

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

The Mayor and City Council met in Regular Session on Tuesday, November 18, 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, CFO, 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 Rev. Nathan Phillips, Associate Pastor of Columbus First Methodist Church, to Offer the Invocation.

II. CONFIRMATION OF/OR AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Council Member Stewart made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. Council Member Harris 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 29, 2025

B. Approve Minutes for Meeting of November 4, 2025.

Council Member Stewart made a motion to approve the Minutes for the Special Meeting of October 29, 2025 and the Regular Meeting of November 4, 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

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Council Member Spears made a motion to approve the Docket of Claims for November 18, 2025 in the amount of \$1,554,910.75, excluding Voucher Number 235924 (Vendor 6589, W. T. Consultants). Council Member Harris seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

Council Member Spears made a motion to table the request to pay Voucher Number 235924 for W. T. Consultants, in the amount of \$6,000 and to table consideration of that invoice until the November 26 Work Session. Council Member Harris seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve request for Grant Writer/Administrator Susan Wilder to travel to Main Street America conference in Tulsa, OK, April 12 – 15, 2026 as part of the Science Discovery on Main Street Implementation Grant at no cost to the City.
- B. Accept letter of resignation from Fire and Rescue Firefighter, Tavonta Macon, effective November 17, 2025, and approve compensation of unused vacation leave.
- C. Approve request for Forensic Chemist Trainee, Joyanna Davis, to attend the “Expert Witness Testimony: Advanced Skills for Forensic Science Professionals” webinar and approve registration expense of \$179.00.
- D. Approve permit request submitted by Colin Krieger to host a “Block Party” to be held on November 22, 2025, from 5:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m. at 527 Military Road, blocking the 900 block of 6th Avenue North.
- E. Approve permit request submitted by Frances Glenn, on behalf of Columbus-Lowndes Convention & Visitors Bureau, to host “Catfish in the Alley” to be held on April 11, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., blocking streets on Friday, April 10, 2025 from 12:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 11, 2025. *See attached map.*

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- F. Accept letter of resignation from two (2) CPD personnel, Eric Lewis, effective November 6, 2025 and Mack Smith, effective November 12, 2025, and approve compensation of unused vacation leave.
- G. Approve permit request submitted by James Allen, on behalf of Annunciation Catholic Church, to host "Columbus Sings Messiah" to be held on December 9, 2025, from 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. at Annunciation Catholic Church, 802 College Street, blocking 8th Street South next to the church.
- H. Approve Facility Usage Permit submitted by Sharon Johnson, on behalf of Columbus-Lowndes Convention & Visitors Bureau to host the Catfish in the Alley Festival on April 10, 2026 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- I. Approve Facility Usage Permit submitted by Sharon Johnson, on behalf of Columbus-Lowndes Convention & Visitors Bureau to host the 2nd Annual Memorial Day Tradition Taste and Tune, to be held May 22, 2026 from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.
- J. Approve Facility Usage Permit submitted by Eric Thomas on behalf of the Eric Thomas Open Heart Foundation to host the E. T. Heart Walk / Health Fair on February 28, 2026 from 12:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Council Member Smith made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as prepared. Council Member Harris 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, Announcements and Observations from Mayor and Council

- Council Member Harris announced that she and Council Member Jefferson will be traveling to Oxford, MS on November 21, 2025 for a Continuing Education Workshop.
- Mayor Jones thanked the community for coming together to collect canned goods and non-perishable items for those in need during this One City One Purpose initiative. We will continue to collect items through Thursday, November 20, 2025. Items will be distributed Monday, November 24, 2025 in the lower level of the Trotter Convention Center.

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- The Farmers' Market Holiday Market will be Saturday, November 22, 2025 from 8:00 a.m. – noon.
- City Offices, with the exception of Emergency Personnel, will be closed Thursday and Friday, November 27 & 28, 2025 for Thanksgiving.
- The lighting of the Christmas Tree will be Sunday, November 30 on the lawn of Tennessee Williams' Welcome Center.
- The Christmas Parade is Monday, December 1, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

B. Special Recognition

Mayor Jones recognized Mariah Beckom, Miss Black Rodeo USA and presented a Proclamation to her detailing some of her achievements.

C. Status Update on the FY23 Audit

Council Member Spears asked CFO Jim Brigham about the status of FY23 Audit. CFO Brigham stated that everything has been pulled for auditors' review and he's scheduled to meet with the auditor on November 19, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.

D. Discussion of each department's Organizational Chart

Council Member Spears requested the Organizational Chart for each department.

E. W. T. Consultants Termination / Mayor's Veto / Resignation

Council Member Spears discussed that recent actions taken by Council Member to terminate W. T. Consultants' Contract were in order. Council Member Spears continued by clearing up some allegations.

Council Member Spears moved to overturn the Mayor's Veto to terminate the contract. The motion failed for lack of a second.

DEPARTMENT HEADS' MONTHLY REPORTS:

F. Columbus Recreation Department - October 2025 Monthly Report

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

G. Forensic Lab – October 2025 Monthly Report

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

H. Columbus Fire & Rescue Department – October 2025 Monthly Report

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

I. Human Resources Department – October 2025 Monthly Report

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

J. Facilities – October 2025 Monthly Report

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

K. Garage Department – October 2025 Monthly Report

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

L. Planning & Community Development Department – October 2025 Monthly Report

The Monthly Report for the Planning & Community Development Department for October 2025 was presented. No action was taken.

M. Public Works Department – October 2025 Monthly Report

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

N. Municipal Court Department – October 2025 Monthly Report

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

O. Building Inspection Department – October 2025 Monthly Report

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

P. Columbus Police Department – October 2025 Monthly Report

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

Chief Daughtry presented a comparative Statistical Report for 2024 and 2025.

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Comparative Analytics - Columbus PD

Joseph Daugherty

Powered by ADSi

2025 Executive Summary

Violent Crime

Category	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Homicide	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Robbery	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	2	0	2	0	0	9
Sex Offense	0	1	2	3	1	2	1	1	4	2	0	0	17
Kidnapping	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	2	2	3	1	5	2	3	4	4	0	0	26

Battery & Domestic Crime

Category	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Assault And Battery-Domestic	42	36	36	45	51	35	41	58	40	43	0	1	428
Total	42	36	36	45	51	35	41	58	40	43	0	1	428

Property Crime

Select Year ...

Configuration

Executive
Summary

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Burglary And Trespass	35	24	16	19	19	17	17	18	21	22	0	0	208
Theft	22	21	20	25	30	22	34	31	34	25	0	0	264
Illegal Possession-Stolen	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	5
Arson	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	58	45	37	45	51	39	51	49	55	49	0	0	479

11/18/2025 11:00 AM

Executive
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2024 Executive Summary

Violent Crime

Category	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Homicide	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4
Robbery	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	7
Sex Offense	2	2	0	2	6	5	4	1	4	0	2	1	29
Kidnapping	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	2	2	0	5	7	7	5	3	6	0	2	2	41

Battery & Domestic Crime

Category	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Assault And Battery-Domestic	45	44	70	62	50	55	61	67	54	49	45	48	650
Total	45	44	70	62	50	55	61	67	54	49	45	48	650

Property Crime

Select Year ...

CONFIDENTIAL

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Burglary And Trespass	23	15	23	32	27	33	44	23	44	26	12	21	323
Theft	38	50	57	46	40	29	44	42	30	57	32	25	490
Illegal Possession-Stolen	1	5	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	14
Arson	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
Total	62	70	81	79	69	62	89	66	75	86	44	47	830

Continuation

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Q. Information Technology Department – October 2025 Monthly Report

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

R. Finance – October 2025 Monthly Report

Jim Brigham, CFO, distributed the Monthly Financial Report for October 2025 that includes the General Fund cash balance of \$7,304,518.21, which is a decrease of \$2,212,627.98 compared to the same time last year. Sales Taxes for October were \$991,486.00, which is an increase of \$21,518.00 compared to the same time last year. No action was taken

S. BOARD VACANCIES

Jammie Garrett, COO, announced vacancies on various boards.

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

1 Vacancy, Jarvis Fenster's **3-Year** Term Expires 11/19/2025.
Appointment will be made November 18, 2025.

APPLICANT:

Jarvis Fenster

Council Member Harris made a motion to reappoint Jarvis Fenster to the City Planning Commission for a 3-Year Term, until November 18, 2028. Council Member Jefferson seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

COLUMBUS-LOWNDES LIBRARY BOARD

1 Vacancy, Sameca Gaines' **5-Year** Term Expired 10/16/2025.
Appointment will be made November 18, 2025.

APPLICANT:

Libby Robertson

Council Member Stewart made a motion to appoint Libby Robertson to the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library Board for a 5-Year Term, until October 16, 2030. Council Member Spears seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

VII. CITIZENS INPUT AGENDA
VIII. POLICY AGENDA

A. Discuss/Approve hiring of one (1) Entry-Level Firefighter, pending successful completion of a pre-employment physical exam and drug screen.

Council Member Greene made a motion to approve the hire of Richard H. McBride as an Entry-Level Firefighter, pending successful completion of a pre-employment physical exam and drug screen. Council Member Smith seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

B. Discuss/Approve request to hire one (1) Entry-Level Police Officer, contingent on successful completion of a pre-employment medical exam and drug screen.

Council Member Greene made a motion to approve the hire of Darius Glover as an Entry-Level Police Officer, pending successful completion of a pre-employment physical exam and drug screen. Council Member Stewart seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

C. Discuss/Approve engaging James O. Turner for before and after analysis of appraisal reports at \$2,500.00 each, expert testimony at \$250.00 per hour, and travel and expenses for Easement/Eminent Domain cases.

General Counsel Turnage reported that at the previous work session, he announced that there were seven (7) pending cases; however, after some productive discussion, he believes the number of eminent domain cases and therefore the cost will decrease significantly. Council Member Stewart made a motion to approve engaging James O. Turner and BBG firm to perform

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appraisal services to ascertain an expert opinion as to the value of the land taken and the damage to the remainder of the property left after the taking at \$2,500.00 for each parcel in question, and thereafter to offer expert testimony at \$250.00 per hour, and travel and expenses for ARPA Easement/Eminent Domain cases. Council Member Smith seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

D. Discuss/Approve Blight Program Advisory Committee

George Irby requested approval of the Blight Program Advisory Committee that are comprised of individual from various backgrounds. Council Member Smith made a motion to approve the Blight Program Advisory Committee. Council Member Spears seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

THE LIST FOLLOWS:

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MAYOR
STEPHEN JONES

CITY COUNCIL
ETHEL TAYLOR STEWART, WARD 1
RODERICK D. SMITH, WARD 2
RUSSELL GREENE, WARD 3
LAVONNE LATHAM HARRIS, WARD 4
GREGORY JEFFERSON, WARD 5
JASON SPEARS, WARD 6

CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER
JAMMIE GARRETT

CITY OF COLUMBUS

POST OFFICE BOX 1408
COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI 39703
(662) 328-7021 Phone
(662) 329-5173 Fax

CFO/SECRETARY-TREASURER
JAMES "JIM" BRIGHAM

POLICE CHIEF
JOSEPH M. DAUGHTRY, SR.

FIRE CHIEF
DUANE HUGHES

HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR
PATRICIA S. MITCHELL

**INTERIM DIRECTOR OF PLANNING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
GEORGE IRBY

November 11, 2025

Mayor & City Council
City of Columbus
523 Main Street
Columbus, MS 39701

Re: Blight Program Advisory Committee

Dear Mayor Jones and Council Members,

I am writing to request the formation of an Advisory Committee for the City's Blight Program. The purpose of this committee would be to provide strategic guidance, professional insight, and community perspective as the City continues its efforts to address blighted properties and promote neighborhood revitalization.

The proposed Advisory Committee would be comprised of eight members with demonstrated experience in real estate, finance, mortgages, housing, and property management. These individuals would serve in an advisory capacity to assist with identifying priorities, evaluating program outcomes, and recommending policies that strengthen the City's approach to blight reduction and redevelopment.

Establishing this committee will help ensure that decisions related to the Blight Program are informed by a diverse range of expertise and grounded in best practices from the housing and development sectors. The following are the individuals we would like you to consider.

- Jacquise Frison
- George Irby
- James A. Kerby
- Colin Krieger
- Janice Matthews
- Jeff Turnage

Thank you for considering this request and for your continued commitment to improving the quality of life in our community. I would be happy to provide additional information or recommendations for potential committee members at your convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

George Irby
Interim Director of Planning &
Community Development
City of Columbus

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E. Discuss/Approve Purchase of five (5) properties for the Blight Program

Council Member Smith made a motion to approve the purchase of five (5) properties for the Blight Program. Council Member Jefferson seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

THE LIST OF PROPERTIES FOLLOW:

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MAYOR
STEPHEN JONES

CITY COUNCIL
ETHEL STEWART, WARD 1
RODERIC K SMITH, WARD 2
RUSSELL GREENE, WARD 3
LAVONNE HARRIS, WARD 4
GARY JEFFERSON, WARD 5
JASON SPEARS, WARD 6

CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER
JAMMIE GARRETT

CITY OF COLUMBUS

POST OFFICE BOX 1408
COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI 39703
(662) 328-7021 Phone
(662) 329-5173 Fax

CFO/SECRETARY-TREASURER
JAMES "JIM" BRIGHAM

POLICE CHIEF
JOSEPH DAUGHTRY, SR.

FIRE CHIEF
DUANE HUGHES

HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR
PATRICIA S. MITCHELL

**INTERIM DIRECTOR OF PLANNING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
GEORGE IRBY

November 17, 2025

Mayor Stephen Jones
and Members of the City Council
City of Columbus
P. O. Box 1408
Columbus, MS 39703-1408

RE: FY 2023 COMMUNITY PROJECT FUNDING GRANT
Columbus Blight Program
B-23-CP-MS-0917

Dear Mayor and Council:

I am requesting approval to purchase five (5) properties for the above-referenced program. Please find attached Property Links for the properties.

Owner Name	Property Address	Purchase Price
Glendon Bontrager	915 16 th Street North	\$10,000.00
Chimere Irons	1113 5 th Street South	\$15,000.00
Ora Shanklin	715 Railroad Street	\$3,020.00
Jesse Brown, Jr. & William T. Brown	1714 7 th Avenue North	\$10,000.00
Fenton, Tommy	1610 8 th Avenue North	\$9,990.00

Sincerely

George H. Irby
Interim Planner

Attachments

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F. Discuss/Approve request to hire one (1) Municipal Court Judge, contingent on successful completion of preliminary testing.

Council Member Stewart made a motion to approve the request to hire Chynnee Bailey, Esq. as Municipal Court Judge 1 at the annual income of \$26,291.95. Council Member Smith seconded the motion.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

G. Discuss/Approve the Amendment to the FMLA Policy in the Employee Personnel Rules Handbook.

Human Resources Director Pat Mitchell requested to update the Family Medical Leave certification form to match the DOL's form and amend the FML policy in areas that conflict with the new forms. Council Member Greene made a motion to approve the Amendment to the Family Medical Leave Policy and forms and distribute them to departments for employees upon request of leave. Council Member Jefferson seconded the motion. The Council engaged in discussion of extenuating circumstances if additional leave is needed. The HR Director responded that the employee must make a request to the Council for consideration.

All Council Members voted in favor of the motion.

The motion carried 6/0.

H. Discuss/Reconsider Allocating Internet Sales Tax funds from Municipal Building Roof Repairs to paving projects.

Council Member Spears requested to reconsider allocating Infrastructure Modernization Act funds for repair of the Municipal Building Roof Repairs and to allocate those funds to paving projects. The Council engaged in a discussion of the request and dire need to replace leaking roofs in the Municipal Complex and the Strip Mall to prevent further damage to floors and equipment. No action was taken.

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