



Department Source: City Clerk

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: December 19, 2022

Re: City Council Meeting Minutes

## Executive Summary

Due to a variety of reasons, the City Clerk's Office is behind on regular and special city council meetings minutes, and would like direction from the City Council with regard to how to proceed with meeting minutes.

## Discussion

For the past few years, the City Clerk's Office has had trouble keeping up with meeting minutes for a variety of reasons to include staffing, increased workload, the length of meetings, etc. At this point, we are about a year behind in meeting minutes. Thus, the City Clerk would like guidance on how the City Council would like to proceed with meeting minutes going forward.

State statute RSMo 610.020(7) states "a journal or minutes of open and closed meetings shall be taken and retained by the public governmental body, including, but not limited to, a record of any votes taken at such meeting. **The minutes shall include the date, time, place, members present, members absent and a record of any votes taken.** When a roll call vote is taken, the minutes shall attribute each 'yea' and 'nay' vote or abstinence if not voting to the name of the individual member of the public governmental body."

Enclosed are minutes that meet the state statute requirement for the last five meetings (October 3, October 17, November 7, November 21, and December 5). If this is acceptable, the City Clerk's Office feels it would be able to catch up with meeting minutes within 3-4 months while also keeping up with future meetings.

As Council knows, we tried verbatim minutes for the last few meeting minutes in 2021 thinking that might be quicker to complete versus the detailed summary minutes provided prior to then, but that has not been the case. We utilized closed captioning transcriptions and transcriptions generated from an artificial intelligence (AI) application as a basis for those minutes, but they do not track who is speaking and tend to be very inaccurate. Thus reviewing, updating, and correcting the text is still very time intensive, especially since our regular meetings average four hours.

The best option, if detailed minutes are desired, is to contract for transcription services. The estimated cost for transcribing the 2022 meetings is at least \$41,000. That estimate is based on the contract the City has with the company/person that does the Planning and Zoning Commission meetings. This or something higher would likely be the cost going forward annually, and we might have to hire multiple transcriptionists to help us catch up in a timely



# City of Columbia

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manner while also assisting with future meetings, assuming we can find people willing to do this. We have been told court reporters are in demand, and many are not willing to transcribe meetings or work in the evenings. They prefer legal proceedings.

If this is the route chosen, the City Clerk's Office will work with the Purchasing Division and Law Department to determine how to solicit the services of a transcriptionist and will then come back to the City Council for a budget amendment for the funding associated with that cost since what was budgeted for FY 2023 will not cover it.

Something to keep in mind moving forward is that we currently have the audio and video of all regular council meetings and most special council meetings on the City's website for anyone to access to review specifically what was said or to obtain the tone of the discussion. The downfall with the audio or video is that technology tends to change which may render the audio and video to not be accessible in the future. It is available and accessible now (from April 2009 to now), but there is not a guarantee that would be the case in fifty years.

## Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: NA

Long-Term Impact: NA

## Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

### Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Not Applicable, Secondary Impact: Not Applicable, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

### Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Not Applicable, Secondary Impact: Secondary, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

## Legislative History

Date	Action
N/A	

## Suggested Council Action

Council direction as to how to proceed with regular and special city council meeting minutes for the 2022 calendar year and for future meetings.