



# City of Columbia, Missouri

## Meeting Minutes

### City Council

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Monday, February 9, 2026  
6:00 PM

Work Session

City Hall  
Council Chambers  
701 E. Broadway  
Columbia, MO

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#### I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.

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

**This item is open to the public:** Transmission Line Discussion

**Attachments:** [Estimate Summary for Grindstone to Perche Creek](#)  
[161 kV Overhead Transmission Work Session Slide Presentation - Preliminary](#)  
[May 30, 2024 - Improvements and Recommendations for Upgrade](#)

Erin Keys, Utilities Director, introduced other Electric Utility staff in attendance, including Gwen Corches, Assistant Director, Eric Worts, Electric Engineering Supervisor, and Dave Storvick, Electric Engineering Manager. The proposed transmission line would connect Perche Creek Substation to Grindstone Substation. She discussed the benefits of the proposed transmission line, while also noting that the need for this is not going away. There are two options proposed, though others have been considered but offer less reliability and have significantly higher costs. Staff feels rolling black outs or load shedding are not acceptable solutions. She explained what load shedding involved. She noted the costs associated with waiting to address this.

Staff propose the Vawter School Rd.-Grindstone route as the best overall option, noting that there are residents that will be unhappy about this. Erin detailed the impacts to not only City customers, but other area partners.

Eric provided information on the two proposed routes, as well as a cost comparison. He noted that some questions may come up that would be better held for the closed session. Eric noted that the Mill Creek Substation is omitted from the project, but that it may come up in the future. Erin provided some information on bond funding being used for repairs at other substations

Eric referenced the timeline hand out that referenced different options that had been considered since 2007. He covered the cost comparison between the Chapel Hill and Vawter School routes. He noted the distribution does not include Boone Electric overhead circuits. Council member Nick Foster clarified that the cost estimates are more updated than what was previously provided. Eric confirmed. Council member Valerie Carroll asked about how long the cost estimate would be accurate, with Erin noting that they would not be accurate for long due to cost increases. Foster asked about the language on the ballot for the bond sales, Nancy Thompson, City Counselor, noted that the ballot language was generic.

Eric reviewed the history of the project. Erin clarified that Council approved staff to proceed with the project in 2013, but that in 2016 Council requested staff organize another public hearing. Following that, Council paused the project.

Council member Betsy Peters provided some context as she was on the Council at that time. Mayor Buffalo noted that in addition to the history of the project, the lessons learned were also important. Erin shared information on what was done in the past. She noted that all adjacent property owners were notified. She stated that the project would require significant public outreach. Peters highlighted some of the issues that came up last time, including aesthetics, health concerns, etc. Foster clarified that the intention had not been to kill the project with the pause, but to explore other options.

Council member Don Waterman asked about the age of the existing line on Chapel Hill. Erin provided a ballpark estimate of the 1960s or 1970s.

Eric shared that the Integrated Electric Resource and Master Plan Task Force provided a recommendation on the Chapel Hill route. He noted the under grounding would be up to a 5x cost multiplier, but staff felt it would be up to 8x.

Eric shared some information on potential risks. He noted the high load times during the summer, generally between 2-8 p.m. He also shared that the project will be around 10 years and costs continue to increase. Certain contingencies could lead to load shedding. He reviewed the 2026 Transmission Map. He noted that any improvements to the southwest area would also benefit the northwest, as the Perche Creek substation serves a significant portion of that area as well. He referenced more conversations to come in May at a pre Council. He mentioned issues getting approval to perform maintenance from MISO due to the lack of ample redundancies.

Eric reviewed some potential poll structures for Chapel Hill. He also reviewed the issues with the line not aligning with the road. Erin noted that the polls on the Chapel Hill route would need to be updated regardless of which route was decided. She noted that it was less invasive than a new transmission line.

Eric reviewed the same for the Vawter School route. This utilizes the old Option A route.

Waterman asked about covering the remainder of the cost for either project with reserves. Erin noted that rates would need to increase to cover the issuance of that bond. Waterman clarified that there would be a rate increase to cover this cost - Erin confirmed. Foster asked about any remaining bond authority. Erin noted that it was being used on Perche and Bolstad system upgrades. She estimated around \$3 million that could be rolled into this. Carroll asked if this project was considered when rates were last adjusted. Erin clarified that the forecast provided for the FY 26 budget did not include issuing bonds. She noted that when the bonds were issued would be when rates would need to be adjusted.

**This item is open to the public:** Motion for the City Council to go into closed session to discuss:

-Leasing, purchase or sale of real estate by a public governmental body where public knowledge of the transaction might adversely affect the legal consideration therefor pursuant to Section 610.021(2) RSMo.

-Existing or proposed security systems and structural plans of real property owned or leased by a public governmental body, and information that is voluntarily submitted by a nonpublic entity owning or operating an infrastructure to any public governmental body for use by that body to

devise plans for protection of that infrastructure, the public disclosure of which would threaten public safety. The disclosure of such information would impair the city's ability to protect the security or safety of persons or real property and the public interest in nondisclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the information to be discussed pursuant to Section 610.021(19) RSMo.

**At approximately 7:00 p.m., Mayor Buffaloe made a motion for the City Council of the City of Columbia, Missouri, to immediately go into a closed meeting in Conference Room 2A of City Hall to discuss the leasing, purchase or sale of real estate by a public governmental body where public knowledge of the transaction might adversely affect the legal consideration therefor pursuant to Section 610.021(2) of the Revised Statutes of Missouri and existing or proposed security systems and structural plans of real property owned or leased by a public governmental body, and information that is voluntarily submitted by a nonpublic entity owning or operating an infrastructure to any public governmental body for use by that body to devise plans for protection of that infrastructure, the public disclosure of which would threaten public safety - the disclosure of such information would impair the city's ability to protect the security or safety of persons or real property and the public interest in nondisclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the information to be discussed - pursuant to Section 610.021(19) of the Revised Statutes of Missouri. The motion was seconded by Council Member Foster.**

**This item is closed to the public:** Closed Meeting in Conference Room 2A (Second Floor of City Hall)

At approximately 7:04 p.m., the City Council went into closed session in Conference Room 2A pursuant to RSMo Sections 610.021(2) and (19).

**This item is open to the public:** Transmission Line Discussion

**Attachments:** [Estimate Summary for Grindstone to Perche Creek](#)

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The open session resumed at approximately 7:41 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Erin looked up other remaining bond funding. \$3.5 million could be used, in addition to the remaining bond authority. She noted \$1 million that could be moved from a separate project.

Carroll asked about how the City interacts within the region. Eric noted involvement in MISO. He added that any improvements to the transmission system has a secondary benefit to the region.

Foster asked about how these two options were decided upon, asking if the Integrated Electric Resource and Master Plan Task Force did not review the Vawter School option.

The Mayor asked about next steps. De'Carlton Seewood, City Manager, noted that staff needed direction from Council to proceed. He also outlined public information sessions as well as a public hearing. Council member Vera Elwood asked about bringing two options to the public for consideration. Erin said it was for clarity, but it was up to Council's discretion. Waterman noted the cost, but also that the redundancy also seemed

beneficial. Foster asked about the Water & Light Advisory Board and their input. Erin shared that the board provided input on what would be shared. She also noted that the board meets on Wednesday and will discuss. Peters asked about delaying Council's recommendations until hearing from the board. De'Carlon advised it would be during staff comments at the next Council meeting due the agenda posting deadlines.

The Mayor stated that the cost alone advantages the Vawter School Rd. route. She was interested in a communications plan.

## **II. ANY OTHER ITEMS COUNCIL MAY WISH TO DISCUSS**

None.

## **III. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:58 p.m.