

MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL CITY OF COLUMBUS, MS October 21, 2025

The Mayor and City Council met in Regular Session on Tuesday, October 21, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. in the Court Chambers of the Municipal Complex. Mayor Stephen Jones presided over the meeting and all Council Members were present. Also present were the General Counsel, the COO participated via ZOOM, CFO, the Police Chief, HR Director, and all other Department Heads.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Mayor Stephen Jones called the meeting to order and called upon Council Member Roderick Smith to Offer the Invocation.

II. CONFIRMATION OF/OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

COO Jammie Garrett requested to add Donel Briggs, Saving the Youth (STY) to Citizens Input Agenda.

Council Member Harris made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Council Member Smith seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion

The motion carried 6/0.

III. APPROVE MINUTES FOR THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

A. Approve Minutes for the Special Meeting of October 1, 2025

B. Approve Minutes for Meeting of October 7, 2025.

Council Member Stewart made a motion to approve the Minutes for the Special Meeting of October 1, 2025, and the Regular Meeting of October 7, 2025. Council Member Harris seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

IV. APPROVE DOCKET OF CLAIMS

Council Member Spears made a motion to approve the Docket of Claims for October 21, 2025, in the amount of \$750,642.24, excluding Voucher Number 235011 (Vendor 4447, Amazon) and Voucher Number 235371 (Vendor 7230, Turner Excavating and Erosion). Council Member Greene seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

Council Member Spears pointed out that Voucher Number 235011 was coded as supplies for Animal Control for the purchase of twelve (12) chairs and should have been coded as capitalized assets (001-010-725-000) and tagged for inventory. Council Member Spears made a motion to approve payment of Voucher Number 235011 pending correction is made to the budget code. Council Member Harris seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

Regarding Voucher Number is 235371 (Vendor 7230, Turner Excavating and Erosion), Councilmember Spears noted that a payment of \$18,810.00 was paid on the Docket of 9/30/3035 and today's request to pay \$10,345.50, is 69.7% of the total bid amount and asked if the contractor had completed that percentage of the work on the job. COO Jammie Garrett remarked that the project was 80% complete. Council Member Spears moved to approve payment of Voucher Number 235371 in the amount of \$10,345.50. Council Member Smith seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve request for Fire and Rescue personnel, Captain George Thompson, to be reimbursed \$600.00 for successfully completing a continuing education course according to the guidelines in the policy.
- B. Approve request for Fire and Rescue personnel, Victoria Culpepper, Dalton Cook, and Christiaan Thomas to attend *"NFPA 1002 – Fire Apparatus Driver*

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Operator” class to be held in Jackson, MS, and approve payment of registration, lodging, use of city vehicle for travel, and reimbursement of meal expenses, in the estimated total cost of \$2,100.00.

- C. Accept letter of resignation from Forensic Lab Technician, Chloe Shaffer, effective October 2, 2025.
- D. Approve permit request for Forensic Lab Director, Claudette Gilman, to attend “Basic Bloodstain Pattern Analysis, to be held in Aberdeen, MS and approve payment of registration and meals in the total estimated cost of \$894.00.
- E. Approve permit request submitted by Mildred Brooks, on behalf of St. Paul Episcopal School, to host a “Boo Parade” to be held on October 31, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. *See attached map.*
- F. Approve permit request submitted by Shanaya Roberts to host a “Fall Carnival” to be held on November 1, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. at 810 Fir Street, blocking Fir Street at Redwood Street and Catalpa Street.
- G. Approve permit request submitted by LaNise Frison to host the “Burns Bottom Reunion” to be held on September 26, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., blocking 3rd Street North at 5th Avenue North and 7th Avenue North.
- H. Ratify permit submitted by Betty Morgan to host a “Party” held on October 10, 2025, from 3:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. at 308 – 21st Street North.
- I. Approve permit request submitted by Francena Williams and Debra Pannell, on behalf of Trinity Health Care Center, to host a “Color for Cures Health Walk” to be held on November 7, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., blocking South McCrary Road at Airline Road and North Court.
- J. Ratify approval of request for CPD personnel to attend “Crises Intervention Training and approve use of City vehicle for travel.
- K. Accept letter of retirement from CPD personnel, effective October 1, 2025, approve compensation of unused accrued vacation leave up to 240 hours and approve the purchase of service weapon according State Statute.
- L. Approve request to accept the proposal for City employees’ Self-Service addition to Smart Fusion Financial software.
- M. Approve request to accept proposal to migrate the on-premises Time Clock Plus system to its cloud-based version.

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- N. Approve request accept proposal of the addition of Recreation Department management software to the CivicPlus suite.
- O. Approve request to accept proposal to migrate the on-premise SmartFusion system to its cloud-based version.
- P. Approve the rehire of Rhonda Hayes Ellis as temporary Judge Pro Tem.
- Q. Accept a grant from the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security in the amount of \$8,000.00 for a new portable metal detector for the Municipal complex and authorize the Mayor to sign and execute the Grant Agreement.

Council Member Smith made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as prepared. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion. Mayor Jones called for discussion, and there being none, all Council Members voted in favor of same, with a unanimous vote.

VI. REPORTS, PROCLAMATIONS, RECOGNITIONS AGENDA:

A. Comments from Mayor and Council

- Council Member Harris complimented the Director and Assistant Director of the Trotter Convention Center, Rogena Bonner and Bernice Turner, for publicizing an upcoming event at the Convention Center scheduled to be held on October 25, 2025, and ensuring that measures have been taken to boost security.
- Mayor Jones announced CPD's National Night Out event and the Victims' Advocate recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness event that will take place immediately following this meeting. CPD will also be praying for Canaan Baptist Church.

B. Special Recognition

Mayor Jones made a request for Fire Chief Duane Hughes and Human Resources Director Pat Mitchell to come forward. Mayor Jones recognized Chief Hughes for 30 years of dedicated service to the City of Columbus Fire and Rescue Department and presented him with a Plaque and a gift. Mayor Jones then recognized Human Resources Director Pat Mitchell for 40 years of dedicated service to the City and presented her with a plaque

and roses. Both employees thanked the Mayor and Council for the opportunity to serve.

C. Finance Committee Update

Council Member Spears reported that the Finance Committee met on October 15, 2025, and covered various topics that the committee is working on collectively with the governing body to get rectified. The first items we discussed were the FY2023 and FY2024 Audits. Mr. Spears reported that the Committee discussed the status of the FY23 Audit. The CFO stated that he's finishing up on a couple of things now that FY22 Audit is completed so that the Auditing firm can begin working on FY23's audit. Once FY23 Audit is complete then, we can progress to the FY24 Audit. One must be finished prior to beginning the next year. The CFO also believes that we may be complete with both years by summer of 2026. Mr. Spears also reported on the following:

- **Fixed Assets Accountability System**
Discussed how to strengthen our policies and accountability. Department Heads will play a role in ensuring accountability for their departments and report to CFO and/or his designee
- Discussed steps to remedy findings reported in the FY22 Audit. There will be repeat findings discovered in the FY23 & FY24 Audits, but hopefully we will continue to orchestrate better systems and policies in regulating how the City manages its financial obligations
- Discussed the Claims Docket processes to prevent holding up approval of payment of items.
- Discussed the Budget Amendment process. CFO Jim Brigham elaborated on the Budget Amendment process, stating that the State of Mississippi understands that the budget may not be perfect when adopted, but is a plan. If the Council wants to approve an expense that is not in the budget, the CFO will go back and present the purchase as a Budget Amendment and then look to determine what line item the payment will be made from. The request is then presented to the Council for approval and documented in the minutes.
- Council Member Spears remarked that it took a lot of effort to put the budget together and hopes that it does not require amending.

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- Discussed large city projects and creating funding aspects and instituting checks and balances.
- It good meeting and he looks forward to continuing the dialogue.

DEPARTMENT HEADS' MONTHLY REOIRTS:

D. Building Inspection & Code Enforcement – September Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Building Inspection & Code Enforcement Department for September 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

E. Planning & Community Development Department – September 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Building Inspection & Code Enforcement Department for September 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

F. Columbus Fire and Rescue Department - September 2025 Monthly Report

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

G. Garage – September 2025 Monthly Report

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

H. Human Resources Department – September 2025 Monthly Report

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

I. Police Department – September 2025 Monthly Report

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

J. Facilities – September 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Facilities Department for September 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

K. Public Works Department – September 2025 Monthly Report

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

L. Forensic Lab Department – September 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Forensic Lab Department for September 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

M. Information Technology Department – September 2025 Monthly Report

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

N. Recreation Department – September 2025 Monthly Report

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

O. Finance Department – September 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report from the Finance Department for September 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

Mayor Jones asked Members of the Council if they had questions for the Department Heads.

Council Member Spears had a question for Nathan Katona about his Code Enforcement Structure report. Nathan Katona answered by stating that the Code Enforcement Office will go through the Municipal Court ticketing system if citizens or businesses fail to cut their grass, but stated there will be times when Section 21-19-11 is used. Mr. Katona stated he hoped this would save the City valuable resources and bring about a more expedited cleanup of property.

Facilities Report

Report states that the Facilities Building now needs a roof. Mayor Jones stated that the need for a roof was discovered after the renovations began. Council Member Spears asked that projects be inspected before the work begins to ensure that the quotes cover all needed work. Nathan Katona remarked that he is preparing a Strategic Plan.

P. BOARD VACANCIES

Jammie Garrett, COO, announced vacancies on various boards.

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

1 Vacancy, Jarvis Fenster's **1-Year** Term Expires 11/19/2025.
Appointment will be made November 18, 2025.

APPLICANTS:

None at this time

COLUMBUS-LOWNDES LIBRARY BOARD

1 Vacancy, Sameca Gaines' **5-Year** Term Expired 10/16/2025.
Appointment will be made October 21, 2025.

APPLICANTS:

None at this time

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

1 Vacancy, Chuck Bigelow's and MacArthur Inge's **3-Year** Terms Expired 10/04/2025.

Mr. Bigelow's appointment can be made tonight and MacArthur Inge's appointment may be made on November 4, 2025.

APPLICANT:

Chuck Bigelow

Council Member Stewart moved to reappoint Chuck Bigelow to the City Planning Commission for a 3-Year Term, until October 4, 2028. Council Member Harris seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

VII. CITIZENS INPUT AGENDA

A. Donel Briggs – Saving the Youth (STY)

Mr. Donel Briggs came before the Mayor and City Council and requested financial sponsorship for Saving the Youth (STY) scholarships for five (5) young men and shared how the funds would be used. Council Member Spears stated that the City just went through the budget and approved

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several appropriations, thus he moved to table this request. Council Member Harris seconded the motion. During discussion it was stated that funds were budgeted in line item 001-004-703-000, Advertising City Resources.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

VIII. POLICY AGENDA

A. Discuss/Approve Derelict Property Docket

HENDERSON AMOUS SR. / GB

c/o JOHN AMOS

2224 7th Avenue North

CASE NUMBER: 25-0407

Property Maintenance Code Violation

The General Counsel called cause number **25-0407**. No one appeared. Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Director Nathan Katona stated the property was in such a state of uncleanness 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 Harris 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 Smith seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

WILLIE AND DOROTHY M. SANDERS

704 20th Street North

CASE NUMBER: 25-0408

Accumulation of Rubbish and Garbage

The General Counsel called cause number **25-0408**. No one appeared, but the property owner requested a **10-day** extension after which he intends to pursue the issuance of a municipal offense ticket returnable to Municipal Court. 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 Harris made a motion to give the property owner a **10-day extension** to

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remediate the property. Nathan Katona 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 Jefferson seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0

**DLP PROPERTIES LLC
2604 5TH Avenue North
CASE NUMBER: 25-0411**

Dilapidated/Abandoned Structure

The General Counsel called cause number **25-0411**. No one appeared, but the property owner requested **30 days'** extension to remediate the property. Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Director Nathan Katona stated the property was 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 Harris made a motion to give the property owner a **30-day** extension to take out a demolition permit and demolish the structure 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 Jefferson seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

Mr. Katona told the Mayor and City Council he had decided not to present the \$250 or less derelict property docket.

**B. Discuss/Approve Recommendations from the October 13, 2025,
Planning Commission.**

Case 25-11

**On behalf of TG Ferguson Co., Inc.
509 Cypress Street**

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R-1 Single Family Residential District

Request to allow use of property as a short-term rental

With a vote of 6 to 1, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the above request. The Commission based their decision on there was no public outcry and it aligns with the City's permitted use procedures.

Council Member Smith 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 allow *use of property at 509 Cypress as a short-term rental* be approved. Council Member Smith 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.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

Case 25-12

On behalf of Yeates Family Center

470 Wilkens Wise Road

C-3 Highway Commercial District

Request to allow use of property as an after-school program

The Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the above request. The Commission based their decision on the use being in character with the neighborhood, the building's allowed occupancy, there was no public outcry, and it aligns with the City's permitted use procedures.

Council Member Spears 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 allow *use of property at 470 Wilkens Wise Road as an after-school program* be approved. Council Member Harris 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.

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All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

AMENDMENT TO THE CHART OF USES

Nathan Katona recommended amended the Chart of Uses as it relates to Computer data storage facility and Data processing and cryptocurrency mining operations. Council Member Smith made a motion to approve the Amendment to the Chart of Uses. Council Member Spears second the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

Council Member Greene asked Nathan Katona to state the requirements for anyone that wanted to open an Airbnb. Mr. Katona discussed the requirements and stated that a permit is REQUIRED and the owner will owe 7% tax and 2% hotel/motel tax once the City's resolution is submitted to the State giving the state notice of the City's intention to levy the tax.

C. Discuss/Approve request from Captain George Ryan Thompson to take on-line college course under the City's Continuing Education Reimbursement Policy.

Council Member Harris made a motion to approve the request from Captain George Ryan Thompson to take an on-line college course under the City's Continuing Education Reimbursement Policy in the amount of \$600.00 and not to exceed \$1800.00 in a fiscal year. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

D. Discuss/Approve Awarding the Legal Services Contract for the Blight Program

Councilman Smith made a motion to award the Legal Services Contract to the Mitchell McNutt law firm for the Blight Program. Councilwoman Harris seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

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The motion carried 6/0.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS WILL BE ADDED IN THE MINUTE BOOK.

E. Discuss/Approve Awarding the Environmental Inspection and Removal Contract for the Blight Program.

Council Member Harris made a motion to Award the Environmental Inspection and Removal Contract for the Blight Program with EAC Environmental. Council Member Spears seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS WILL BE ADDED IN THE MINUTE BOOK.

F. Discuss/Approve W. T. Consultants Service Contract.

Mayor Jones announced that W. T. Consultants Service Contract does not expire until December and will be addressed prior to then. No action was taken.

G. Discuss/Approve the Awarding painting of Columbus-Lowndes County Airport Hangar in the amount of \$5,700.00 to Sammie Clemons dba Jesus Men of Integrity Professional painting who provided the lowest quote.

Council Member Greene made a motion to Award the painting of Columbus-Lowndes County Airport Hangar in the amount of \$5,700.00 to Sammie Clemons dba Jesus Men of Integrity Professional Painting who provided the lowest quote. Council Member Smith seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

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Approved by: _____
Stephen Jones, Mayor

James “Jim” Brigham
CFO/Secretary-Treasurer/Clerk