



# City of Columbia, Missouri

## Meeting Minutes

### City Council

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Monday, June 8, 2026  
6:00 PM

Work Session

City Hall  
Conference Room  
1A/1B  
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:** 6 - Buffaloe, Peters, Sample, Elwood, Hartman, and Foster

**Absent:** 1 - Carroll

#### Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)

**Attachments:** [Staff Memo](#)

Erin Keys introduced the topic for Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) for both Water and Electric. She introduced Eric Worts, the project manager, and Chad Nobles from Ameresco. She also highlighted the staff from other departments that were in the room to support the project. She provided some examples of how AMI would be beneficial to utility customers, including notifications when the power is out without customers phoning in and notifications when there are water leaks before the bills go out. She emphasized that this is an investment.

Chad introduced his team, and complimented the collaboration with a variety of City departments.

Eric highlighted current challenges with the existing system. He noted that many meters are past their useful life. He referenced several operational inefficiencies related to the current system. He noted that this project is not something that could have been done in house. He reviewed the timeline of the project to-date, beginning back in March 2025. He noted that the intent was to bring a contract with Ameresco to Council sometime in September for their support.

Council member Peters asked about the utility billing software. Chad noted that it would utilize the same billing software.

Chad provided some historical information on the meter readings. He added AMI had been utilized for around 15 years, adding that it provides close to real time reads. Mayor Buffaloe asked about the infrastructure. Chad noted that most of the readers would be added to existing meter boxes or an existing cell tower. He highlighted some of the benefits of AMI, including providing customers with data on their utility usage. He noted that they could set notifications to help them track their usage. He added, from a staff perspective, there would be a reduced cost with less trucks on the road reading meters, as well as shortening repairs times. Council member Sample asked about the impact on the number of staffing. Chad noted that these positions are hard to recruit for, and that existing staff could be re-trained. He also emphasized the improved customer experience

related to access to data on their utility usage.

Chad reported on the electric meter field survey. He noted that the majority of meters were outdoors, and that there were a variety of manufacturers. He noted on the small water meter field survey results. Council member Hartman asked about the average life of a meter. Chad noted that it was tied to age and volume of water, noting the industry standard was 5-7 years. He noted the newer meters did not have moving parts, so their average life was approximately 20 years. Mayor Buffaloe asked about the meter replacement schedule. Eric noted that there was a schedule, but that they were behind. Council member Peters asked about any issues with changing out meters for water - Chad noted that changing water meters take longer. Eric noted that Ameresco would deal with the meters, and utility staff would repair the service lines. Council member Foster asked if there was an estimate to replace the current meters. Chad noted that, for water meters, they would be able to re-use a number of existing meters.

Chad provided an update on the intermediate meter field survey results. He noted that around 56.7% were located indoors. He added that in some cases concrete work may be necessary, but that they would be working with staff. For the larger meter field survey, he noted that Ameresco staff went to review all of these meters (3" and larger). Council member Hartman asked about the fiscal impact and pricing. Chad noted that Ameresco can provide a firm fixed price based, adding that if it goes over their estimate then they would eat the extra cost.

Chad provided an overview of the proposed scope of work. Around 54,000 electric meters would be replaced, for water around 33,000 would be replaced and 19,700 would be retrofitted. He emphasized that this is a data project. He noted the integration, ancillary materials, and software would all be included in the price. He shared information on the software package.

Chad provided an overview of a typical meter installation. He noted that all indoor meters and commercial installations would be scheduled appointments. He noted that there would be some disruption to customers, ideally that it would be a brief disruption. Peters asked about how the installations would be scheduled. Chad discussed the process, including taking photos of the site pre and post installation. Council member Elwood asked about how residents with specific needs, for instance a child on an oxygen machine, could reach out for scheduling to minimize the disruption. Chad noted that this was already being planned around, but added that residents would need to get in touch with staff.

Chad shared information on the customized communication tools to assist staff and provide education to the public. He emphasized that this would help staff increase their response times. He provided some other benefits. Hartman asked about data security. Rich Wieman, IT Manager, noted that IT had been involved since the beginning of the project and they did not have any concerns.

Chad reviewed the financials. The total implementation cost is just over \$42 million. He added there is approximately \$560,000 in ongoing third party annual fees. He provided information on three years of meter testing and verification. He estimated approximately \$3.9 million in year 1 benefits due to increased accuracy and operational savings. Hartman asked about when the City would start to see a return on investment. Chad noted the project would fund itself in a 15 year period.

Mayor Buffaloe asked about potential project funding. Matthew Lue, Finance Director, said the City looked at bonding over a 15 year period with just over a 3% rate. He noted

the bank loan was at a 3.75% rate. De'Carlon Seewood, City Manager, said that staff would bring a report to Council before the contract came back. Peters asked about getting information on all the current bonds and bonding authority.

The Mayor asked about a general time frame. Eric estimated around a three year total project period. She asked if the Water and Light Advisory Board had been given this presentation. Erin noted that they had not received this presentation, but they had been discussing this for several years. Foster asked about threshold for cities implementing AMI. Chad noted that it varied quite a bit. Many of the larger electric utilities utilize AMI. With battery technology, many water utilities are utilizing AMI. The Mayor asked about possible concerns from residents with radio waves. Chad noted the frequency is similar to baby monitors. He noted there had been many studies and white papers.

Hartman asked if residents could opt out. Erin noted that residents could opt out, but there were additional fees. She noted that staff's preference would be to remove the non-standard meters from the ordinance. She said at minimum the monthly fees should increase for residents wanting to opt out. Hartman asked about the length of storage. Erin responded that private information is stored in the billing system. Chad noted that the utility billing software keeps a certain amount of data. Ricki Jones, Utility Customer Service Manager, noted that the usage data and customer information data would be housed in separate areas.

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

The Mayor discussed future scheduling. Sheela Amin, City Clerk, stated that there were 14 applicants for the three boards. The Mayor asked if it would be possible to have the capital improvement project work session at a future budget work session. Matthew preferred to keep the work session separate. The Council agreed to begin Monday's pre-council meeting at 4:30 p.m.

## **III. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.