



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes - Final

City Council

Monday, October 20, 2025
5:00 PM

Pre-Council

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:02 p.m.

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

Citizens Police Review Board Applicant Interviews

The Mayor covered a brief overview of the Citizens Police Review Board (CPRB) for each applicant and gave each the opportunity to ask questions. Each applicant was asked about their view of the role of the board, why they desired to serve, etc.

Applicants interviewed included:

- Harry Castilow
- Charles Zug

Council Communication and Meeting Practices

Attachments: [R188-81 - Rules for Public Hearings & Comments](#)

[Report Update to R188-81 - November 2019](#)

[R101-14A - Procedures & Guidelines for Scheduled Public Comments](#)

[PR145-12 - Policies related to appointments to Boards & Commissions](#)

Mayor Buffaloe explained the goal of the council conversation about updating Council Communications and Meeting Practices. De'Carlton Seewood, City Manager stated that some changes would need to become ordinances and some would just remain best practices.

Vera Elwood asked about removing an issue in the ordinances that would allow a council member to add five minutes to a speaker for any reason. Council agreed that might need to be removed.

Council was in agreement that the sections about smoking and ash trays should be removed.

Sheela Amin, City Clerk, explained the concerns about speakers having to give their address to the city council. Buffaloe suggested that it be removed but speakers should still give their ward to the council.

Elwood asked about what was considered to be out of order. This is currently just limited to spoken communication and what should be done about those who speak out of order. This includes inappropriate language that should not be tolerated. Elwood currently does

not have any suggestions on non-verbal communication but would be interested in what other council members had to say. Buffaloe suggested that signs have certain limits to keep the live stream unobstructed.

Jacque Sample asked about the legal push back and possible free speech issues that could occur if they change the ordinances. Rebecca Thompson, Deputy City Counselor, said that the legal department would have to be careful with how they write the ordinances.

Buffaloe noted that some communities limit the amount of time a person has to speak throughout the duration of the meeting. Valerie Carroll said she would not want to limit the amount of time they could speak at the meeting. Carroll mentioned that people might have expertise or opinions on several topics on the agenda. Elwood agrees that the council should have shorter meetings but that there should not be limited time to speak or mandated end times for the council meetings.

Don Waterman asked about the average meeting length and end times for the city council meetings. Amin said that she did some research a year or so ago but does not remember the average at this time. Amin explained that longer meetings have more controversial issues that might extend the meetings. Betsy Peters said that meetings have gotten shorter over her time on the council. She suggested that the city's responsiveness to issues has allowed the meetings to be shorter.

Waterman asked about the second read and final passage and allowing people to speak at that time. He suggested allowing people to speak on first reading to give both council members and citizens a chance to ask questions and to have clarity on those issues on First Read. Waterman agreed to follow up on his question at a later meeting. Carroll said that having items on first read gives people an opportunity to prepare for later meetings.

Sample asked that certain gendered language should be updated. Sample made a suggestion to have people sign up to speak on the second reading.

Buffaloe asked about removing the fax number on scheduled public comment form. Council did not object. Amin discussed the cost of advertising for boards and commissions and noted it is about \$7,000 to \$8,000 dollars a year. Amin would be willing to make changes as the council wishes. Foster mentioned that questions asked to potential board members when they apply. He made a point that the city should use communication that would reach a high volume of people.

Buffaloe moved on to question about virtual attendance for council meetings. Seewood said that the council should have a conversation about the subject. Currently, council members can attend work sessions virtually. Seewood said that everyone had to have their cameras on at the council meeting. Waterman briefed the council on what the City of Springfield does for their virtual meetings. Foster about the technology and how that has changed since the pandemic. Mark Neckerman, IT Director, said that the city has technology but the seen and be seen policy might make it difficult for everyone to handle. Thompson said that she noticed that Springfield, the only person that had their camera on, was the person that was speaking.

Elwood suggested that a notification timeline would help with staff. Dalton Wilfley, Video Engineering Specialist, said that if given enough time that they should be able to have everyone prepared for virtual participation. Carroll suggested that it would be helpful to have the option available when someone is traveling or sick to give staff sick.

Buffaloe asked if there is anything that needs to change in city ordinances. Amin asked if there is anything the council would need like electronic equipment.

Buffaloe discussed broadcasting closed session and precouncil meetings. Currently, those sessions would have to be done in the council chambers because that is the only room capable of broadcasting. Amin said that it would cost an additional \$200 to broadcast the meeting. Elwood said that there are better AI tools that could be used to help with captioning. Buffaloe said that it is still useful to be candid about topics being discussed but it would be helpful for community connections to understand what council is talking about. Peters asked about a timeline. Carol Rhodes, Assistant City Manager, said that they are still waiting on bids and they want to make sure that there is plenty of time so city staff does not have to disrupt any council or board meetings.

Buffaloe discussed tabling practices. Seewood discussed emergency communication plans. Seewood said that he would send out a text alerting council members of the emergency and all plans involved in said emergency. He will also make clear if he does not have all the information ready yet. This includes shootings, fires affecting major institutions, and casualties. Carroll asked about the protocols. Matt Stephens, Deputy Police Chief, made clear that certain information has to be closely guarded to avoid any mistakes or private information prior to families of a victim being notified. One of the difficulties is out pacing and beating what social media is putting out, which is not always accurate information. Stephens noted that they understand the impact of no notice at all, but they understand the importance of having the correct information out. Brain Schaeffer, Fire Chief, mentioned that it is important to have accurate information. Schaeffer mentioned that there is a focus on being values driven, and accurate. Protecting our community and getting the correct information.

Buffaloe asked the council on when they would like to move the work session and pre-council into the council chambers to broadcast. Peters mentioned that she would rather wait until they figure the cost of this.

Buffaloe asked if the council would be okay to eliminate the newspaper advertising for board and commission knowing that there would be multiple ways they are advertising.

Amin stated that they would bring back a report to finalize and answer these questions.

Seewood stated that the City Council should expect the report in the 2nd meeting in December.

II. ANY OTHER ITEMS COUNCIL MAY WISH TO DISCUSS

None.

III. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:56 p.m.