



# City of Columbia, Missouri

## Meeting Minutes

### City Council

---

Monday, February 2, 2026  
7:00 PM

Regular

City Hall  
Council Chamber  
701 E. Broadway  
Columbia, MO

---

#### I. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

The City Council of the City of Columbia, Missouri met for a regular meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, February 2, 2026, in the Council Chamber of the City of Columbia, Missouri. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the roll was taken with the following results: Council Member VALERIE CARROLL, Council Member VERA ELWOOD, Council Member JACQUE SAMPLE, Council Member NICK FOSTER, Council Member DON WATERMAN, Council Member BETSY PETERS, and Mayor BARBARA BUFFALOE were present. City Manager De'Carlton Seewood, Deputy City Counselor Becky Thompson, City Clerk Sheela Amin, and various Department Heads and staff members were also present.

Mayor Buffaloe explained the January 20, 2026 regular meeting minutes were not yet completed.

The agenda, including the consent agenda, was approved unanimously by voice vote on a motion by Mayor Buffaloe and a second by Council Member Waterman

#### II. SPECIAL ITEMS

SI1-26

Resolution of Appreciation - Carol Rhodes, Assistant City Manager.

Mayor Buffaloe asked Assistant City Manager Carol Rhodes to join her at the podium, and presented her with a resolution of appreciation signed by the City Council. Assistant City Manager Carol Rhodes thanked her parents for the values they had instilled in her, former City Manager Ray Beck, who had initially hired her, and her husband, John, for his support during her 30-plus year career with the City of Columbia.

#### III. APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

None.

#### IV. SCHEDULED PUBLIC COMMENT

SPC6-26

Doug Hunt - Request to have Council restore to the Citizens Police Review Board the powers and duties eliminated by the Council on September 3, 2024.

Doug Hunt, a Fourth Ward resident and a member of the Citizens Police Review Board (CPRB), stated the CPRB was asking the City Council to reverse an action it had taken at its September 3, 2024 Council Meeting, which had limited the powers and duties of the CPRB in a number of ways, including narrowing the range of complaints they could act upon, eliminating their ability to hear citizen appeals about racially biased policing and inappropriate searches and seizures, eliminating their authority to comment on police department policies or the training of officers, and hosting public meetings to discuss

such matters, making it difficult to provide a level of civilian oversight consistent with their purpose of increasing policing accountability for the community along with increasing community trust in the police, during a time when increasing police accountability and community trust was important, explained the changes were made based on the advise of the City's legal department and changes in State Law, particularly Section 590.653 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri, understood other Missouri communities, such as Ferguson and Kansas City, had continued to make recommendations on policies, procedures, and training, host public information sessions on law enforcement matters, and make findings on allegations of misconduct that were outside of the four categories specified by State Law, and reiterated the request of the CPRB to lift the restrictions placed by Council action at the September 3, 2024 Council Meeting.

SPC7-26

**Sarah Read - Action needed to ensure reliable electric service.**

Sarah Read, 3802 Bedford Drive, noted one of the essential functions of government was to provide for the safety, health, and welfare of its people, felt Council had failed in that duty ten years ago when it paused the construction of a transmission line along Nifong Boulevard/Vawter School Road despite it being extensively studied, approved by the Council and the voters, and on-time and on-budget, explained it had been paused for political reasons, and without adequate notice to the thousands of voters who had approved it, full disclosure to the customers whose rates had increased by three percent to pay for it, and appropriate notice to staff that such drastic action was being considered, stated that hundreds of thousands in studies had been spent since the pause with none providing a better alternative and all confirming the need and the route, pointed out the pause had been costly to the public due to the costs spent on consultants, the millions in sunk costs, the millions in interest paid on the bonds issued to build the line without that promise returned, the costs for various work arounds, the millions in increased construction costs as well as the raised risk and eroded reliability of the system as had been documented by the reports the City provided to the Northern Electric Reliability Council in December of every year, with redactions beginning in 2018 and the most recent report in 2025 being closed in its entirety due to the disclosure impairing the ability to protect the security and safety of persons or property, and urged the Council to approve and build the transmission line as delaying it further would only result in increased risks and costs.

SPC8-26

**Ashton Buckridge and Allison Calkins - How Vidwest has supported students at Hickman High School.**

Allison Calkins, a freshman at Moberly Area Community College and a founding member of the Hickman High School Film Club, and Ashton Buckridge, a senior at Hickman High School and the current President of the Film Club, explained the Hickman Film Club, which began in October of 2024, was a fifteen member group that focused on storytelling and provided students with a free space to learn, create films, create stories, and determine the aspects of filmmaking for which they were most passionate, and would not exist without Vidwest as they were dependent on Vidwest for equipment rental and training, stated the Film Club had completed two short films and was working on its third, had allowed them to make connections with other students and teachers, helped them socially, and had provided a safe after-school and weekend activity, noted Vidwest had also helped them personally by allowing them to learn practical filmmaking skills, work on short films, comedy sketches, live streams, etc., utilize equipment for college application films, and include that experience on college resumes, and reiterated none of this would have been possible without Vidwest as the equipment and training was costly.

## V. PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

**VI. OLD BUSINESS**

B265-25 Amending Chapter 14 of the City Code to add provisions related to the rights and duties of motorists and pedestrians in major corridor roadways and intersections.

The bill was given third reading by the City Clerk.

Public Works Director Shane Creech provided a staff report, and he, Police Chief Jill Schlude, Deputy City Counselor Becky Thompson, and City Manager De'Carlton Seewood responded to Council questions and comments.

Mayor Buffaloe made a motion to amend B265-25 with Amendment Sheet #1, which added "Such schedule shall also be posted on the city website by the director of public works." to the end of item (c) in Section 1. The motion was seconded by Council Member Carroll, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

The Council discussed potential changes to Amendment Sheet #2.

Council Member Sample made a motion to amend B265-25 with an altered version of Amendment Sheet #2, so item (d)(1) of Section 1 read "No person shall cross a major corridor roadway at any place except in a crosswalk when such crosswalk is reasonably accessible and usable. Where there is no crosswalk, a person shall cross only where a pedestrian-control signal is located. Where there is no crosswalk or pedestrian-control signal, a person shall cross only at an intersection. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit a pedestrian from crossing at a location other than a crosswalk when existing curb ramps, intersection geometry, signalization, or sidewalk conditions render the crosswalk inaccessible or unsafe." The motion was seconded by Council Member Peters, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

The Council discussed potential changes to Amendment Sheet #3.

Council Member Sample made a motion to amend Amendment Sheet #3 so it read "No person shall be located upon a median in a major corridor intersection or on a median that is less than six (6) feet in width unless in the process of legally crossing a roadway. Failure of a person to leave the median after two consecutive opportunities to cross the roadway in a lawful manner is prima facie evidence of a violation of this subsection. This subsection shall not apply to any person whose disability, mobility limitation, use of assistive device, accompaniment of a child or service animal, or safety considerations make compliance impracticable." The motion was seconded by Council Member Elwood, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Mayor Buffaloe made a motion to amend B265-25 with Amendment Sheet #3, as amended, which changed item (d)(2) of Section 1 so it read "No person shall be located upon a median in a major corridor intersection or on a median that is less than six (6) feet in width unless in the process of legally crossing a roadway. Failure of a person to leave the median after two consecutive opportunities to cross the roadway in a lawful manner is prima facie evidence of a violation of this subsection. This subsection shall not apply to any person whose disability, mobility limitation, use of assistive device, accompaniment of a child or service animal, or safety considerations make compliance impracticable." The motion was seconded by Council Member Peters, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

The Council discussed Amendment Sheet #4.

Council Member Sample made a motion to amend B265-25 with Amendment Sheet #4, which changed item (d)(4) of Section 1 so it read "No person, other than an occupant of a vehicle, shall be upon a major corridor roadway when a continuous, accessible pedestrian route is available and usable, except to lawfully cross such roadway. A 'continuous, accessible pedestrian route' means a sidewalk or path of travel that complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), including accessible curb ramps, surface condition, width, grade, and freedom from obstruction due to construction, weather, or disrepair." The motion was seconded by Council Member Peters. After discussion, the

motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Council Member Sample made a motion to amend B265-25 with an altered version of Amendment Sheet #5, which removed distribution conduct under item (b) of Section 1, eliminated item (d)(6)a. of Section 1, item (d)(6)b. of Section 1, and item (d)(6)c. of Section 1, and renumbered the new proposed a. to (6) under item (d) of Section 1 and the new proposed b. to (7) under item (d) of Section 1. The motion was seconded by Mayor Buffaloe. After discussion, the motion was approved by voice vote with only Council Member Foster voting no.

Council Member Carroll made a motion to amend B265-25 by adding item (8) under (e), which read "Any person lawfully operating a cycle as set forth in Article VII of this chapter." The motion was seconded by Mayor Buffaloe, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Mayor Buffaloe made a motion to amend B265-25 by changing Section 2 so it read "This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after July 1, 2026." The motion was seconded by Council Member Sample, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Alejandro Gallardo, a Sixth Ward resident, felt the proposed ordinance was fundamentally wrong as the City and State had failed to build a roadway system that was safe and accessible for pedestrians, commented that instead of correcting these problems, they were trying to restrict and police the activity of pedestrians while abrogating the responsibility of the City to protect pedestrians, many of whom were the most vulnerable members of the community, i.e., disabled or poor, and urged the Council to reject this ill-conceived ordinance and address the longstanding issues with the road network and infrastructure.

Julie Schupp, 5811 E. Waterfront Drive South, commented that since returning from the Chamber of Commerce trip to South Carolina last fall, she had been focused on the issue of homelessness, noted the temporary solutions relied upon here and across the country were not working, stated the last time this item was discussed, the focus had been on the technical definitions of infrastructure, enforcement of hypothetical situations, and civil rights issues instead of the safety risks this ordinance was meant to address, understood some people were opposed to the proposed ordinance regardless of the language or intent because they felt it was an attack on the homeless, believed allowing people to panhandle in the medians was enabling and putting people in directly in harms way, expressed her support for the proposed ordinance to protect drivers and pedestrians, voiced her commitment to building long-term solutions that provided people a path to restore their purpose and rejoin the community, and urged the Council to vote in favor of the proposed ordinance as well as moving forward with the infrastructure previously discussed.

Dani Perez stated the proposed ordinance reminded her of the ugly laws that had been passed in the 1800s and upheld until the 1970s targeting those who loitered, panhandled, and had disabilities, believed this ordinance was spearheaded by those that had taken inhumane photos of people passed out on the medians, thought this would be the start of other legislation, such as banning panhandling and establishing loitering periods, which would negatively impact those with disabilities, pointed out that people sometimes had to walk on the streets due to ice, gravel, or rubble on the sidewalk, sit on concrete because there were not appropriate bus stops, and walk around cars blocking the crosswalk, felt society valued vehicles over people, suggested they stop arguing about the width of sidewalks, build the infrastructure to assist pedestrians, and bring back bus shelters instead of passing ugly laws such as this.

Derrick Fogle, 409 W. Broadway, spoke against the ordinance due to its impact on those, like him, who protested at intersections and medians, thanked Council Member Sample for asking the questions related to protesting, appreciated the clarification made that bicycles were vehicles for the purposes of this ordinance, wondered if this ordinance would target him when he practiced his hacky sack skills as some might view it as disruptive or distracting, believed the homeless would find a way around this ordinance by

crossing the intersections more often, which would likely increase interactions between cars and pedestrians, did not feel being mean to people or depriving them of things would modify their behavior to a behavior many wanted as it would likely change behavior to something that was more dangerous, and reiterated people would find ways to get around this ordinance.

Kristin, a Fifth Ward resident, wondered if only the Director of Public Works would designate roadways and intersections as major corridor roadways and intersections, or if it would instead be a team or committee, why prohibitions (1) and (2) had different verbiage when it came to a disabled person, and why they removed distribution conduct as she thought there was still reference to it later in the ordinance, stated her opposition to the proposed ordinance, noted pedestrian safety, driver safety, and traffic flow were all legitimate concerns but the proposed ordinance, even as amended, did not actually solve the safety problems it claimed to address, believed the ordinance only shifted the responsibility onto pedestrians and individuals using existing public infrastructure, and pointed out the ordinance did not commit the City to widen unsafe medians, improve crosswalk visibility, add pedestrian signals, repair broken sidewalks, redesign high speed corridors, or bring routes to ADA compliance standards.

Ida Fogle, a First Ward resident, urged the Council to vote against this ordinance, explained in her experiences as a pedestrian, bicyclist, and vehicle driver, the biggest danger was inattentive or ignorant vehicle drivers, noted she had almost been hit coming to the meeting tonight as a vehicle had turned left when she had the right of way as a pedestrian, believed drivers needed to be educated and held accountable, stated she utilized a median with an improved intersection and crosswalk with flashing lights to and from work and had been stuck at an intersection until a driver finally realized she had the right of way, wondered if she would be violating the ordinance when picking up trash at that and other medians as they tended to collect trash, and felt trying to penalize pedestrians instead of building better infrastructure and educating drivers would create a lot of problems.

Bill Dijak, a representative of CoMo Mobile Aid Collective, commented that the homeless depended upon panhandling for survival, thought the passage of this ordinance would push people to extremes, felt those who supported this ordinance had lost their sense of humanity, empathy, and altruism, believed this ordinance would have difficulty in the courts because the City did not have the data to prove that approaching a stopped vehicle at a roadway was unsafe nor the number of individuals actually injured when standing on a median, pointed out the passage of this ordinance would put the City at a significant financial risk, suggested people deal with their uncomfortable feelings associated with the homeless, and noted this ordinance would do nothing to address the factors associated with pedestrian accidents, reducing speed limits or widening medians, and would only burden pedestrians.

Anthony Willroth, a Boone County resident and Columbia pedestrian, thought they would all agree that pedestrian safety improvements were needed, which would be addressed with improved pedestrian infrastructure, not an ordinance that only addressed enforcement, suggested the Council address pedestrian infrastructure through the CIP or by going to the vote of the people, felt this ordinance would only create more points of conflict with law enforcement, not just with the homeless, but with people trying to walk to work, stop to admire the birds, or protest, and would not necessarily only result in a citation as it could end with resisting arrest or violence, and believed they should always assume the worst as that was important when creating good laws.

Shane Lowe, a Fourth Ward resident, pointed out that medians and traveled paths tended to be neglected as they were not the priority for road crews, explained that during snow storms, plows created snowbanks along medians and other pedestrian routes, wondered if shoveling it would be a violation of the ordinance, and suggested an amendment to allow for the clearing of debris, snow, and other pedestrian obstructions and hazards if this ordinance was to be approved.

Elizabeth Bridges, 4005 Citation Drive, stated this ordinance was bullying disguised as public safety or pedestrian safety, and believed her eight year old child said it perfectly when asked what she should say at the meeting tonight, which was "don't," and urged the Council to not pass this ordinance.

Simon Nachman, a Fifth Ward resident, commented that he was opposed to prolonging people's homelessness, which this bill would do by issuing citations for asking for money while on roadway medians, pointed out many were already working jobs and struggling to survive, believed the proposed ordinance would force them to ask for more money or turn to crime, noted the homeless would be placed in jails or die on the streets because they had been pushed away, and stated this bill only made Columbia less safe for homeless people.

Jim Meyer, 104 Sea Eagle Drive, stated his support of this bill, explained he had witnessed a number of very unsafe conditions over the years on the medians, provided an example of a person who was passed out on the edge of a very narrow median at Stadium and Broadway and would have been severely injured if he had moved his hand or leg or had rolled over in his unconscious state, believed something needed to be done to address that situation, felt the First Amendment rights issues had been addressed, appreciated the open, transparent process tonight when amending the ordinance, and urged the Council to pass the proposed ordinance as it had been perfected as well as it could.

Drew Amidei, a Fourth Ward resident and regional organizer for Missouri Jobs with Justice, which he mentioned because they had been given a Diversity Award last week due to their commitment to building a Columbia that was welcoming to all as well as for exemplifying the life and teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., stated the proposed ordinance targeted already marginalized members of the community, would not make Columbia safer, and would make Columbia less safe for those marginalized people, and urged the Council to vote no on this ordinance.

Ada Groharing stated the homeless panhandled for a little change, which allowed the person providing it to feel better about themselves, similar to the service provided by any pastor or charity, felt looking down on the homeless as if they were parasites was fundamentally wrong as they were part of the fabric of America, did not appreciate an earlier comment about the homeless rejoining society as the homeless survived off of community connections and took care of each other even when they lacked the appropriate means, noted the passage of this ordinance would impact the ability of the homeless to make money to survive, which was essentially genocide, and urged the Council to not being complicit with a genocidal action in passing this ordinance.

Ken Rice, 209 Reedsport Ridge, stated he was encouraged by the work of the Council earlier tonight in actually debating the proposed ordinance and attempting to move it forward, believed the Council had addressed the issues with the ordinance with their amendments earlier tonight, noted he did not feel this ordinance was an attack on the homeless or would negatively impact the disabled, agreed a big problem was adequate infrastructure, which could not be fixed right away, so this was an interim action that could help, commented that the issue was not only people blocking access by sleeping on medians, but also people selling flowers or working for a charity as running in and out of the traffic lane in between cars was problematic and addressed by this ordinance, understood this would not fix all of the problems but would help, and urged the Council to pass the ordinance.

Tanya Heath, a Fourth Ward resident, thanked the Council for their diligence tonight when discussing the amendments, recalled Fire Chief Brian Schaeffer explaining the unsafe situation involving the backends of rigs when turning, stated no one wanted to be involved in an accident with someone at a median as it would be a tragedy that all involved would carry with them, thought that with the passage of the ordinance, there were better ways to help those that utilized the medians, such as donating to the Opportunity Campus and volunteering time to help build resumes, connect people with job opportunities, and serve

humanity, and suggested developing long-term strategies for a better quality of life for all involved.

Ted Farnen, a Fifth Ward resident, asked Council to focus on the ordinance being voted on tonight as it was not an attack on homelessness, noted the ordinance said that no one needed to be on these busy medians except for a pedestrian crossing the street, felt any other claim was just noise or a rationalization to try to defeat the ordinance, understood some believed that if the City could not redesign intersections, improve public transportation, and restrict motorists, this ordinance should not even be considered, which he thought was foolish, explained they could do both, pointed out some, who were saying the intersections were unsafe, were okay with people standing in those areas doing whatever they wanted, commented that other controversial ordinances had been passed previously, which people now enjoyed, such as the ban on public indoor smoking and the use of roll carts for trash, and urged the Council to support the proposed ordinance.

Jeff Stack, a representative of the Mid-Missouri Fellowship of Reconciliation, which was a peace and social justice group, commended the City on their work the last few years in terms of the homeless and related facilities as it showed compassion, urged the Council to vote against this ordinance, felt this was a public relations effort to get unhoused people, who did not have many choices, out of our midst, suggested utilizing funds for drug and alcohol treatment instead of research to try to get people off of the medians, noted he utilized spaces like this to protest issues to reach as many people as possible, stated people were in the medians out of desperation as it was a way to obtain assistance during economically challenging times, believed they needed to be kinder to one another, and asked the Council to vote against this ordinance.

Luke Fennewald, 710 Glenstone Drive, stated he was opposed to this ordinance, commented that pedestrian safety was not caused by citing pedestrians and came from pedestrian infrastructure in the place of car infrastructure, felt this ordinance would not include distribution conduct if the issue was truly about pedestrian safety, noted it was an anti-panhandling ordinance, and asked the Council if they wanted Columbia to be a community where the unhoused, who were our most vulnerable, were put at risk.

Bruce Summers, a Third Ward resident, stated he was supportive of this ordinance, hoped the Council passed it, thought it was madness to allow people to hang out in the medians, and provided examples of people in the driving lanes near medians where the incidents could have been tragic had someone not swerved or been paying attention.

Tom Trabue, 4750 N. Booth Lane, a representative of the Columbia Board of Realtors, explained the Board provided a letter of support to the Council last week, indicating they felt the ordinance had a balanced approach as it did not restrict legitimate pedestrian activity and only channeled it to safe designated areas, stated roads and highways were first and foremost designed for the conveyance of vehicles and the City's complete streets policy also made provisions for pedestrian crossings at crosswalks in an orderly and predictable fashion, commented that the standard and design guides referenced by the traffic consultant represented the current best practices for a comprehensive roadway design for vehicles and pedestrians and the ordinance drafted was consistent with the science outlined in the design guides, understood there were deficiencies in some of the older roadways in terms of pedestrian accessibility, listed some of the activities designated to assist in that effort, such as the sidewalk improvement program, the capital improvement plan, and an evaluation for updating the City's street standards, but noted that took time and money, indicated concern with the amendments made with Amendment Sheet #4 because it watered down the ordinance by essentially allowing any able-bodied person to walk in the roadway if there was not a perfect sidewalk, asked the Council to reconsider that amendment, and urged the Council to support the ordinance as it was one more tool toward the City's Vision Zero goals and provided clear boundaries and more predictability in situations where drivers and pedestrians did not necessarily do the right thing.

Alyce Turner, 1204 Fieldcrest, indicated the difference between this proposed ordinance and the smoke-free ordinance was that they had worked on the smoke-free ordinance for three years to make sure people were comfortable with it and there were not court cases that could overturn it, suggested the Council consider the majority of those who had spoken tonight, noted she was opposed to the passage of this ordinance until they could include infrastructure improvements with it, stated she was a protestor and did not feel now was the time to limit civil liberties with what was going on throughout the country, expressed concern about this being taken away from the unhoused community, pointed out this ordinance did not have great community support, and wondered if the four boards and commissions this was referred to were supportive.

Grace, a Fifth Ward resident, commented that she believed this ordinance would have a negative impact on the disabled population, the protestors, and the homeless, stated she questioned whether some of the Council Members actually listened to those that came forward to speak, and believed the intent of the ordinance needed to be clear otherwise it was not ready to be passed, and felt they could do better for the community and create an ordinance that was about infrastructure rather than banning people from public spaces.

Matt Jenne, the Chair-Elect for the Columbia Chamber of Commerce, voiced support for the ordinance, as amended, on behalf of the thousands of people represented by the Columbia Chamber of Commerce, stated the ordinance was fundamentally about safety, including not only pedestrians and motorists but also the customers and employees who kept Columbia's economy moving, felt this ordinance was about ensuring the City's major corridors, which served as the economic corridors, were safe, efficient, and welcoming for all who traveled on them as it would otherwise affect the local economy, commented that the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation had conducted studies that consistently showed safe and efficient infrastructure as among the top three factors when choosing to relocate or expand, noted this ordinance designated high traffic, high speed areas, such as the commercial corridor along Stadium Boulevard, Providence Road, and Broadway, as zones where pedestrian and vehicle interactions should be limited to lawful crossings and clearly marked intersections, believed the citizens of Columbia should do what it could for the least among them, but that did not include allowing people to stand in the middle of a road for hours at a time, understood this ordinance would provide the police with a tool to get people to a safer location, such as the Opportunity Campus to help them get back on their feet, emphasized this ordinance was about protecting people as well as supporting businesses to promote a healthy, vibrant economy, urged the Council to pass this ordinance and continue to foster a business climate that was built on a foundation of safety and common sense, and asked those in support to stand.

Bry Mink, a Fourth Ward resident, commented that the opponents had laid out very clear, intelligent, and concise reasons to oppose the ordinance from a legal, moral, and practical ground, and noted he was opposed to the ordinance, even with the amendments, which he did not feel had any impact.

Rachel, a Sixth Ward resident, pointed out this ordinance was about people standing on medians, not standing in the middle of the road as that was already illegal, noted some medians were called pedestrian refuge islands for people to stand on in order to be safe, felt the ordinance created an additional danger to pedestrians by pressuring people to cross too soon so they were not cited, expressed concern that this ordinance would prohibit protests on porkchop intersections, which was a serious First Amendment violation, stated that banning peaceful protests under the guise of public safety was problematic regardless of intention, asked the Council to vote against the ordinance and to not be swayed by social media or people coming to Columbia from out of town, requesting that they turn against the most vulnerable community members, and suggested they do what was right for the community.

Margaret McConnell, a Second Ward resident, commented that it might be unfair to say this ordinance targeted the homeless, but it clearly targeted panhandlers as it would make the interaction between someone standing on the median and someone in the car

illegal, felt this ordinance, if passed, would be challenged in court, noted many speakers had indicated they would continue with protests or aid people, so citations would be issued, stated the homeless were involved because many of them panhandled as their only way to survive, emphasized the data did not support the ordinance, believed that if the Council would be bullies if they passed the ordinance knowing it would not hold up in court and would hurt people trying to survive by panhandling, and felt the same about those with the Columbia Chamber of Commerce and Columbia Board of Realtors in support of the ordinance.

Renee Carter, a representative of Race Matters, Friends, stated they opposed the ordinance for equity reasons, understood the City was on a 50-year plan for fixing dangerous intersections, crosswalks, medians, bike paths, and sidewalks while MoDOT could not address infrastructure safety either because they were busy spending money on highways, but the City was still considering an ordinance that would ticket the most vulnerable community members to attempt to solve the problem, commented that the panhandlers would go to jail because they would not be able to afford paying the ticket due to the City's neglect to not fix the infrastructure issues, believed this ordinance would criminalize people under the guise of safety when there was not any proof indicating panhandlers had been injured, noted the City would also force wheelchair users and pedestrians into unsafe conditions by not enforcing the ordinances it already had with regard to keeping sidewalks and crosswalks cleared, felt this ordinance targeted panhandlers and the homeless, suggested they spend time determining how they could improve the infrastructure issues, and recommended everyone read *Killed by a Traffic Engineer* by Wes Marshall as traffic engineers were addressing traffic movement, not pedestrian safety.

Susan Hart, 3719 Bray Court, expressed concern regarding comments indicating one could not be compassionate to all citizens in the community and support this ordinance, explained for three months during the year she participated in Saturday Café with her faith community at Room at the Inn, was part of a group that served dinner on the first Sunday night of each month, and assisted behind the scenes with the Opportunity Center while still being supportive of this ordinance as it was amended this evening, believed they needed a balance between safety and accessibility, which this ordinance provided, noted she had driven through some of the intersections that would be affected by this ordinance many times since January 1 and saw the near misses, stated the ordinance was needed because safety had not been built into medians as they had been for buildings because it had not been anticipated that individuals would occupy them, and felt the Council should pass the ordinance with the amendments tonight and discuss the infrastructure work needed in future meetings.

Jordan Struble, a Sixth Ward resident, commented that regardless of the intent of the ordinance, it punished the behavior of those who were likely homeless versus the average pedestrian, emphasized that the most effective means of protecting pedestrians and preventing accidents was to build accessible and safe infrastructure, and stated he opposed this ordinance because the effect would be the prosecution of those who were homeless, not the safety of people trying to walk around the City, which he did often and was hard.

Carrie Gartner, the Executive Director of the Business Loop CID, stated the Loop CID Board was in favor of this ordinance as they saw the near misses and dangerous conditions every day, noted they had seen drivers trying to help in compassionate but misguided ways, such as stopping their cars in moving traffic and rolling down their windows prompting someone to dart into traffic to collect money, which created the perfect conditions for a pedestrian involved crash or rear-end crash, commented that a safety audit of the Business Loop had found that pedestrians were less willing to cross at crosswalks if someone was standing in the median, explained they had observed Hickman High School students using the crosswalk at Providence but not at the Business Loop to get to McDonald's in order to avoid a person standing on that median

or in that crosswalk, which was a safety concern because they did not want students darting into traffic, believed medians should be a safe place for pedestrians to stop if the signal changed, particularly if they moved a bit slower or had a disability, but that could not be done if the median was already occupied, recognized there were people in the City who needed help and many nonprofits and government agencies were working hard to provide safe and reliable assistance, some of which were located on the Business Loop, such as the Food Bank and the Opportunity Campus, agreed the best way to make things safe for everyone was through infrastructure but the cost for improvements on the Business Loop alone was \$20-\$30 million so unless there was a secret infrastructure fund they could tap into, there was not an immediate solution, emphasized they needed something now to keep the students, pedestrians, and people on the Business Loop and in the rest of City safe, and urged the Council to pass the ordinance.

Eugene Elkin, a Second Ward resident, stated he was opposed to this ordinance, suggested infrastructure be built to allow a person to stand on safely, asked for empathy and to do what was right, and commented that the jails could not accommodate more people as they were already full.

Alec Martinez, a First Ward resident, echoed the comments of those that felt the bill was clearly not about pedestrian safety as it would cite pedestrians more often, especially those that were disabled, believed it was about the criminalization of homelessness and putting the most vulnerable members of the community in harm's way more than they were now, and asked that the Council vote against it.

Dave Griggs, 11 Lemmon Drive, commented that 90 percent of the problems in Columbia involved Missouri roads, i.e., roads constructed and maintained by MoDOT, who did not have the money for infrastructure changes either, understood widening the median might be a great idea but that would likely result in the widening of right-of-way to accommodate traffic, and stated his support for the proposed ordinance as it would make the streets safer for everyone.

Matthew Schacht, a Benton Stephens neighborhood resident, stated it was heartening to see the Council work through the problems with this ordinance and to allow everyone to be heard, understood 50 percent of the people in the room would feel the wrong decision was made, regardless of the final decision, suggested the City communicate with video evidence on how the ordinance was being enforced if it was passed and how the City would continue to try to address safety if it was not passed, noted he sympathized with the business owners as well as the pedestrians and homeless advocates, commented that he did not feel anyone was in the wrong, and reiterated the need to communicate to build a bridge between both sides as they were stronger when they were able to work together.

Mike Burden, a representative of Local Motion, commented that there had been a lot of discussion because they were talking about complex, longstanding societal issues that did not have easy solutions, believed pedestrian safety involved the safety of all road users, i.e., pedestrians, cyclists, drivers, and bus riders, noted the engineer that had spoken earlier was correct in saying that the movement of automobiles had been prioritized over pedestrians since the 1930s, felt they could prioritize people and the movement of people, but it would take investments and would not be easy or happen right away, stated if he were to write a pedestrian safety ordinance, it would prioritize the rights of their most vulnerable road users, those who were increasingly impacted by injuries and deaths in our state and nation, pointed out the medians were not large enough for a person or people to be there for any period of time, suggested reviewing the standards of refuge islands as well as many other pieces of infrastructure as 30 percent of Americans were non-drivers for a variety of reasons and could make our community and economy stronger with safe, reliable, and dignified options, asked the Council to think about the intent of this proposed ordinance, what actions would enforcement inspire, and whether that was their desire, hoped this would be the start of a continuing discussion on how to truly make the City work for everyone, not just those with vehicles, and urged the Council

to vote no on this ordinance.

Pat Fowler, a North Central Columbia neighborhood resident, commented that the City could not provide the unhoused adequate access to toilets, showers, laundry, storage space, overnight indoor space, etc. for the number of unsheltered they had, noted the unhoused used the money collected at medians for a modest hotel room if there was a vacancy, medications, durable medical equipment, etc., agreed Columbia had built a comprehensive continuum of care with years of government grants and funds that were now disappearing, but it only provided for a portion of their needs as assistance was not immediate, stated they would be denying people of their basic human right of being able to do their best for themselves with the passage of this ordinance while they waited for other services to come into being, and wondered why this was even being considered.

Matthew Struckhoff, a Fourth Ward resident, stated he was usually encouraged when Columbia took efforts to improve the safety of non-automobile users but was not encouraged by this ordinance as it was unlikely to improve pedestrian safety due to the limited evidence of median occupancy causing or even contributing to accidents, did not feel the research commissioned by the City supported the ordinance, believed this ordinance would place additional expectations of enforcement by the Columbia Police Department to police its citizenry versus providing services to those in need, pointed out that regardless of intent, the unhoused, specifically panhandlers, would be adversely affected by the passage of this ordinance, and urged the Council to vote against the proposed ordinance.

Catherine Armbrust, a Second Ward resident, wondered why they bothered when Columbia seemed to move forward with tentative and fearful steps, failed to push past unfounded fears that did not reflect the research, and was swayed dollars or those who could function successfully with a traditional capitalistic structure, stated they bothered because most wanted Columbia to be progressive, understood the intent of ordinances such as this were about power, control, keeping poverty out of sight, and potentially suppressing protest, noted homelessness, poverty, and panhandling would not disappear or be solved by this ordinance, believed instances of someone who was passed out on a median or dancing in traffic should be addressed on an individual basis as an emergency, felt someone sitting or standing on a median was not a safety issue, pointed out that nothing had been done to address safety on Clark Lane after her friend had been struck and died as a pedestrian there in December of 2022, urged the Council to vote no on this ordinance as it would not create a safer space for pedestrians, and questioned if the City wanted its tax dollars spent on legal fees as she believed the City would be sued if the ordinance was passed.

Alex Bohannon, a Benton Stephens neighborhood resident, encouraged the Council to vote no on this ordinance, understood the Bicycle/Pedestrian Commission, the Disabilities Commission, and the Commission on Human Rights were either opposed to the passage of the ordinance or had concerns with it, wondered why the Council would consider voting tonight when there were still so many questions, some with not great answers, and when enforcement would not begin until July, suggested looking at motorist enforcement, such as speeding and distracted driving, before pedestrian enforcement, emphasized that there were not any documented examples of people in medians causing accidents, and recommended that the Council either vote no or table this item.

Keith Clayton, a Boone County resident, expressed disgust with the process and the idea of this being a safety ordinance, and commented that this was about fining people they found undesirable instead of helping them.

John Shinn, a Third Ward resident, stated the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) never intended for medians to be a permanent refuge or long-term refuge, noted it was meant to be a transverse place, a temporary place of refuge, encouraged the Council to pass this ordinance as it was better than anything they had now, expressed concern with people and dogs being in the medians in extreme weather conditions, reiterated that medians were designed for someone to use when waiting for the light to

cross as well as for the placement of traffic control devices, and emphasized that he felt this was a safety issue and did not intentionally target the homeless or those panhandling as money could still be exchanged on the sidewalk, in parking lots, etc.

Justin Sills, a resident of student housing in the Grindstone area, believed laws should be based on a solid foundation of facts and compassion, and felt the proposed ordinance failed on both accounts.

The Council asked questions and made comments.

**B265-25, as amended, was given fourth reading by the City Clerk with the vote recorded as follows: VOTING YES: SAMPLE, FOSTER, WATERMAN, PETERS, BUFFALOE. VOTING NO: CARROLL, ELWOOD. Bill declared enacted, reading as follows:**

A recess was called at 11:24 p.m., and the Council returned to the meeting at approximately 11:30 p.m.

## VII. CONSENT AGENDA

The following bills were given second reading and the resolutions were read by the City Clerk.

- B17-26 Amending Chapter 7 of the City Code as it relates to emergency management organization.
- B18-26 Vacating a drainage easement adjacent to Lots 194 and 195 within Forest Hills, Plat No. 3 located at 5724 Black Gum Court; accepting a grant of easement for utility and drainage purposes from New Standard Homes, LLC; directing the City Clerk to have the ordinance and conveyance recorded.
- B19-26 Authorizing construction of the Rice Road Private Common Collector Elimination Project (PCCE) #43 sanitary sewer improvement project; calling for bids through the Purchasing Division or authorizing a contract for the work using a term and supply contract.
- B20-26 Authorizing expanded HIV testing program services and business associate agreements with Morgan County Health Center.
- B21-26 Authorizing Amendment No. 1 to the contract with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services for public health emergency preparedness program services.
- B22-26 Authorizing a memorandum of agreement with the Missouri National Guard Adjutant General for the use of the Northeast Regional Park for a training event.
- B23-26 Authorizing an airport aid agreement with the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission for air service promotion; amending the FY 2026 Annual Budget by appropriating funds in the amount of \$350,000.00.
- R16-26 Setting a public hearing: proposed construction of the Quail Drive - Phase 2 stormwater improvement project.
- R17-26 Setting a public hearing: consider approval of a revised plan for basketball court improvements associated with Phase II construction at Douglass Park.

- R18-26 Setting a public hearing: proposed annexation of property located on the southeast corner of Highway WW and El Chaparral Avenue (1020 S. El Chaparral Avenue) (Case #73-2026).
- R19-26 Authorizing application to the United States Department of Transportation for a Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant associated with the replacement of a stormwater culvert on Proctor Drive.
- R20-26 Authorizing an agreement with Boys & Girls Clubs of the Columbia Area associated with the Teen Connection Project program services.
- R21-26 Authorizing a CDBG-CV agreement with Love Columbia for homebuyer education and fair housing counseling services.
- R22-26 Authorizing a second amendment to the facility usage agreement with Mortgage Research Center, LLC, d/b/a Veterans United Home Loans, for the use of the Northeast Regional Park located at 5212 N. Oakland Gravel Road.
- R23-26 Authorizing Aviation Project Consultant Supplemental Agreement No. 2 with Burns & McDonnell Engineering Company, Inc. for additional construction services associated with the west parking lot resurfacing project at the Columbia Regional Airport.
- R24-26 Authorizing a letter of agreement with Columbia, Missouri FAA Contract Tower (COU FCT) and Springfield Approach (Mizzou Sector) associated with the Surface Area Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs) and NOTAM Management System (NMS) notification procedures at the Columbia Regional Airport.
- R25-26 Authorizing an agreement with Columbia Mall L.L.C. for the 2026 “Tons of Trucks” event.
- R26-26 Authorizing investment of police and fire pension funds in securities managed by KKR Private Equity Conglomerate LLC; authorizing execution of any agreements as are necessary for completion of those investments.
- R27-26 Expressing support for the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission’s Improve I-70: Rocheport to Columbia Project 4A (Missouri River Bridge at Rocheport to Route B); authorizing staff to proceed with associated corridor construction enhancements.

**The bills were given third reading and the resolutions were read by the City Clerk with the vote recorded as follows: VOTING YES: CARROLL (except for R26-26 on which she voted no), ELWOOD (except for R26-26 on which she voted no), SAMPLE, FOSTER, WATERMAN, PETERS, BUFFALOE. VOTING NO: NO ONE. Bills declared enacted and resolutions declared adopted, reading as follows:**

## VIII. NEW BUSINESS

None.

## IX. INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

The following bills were introduced by the Mayor unless otherwise indicated, and all were given first reading.

- B24-26 Amending Chapter 14 of the City Code as it relates to the definition of a pedestrian; making gender-neutral grammatical edits.
- B25-26 Authorizing an annexation agreement with Nabil and Dana Beaini for contiguous property located on the east side of Gans Creek Road; directing the City Clerk to have the agreement recorded (Case #44-2026).
- B26-26 Approving the Final Plat of "Providence Walkway, Plat No. 1B" located on the east side of Trinity Place and north of Boone Drive (308 Trinity Place); authorizing a performance contract (Case #41-2026).
- B27-26 Approving the Final Plat of "Centerstate South Plat 1" located on the north side of Clark Lane and west of US Highway 63; authorizing a performance contract (Case No. 315-2025).
- B28-26 Authorizing a memorandum of understanding with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services for wastewater surveillance program services.
- B29-26 Accepting conveyances for sewer, utility, drainage, and temporary construction purposes; accepting Stormwater Management/BMP Facilities Covenants; directing the City Clerk to have the conveyances recorded.
- B30-26 Authorizing a memorandum of understanding with the Missouri State Highway Patrol for the transmission, storage, and use of criminal justice data.
- B31-26 Authorizing a memorandum of understanding with the Missouri National Guard associated with a joint counterdrug program.
- B32-26 Amending the FY 2026 Annual Budget by appropriating funds in the amount of \$776,230.18 for facility modifications to the Sanford-Kimpton Building and installation of office furniture.
- B33-26 Amending the FY 2026 Annual Budget by appropriating funds in the amount of \$50,000.00 associated with maintenance repairs to the Eighth and Walnut (Plaza) municipal parking garage.
- B34-26 Amending the FY 2026 Annual Budget by appropriating funds in the amount of \$400,000.00 associated with improvements to the south parking lot at the Columbia Regional Airport.
- B35-26 Approving a revised plan for basketball court improvements associated with Phase II construction at Douglass Park.
- B36-26 Authorizing agreements, promissory notes, and deeds of trusts with Housing Authority of the City of Columbia, Missouri and Providence Walkway Housing Development Group, LP associated with the Providence Walkway development project; directing the City Clerk to record certain documents.

## X. REPORTS

- REP9-26 Homelessness Report.
- Public Health and Human Services Director Rebecca Roesslet provided a staff report, and responded to Council questions and comments.
- Mayor Buffaloe made a motion to authorize staff to proceed with a homelessness

strategic planning process, which might include issuing an RFP for facilitation services. The motion was seconded by Council Member Foster, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

REP10-26 Citizens Police Review Board 2025 Annual Report.

Special Projects Manager Stephanie Brown provided a staff report, and respond to Council questions and comments.

REP11-26 Columbia Historic Preservation Plan Update.

Community Development Director Clint Smith provided a staff report.

REP12-26 North 763 Community Improvement District (CID) - End of Fiscal Year (FY 2025) Report.

Mayor Buffaloe understood this report was provided as required by state statute.

## XI. GENERAL COMMENTS BY PUBLIC, COUNCIL AND STAFF

Eugene Elkin, a Second Ward resident, expressed concern for the homeless, especially with regard to the passage of B265-25, as amended, earlier tonight, and noted some people did not like crowds, chose to stay outdoors, and would not conform or follow rules.

Renee Carter, a representative of Race Matters, Friends, commented that people had not been hit while on the median, but instead had been hit crossing a street that had a median with regard to the median data, noted that when Race Matters, Friends, had a bail fund, they had bailed out hundreds of people whose address had been Wilkes Boulevard, believed the same situation was happening now, and pointed out that people who were ticketed and did not have money stayed in jail if no one was able to bail them out.

Catherine Armbrust, a representative of the CoMo Mobile Aid Collective, expressed disappointment with the vote tonight, stated she was grateful the City had decided to invest in a strategic plan with regard to homelessness as it was the job of the city and community to come together in that regard, pointed out there was not a cure for homelessness and that the Opportunity Campus was not a utopian space as it would not provide everyone with a place to go because not everyone could or would want to be in that environment due to mental health and other reasons, suggested they be realistic because the homeless numbers would continue to rise due to what was happening nationally, and asked that they move forward with empathy and love as these were humans with their own stories, experiences, and dreams.

John Shinn, a Third Ward resident, stated he believed the Council had made the right decision on the median ordinance, expressed appreciation for the vote by Council two weeks ago on the Ashford Place development, felt the City should have addressed the situation with the park in 2017 before the site had been subdivided because the parameters of the statement of intent and development agreement could not be reasonably applied now, noted he would be in contact with the Council and Law Department about that issue, and hoped fire and police personnel would receive a raise this year as he believed they were underpaid.

The Council and staff discussed various topics to include the move of the Risk Management Division from the Finance Department to the Law Department in October 2024.

Council Member Carroll made a motion asking for a report outlining the decision-making process with regard to the Risk Management Division, i.e., the merits of moving it along

with an evaluation of other risk management programs in peer cities, such as Springfield, Florissant, Maryland Heights, Cape Girardeau, Ann Arbor, Urbana-Champaign, Iowa City, and Lawrence. The motion was seconded by Council Member Sample. After discussion, the motion was defeated by voice vote with only Council Member Carroll, Council Member Elwood, and Council Member Sample voting yes, and with Council Member Foster, Council Member Waterman, Council Member Peters, and Mayor Buffaloe voting no.

The Council and staff continued to discuss various topics to include considering the Springfield, Missouri approach of accepting public comment at the meeting at which legislation was first read versus the meeting at which the vote would take place as it would provide them time to deliberate and further communicate with constituents so they felt they were heard prior to voting, understanding public comment had been received on the median ordinance in November, which had led to a robust work session, the amendments discussed and made tonight, and people still feeling they had not been heard, the fact the City could provide input but understanding MoDOT had the ultimate speed limit decisions on MoDOT roads while also considering the design of streets in terms speeds and enforcement, the need for traffic enforcement, the results of the citizen survey indicating that by and large, people thought Columbia was a good or great place to live and work, which they were reminded of with the various events this past week, such as the kick-off for CoMo Restaurant Week, the Kinney Point ribbon cutting, which was a model of the kind of housing that could be built beyond what the Columbia Housing Authority had done, the longstanding Columbia Values Diversity Celebration, which allowed them to celebrate the diversity they had while acknowledging that there was more work to be done, the Black Business Expo to support minority and women entrepreneurs, and the Fire Recruit Graduation, thanking any staff involved in bringing Nordstrom Rack to Columbia, the fact they would be discussing the transmission line this Monday in the Council Chamber at 6 p.m., the attendance of Mayor Buffaloe at the U.S. Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting last week whereby she was helping to advocate for the support of cities at the federal level, the fact all communities were dealing with so many of the same complex issues, acknowledging Columbia was investing in things related to housing, homelessness, and pedestrian infrastructure but was not necessarily able to communicate that adequately, and again thanking Assistant City Manager Carol Rhodes for her 31 years of service to the City.

## **XII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned without objection at 12:29 a.m.