which a quorum of the Council was present.

Notary Public

(S E A L)

My Commission Expires: _____

H. Discuss/Approve Historic Resources Survey Contract in the amount of \$58,500.00 for up to 700 parcels and for \$85.00 per parcel above 700 parcels, not to exceed \$64,450.00.

Council Member Mickens made a motion to approve the Historic Resources Survey Contract in the amount of \$58,500.00 for up to 700 parcels and for \$85.00 per parcel above 700 parcels, not to exceed \$64,450.00.
Councilwoman Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 5/0.

THE CONTRACT FOLLOWS:

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CONTRACT

Historic Architectural Survey of the Northside Area for the City of Columbus, Lowndes County, Mississippi

This CONTRACT between the City of Columbus (hereinafter called **the City**) and Jaime L. Destefano (hereinafter called **the Consultant**) relates to a historic architectural survey of the Northside Area (the **Project**) to be undertaken by the Consultant for the City. The Project is a mitigation stipulation outlined in a Memorandum of Agreement for adverse effects resulting from the Columbus Blight Elimination Program within the Project area. The Project is estimated to include the survey of up to 775 properties (regardless of age) within a predefined survey area agreed upon between the City and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH). The Consultant is a Secretary of Interior (SOI) qualified professional Architectural Historian.

The Consultant agrees as follows:

1. Work Program

The Consultant shall carry out project work as specified in the Consultant's Proposal and made a part of this contract as Attachment A. All work will be in accordance with the MDAH most current survey standards.

MDAH Review: All completed MDAH inventory forms will be submitted by the Consultant to the MDAH throughout the course of the Project for review and comment. The draft survey report will first be submitted by the Consultant to the City for review and comment. Upon approval, the Consultant will submit the survey report draft to MDAH for review. The Consultant will continue to consult directly with the MDAH to ensure all final deliverables meet the mitigation requirements of the MOA.

2. Compensation

The Consultant agrees to perform the work outlined in Attachment A for a **minimum** lump sum fee of **\$58,500.00**. This fee assumes the survey of 700 resources within the Project area. Following fieldwork, a complete inventory of resources requiring MDAH survey inventory forms will be compiled. Should the total number of survey forms exceed 700, an additional \$85.00/resource will be applied to the cost. **Not to exceed \$64,450.00.**

The City is expected to be able to cover all costs incurred during the course of the Project. Compensation to the Consultant shall be made upon satisfactory completion and submission to the MDAH of the products of the Project as specified below. Compensation shall be made incrementally, with the following completion points:

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Task 1: Project Initiation, Research and Completion of 25% of Fieldwork (~175 Resources Field Documented). 12% of project cost (estimated between \$7,020-7,734)

Task Deliverables: Survey Map with all parcels and addresses. Field Survey Numbers for completed fieldwork will be shown on the map. Working Survey Inventory spreadsheet including all surveyed properties to date

Task 2: Completion of all fieldwork, survey map and working inventory. 12% of project cost (estimated between \$7,020-7,734)

Task Deliverables: Survey Map with all parcels, addresses and assigned field numbers. Complete survey inventory of all resources. All digital photographs, arranged by address and street and submitted via a file share application.

Task 3: Submittal of 25% of survey forms to MDAH for review. 16% of project cost (estimated between \$9,360-10,312)

Task Deliverable: Consultant will submit electronic files of the first 25% survey forms for review

Task 4: Submittal of 100% survey forms to MDAH for review. 30% of project cost (estimated between \$17,550-19,335)

Task Deliverable: Consultant will submit electronic files of the first 25% survey forms for review

Task 5: Submittal of draft survey report to City and MDAH for review and comment. 16% of project cost (estimated between \$9,360-10,312)

Task Deliverable: Consultant will submit draft survey report to the City of MDAH for review and comment

Task 6: Submittal of final survey report and survey forms. 14% of project cost (estimated between \$8,190-9,023).

Task Deliverable: One (1) hard copy of survey report to MDAH, one (1) hard copy of survey report to the City. Archival survey forms with glued photographs to the MDAH. Digital survey forms to the City.

The Consultant's invoices for the Project cost up to the amount of \$64,450.00 should be made to the City of Columbus. Invoices will be submitted to the City by the Consultant upon completion of each task listed above. The City shall make payment on invoice within 30 days of receipt. If payment exceeds the 30 days, an additional cost of 5% shall be applied to the invoice.

3. Amendment Provision

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The terms of the CONTRACT may be amended by written agreement, signed by all parties.

4. Termination for Cause

- (a) **Default.** If the Consultant refuses or fails to perform any of the provisions of this CONTRACT with such diligence as will ensure its completion within the time specified in this contract or any extension thereof, or otherwise fails to timely satisfy the contract provisions, or commits any other substantial breach of contract, the City shall notify the Consultant in writing of the day of nonperformance, and if not cured in ten (10) days or any longer time specified in writing by the City, the City may terminate the Consultant's right to proceed with the contract or such part of the contract as to which there has been delay or a failure to properly perform.
- (b) **Excuse for Nonperformance Delayed Performance.** The Consultant shall not be in default by reason of any failure in performance of this contract in accordance with its terms (including any failure by the Consultant to make progress in the prosecution of the work hereunder which endangers the such performance) if the Consultant has notified the City within the 15 days after the cause of the delay and the failure arises out of causes such as: acts of God; acts of the public enemy; acts of the State and any other governmental entity in its sovereign or contractual capacity; fires; floods; epidemics; quarantine restrictions; strikes or other labor disputes; freight embargoes; or unusually severe weather. Upon request of the Consultant, the City shall ascertain the facts and extent of such failure.
- (c) **Additional Rights and Remedies.** The rights and remedies provided in this clause are in addition to any other rights and remedies provided by law or under this contract.

5. Reporting

The Consultant shall advise the City of the progress of the project by email at least once every month while the Project is underway. The Consultant shall contact the City if any situation should arise which will affect the timely or successful completion of this Project.

6. Copyright

The copyright for any publication resulting from materials, information and data assembled due to this contract shall be available to the City. The City shall retain the right of printing and reprinting any publications using said materials, information and data. The Consultant waives any claim to a copyright involving said materials, information and data.

7. General Provisions

The Consultant agrees to comply with all federal and state laws and regulations concerning equal opportunity, affirmative action, and fair employment practices. The Consultant shall indemnify and hold harmless the City, and all of their officers, agents and employees from all suits, actions or claims of any character brought for or on account of any injuries or damages

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received by any persons or property resulting from the operations of the Consultant in executing work under this contract.

This CONTRACT becomes effective upon signature of the parties below.

The City of Columbus

By _____

Keith Gaskin, Mayor

Date _____

Consultant

By _____

Jaime L. Destefano, MSHP
Principal Architectural Historian

Date _____

I. Discuss/Approve Lobbyists Contract with W. T. Consultants, not to exceed \$72,000 for the 2025 Session

Council Member Jones made a motion to approve the Lobbyists Contract with W. T. Consultants, not to exceed \$72,000 for the 2025 Session. Council Member Mickens seconded the motion.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION:

Council Member Greene made a motion to table this request until the next Council Meeting. Councilwoman DiCicco seconded the motion.

Council Members Stewart, Greene and DiCicco voted in favor of the substitute motion to table request. Council Member Mickens and Jones opposed the motion.

The motion carried 3/2.

J. Discuss/Approve Resolution of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Columbus declaring their support for keeping the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science at the Mississippi University for Women

Council Member Mickens made a motion to approve the Resolution of the Mayor and City Council of the City of Columbus declaring their support for keeping the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science at the Mississippi University for Women. Council Member Jones seconded the motion, and after a thorough discussion and deliberation, the Mayor called for a vote of the Council Members, then and there voting and recorded the votes as follows:

Council Member Stewart	voted: <u>YES</u>
Council Member Mickens	voted: <u>YES</u>
Council Member Greene	voted: <u>YES</u>
Council Member Beard	voted: <u>ABSENT</u>
Council Member Jones	voted: <u>YES</u>
Council Member DiCicco	voted: <u>YES</u>

The Mayor then announced that the motion carried and the Resolution was duly adopted on this the 18th day of February, 2025.

THE RESOLUTION FOLLOWS:

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**RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS
DECLARING THEIR SUPPORT FOR KEEPING
THE MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL FOR MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE
AT THE MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN**

WHEREAS, in 1987 the Mississippi Legislature passed into law a bill that created the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science to be situated at the campus of MUW; and

WHEREAS, thirty-eight years later, MSMS continues to outperform expectations at MUW, with the MSMS Class of 2024 being offered \$32M in scholarships and being ranked by NICHE as the best school in the State with 80 percent of MSMS students feeling safe at the school and 82% being happy there and with the graduating class of 2024 turning out 24 National Merit Scholarship semifinalists.; and

WHEREAS, MSMS has regularly been ranked as one of the best public high schools in the country by Newsweek Magazine and MSMS students consistently outpace every other public & private school or learning system in Mississippi for awards in national competitions; and

WHEREAS, MSMS students and parents consistently credit the success of MSMS to the close, supportive mentorship they receive working with faculty focused on MSMS Ideals of scholarship, community, creativity and service; and

WHEREAS, MSMS students regularly acknowledge that the academic opportunities they receive at MSMS are not available at home schools and that the small close-knit community at MSMS is more supportive of their success than their home schools; and

WHEREAS, MSMS has outperformed in competitions at the International Science and Engineering Fair, the Louisiana/Mississippi Mathematical Association of America College competition, beating out MSU and others; and

WHEREAS, MSMS was awarded the Mississippi Governor's award for Excellence in the Arts for the Tales from the Crypt research/performance project; and regularly wins competitions for Student Teacher Achievement Recognition known as the STAR teacher award; and

WHEREAS, MSMS has won numerous awards for History projects, including the MS Historical Society Award of Merit, in 2024, has won numerous scholastic writing awards including three National Scholastic Medal winners in 2024, the YoungArts award in 2025 and two Scholastic Art medal winners in 2025, and in World languages has won the Young Orator prize at the International Olympiada of Spoken Russian in Moscow, Russia; and

WHEREAS, with MSMS having such a consistent and ever improving record of success at its current location on the campus of MUW, the risks of jeopardizing such success by relocation far outweigh any small chance that moving MSMS to the campus a SEC campus with 24,000 students would generate any small increase in performance;

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NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Columbus hereby emphatically call upon the Mississippi Legislature to reject any proposed legislation that would attempt to relocate MSMS to MSU or any other location other than where it is outperforming expectations on a limited budget;

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Mayor and City Council call upon the Mississippi Department of Education and/or the Legislature, to provide sufficient funding to fully support the most significant educational creations in Mississippi history and further that the Mayor be directed to deliver the Proclamation to The Mississippi Board of Education, Members of the Mississippi Legislature Education and Colleges and Universities Committees, the Governor, House Speaker, the Lieutenant Governor, and that all Columbus citizens and MSMS students and alumni are encouraged to likewise petition the Government to leave MSMS where it is – on the campus of the Mississippi University for Women.

Council Member _____ after reading the Resolution, in whole and in part moved for adoption of the Resolution. Said motion was seconded by Council Member _____, and, after a thorough discussion and deliberation, the Mayor called for a vote of the Council Members then and there voting and recorded the votes as follows:

Council Member Stewart	_____
Council Member Mickens	_____
Council Member Greene	_____
Council Member Beard	_____
Council Member Jones	_____
Council Member DiCicco	_____

The Mayor then stated that the motion was passed, pronounced the Resolution duly adopted with a copy to be spread upon the Minutes of the Mayor and City Council.

WITNESS THE SIGNATURE OF THE UNDERSIGNED OFFICERS, on this the _____ day of February, 2025.

KEITH GASKIN, MAYOR

SIGNATURE

ATTEST:

JAMES BRIGHAM, MUNICIPAL CLERK AND
SECRETARY/TREASURER OF CITY
OF COLUMBUS

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ADJOURNMENT:

The Mayor then asked if there was any other business to come before the Mayor and City Council. There being none, the Mayor announced that the meeting was ADJOURNED.

Approved by: _____
Keith Gaskin, Mayor

James "Jim" Brigham
CFO/Secretary-Treasurer/Clerk

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