



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes - Final

City Council

Monday, November 3, 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 5:01 p.m.

Present: 6 - Foster, Waterman, Peters, Carroll, Sample, and Elwood

Absent: 1 - Buffaloe

This item is open to the public: Columbia Police Department (CPD) Dashboard Presentation

Chief Jill Schlude introduced herself and Columbia Police Department Command Staff. Chief Schlude discussed the crime statistics portal and it is used by CPD.

Assistant Chief Fitzgerald went over crime reporting and CPD's Crime Data Dashboard. Fitzgerald reviewed some definitions and made some clarifications on how crime data is reported. Fitzgerald mentioned the topics of discussion were:

- Crime Statistics Generally- Perspective from the police
- The History of Crime Reporting
- Crime Data Dashboard
- Recommendations for interaction with the crime data.

Following this, Fitzgerald discussed the importance of definitions, bringing up an example that a "call to service" can have many different interpretations. For instance, it can mean a citizen called 311 or 911 to report a crime, it could mean police calls where the officer observed a crime or self-initiated a traffic stop, or where an officer checks out on a "call" for administrative work, follow up, processing evidence and more. Fitzgerald then explained that CPD has chosen to prioritize incidents over offenses when it comes to data. They identified some issues with mapping offenses. For example, for one incident there could be 3 offenses. Fitzgerald said that the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) classifies crimes. Fitzgerald said the crime statistics are a snap shot in time and can't be used to make generalized statements for very long.

Valerie Carroll asked about the increase of officers in CPD over the past few years and how that might influence the crime data. Fitzgerald said that could be difficult to discern in the dashboard. Fitzgerald stated that as they get more officers, there is a higher possibility of discovering crime. Fitzgerald advised Council, when using the data to have a larger look back period, and all it to be more robust.

Carroll made a statement that it is very easy to misinterpret without context. She mentioned that on this dashboard it is not clear what the context is.

Nick Foster asked about how data is used to distribute resources. Fitzgerald mentioned that staffing at the CPD continues to be a problem, and it is still challenging. He mentioned that the best way they currently use the data is as a management tool to help elevate balance workloads. This allows them to focus on the low hanging fruit. Management of employees helps to guide deployment and more. Fitzgerald mentioned that how the data is reported, that murder is too broad of a category to designate resources to, ranging from domestic violence homicides, road rage homicides and more. He stated that the motivations of the homicides are different.

Fitzgerald brought up a framework that Denver PD uses when sending officers to a certain area for foot patrol based on past data. He mentioned that the Columbia Police Department would not be able to do that due to their capacity.

Fitzgerald explained how NIBRS can change the definition of certain crimes. He used the example of robberies and how that will cause the CPD to change how they categorize robberies (e.g. commercial or strong arm robberies). Vera Elwood asked about some of the categorized crimes in the dashboard and asked if it was intentional or something that will be adjusted along the way. Fitzgerald explained that once a crime has been categorized, definitions or recategorizing happens when it is changed at the NIBRS level. It is very difficult to recategorize the crime data when these changes happen.

Carroll asked about the pick list as it becomes more specific and how CPD prioritizes things on the pick list.

In 2021, the Federal Government mandated that states have universal reporting standards. Fitzgerald said that the crime rate is difficult to understand because the reporting population might be hesitant to call the police. He used the example of homeless people not reporting sexual assault in encampments or robberies from stores that might not get an officer in time. Schlude wants to bring back Comp Meetings where CPD staff would compare calls for service locations and police reports in an area.

Fitzgerald opened the Crime Statistics Dashboard. He cautioned that the most current crime data was the least likely to be accurate. He explained how offenses are group and crimes against society. Fitzgerald explained that only crimes that have resulted in an arrest are reported to the State of Missouri of the Federal Bureau of Investigations.

Fitzgerald went over the Columbia Crime Map. Elwood asked about Overdoses and how that is tracked by the CPD. Assistant Chief Lance Bolinger explained how that could be difficult to track because it could end up as a Second Degree Murder Charge.

Fitzgerald reminded the council that there might be some discrepancies in downtown crime reporting because 600 East Walnut (CPD Headquarters) serves as the placeholder address if the resident does not know where a crime occurred.

Fitzgerald asked the council to be careful about making generalized statements about crime trends in Columbia. Foster asked about what decisions CPD is making about the crime data. Fitzgerald was affirmative that CPD was heading in the right direction with regards to staffing and building relationships with the reporting population.

Carroll asked about CPD giving more context and disclaimers to the public. Fitzgerald said that CPD is working on changing the dashboard so that it is more user friendly.

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

- Confidential or privileged communications between a public

governmental body or its representatives and its attorneys pursuant to Section 610.021(1) RSMo.; and

- Operational guidelines, policies and specific response plans developed, adopted, or maintained by any public agency responsible for law enforcement, public safety, first response, or public health for use in responding to or preventing any critical incident which has the potential to endanger individual or public safety or health pursuant to Section 610.021(19)(d) RSMo. As required by Section 610.021(19)(d), the City Council hereby declares that disclosure of information to be discussed in closed session pursuant to this section of the Sunshine Law would impair the public governmental body's ability to protect the security or safety of persons or real property, and that the public interest in nondisclosure outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the records.

At approximately 6:04p.m., Mayor Pro Tem Nick Foster made a motion for the City Council of the City of Columbia, Missouri, to immediately go into a closed meeting in Conference Room 1A/1B of City Hall to the hiring, firing, disciplining or promoting of particular employees by a governmental body when personal information about the employee is discussed or recorded pursuant to Section 610.021(3) of the Revised Statutes of Missouri; individually identifiable personnel records, performance ratings or records pertaining to employees or applicants for employment pursuant to Section 610.021(13) of the Revised Statutes of Missouri; leasing, purchase or sale of real estate by a public governmental body where public knowledge of the transaction might adversely affect the legal consideration therefore pursuant to Section 610.021(2) of the Revised Statutes of Missouri; preparation, including any discussions or work product, on behalf of a public governmental body or its representatives for negotiations with employee groups pursuant to Section 610.021(9) Revised Statutes of Missouri; and legal actions, causes of action or litigation involving a public governmental body and confidential or privileged communications between a public governmental body or its representatives and its attorneys pursuant to Section 610.021(1) Revised Statutes of Missouri. The motion was seconded by Don Waterman.

Yes: 6 - Foster, Waterman, Peters, Carroll, Sample, and Elwood

Absent: 1 - Buffaloe

This item is closed to the public: Closed meeting in Conference Room 1A/1B

At approximately 6:05 p.m., the City Council went into closed session in Conference Room 1A/1B pursuant to RSMo Sections 610.021(1) and (19)(d).

II. ANY OTHER ITEMS COUNCIL MAY WISH TO DISCUSS

None.

III. ADJOURNMENT

The closed meeting adjourned at approximately 6:55 p.m.