



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes

City Council

Tuesday, January 20, 2026
5:00 PM

Pre-Council

City Hall
Conference Room
1A/1B
701 E. Broadway
Columbia, MO

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Buffaloe called the meeting to order at approximately 5:00 p.m.

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

Labor Group Presentations

- Local 955
- Local 1055
- CPLA
- CPOA

Mayor Buffaloe introduced Kathy Baker, HR Director. Kathy introduced the labor groups presenting.

Local 955

Scotty Johnson presented for Local 955. He provided handouts to the Council. He expressed support for pay adjustments, including a \$19 minimum wage, changes to policies related to attendance, add. pays, policies related to drug testing, etc. Vera Elwood asked for more information about attendance policies. He noted a desire for a uniform attendance policy as there seemed to be variability across divisions.

Local 1055

Zack Privette presented for Local 1055. He spoke on priorities related to base salaries, meal allowances, add. pays, and retirement health insurance pay. He noted members were satisfied with how the pay plan was set up. He commented on the improvements made towards pay. He provided some additional information about the Consumer Price Index (CPI) - noting that the raises were still behind the CPI inflation rate. He added that pacing inflation is not a pay raise, but stagnation. He highlighted a request to add one step to the pay plan. For the add pays, he noted a request for specialty team pay, such as special operations and water rescue. He noted there hadn't been an adjustment to meal allowance since 2017/2018 and noted a request for an automatic adjustment annually. The retirement health insurance program requests were similar to the previous year. The fiscal note for their request, they estimated to be around \$1.3 million.

The Mayor requested additional information on the meal allowance. Zack clarified that it was around \$14 per shift and was paid out in lump sums.

CPLA

Lt. Derrick Morris noted a focus on recruitment and retention. He emphasized ensuring compensation and leave was addressed. He noted a desire to see the accrual limit removed. He added a desire for compensation due to the requirement to work on city

holidays. He also noted post-employment retirement benefits. Organization efficiency and accountability. He emphasized the desire for trust when decisions need to be made.

CPOA

Don Weaver presented for CPOA. He emphasized pay step plans that award tenure. He noted several resignations within the past 90 days. Another goal for the union was restoring the pension. He also discussed a neutral and unbiased outside review of discipline (binding arbitration). In addition to that, there was an interest in collaborating with City staff on ways to improve the investigation, discipline, review, and appeals process.

Council member Don Waterman asked about the reason for the resignations he referenced - Weaver stated he did not have access to that information. Council member Vera Elwood asked about the pension. Weaver brought up the 20 year retirement and noted that retention was less of an issue then. The Mayor asked about other police departments with a 20 year retirement - Weaver noted that there weren't many remaining.

Kathy noted the Water & Light Association did not request the opportunity to speak.

There was some discussion about when a closed session related to the labor group presentation could occur.

Community Survey Results

Attachments: [2025 Columbia MO Survey Report](#)
[2025 Columbia MO Survey - Open Ended Comments](#)
[2025 Columbia MO Survey - Maps by Ward](#)
[2025 Columbia MO Survey - Maps by Census Block](#)

Carol Rhodes, Assistant City Manager, introduced Robert Heacock, ETC Institute. Robert emphasized that of the 89 metrics 80 either stayed the same or improved. He reviewed the purpose and methodology used in the survey. He noted a total of 804 surveys were completed, adding that the goal was 800. He noted that this was a margin of error +/- 3.4%

Council member Valerie Carroll arrived at approximately 5:36 pm.

Robert reviewed the demographics of the survey respondents, noting all age groups and time in Columbia were well represented. The Mayor asked about the survey respondents. Robert noted that only around 20 residents responded to the survey outside of the random sample - due to the low number, those responses were not provided to Council. He noted that if there had been a group of 50 or more, then they would have tabulated that data in a separate report. Council member Carroll asked about the social media ads. Robert noted that the surveys outside city limits were not included in the 20 he referenced. He also added that there were occasions when two members of the same household tried to submit a survey, but it was only one per household that was recorded.

He reviewed the questions covering overall satisfaction. Council member Elwood asked about the numbers by option for respondents who opted "don't know." Council member Waterman asked if excluding the "don't knows" was common practice and Robert indicated that it was. Council member Carroll asked if Robert could re-create the slide with the "don't knows" included. Robert said he would follow up with staff. He reviewed the question about services that should have the most emphasis over the past two years, noting that respondents could rank their top three choices. Public safety,

streets, and solid waste services were the top choices.

Council member Jacque Sample asked about the date range for the survey. It was conducted in October and November 2025.

He reviewed satisfaction with customer service, noting that the results were very high. He reviewed satisfaction with public safety. There was high satisfaction for Fire, and satisfaction for Police improved significantly from the prior year's survey. When reviewing satisfaction with city maintenance and public works, the maintenance of City streets was the lowest but there could be opportunities for increased public education about street maintenance authority. He noted high satisfaction with walking and biking trails.

Compared to other communities, results rated higher than the margin of error for Columbia over the US overall in several areas, including as a place to work, to live, to raise a family, buy a home, and retire. For the City services, the City scored higher compared to other areas in Parks, customer services, and electric services. He noted that the quality of City streets and enforcement of codes were lower than the US overall. The viability of police, responsiveness in enforcing traffic laws, and crime prevention scored low, but Robert noted that the community's knowledge of efforts to prevent crime could be low.

When reviewing trends, he covered the areas showing the greatest increases. These included quality of police, feeling of safety in neighborhoods at night, police responsiveness, efforts to prevent crime, etc. He reviewed the 9 areas that decreased, noting only two were outside the margin of area.

When considering priorities for investment, he reviewed the satisfaction rating for service areas including general city services, public safety, public works, etc.

Respondents ranked email, social media, and direct mailers were the most preferred forms of communication. Transparency and accountability were the highest ranked for contributing to trust in local government. The safety issues that should receive the most attention over the next two years emphasized gun violence. 69% of respondents noted that the City didn't have enough police officers and firefighters. A total of 55% of respondents indicated support in an additional tax to fund public safety.

The Mayor noted that the "don't know" responses were totaled in the actual report. Council member Nick Foster asked about the respondents that have lived in Columbia for a long time and asked if it was typical. Robert noted that there are a number of institutions that would draw people to live in Columbia for a long period of time. He said it seemed like more than other communities. Council member Elwood asked about questions related to transportation - Robert noted that the presentation was high level, and not all questions were included in the slides. He also noted the presentation was modified with feedback from staff.

Council member Carroll asked about the demographics, noting the owner occupied compared to renters. Robert noted that, while they haven't done this for Columbia in the past, they have weighted certain responses.

De'Carlon Seewood, City Manager, presented the staff slides. The key themes included homelessness, public safety and crime prevention, litter and code enforcement, and streets and sidewalks. He noted that these were similar to last year's results. The presentation covered ongoing efforts, as well as staff recommended actions, for each of these themes.

The Mayor asked about conversations with MoDOT concerning litter crews to improve priority routes, adding that many of those areas are state roads. Seewood noted that conversations with MoDOT were happening.

Seewood noted that the City should improve education on which streets were maintained by the City as there are a number of roadways that are maintained by MoDOT or the County. He noted that solid waste satisfaction was down, but felt that was due to the tornado taking out the MRF, noting the the comments were related to recycling.

Shane Creech, Public Works Director, shared information about staffing levels compared to the lane miles.

Council member Betsy Peters asked about changes based on the survey. Seewood noted staffing needed to address concerns. The Mayor asked about how these results would inform the budget. Seewood noted that these results would help formulate what would be included in the budget.

II. ANY OTHER ITEMS COUNCIL MAY WISH TO DISCUSS

The Mayor noted the potential to table reports 5-26 and 6-26 to the February 16 meeting. Council member Elwood asked about seeing comparison data to the questions related to transportation (question 21 - US, Plains Region).

The Mayor clarified whether the not statistically significant results were included in the open ended comments. Robert noted that he would look into it.

III. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:32 p.m.