

**City of Columbus  
Special City Council Meeting  
Alternative Meeting Format  
MN Statute, Section 13D.021  
06.29.2022**

The 06.29.22 meeting of the City of Columbus City Council was called to order at 3:08 p.m. by Mayor Jesse Preiner at the Columbus Community Center. Present were Councilmembers Robert Busch (via teleconference), Janet Hegland, Shelly Logren (via teleconference) and Sue Wagamon (via teleconference); City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko (via teleconference) and Public Works Director Jim Windingstad.

- 1) **CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING CALL TO ORDER – 3:08 p.m.**
- 2) **Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3) **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
  - a) **Northwoods Humane Impound Agreement**

**Motion by Preiner to approve the agenda with the addition of Item 3A: the Northwoods Humane Impound Agreement. Seconded by Hegland. Roll call vote: Hegland – aye; Logren – aye; Wagamon – aye; Busch – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.**

- 4) **CITY OF COLUMBUS – ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT**
  - a) **Discussion & Questions – Accounting Department**
  - b) **CLA Extension of SOW to August 1, 2022**
  - c) **Accountant Position Offer**

On behalf of the Personnel Committee, Mursko updated the Council on the temporary accountant position, sharing that Lissa Grabowski's contract is coming to an end at the end of June. CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA), her former employer, was able to identify another temporary accountant that could assist the City with two days of service per week on Mondays and Tuesdays, billed at \$100 per hour, to fill the gap and train a new Senior Accountant.

Mursko continued, sharing that she, Windingstad and Grabowski were able to discuss the test results from applicant Cheryl Jenkins and decided to invite her in for a second, more technical interview with Grabowski, who determined Jenkins has the skills for the job. The Personnel Committee recommends extending an offer to Jenkins at Step 4 for 40 hours per week at a wage of \$36.86 per hour, as well as accepting a temporary service contract through August 1, 2022, with CLA for two days per week of transition and training at \$100 per hour.

Logren asked what \$36.86 per hour amounted to as a yearly salary. Wagamon said it amounted to approximately \$76,000 per year, but didn't know if that wage included benefits. Mursko confirmed the hourly rate only included wages.

Hegland asked what Step the City's last accountant was earning at his resignation. Mursko said that the previous accountant was not on this same pay scale. Hegland asked what the previous accountant's hourly wage was. Mursko said it was \$30.98 per hour.

Logren requested clarification for how long the CLA temporary accountant would be under contract and what the final bill was estimated to be. Hegland said the temporary service would cost approximately \$6,500.

Preiner asked Mursko when Jenkins was expected to start. Mursko said Jenkins shared she would return from her vacation on July 18, 2022, but that they hadn't determined an official start date.

**Motion by Preiner to proceed forward with an offer to Cheryl Jenkins for the Senior Accountant 40-hour position at Step 4 at \$36.86 per hour. Seconded by Hegland. Roll call vote: Hegland – aye; Logren – aye; Wagamon – aye; Busch – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.**

**Motion by Hegland approve authorizing staff to move forward with a contract for Senior Accounting with CLA for the consultant, Randy Gruber, for an additional bridge through August 1, 2022, and transition training purposes two days per week, Mondays and Tuesdays, at \$100 per hour, not to exceed the value of \$6,500. Seconded by Preiner. Roll call vote: Hegland – aye; Logren – aye; Wagamon – aye; Busch – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.**

#### 5) PLANNING TECHNICIAN UPDATE

Mursko shared that Sara "Ella" Giefer had accepted the role of Planning Technician and is excited to start. Plans are for her to start July 18, 2022.

#### 6) MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBER REPORTS

Hegland provided clarification regarding the animal impound contract with Northwoods Humane Society. The City's animal control contractor, Companion Animal Control, had helped to draft the contract before it was submitted to City Attorney Bill Griffith.

**Motion by Hegland to approve the animal impound services agreement with Northwoods Humane Society effective July 1 as presented in the contract. Seconded by Wagamon. Roll call vote: Hegland - aye; Logren – aye; Wagamon – aye; Busch – aye; Preiner – aye. Motion carries.**

Logren shared a complaint she'd received about the Vassar Street road. Windingstad said he'd spoken with Preiner about it, but hadn't heard from the complainant themselves yet. Preiner asked when Logren received the email. Logren said she'd received the email on June 24, 2022. Windingstad said that since that date, Public Works had rolled, applied calcium chloride and other work to that road, but feels that the citizens of that road might want a different type of gravel than they have currently based on an email Public Communications Coordinator Connor Keith had received June 27, 2022. Windingstad directed Keith to reply with a petition for the neighborhood to sign to request the type of gravel used on Vassar Street south of 181<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Logren asked about the differences between the different road gravels and why they might make the request. Windingstad said previous Public Works Directors had put down limestone gravel on less-traveled roads and it has held up pretty well, but he doesn't feel it's as good a material on a more-traveled road. Windingstad has not enacted a material change during his tenure. Mursko provided further background information, sharing that subdivisions that did not want to pave the roads but wanted to use a more-expensive material than Grade 5 gravel elected to use the limestone. It was after these arrangements that the City discovered limestones durability under light and heavy traffic, with the heavily traveled roads developing potholes and being difficult to grade. Hegland asked what the residents are trying to fix by changing materials. Windingstad says that

changing the type of gravel won't solve the problems. Logren feels a new policy needs to be written to determine whether Class 5 gravel or limestone is laid based on the configuration or length of the road or the amount of traffic which would stipulate that making a change in materials against the policy would be assessed against property owners' taxes. Hegland said a similar situation had arisen recently and the City denied the request, and agreed with Logren that a policy should be officially drafted. Logren voiced that direction from Windingstad should be followed in these sorts of situations, and if residents insisted on one type of material over another, than they should be charged for the installation and maintenance of the unadvised roads. Hegland felt this sort of adjustment is similar to the petition from 170<sup>th</sup> Avenue and should also be discussed with the City Attorney to ensure the City's ability to assess the properties before offering that option. Preiner recommended Logren tell the complainant that she'd forwarded her concerns to Public Works.

Logren continued, sharing another person had filed a complaint about the property on West Iverson under abatement that she didn't know if the City was taking any action. Mursko advised Logren to indicate to this complainant that the City is making progress, but it has been hampered by the pandemic and the court system, and that Assistant to the City Administrator Jessica Hughes is working on modifying the abatement ordinance to broaden the City's power to handle properties that have gotten to the state this one has. Mursko also reminded the Council that they have been considering hiring a code enforcement officer to help the City stay ahead of these problems before they get out of hand. Hughes also has the list of dates where the City has taken action on this property.

In regards to the road complaint Logren had brought forth, Wagamon asked Windingstad if he had a schedule for gravel roads being re-graveled. Windingstad said when he started, he had a \$120,000 gravel budget, but this year it was \$50,000. In the past, the gravel budget had gotten as low as \$20,000. When the budget was at its highest, he used to have a schedule for high traffic roads (every three years), while others got redone every 5-7 years, but now with a lower budget and higher costs for gravel, every road was assessed every year for need of maintenance. He felt the current setup has worked pretty well.

## 7) **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Meeting adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Respectively submitted:

Connor Keith, Public Communications Coordinator