



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes

City Council

Monday, December 8, 2025
9:00 AM

Council Retreat

Molly Thomas Bowden
Neighborhood Policing
Center
Community Room
1204 International Dr.
Columbia, MO

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Buffaloe called the meeting to order at approximately 9:03 a.m.

Present: 7 - Buffaloe, Foster, Waterman, Peters, Carroll, Sample, and Elwood

II. AGENDA TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED

Setting the Stage
Council-Manager Form of Government
Governing Together
Follow Up
Generative Conversations
Calendaring Upcoming Items
Closing Thoughts

Setting the Stage
The retreat began with Mayor Buffaloe welcoming her colleagues and highlighting the importance of united governance. She then introduced the facilitator, who reviewed the agenda and meeting norms. Next, members of the City Council and staff introduced themselves by sharing their expectations for the day and reflections on previous retreats. Common themes included learning from one another and strengthening communication.

Council Manager Form of Government
The facilitator provided a review of the council-manager form of government.

Governing Together
The group addressed several questions about governing together as a body. These included: What does good governance look like to you? What values are important in governing? What is important to remember when your position is the prevailing decision and when it is not? How do you distinguish between policy (Council) and administration (manager and staff)? What kind of relationship do you have with your Council colleagues, and with the City Manager and staff? What do you want this governing body to be known for?

Follow Up
The group discussed and revised their norms for communication. These were originally established in 2023 and then revised in 2024. The norm related to requests for Council reports was clarified. Staff also encouraged the use of the Council Inquiry email system to ensure better tracking and accountability.

The group addressed how to best utilize the current Council Questions system. The group agreed to begin regularly scheduled off-week Council work sessions on the second Monday of each month on an as needed basis. Information on how to request a special meeting was clarified, as well as information on media requests, adding items to the agenda, and support from staff for emergent issues.

Generative Conversations

Members of Council discussed the best strategies for working together with key partners. They expressed their desire for the City to take a more proactive role in shaping the narrative around safety in Columbia. Many members agreed that the City has an opportunity to highlight many of the important public safety initiatives that have been underway or planned, even prior to September. Ideas included greater centralization of communications, highlighting City efforts toward the beginning of Council meetings, greater enforcement of City Code, and proactively convening additional gatherings of stakeholders. Overall, the group agreed on the importance of the City having a proactive public safety narrative.

Calendaring Upcoming Items

The group reviewed a number of upcoming items for Council's awareness. As most department heads were not present, Council requested that staff provide a more comprehensive preview of upcoming agenda items in an upcoming Current Events.

Closing Thoughts

As the check-in came to a close, participants were asked to share takeaways from their time together.

III. OTHER ITEMS COUNCIL MAY WISH TO DISCUSS

None.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:11 p.m.