

City of Columbus
Special City Council Meeting
Alternative Meeting Format
MN Statute, Section 13D.021

02.03.2022

The 02.03.2022 meeting of the City of Columbus City Council was called to order at 3:09 p.m. by Mayor Jesse Preiner at the Columbus Community Center. Present were Council members Robert Busch (via teleconference), Janet Hegland, Shelly Logren (via teleconference) and Sue Wagamon (via teleconference); and City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko.

1. **CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING**
 1. **Call to Order – Special Meeting – 3:09 p.m.**
 2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
2. **CONSENT AGENDA**
 3. **Motion – Agenda Approval**

Motion by Preiner to approve the agenda. Seconded by Hegland. Roll call vote: Hegland – aye; Wagamon – aye; Busch – aye; Logren – aye; Peiner – aye. Motion carries.

3. **PRESENTATION**
 4. **Public Communications Coordinator Position**

Hegland presented the personnel committee report to the City Council outlining the interview process for the Public Communications Coordinator Position, indicating that two candidates had been interviewed twice – once by City Staff and a second interview with the Committee.

Motion by Hegland to extend an offer of employment to Connor Keith for a full-time position, starting at Step 1 of the pay scale and, should Keith decline the offer, that the City would be able to move forward with an offer of employment under the same terms to Sean Allan. Seconded by Wagamon. Roll call vote: Hegland – aye; Wagamon – aye; Busch – aye; Logren – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

5. **Interim Accounting & Finance Contract**

Hegland presented the personnel committee report to City Council pertaining to the upcoming Accountant vacancy. Because Bill Werner's last day is February 18, the City needs an interim solution. Accounting firm CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA) is currently under contract with the City to provide higher finance accounting, reporting and audit prep, and offers specialized interim solutions to cities when their accounting department is in transition. A well-qualified interim accountant is available to start February 7, allowing her a couple weeks overlap with Werner in anticipation of the annual audit beginning May 2.

On behalf of the Personnel Committee, Hegland requested Council direction to execute a contract amendment with CLA to bring in a consultant at \$120 per hour (totaling approximately \$30,000) from February 7 to May 15. If an accountant is hired that can take over and see the City through the audit, the

contract is eligible to be terminated earlier. \$10,000 had already been budgeted for CLA for audit prep, leaving \$20,000 unbudgeted that can be covered by operating reserves.

Motion by Hegland to direct Staff to execute a contract amendment with CLA for the City accounting services to include audit preparation at the hourly rate of \$120 per hour beginning February 7 and terminating on May 15 or after the new full-time employee is fully trained. Seconded by Logren.

Busch inquired if a discussion had been had with Werner about extending his employment. Mursko confirmed Werner had been asked and that the date was extended past his original resignation date. Busch asked if an exit survey had been conducted with Werner about why he was deciding to leave. Hegland said Werner gave the City his notice, but was willing to stay longer to train the interim person or new employee. Hegland continued to say Mursko and Windingstad did conduct an exit interview. Busch continued, verifying that the CLA contract was an interim measure that could be terminated at any time. Hegland clarified that the contract can be terminated if the City finds a qualified candidate.

Logren indicated that she felt \$30,000 for that amount of time is a lot of money, but that she assumed the Personnel Committee had pursued all other leads before settling on this course. Hegland affirmed that due to the audit, the City needed someone familiar with government accounting and also knows how the audit is done to streamline the process. Hegland continued to detail the competition in the accounting field, sharing how recruiters at major accounting firms are targeting college juniors and that other cities around Columbus are also searching for accountants and have budgeted higher wages.

Roll call vote: Hegland – aye; Wagamon – aye; Busch – aye; Logren – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

4. CITY COUNCIL OPEN FORUM

6. Emmer Meeting Recap

Hegland shared that a group from the City had met with a local staff member for Congressman Tom Emmer to discuss federal funding for Internet infrastructure for the City.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Preiner to adjourn. Seconded by Busch. Roll call vote: Hegland – aye; Wagamon – aye; Busch – aye; Logren – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.

Meeting adjourned at 3:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Connor Keith, Public Communications Coordinator