

CITY OF COLUMBUS
CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
January 07, 2008

ATTENDANCE

The City Council of Columbus, Kansas, met January 07, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall. Mayor Harley McDaniel presided. Council members present: Dana Allison, Jerri Burton, Steve Dunlap, Doug Hosier, Marie Nepple, John Paradee, Dewey Smith, Gary Smith, Grant Spieth. Members absent: Connie Bennett.

Ervin Dill led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

Mayor Harley McDaniel called for additions or correction to the minutes of the December 17, 2007 council meeting. Burton moved to accept the minutes of the December 17, 2007 council meeting. Dunlap seconded the motion. Voting aye: Allison, Burton, Dunlap, Hosier, Nepple, Paradee, Smith Dewey, Smith Gary, Spieth. Voting nay: None. Motion carried: 9-0.

APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE #07-167

Smith Gary moved to approve Appropriation Ordinance # 07-167. Paradee seconded the motion. Voting aye: Allison, Burton, Dunlap, Hosier, Nepple, Paradee, Smith Dewey, Smith Gary, Spieth. Voting nay: None. Motion carried: 9-0.

APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE #08-168

Smith Gary moved to approve Appropriation Ordinance # 08-168. Burton seconded the motion. Voting aye: Allison, Burton, Dunlap, Hosier, Nepple, Paradee, Smith Dewey, Smith Gary, Spieth. Voting nay: None. Motion carried: 9-0.

VISITORS – April Lemon, Julie Voelker, Scott Roberts, Charlotte Payne

April Lemon – First Impressions- Scope & Sequence- Thank you for allowing us to be here tonight. First I would again like to introduce who we are, what town we are from and where we work. My name is April Lemon and I am from Pittsburg and I work at The Medical Clinic, Scott Roberts work at PSU in the University Development at Pittsburg, Julie Voelker is from the Commerce Bank in Independence and Charlotte Payne is from Fredonia and she is a retired RN. South East Leadership Academy brings a bunch of people together from the different areas of South East Kansas and we work to better our leadership skills to get to know each other, to network and it's been a very fun experience. Part of that is First Impressions and that is why we are here tonight. First Impressions is a community betterment program and that was implemented as a project at the South East Leadership Academy. Huck Boyd National Institute is the one that founded the First Impressions program. Actually it was founded in Wisconsin and Kansas brought it to the area in 1992. There have been about 50 Kansas communities that have used this program so far with populations as small as 612 up to about 22,000. How it works is we come into town one day and people are not expecting us, we go out and eat, we visit the Chamber, different office and different businesses. We actually enter from all areas so we can look at the signage, the buildings and the economic development. We take notes on what we see that day, we take pictures than we compile it all into a report and present it to you. So what the program is not: It is not a statistical measurement. It is subjective. It is subjective on our views of what we saw that day, not technical as peoples opinions vary. It is not to be used in isolation. This is just our first impressions of Columbus. You should use other means of interpreting things when you

look at bettering your community. Sometimes it is not entirely fair. We may have talked to someone who has had a bad day and they were grumpy with us. Taking all together it gives us a snapshot view of the community. So that is what we are here today to share with you is that first impressions of the day when we visited Columbus. Now Julie will come up and give the general information.

Julie Voelker – General Information - Just to give you a little bit of an idea of what we are going to cover, we're going to talk about general information, about the town and what we saw, some of the amenities that we did see while we were here, to just give you an overall summary of our impression and then we have some thanks that we owe people too. To start out with, the signage; one thing I have to say is when you come to Columbus Kansas there's no doubt where you are at. There is a sign everywhere you turn. You have some great new signs, they are attractive and very informative and they are at several different locations as you come into town. There are also some older signs. There might be an old sign that says Welcome to Columbus and right next to it is a new sign. There were great directions to the downtown area and the business district. It was obvious as to where we were at. There was an entrance sign showing where the Industrial district was. There were some older signs such as a hospital sign, I don't know who is in charge of that, whether it is a state or city issue, but surely they have some new ones. Those signs were getting worn. The other sign we noticed was the Columbus Titans sign. Your High School and the school in general have done some great things here. I think one of the projects for one of the classes would be to come and repaint this sign. It shows there is a lot of pride in the community but it is looking worn. I think that is something you might want to suggest to somebody. Some of the newer signs are great but they were set off the road a little and were a little hard to read until you got right up on them. They were great as far as information letting us know you are a fiber optic community. That is something to say for a town this size. The other thing I would say is your web site, absolutely excellent. I have not seen another small town that has a web site that is as good as what Columbus Kansas has. The town map that is on the web site is easy to read. It shows where the major items were so we didn't have to find where the parks or schools were located. Great information that is not normally found on a web site for example student teacher ratios. If I'm moving to town that is something that is very important to me and to have that right there where I could see was wonderful. It talked about housing availability. The other thing I got to do while I was here was go to the Chamber office and I told a little white lie. I pretended like I was moving to town and I tell you Jean was a wealth of information. She started talking about Columbus and started me everything I wanted to know. She had great things to say about the medical community here and talked about the different businesses. I asked her where was a good place to eat and she listed off several places. I can even tell you where her son buys his jeans. The City staff was very helpful, they probably wondered who we were when we first walked through the door but they were very gracious and offered a lot of information. You have a lot of information in your City office. One suggestion I would have for the Chamber is they put together a relocation packet, because when I started to ask about relocating there was information pulled out of several different areas, she gave me a great packet of information but it would have been so much easier for her if she had been able to just pick up something that had already been made up. One suggestion I have that I have seen used in other communities to help pay for that, relocation packets and brochures are not cheap and they are not free, but I have seen other communities actually sell advertising. They just do little business cards. They charge the businesses a nominal fee to have it in the relocation packet and it's great for the businesses and it's also good for the people moving into town because it immediately tells you some places you can go in the community. Again everyone was very friendly and helpful, even the employees at McDonalds. They knew exactly where City Hall was. I'm not sure if you stop at McDonalds in Independence if they could even tell you where City Hall was.

Scott Roberts – Amenities - I will begin to list some of the amenities that we found. The downtown area we thought was very attractive. It had a beautiful square which we thought was very nice for this size community. Also the gazebo on the south east corner we thought was a gorgeous area, beautiful to look at and as well the fountain and watch tower. All items we thought were very attractive and spoke very highly of this community. We also thought on the downtown area the businesses were very well taken care of and we were please to see that. The sidewalks, the streets and everything that we saw in that regard looked good. We also noticed the corners around the square were handicap accessible which a lot of people do not notice right off the bat but one of our members pointed that out and we thought that was kind of nice to have that. A lot of squares are not handicap accessible. The day we were there, there was a lot of wind, so one of the suggestion we have is that the merchants keep the leaves away from the doors. We went to the main City park and the fairgrounds and we were really impressed by that as well. They looked clean and they were well taken care of. The civic support almost screams at you when you walk in there. You see all these signs from the American Legion and all the civic organizations that really seem to have a vested interest in that area and probably use that area quite a bit. We thought it was nice to see that kind of support. We thought there might be a need for a nice large sign at the main park. The other parks we went though also looked clean however they were beginning to show a little wear. It looked to us like the economic development was being addressed. There was defiantly an area designated for an industrial park however, when we followed the industrial park sign down there we did see there was a building and some housing being constructed also. So we were a little confused when we pulled in and weren't sure if we were in the right place. We also notice in areas where you have nice houses and then next to it one that is run down but that is typical of a lot of communities. We then went through the residential area. We weren't sure if there were any clean up ordinances being utilized because it seemed like some of the homes we went passed it looked like a lot of trash out front and some appliances stacked outside. We didn't know if there were codes that helped enforce that or to help people know there was a city wide cleanup. We thought the location of the schools were good. They were all on the maps we had. We thought that was very easy to find all of them. They were very attractive. On some of the schools we had to drive around a little bit before we realized which school it was, so we thought the signage could have been a little better. All in all the schools looked great and were well taken care of. We thought it was nice the Junior College had a site here. The emergency services were great. We thought it great that there was a hospital and community health care here. We noted that they were affiliated with St. John's. The chamber spoke very highly of that. We were really impressed by the fire and law enforcement buildings. They were extremely well taken care of and that speaks well of the community. As far as transportation in the community we noticed there were some public transportation vehicles that again showing that the community was civic minded. At this time I am going to pass it along to Charlotte.

Charlotte Payne – Summary - Thanks - For one thing in summary, the part that I will be doing, we just want to tell all of you really doing it right. You have a wonderful community and it was our pleasure to come here and be a part of it for just a short time. One of the things we did notice throughout the day we were here were your businesses. We did use your web site to find out about your schools, your populations of your schools and the type of income you are getting. I don't know how often you update that information. You have a community that has supported itself and you have good businesses that are doing well in providing employment. That in its self will improve any community. So that was a good sign of progress. Your web site as Julie and Scott mentioned is wonderful. There was a wealth of information on it and it was very colorful. One of the first things we noticed on it before we even came here is that you are very proud of you Columbus Day Events. We noticed you have a balloon regatta. Do you still have that? Yes. I know we have some people who would love to do that so we will probably have some people from our Chamber calling someone here to find out how you put that on. That is something that

would really be interesting for other communities to do. Events like that are what brings communities together, it integrates them and it also gets people from the outside to come in and see your community. It was wonderful to see how proud you are of your City. The one thing we did notice while we were here though was all those things on the web site were being reinforced. We saw your Columbus ships located on your lamp posts. We thought that was a wonderful part of you city. It gave it such a charm. We saw the city flags and state flags so that shows a definite sign of pride. Just remember when we are going through here we have an outline that we have to use and are instructed to find these different things. When we find these things then we are pointing them out to you because these are the positive things that are suppose to be in a community and you guys are doing it right because we could hardly find anything you weren't doing. Some of the recommendations that we might have is if you have ordinances where you do annual or bi annual clean up days, to where your landfill can be free for that day, to get people to put their stuff out that day. You may already being doing that and we just came at a time when it wasn't being done. Some of the flags were getting worn and I know from our community how expensive it is to replace flags so you wait until they are worn out but flags are important as they bring color, they bring pride to a community so getting those replaces is important. One of the other things we would probably recommend is there were a few businesses, not necessarily downtown but on the outskirts of the city, that there were no businesses in them at that time, basically had a little bit of trash around them some of the windows just had paper taped up in them and you want that property to look like I want you here, I want a business here so take down the old paper. Clean up windows, clean up the trash around the area and say this is good property and we are ready for business, come buy me. One of the things we also noticed is that you have apartments around here and it seemed you had good leasing and renting income for that. That is unusual for a community of this size. So that is great you can offer that. So basically in summary we just want to change certain focus of what we saw and what our perception was. We want to change it from some of the things we saw like newspapers on windows and we want to change it to where you can point out the different things in your community that are highlights like your towers and your museums. Your restaurants were fabulous and people were so friendly and we never had to ask for extra tea we were always getting out glass refilled. The civic pride you have in all of your events was very obvious. We just had a wonderful day here. We want to thank so many people, but especially we want to thank the Mayor Harley, we want to thank Janice because she has been the one communicating with us so very much and especially Jean Pritchett because she was so wonderful and so friendly because we would like to thank your community as they made us feel so welcome. This time we would like to take some questions if you have some.

Mayor Harley McDaniel asked if there were any questions.

Councilmember Nepple asked the group; what are some of the cities that have used this First Image. Just a couple off the top of your head would be fine. We are in the process of doing Fort Scott is going through it right now, we have done Chanute; the next stop would be around Bonner Springs and then out to the other side of Western Kansas. We actually have a leader from their group that comes and gives us a whole one day seminar and they show us what to look for in a community. I feel like this is a bad time to come with these suggestions when you have just gone through the devastation of the ice storm but we feel you guys are so wonderful you have so much pride in your community and you will get through this. This is something that Charlotte and I both can attest to being in towns that were impacted greatly by the flood this past summer. What you will see are those communities that want to fight back and what it will end up doing will bring your community together. You will have wonderful volunteers come into the town to help you but once they leave its sparks self motivation. The other thing we encourage you is to build on the disaster you just had and the volunteers to spark that motivation.

Councilmember Spieth asked how they select the cities to do this. Actually you selected for First Impressions to come. You can go on the Huck Boyd National Institute web site there's

guidelines and stuff. The city actually pays for First Impressions to come to town. We weren't any part of that. We are only part of the South East Leadership Academy and they said this is part of you and we want you to do this as part of your program. One of the things we forgot to mention was your city offices and the fact you have so many people that are participating in your city council. When we saw how many were involved we thought WOW. I came from a community of about 2500 and we are lucky if we get three, 2 city commissioners and a mayor. Mayor McDaniel asked for any more questions then asked Dave Martin if he had anything to say. He said he had no questions but did let them know the city was trying to clean up the town. Mayor McDaniel then asked Jim Dahmen if he had anything to say; the only thing I have to say is that after the council has an opportunity to digest the report I would encourage the council to develop a plan of action and to address some of the concerns what these kind folks have shown you. Often times we live in the forest and we don't see the trees. I have noticed that over my 20 plus years living in the community I have saw a lot of things that are wrong from years ago it all goes back over the years where city councils and chamber committees have addressed those issues. But I don't see them anymore. Maybe I've been here to long and living in the forest too long. I think these folks have done us a favor by helping us pointing out some of the trees. Maybe the ice didn't affect them but time has. I would think maybe the council would look at developing an external committee possibly. You shouldn't have to shoulder this responsibility yourself. Maybe you should approach the Chamber or some other organizations in town and say "help us develop a plan and these are the types of problems that have been identified." I appreciate their time they spent here visiting with us. No other questions or comments were presented and Mayor McDaniel thanked the group for coming.

City Administrator Evan Capron report:

1. During December the penalties were waived due to the weather on the billing. December 9th the ice was here and December 10th bill was due. On December 11th penalty would have started. We were open all the time during that period but customers could not make it in to pay. We need a vote on this as it will come up in the audit.

WAIVE PENALTIES IN DECEMBER

Burton moved to waive penalties on the November water usage, payable in December, due to the recent ice storm. Allison seconded the motion. Voting aye: Allusion, Burton, Dunlap, Hosier, Nepple, Paradee, Smith Dewey, Smith Gary. Voting nay: Spieth. Motion carried: 8-1.

2. Jacob Weber and Tim McDonald with the Kansas forestry will be in town on January 17, 2008 surveying the tree damage and holding a public meeting at the Columbus Community Building at 1:00 PM on January 17, 2008. Everyone is welcome. I have contacted Baxter Springs and invited them.
3. The bridge on Highway 69 South of Crossland Construction will be removed on January 9, 2008 as part of the 9 mile road construction.
4. KDOT has extended the contract let date from February to April 16, 2008 for the ½ mile construction in Columbus City limits. Reason for extension is easements we do not have completed yet.
5. On Friday, January 4, the Mayor, City Superintendent and I met with FEMA and the Army Corp of Engineers to report our expenses and debris clean up efforts so that they could include Columbus in their estimates. Debris loads: As of today County 199 loads, 14 cubic yards, City 150 loads at 10.5 cubic yards for a total so far of 4,361 Cubic Yards. We have estimated the Cubic Yards of debris to be around 30,000. FEMA has given us pointers and instructed us on record keeping procedures and documents that we must have in place. Two of those documents are on your desk, one is the mayoral declaration

of curfew for the city during the ice storm and the other is “right of entry/hold harmless” for the authorized KDHE burn site. FEMA reps toured the Cities, Cherokee County and 37 other Counties in Kansas. After they pull their numbers together for the State it gets passed to the Federal level. If a Federal declaration is made there would be assistance for the municipalities (city and county governments).

We are still asking residents to put their household garbage out front for pickup. We have had calls from people saying that their alley is clear. The alley has to be clear for the trash truck with two people riding it to go through without endangering the people on the truck. Furthermore it is not efficient to run some alleys and not others as some are putting the trash out in front and some in the alley. We will continue to communicate in the newspapers, Cable TV channel 7, and in the monthly bills from the City.

6. AmeriCorp from St. Louis is in town cleaning up debris for the elderly and disabled. These are people who have come to City Hall and requested assistance with debris clean up. They are required to sign a waiver and we fax it to the headquarters in St. Louis. The group of 6 people from AmeriCorp arrived in Columbus around 2:30 pm on Monday and plan to work through Saturday. We will be housing them at the community building during this week. They have requested other volunteer groups to join them in this organized effort. Saturday would also be an excellent volunteer day as most people will not be working then.
7. I need a 10 minute executive session for personnel matters of non-elected personnel.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Burton moved to go into executive session for 10 minutes from 7:07 pm to 7:17 pm on personnel matters of non-elected personnel with Council, Mayor, City Administrator, City Attorney, City Superintendent and City Clerk in attendance. Nepple seconded the motion. Voting aye: Allison, Burton, Dunlap, Hosier, Nepple, Paradee, Smith Dewey, Smith Gary, Spieth. Voting nay: None. Motion carried: 9-0.

REGULAR SESSION 7:17 PM

AMEND RECORD ON RESIGNATION

Nepple moved to amend record on resignation of Adam Ellison to read “in good standing”. Smith Gary seconded the motion. Voting aye: Burton, Nepple, Paradee, Smith Dewey, Smith Gary. Voting nay: Allison, Dunlap, Hosier, Spieth. Motion carried 5-4.

City Superintendent Jim Burton report:

1. Hopefully tomorrow if the County helps us we will be out in East Town and will head this way. I had them transporting out of the pile located at the Dog Pound, that way if anyone is wanting to haul there over the weekend it gives us more room.
2. During this ice storm we did have a real bad sewer problem. We had to bring a private contractor in. We don't know what the price of that bill is going to be. It kept giving in on us as our shore boxes weren't even big enough. I did approach Crossland's about helping us but all of their equipment was in Arkansas and was told it would be more beneficial financially to the City to get someone from around here.
3. Right now we have a problem down at the water plant. When our pumps kick off for clear well being full they will not come back on. We have to start them manually. We had an electrician out today and he was lost. I have Newby out of Oswego coming in the morning. Bone Creek started pumping to us this afternoon but they had problems of their own. We shouldn't have any problems. Eric will go down tonight to check and see our clear well and everything as we have about 28 feet in our towers and at the park it carries about 32 and it keeps going up.

4. Like Evan talked earlier we have people complaining we are not running our trash truck down the alleys. One may be cleaned but two or three others are not. East Town is terrible with hangers in the alley. People are piling brush in the alley and the truck cannot get through. We've got to decide if we want to clear brush in alleys or streets. We have one person stationed out at the burn site to keep stuff pushed up and another one loading our trucks. If we have a water leak or something we have to pull them off that job. I have 2 backhoes down and 1 truck down. We are very limited on what we can do with our small amount of equipment. I don't know how long the County is going to be here. Since we have had partial days they have been coming about 2 or 3 days a week. City Administrator said they have been here 5 days and they have been a tremendous help. They have put us a long way down the road in the clean up effort.

Councilmember Spieth asked if we had an actual schedule as to where we will be doing cleanup so we can let the community know. City Superintendent said we would probably know by tomorrow after we know when the County will be with us. FEMA said you would probably go through at least 2 times. Right now we are just getting stuff that hit the ground. We will probably be going through fall cleanup. There are quite a few people hauling their stuff down to the dog pound. I was busy all day Saturday and Sunday keeping it pushed up. Spieth wanted to know if we are thinking about contracting anybody else to come in and help or are we going to do this over a 6 month period. Are we going to be reimbursed for any expenses? City Administrator said we will know in about 2 weeks. When the State makes their decision it then goes to the Federal for them to make their decision. Mayor said the most we can get is 85%. Spieth said if a contractor comes in with the right equipment they will be able to haul off more than the City can. We want to keep that in the back of our minds. Mayor said we are going to have to hire a contractor to do the hangers (limbs in trees). FEMA requires those hangers over the right of way have to be down before they pay anything. Its going to be a long process no matter what we do noted Councilmember Dunlap. City Superintendent said there is a lot of red tape with FEMA in hiring a contractor.

Fire Chief Don Kirk asked the City Administrator about volunteers helping and was told that AmeriCorp is here and they could contact them. They will be doing all clean up as people have to sign a waiver with them. It was asked about volunteers down at the park if they would have to sign a wavier and the City Attorney said it would probably be just like when we had the school volunteering down there and the did not have to sign a waiver. They would probably not be using city equipment. City Superintendent said city crew would probably cutting up what needed to be cut up and people could just haul that off.

EMPLOYEE HIRE/MECHANIC – ROY DAVIS

Nepple moved to hire Roy Davis as Mechanic Range 13 Step A at \$13.49 providing he passes all pre screening requirements. Paradee seconded the motion. Voting aye: Allison, Burton, Dunlap, Hosier, Nepple, Paradee, Smith Dewey, Smith Gary, Spieth. Voting nay: None. Motion carried: 9-0.

ADA

City Attorney Barbara Wright informed the council that we had received a response from SKIL's attorney regarding mediation. He has agreed to use our local mediator John Mazurek, who is an attorney in Pittsburg, when we objected to the use of an unknown unnamed mediator of his choosing out of Wichita. In his December 28th letter to me he said he had visited with Mr. Mazurek on the phone and told him he would agree that Mr. Mazurek could do the mediation and it would probably be better in Pittsburg. He gave us some possibly dates when he is available. The dates he has provided is January 22, 28 or 30th, February 2, 6 or 8th. He did not

clear those dates with Mr. Mazurek but has left it up to us to pin point a final date and time. Evan and I thought between us the 6th of February would be the best.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE DONATION

Spieth moved to donate \$1,000 the Columbus Chamber of Commerce and is to be paid out of the Tourism Fund. Nepple seconded the motion. Voting aye: Allison, Burton, Dunlap, Hosier, Nepple, Paradee, Smith Dewey, Smith Gary, Spieth. Voting nay: None. Motion carried: 9-0.

City Attorney report:

1. The rescheduling of the hearing on the condemnation on G&W and McDonalds properties is still up in the air. The court had a date available for the 24th of January but one of our appraisers is not able to attend. I've left a message with the court reporter to get back with me and I am hoping we can do this the 25th. I will be getting that clarified tomorrow.

2.

Mayor McDaniel said he thought the least we could do was to send a letter to the County Commissioners thanking them for the help they have given us so far. They have worked hard and have been very cooperative. Everyone thought it would be a good gesture on our part. There have been a lot of groups in here helping us. The Baptist group and the Shultz's with the First Christian Church. They have done a wonderful job. I want to commend City Administrator Evan Capron and City Superintendent Jim Burton for having quite a bit of the figures ready for when we met with FEMA at the Court House on Friday. It's a long process and I didn't know there was so much red tape involved.

Meetings:

Personnel

Monday January 14, 2008 @ 6:30 pm

Police & License

Monday January 14, 2008 @ 7:00 pm

Fire

Monday January 14, 2008 @ 7:15 pm

ADJOURNMENT

Smith Dewey moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 pm. Burton seconded the motion. Voting aye: Allison, Burton Dunlap, Hosier, Nepple, Paradee, Smith Dewey, Smith Gary, Spieth. Voting nay: None. Motion carried: 9-0.

Janice Blancett, City Clerk