

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

The Mayor and City Council met in Regular Session on Tuesday, March 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 Greene made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. 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 PREVIOUS MEETINGS.

APPROVE MINUTES FOR MEETING OF MARCH 5, 2025.

Council Member Greene made a motion to approve the Minutes for the Meeting of March 5, 2025. Council Member Mickens seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

APPROVE MINUTES FOR SPECIAL MEETING OF FEBRUARY 27, 2025.

Councilwoman Stewart made a motion to approve the Minutes for the Special Meeting of February 27, 2025. Councilwoman DiCicco seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0

IV. CONSENT AGENDA:

- A. Approve request for CPD Personnel, Antonious Sellers and one (1) additional officer to attend a "Peer Support Course" to be held in Brandon, MS, and approve payment for lodging, use of city vehicle for travel and reimbursement of meal expenses, in the estimated total cost of \$1,844.00.
- B. Approve permit request submitted by Alan Aldridge, on behalf of himself and Munson and Brothers, to host "Porch Fest" to be held on April 11 – 12, 2025 from 12:00 p.m. until 12:00 a.m. each day, blocking 3rd Street North at 3rd Avenue North and 2nd Avenue North and remaining blocked until the end of the event.
- C. Approve permit request submitted by Jerry Fortenberry on behalf of the Tennessee Williams Tribute and Columbus Arts Council to host a "Stella Shouting Contest" to be held on April 12, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m., blocking College Street at 5th Street South and 4th Street South. See *attached map*.
- D. Approve request from Tennessee Williams Tribute and Columbus Arts Council to have beer available on College Street at 5th Street South and 4th Street South by donation during the "Stella Shouting Contest" on April 12, 2025.
- E. Accept permit request submitted by Ryan Munson, on behalf of Munson and Brothers, to host "St. Patrick's Day Fun Run" to be held on March 29, 2025, from 3:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m., blocking 2nd Avenue North from 5th Street North to 2nd Street North by the Farmers' Market. See *Attached Map*.
- F. Approve request for the Interim Planner, George Irby, and Council Member Joseph Mickens to attend the Civil Rights Movement Sites Symposium in Atlanta, GA on April 10 – 11, 2025, in the estimated cost of \$1,200.00.
- G. Approve request for Grant Writer/Administrator, Susan Wilder, to attend Science Discovery on Main Street Meeting in Philadelphia, PA, in the estimated cost of \$815.34.
- H. Approve request to publish notice of advertising for Legal Advertising Bid.
- I. Accept letter of resignation from Fire and Rescue Firefighter, Kyler Kidder, effective March 16, 2025, and approve compensation for unused vacation leave.

MINUTES OF THE
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
MARCH 18, 2025

- J. Accept letter of resignation from CPD personnel, Benjamin Perryman, effective March 8, 2025, and approve compensation for unused vacation leave.
- K. Accept letter of resignation from accounts Payable Clerk, Tabitha C. Berry, effective March 20, 2025.
- L. Accept letter of resignation from Public Works Laborer, Jimmy Weatherspoon, effective March 6, 2025 and authorize the HR Director to begin the normal recruitment process.
- M. Accept letter of retirement/resignation from Municipal Judge, Rhonda Hayes Ellis, effective March 31, 2025.

Councilwoman Stewart made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. Council Member Greene seconded the motion. The Mayor called for discussion. Councilwoman DiCicco asked a question Consent Agenda Item "F" and Council Member Mickens asked a question about Consent Agenda Item "G." All Council Members voted in favor of same, with the exception of Councilwoman DiCicco, who opposed. The motion carried with a majority vote, 5/1.

V. APPROVE DOCKET OF CLAIMS:

Council Member Beard made a motion to approve the Docket of Claims for March 18, 2025, in the amount of \$2,224,480.52. Council Member Greene seconded the motion. CFO, Jim Brigham, gave an explanation as to why the large docket, stating that it includes some one-time payments and debt service payments.

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 the citizens for coming out to the Police Department's Town Hall Meeting that has convened in each Ward. There has been three (3) so far and three (3) more have been scheduled. If you miss the meeting in your, feel free to attend a meeting in another Ward.

MINUTES OF THE
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
MARCH 18, 2025

- Mayor Gaskin reminded everyone that the Primary Election will be held Tuesday, April 1, 2025. We thank all the citizens who have helping prepare for this election.
- The next City Council Meeting will be held on April 1, 2025 and the meeting will be held upstairs in City Hall. Please be reminded that downtown parking is limited.
- Council Member Jones announced that the Recreation Department is hosting several Spring Break events and encouraged parents to bring their kids out to participate.
- Council Member Mickens reminded citizens that voting precincts for Ward II are the East Columbus Gym on Lawrence Street and Fairview School on Airline Road.
- Mayor Gaskin added that citizens can locate their voting precinct on the City's website and noted that the Commercial Dispatch published this information the past weekend.

B. Building Inspection Department – February 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Building Inspection Department for February 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

C. Columbus Fire and Rescue Department – February 2025 Monthly Report

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

D. J. M. Trotter Convention Center – Cemeteries February 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the J. M. Trotter Convention Center – Cemeteries February 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

E. Community Outreach – February 2025 Monthly Report

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

F. Human Resources Department – February 2025 Monthly Report

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

G. Garage – February 2025 Monthly Report

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

H. Code Enforcement – February 2025 Monthly Report

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

I. Columbus Police Department – February 2025 Monthly Report

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

J. Public Works Department – February 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Public Works Department for February 2025 was presented. No action was taken

K. Municipal Court – February 2025 Monthly Report

.The Monthly Report from the Municipal Court Department for February 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

L. Columbus Recreation Department – February 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Columbus Recreation Department for February 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

M. Information Technology Department – February 2025 Monthly Report

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

N. Finance – January 2025 Monthly Report

Jim Brigham, CFO, distributed the Monthly Financial Report for February 2025 that includes the General Fund cash balance of \$11,679,006.96, which is an increase of \$833,867.41 compared to the same time last year. The Sales Tax Receipts for February are \$839,659.00, which is an increase of \$9,833.00 compared to the same time last year. The balance in the Major

Projects (ARPA) is \$3,243,193.88, City-wide Park Improvement project has a balance of \$2,040,341.07, Modernization Use Tax has a balance of \$3,987,900.28, the Pedestrian Bridge Repair fund has a balance of \$57,555.34 and the Amphitheater balance is \$1,000,000.00. No action was taken

Jammie Garrett, COO, announced participants on the Citizens Input Agenda and asked that they be mindful of the time to make their presentation.

VII. CITIZENS INPUT AGENDA:

A. GEORGE LOWE – Community Development Survey / Art Initiative

George Lowe and Stephen Harrison came before the Mayor and Council, thanked them for the opportunity to discuss the Community Development Survey and the Art Initiative. The Community Development Survey is an initiative that was designed to give residents a voice and to provide meaningful input on the direction of our city, as well as to ensure that the leadership has real community driven data to inform future decisions. The objective is to have raw data for citizens. The surveys were launched January 29, 2025. The goal is to have 2500 surveys completed by June 5, 2025. The survey will take 30 – 45 minutes to complete. We have used several methods of informing citizens about the surveys and asked the Mayor and City Council for their support. The URL is developcolumbus.us.

Part 2: The second part of the presentation is that we want to update the mural in Sandfield and want to involve the community in the design. We would like to partner again with the Columbus Housing Authority and also utilize the services of Ms. Anastasia Doughty, who has completed several works of art in the downtown area and throughout the Golden Triangle. Initially we wanted to do something of this nature in each Ward. When we finish this project, we would like to go in each Ward and asked Council Members to collaborate with us.

B. JASON SPEARS – Columbus Orthopedic Riverwalk Spring Invitational Soccer Tournament

Jason Spears came forward, distributed flyers, and discussed the 2nd Soccer Tournament to be held in the Roger Short Soccer Complex April 12 – 13, 2025, and projects a larger crowd this year than in the past. I am here to request that you allow food trucks to set up and permit the committee to erect signage and allow the Columbus Recreation Department to set up a large tent for referees. 53 Teams have signed up.

We also request that you allow the Columbus Fire & Rescue Department and the Columbus Police Department to be on site.

C. BRITTANY HARRIS – Stop The Violence

Brittany Harris, along with the Road Manager for Dr. Levy, came before the Mayor and Council with a request to help sponsor “STOP THE VIOLENCE” event that is scheduled for March 29, 2025. Ms. Harris is a Columbus native and is a 2007 graduate from Columbus High School and has been impacted by violence and death of family members. She endeavors to bring Dr. Lawrence Levy of Freedom Word Ministry from Lafayette, Louisiana to Columbus to deliver a life-changing message to our youth. The title of his series is **THE FUNERAL IS CANCELLED**. Dr. Levy’s fee to host this production is \$7,000 - \$10,000. Ms. Harris is seeking financial sponsorship. Council Member Jones made a motion to give up to \$2,000.00 under Social and Community Service Organization, providing they receive the match from other sponsors. Council Member Mickens seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

D. ROBERT J. (Bobby) SANDERSON – Forensic Audit

Mr. Sanderson was not present.

E. VANITA PHINISEY – 6th Annual Battle of the States Tennis Tournament

Ms. Vanita Phinisey came before the Mayor and Council regarding sponsorship for an event “BATTLE OF THE STATES” tennis tournament , an adult tennis tournament featuring juniors able to compete against adults. All states are invited to battle for the right to be crowned champion of the states. The event will be held May 16 – 18, 2025 at Columbus High School Tennis Court, Mississippi University for Women Tennis Courts and Lake Lowndes State Park. Approximately 250 players are expected to participate. Council Member Beard moved to approve the expenditure of \$1,000.0 from 001-004-695 (Advertising City Resources) and find that said amount is a legitimate expense that will advertise and bring into favorable notice the opportunities, possibilities and resources of the City of Columbus. Council Member Greene seconded the motion,

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

F. GLENN LAUTZENHISER – Lowndes County Sports Hall of Fame

Mr. Glenn Lautzenhiser came before the Mayor and City Council on behalf of the Lowndes County Sports Hall of Fame Induction Banquet, which is scheduled to be held April 18, 2025 from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. at the Trotter Convention Center. Ticket price is \$30.00. Inductees are: Stanley R. Black, Homer Erwin “Billy” Brewer, Roosevelt Bridges, Carl H. Butler III, Sam Fletcher, Leslie Frazier, Frank Griffin, Ronnie Richardson, Cary Shepherd and Clarence Weatherspoon, six (6) are living and four (4) are deceased and will have family members present. Keynote speakers will be Clarence Weatherspoon and Leslie Frazier. Mr. Lautzenhiser discussed some of the activities that will occur at this banquet and then requested financial support. Council Member Mickens moved to approve the expenditure of \$1,000.00 from 001-004-695 (Advertising City Resources) and find that said amount is a legitimate expense that will advertise and bring into favorable notice the opportunities, possibilities and resources of the City of Columbus. Councilwoman Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

PRESENTATION:

Council Member Jones presented a plaque to Fredrick and Pauline Rogers, of Jackson, MS, for exhibiting a “Heart of Giving” and unwavering dedication and support to Columbus by bringing a truck load of commodities to citizens in Ward 5 and also thanked local citizen, Ms. Sharon Jones, for her efforts by way of the organization Road To Pride.

VIII. POLICY AGENDA:

A. Discuss/Approve Derelict Property Docket

JONES AND TAMMY ENTERPRISES LLC

c/o Tammy Davis Stevenson

1920 Washington Avenue

CASE NUMBER: 25-0043 Property Maintenance Code Violation

The General Counsel called cause number **25-0043**. The Code Enforcement Officer, Sasha James, reported that this property has changed ownership and requested a **45-day** extension to remediate the property. Ms. Tammy Davis

came forward and requested an enlargement of time to remediate three (3) parcels. 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 Jones 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. Councilwoman Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

JONES AND TAMMY ENTERPRISES LLC

c/o Tammy Davis Stevenson

1919 Washington Avenue

CASE NUMBER: 25-0044

Dilapidated Structure

The General Counsel called cause number **25-0044**. 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 uncleanness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code. Council Member Jones 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. Councilwoman Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0

DAMIEN D. HILL / CHAVON N. HILL

1815 3rd Avenue South

CASE NUMBER: 25-0045

Property Maintenance Code Violation

MINUTES OF THE
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
MARCH 18, 2025

The General Counsel called cause number **24-0045**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Sasha James stated the property was in such a state of uncleanliness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code and asked the Mayor and Council to adjudicate the property as such and that an Order be entered to such effect, requested **immediate abatement** and that an Order be issued for the property. Council Member Beard made a motion in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, and for an Order 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 removing 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.

**JENNIFER MONTGOMERY PREWITT
& JAMES ROBERT MONTGOMERY
410 17th Street South**

CASE NUMBER: 25-0047

Property Maintenance Code Violation

The General Counsel called cause number **24-0047**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Sasha James stated the property was in such a state of uncleanliness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code and asked the Mayor and Council to adjudicate the property as such and that an Order be entered to such effect, requested **immediate abatement** and that an Order be issued for the property. Council Member Beard made a motion in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, and for an Order 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 removing 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.

**WILLIE J. WILLIAMS
512 10th Street North**

CASE NUMBER: 25-0049

Accumulation of Rubbish & Garbage

MINUTES OF THE
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
MARCH 18, 2025

The General Counsel called cause number **24-0049**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Sasha James stated the property was in such a state of uncleanliness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code and asked the Mayor and Council to adjudicate the property as such and that an Order be entered to such effect, requested **immediate abatement** and that an Order be issued for the property. Council Member Beard made a motion in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, and for an Order 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 removing 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.

JACYNDA GRIFFIN

817 17th Street

CASE NUMBER: 25-0051

Property Maintenance Code Violation

The General Counsel called cause number **24-0051**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Sasha James stated the property was in such a state of uncleanliness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code and asked the Mayor and Council to adjudicate the property as such and that an Order be entered to such effect, requested **immediate abatement** and that an Order be issued for the property. Council Member Beard made a motion in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, and for an Order 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 removing 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.

TOMMY PATTMON

507 27TH Street North

CASE NUMBER: 25-0052

Accumulation of Rubbish & Garbage

MINUTES OF THE
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
MARCH 18, 2025

The General Counsel called cause number **25-00452**. The Code Enforcement Officer, Sasha James, reported that this property has changed ownership and requested a **30-day extension** to remediate the property. Mr. Tommy Pattmon came forward, agreed that his property needed to be cleaned and requested an enlargement of time 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 **30-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.

DAISY S. MURRAY

1901 Bell Avenue

CASE NUMBER: 25-0054

Accumulation of Rubbish & Garbage

The General Counsel called cause number **25-0054**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Sasha James stated the property has been **remediated** by the owner, and it is her recommendation to enter the proposed Order under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, finding that this property was in such a state of uncleanness as to be a menace to the public health and safety of the community. This Order should provide for such re-entry as the Statute allows. Councilwoman Stewart made a motion in accordance with Section 21-19-11, and for an Order stating the City may remediate the property with respect to cutting grass and weeds and removing rubbish, personal property and other debris no more than twelve (12) times in a twenty-four (24) month period immediately following the Order, with further notice to the owner as required by law. Costs are to be assessed as allowed under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code. Council Member Greene seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

EARNEST J. DAVIS III

5th Avenue South

CASE NUMBER: 25-0058

Accumulation of Rubbish & Garbage

The General Counsel called cause number **24-0058**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Sasha James stated the property was in such a state of uncleanliness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code and asked the Mayor and Council to adjudicate the property as such and that an Order be entered to such effect, requested **immediate abatement** and that an Order be issued for the property. Council Member Beard made a motion in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, and for an Order 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 removing 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.

CARL BANKHEAD / BRENDA BANKHEAD

15 Pandora Drive

CASE NUMBER: 25-0059

Accumulation of Rubbish & Garbage

The General Counsel called cause number **24-0059**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Sasha James stated the property was in such a state of uncleanliness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code and asked the Mayor and Council to adjudicate the property as such and that an Order be entered to such effect, requested **immediate abatement** and that an Order be issued for the property. Council Member Beard made a motion in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, and for an Order 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 removing 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.

EDDIE WILL SHELTON JR.

2423 6th Avenue North

CASE NUMBER: 0060

Property Maintenance Code Violation

MINUTES OF THE
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
MARCH 18, 2025

The General Counsel called cause number **24-0060**. No one appeared. Code Enforcement Officer Sasha James stated the property was in such a state of uncleanliness as to be a menace to the public under Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code and asked the Mayor and Council to adjudicate the property as such and that an Order be entered to such effect, requested **immediate abatement** and that an Order be issued for the property. Council Member Beard made a motion in accordance with Section 21-19-11 of the Mississippi Code, and for an Order 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 removing 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.

TIMOTHY BROWN

111 Maple Street

CASE NUMBER: 25-0057

Burned Structure

Property Maintenance Code Violation

The General Counsel called cause number **25-0057**. Mr. Brown appeared and requested additional time to remediate the property. The Code Enforcement Officer, Sasha James, reported that this property is dilapidated and an eye-sore to the neighborhood and recommend 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. Council Member Greene discussed this case number with the Building Official, who reported that he does not think the property can be remediated. Council Member Greene made a motion to give the property owner a **45-day extension** to remediate the property and at the conclusion of this extension, the City will demolish 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. Councilwoman Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

Council Member Beard requested to hear a case that was discussed the previous meeting.

JOHNNY MCGREGORY
2103 Strawberry Street
CASE NUMBER: 25-0029

Property Code Violation

The General Counsel called cause number **25-0029**. The Code Enforcement Officer, Sasha James, stated that the property owner requested a **30-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. Council Member Beard made a motion to give the property owner a **30-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.

B. Discuss/Approve request to fill one (1) vacant Boom Truck Operator position, pending successful completion of all preliminary testing

Council Member Beard made a motion to approve the request to hire **Derrick L. Lucious** to fill the vacant Boom Truck Operator position at \$17.00 hourly, 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 6/0.

C. Discuss/Approve applying for the FY2026 MDOT Multimodal grant for the construction of an open Hangar

Zach Foster, dba Neel-Schaffer, Inc. came before the Mayor and Council and requested approval to apply for the FY2026 MDOT Multimodal grant for the construction of an open Hangar. The total project cost is \$711,223.00

and Multimodal will pay 50% of this total (\$355,611.50). The airport has \$183,000.00 BIL funds available, which is used, will leave a balance of \$172,611.50, requiring the City of Columbus and Lowndes County to pay \$86,305.75. Lowndes County has approved and the grant application is due on March 28, 2025. Construction will not begin until January or February 2026 and should be budgeted in FY2-26 budget. Council Member Greene made a motion to approve the request to submit this grant application. Council Member Mickens seconded the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

D. Discuss/Approve applying for the T-Mobile Hometown Grant for access steps, and ADA exploration station and information brochures for the Propst Park Fossil Park in the amount of \$50,000 with no match.

Council Member Beard made a motion to approve the request to apply for the T-Mobile Hometown Grant for access steps, and ADA exploration station and information brochures for the Propst Park Fossil Park in the amount of \$50,000 with no match. Councilwoman Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

E. Discuss/Approve applying for the MS Office of Homeland Security Grant for a metal detector and fencing for the Municipal Complex, with no match.

Ms. Susan Wilder remarked that this grant will be submitted through the Columbus Police Department. Council Member Beard made a motion to approve the request to apply for the MS Office of Homeland Security Grant for a metal detector and fencing for the Municipal Complex, with no match. The grant application is due March 31, 2025.

F. Discuss/Approve applying for the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant to purchase generators with a twenty-five (25) percent match in the estimated amount of \$62,500.00.

Chief Hughes came forth and remarked that this grant will replace five (5) old generators and will be paid out of the Fire Rebate Fund. Council Member Beard made a motion to approve the request to apply for the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant to purchase generators with a twenty-five (25) percent match in the estimated amount of \$62,500.00. Councilwoman Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

Council Member Mickens requested the Grant Writer/Administrator to research to determine if there are grants to construct a large storm shelter.

G. Discuss/Approve request to fill vacant Truck Driver position in the Public Works Department, pending successful completion of all preliminary testing.

Council Member Beard made a motion to hire **JEFFREY GORE, JR.** to fill vacant truck driver position in the Public Works Department at \$17.00 per hour, pending successful completion of all preliminary testing. Councilwoman DiCicco seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

H. Discuss/Approve Awarding Farmers' Market Renovations to the lowest responsive bidder (quote) in the amount of \$12,550.00.

Council Member Mickens made a motion to approve the request to award the Renovation Contract for the Farmers' Market Renovation, to include Plumbing and Structural repairs) to Cook Development LLC in the amount of \$12,500.00. Councilwoman Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

I. Discuss/Approve Amendments to the Employee Personnel Handbook.

Human Resources Director Pat Mitchell presented the proposed amendments to the Employee Personnel Handbook for approval. The amendments include the following policies below:

PAGE 8: PAGES 44-46:	Revision Date of the Affirmative Action Program Revisions to the Family Medical Leave policy This change only allows an employee that is off from work due to a serious medical illness or injury twelve (12) weeks of Family Medical Leave according to the Federal policy and one (1) extension of up to an additional twelve (12) weeks.
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MINUTES OF THE
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
MARCH 18, 2025

- PAGES 48-49:** **Revision of the Donated Leave Policy**, which limits the amount of time an employee can receive Donated Leave from other employees, since the FML leave is limited.
- PAGES 50-51:** **Revision of the Light Duty policy** upon return to work from an extensive illness, EXCEPT in the case of a serious on-the-job injury. In the case where a current employee is current on Light Duty and may require an enlargement of time, a request will be presented to the Council at that time.

These amendments will be effective immediately and will be distributed to the employees by Thursday, March 20, 2025.

Council Member Mickens made a motion to approve the above-listed amendments to the Employee Personnel Handbook. Council Member Greene seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

J. Discuss/Approve Resolution to approve the 2025 COLA Payment as outlined in Mississippi Code Annotated in 21-29-247 9 (3) and (5).

Council Member Beard made a motion to approve the Resolution to approve the 2025 COLA Payment as outlined in Mississippi Code Annotated in 21-29-247 9 (3) and (5). Council Member Greene seconded the motion. The foregoing Resolution was read, considered and voted upon section by section and as a whole, the vote of each and all of the sections, and upon the Resolution as an entirety, was taken by “yea” and “nay” vote with the following results:

Council Member Ethel Taylor Stewart	voted:	<u>YEA</u>
Council Member Joseph Mickens, Sr.	voted:	<u>YEA</u>
Council Member Russell Greene	voted:	<u>YEA</u>
Council Member Pierre Beard, Sr.	voted:	<u>YEA</u>
Council Member Stephen Jones	voted:	<u>YEA</u>
Council Member Jacqueline DiCicco	voted:	<u>YEA</u>

The motion having received the affirmative vote of all Council Members present, the Mayor declared the motion carried and the Resolution adopted.

ADOPTED, APPROVE AND PASSED this the 18th day of MARCH 2025.

THE RESOLUTION FOLLOWS:

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI
REQUESTING THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT
SYSTEM OF MISSISSIPPI TO MAKE PAYMENT
OF THE 2025 COLA**

WHEREAS, the City of Columbus is required to fund the necessary payment for the City of Columbus Police and Fire Disability and Relief Fund and the 2025 payment will become due at the end of 2025, as outlined in Mississippi Code Annotated §21-29-247 9 (3) and (5), and the funds are available to make such payments.

IT IS THEREFORE, Resolved and Ordered that the City of Columbus does hereby adopt the Resolution request that the 2025 COLA payment be timely made.

THE ABOVE RESOLUTION, having been first reduced to writing, was introduced by Council Member BEARD, who moved for its adoption. It was seconded by Council Member GREENE.

The foregoing Resolution was read, considered and voted upon section by section and as a whole, the vote of each and all of the sections, and upon the Resolution as an entirety, was taken by "yea" and "nay" vote with the following results:

Council Member Ethel Taylor Stewart	voted: <u>YEA</u>
Council Member Joseph Mickens, Sr.	voted: <u>YEA</u>
Council Member Russell Greene	voted: <u>YEA</u>
Council Member Pierre Beard, Sr.	voted: <u>YEA</u>
Council Member Stephen Jones	voted: <u>YEA</u>
Council Member Jacqueline DiCicco	voted: <u>YEA</u>

The motion having received the affirmative vote of all Council Members present, the Mayor declared the motion carried and the Resolution adopted.

ADOPTED, APPROVED AND PASSED this the 18th day of March, 2025.



Keith Gaskin, Mayor

ATTEST:



James "Jim" Brigham, CFO/Secretary-Treasurer



K. Discuss/Approve Reimbursable Election Workers' pay for the April 1, 2025 Primary Election, to be made payable by April 2, 2025.

Council Member Beard made a motion to approve the Reimbursable Election Workers' pay for the April 1, 2025 Primary Election, to be made payable by April 2, 2025. Councilwoman Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

L. Discuss/Approve Resolution for Adopting the District 4 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Council Member Beard made a motion to approve the Resolution for Adopting the District 4 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Council Member Greene seconded the motion. The foregoing Resolution was read, considered and voted upon section by section and as a whole, the vote of each and all of the sections, and upon the Resolution as an entirety, was taken by "yea" and "nay" vote with the following results:

Council Member Ethel Taylor Stewart	voted:	<u>YEA</u>
Council Member Joseph Mickens, Sr.	voted:	<u>YEA</u>
Council Member Russell Greene	voted:	<u>YEA</u>
Council Member Pierre Beard, Sr.	voted:	<u>YEA</u>
Council Member Stephen Jones	voted:	<u>YEA</u>
Council Member Jacqueline DiCicco	voted:	<u>YEA</u>

The motion having received the affirmative vote of all Council Members present, the Mayor declared the motion carried and the Resolution adopted.

ADOPTED, APPROVE AND PASSED this the 18th day of MARCH 2025.

THE RESOLUTION FOLLOWS:

**RESOLUTION FOR ADOPTING THE DISTRICT 4 REGIONAL HAZARD
MITIGATION PLAN**

WHEREAS, various natural hazards have the potential for causing devastating harm and loss of life and property to the citizens of the City/Town of Columbus, MS and will continue to do so; and

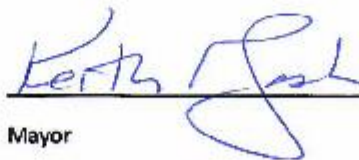
WHEREAS, the implementation of hazard mitigation policies and strategies can protect the citizens, and significantly reduce the loss of life and property from natural hazards; and

WHEREAS, a concerted effort should be made to address hazard mitigation in our respective policies and programs; and

WHEREAS, hazard mitigation goals and objectives can be effectively developed through participation in the development of a regional mitigation plan,

NOW THEREFORE, We, the Mayor, Board of Alderman of the City/Town of Columbus, MS do hereby resolve to adopt the District 4 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, We have subscribed our signature this, the 18th day of March, 2025



Mayor

M. Discuss/approve municipal Judge's request to fill in on a full-time basis until a new a Judge is hired.

The remaining Judge for the Municipal Court has requested to hold court in the dates the retiring judge would have been present until the end of July 2025 at the full-time rate. Council Member Beard made a motion to this effect. Councilwoman Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

CFO Jim Brigham announced that the Auditors will be in City Hall beginning tomorrow (3/19/2025), working on the 2022 audit.

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