



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Food Council

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

4:15 PM

Regular

Department of Public
Health and Human
Services

Training Room 1
1005 W. Worley St.
Columbia, MO 65203

I. CALL TO ORDER

- Saunders called the meeting to order at 4:19 p.m. and did brief introductions

Present: 7 - Katie Molitor, Gabriela Weir Vera, Tish Johnson, Adam Saunders, Shannon Daily, Kyra Barnard and Johnna Martin

Excused: 2 - Anna Meyer and Corrina Smith

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Johnson moved to approve the agenda, with Molitor seconding. The motion passed unanimously

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Barnard moved to approve the October 15th, 2025 meeting minutes, with Weir Vera seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

Attachments: [Draft Meeting Minutes October 15, 2025](#)

IV. OLD BUSINESS

• OFBC update

The meeting began with a project update, noting that a detailed overview had been provided to Bean prior to the session. Schley indicated that, due to a recent absence, there were no additional updates from the previous meeting. Community information gathering has largely been completed, and the next step involves coordinating with Johnson to assess remaining representation needs and begin analysis of the collected data. Interviews will continue through January, with recent conversations, such as one with Martin, requiring multiple attempts but proving successful. Deduce software will be used for qualitative analysis, with the free version currently sufficient, and additional software purchase was deferred due to licensing considerations. The team is also pursuing secondary data from CARES, campus sources, the Farm Census, and other relevant databases, with participants encouraged to share access to industry-specific information, particularly regarding restaurants and grocery stores.

Plans for a “soft rollout” of the report were discussed, modeled after previous public engagement events, including information stations and potential focus groups to capture underrepresented perspectives. The group emphasized aligning the report with actionable priorities for the city and county, particularly regarding zoning, farmland protection, and policy recommendations. Policy and regulatory audits were suggested to identify areas where City Council or County Commission action could address barriers, such as land use, property rights, and dining regulations. Participants agreed that focusing on a limited number of high-impact recommendations-suggested as five-would enhance clarity and engagement. The report structure will likely be organized by components of the food system, grouping topics under each section to provide clarity while focusing on priority areas. Existing frameworks from other groups may be referenced to strengthen the presentation.

The discussion also highlighted the importance of considering broader issues, including food waste, water resources, and food insecurity, as well as planning for potential emergencies that could affect food access. Event planning was emphasized as an opportunity to present findings and engage stakeholders, with a proposed “booth summit” to bring relevant organizations together. Small micro-committees may be formed to explore specific issues between meetings, provided compliance with Sunshine laws is maintained. The draft report is targeted for completion by March, with flexibility to ensure quality, and will be publicly available to inform the five-year strategic plan, expected to be finalized by June 2026. The meeting concluded with agreement that Tish and the project lead will meet regularly to advance data analysis, consolidate themes, and draft recommendations. Participants were encouraged to provide input actively, ensuring a robust, actionable set of priorities for City Council and County Commission consideration, with continued engagement through events and micro-committees as appropriate.

The conversation shifted to committee structure and compliance with Sunshine Law. It was clarified that forming subcommittees requires posting meetings, maintaining quorum, and recording minutes. Participants discussed strategies for collaboration without violating rules, such as working in pairs on assigned sections rather than forming formal subcommittees, and sharing drafts through designated staff (Schley or Oliver) to consolidate feedback. Work sessions were proposed as a method for reviewing marked-up drafts collectively, allowing discussion and consensus on edits without creating unposted meetings. The group explored options for document sharing, including public comment periods or posting draft documents on platforms like BeHeard, ensuring transparency while enabling collaboration.

Discussion also focused on balancing efficiency with compliance, emphasizing small

groups working on specific sections, brainstorming without exceeding quorum, and breaking down the work into manageable parts. The importance of framing the report for different audiences was highlighted-distinguishing between reporting findings and making recommendations. Participants agreed on a phased approach, with a strong draft of findings expected by March and the five-year strategic plan to follow by June. This would allow time for input, deep dives into key themes, and iterative feedback while maintaining alignment with legal requirements. The session concluded with a plan for the next meeting to share common survey themes and updates, initiating a more structured process for developing the report and strategic plan

• **Food allergens update**

During the discussion, an update was shared regarding Meyer's recent meeting with Jordan Bales, the manager of Safety and Environmental Health, and Chrystal Smart, the supervisor of Environmental Health. They had an in-depth conversation about informally incorporating allergen discussions into routine restaurant visits without making changes to the food code, which would have been complex. This approach allows for education on allergens to begin immediately, even if informally, and Meyer found the discussion very helpful. Smart and Bales were able to provide additional insights that Meyer hadn't been aware of previously. Plans were made to continue this educational effort, with Meyer integrating the information into her work.

V. NEW BUSINESS

• **Current events/relevant food policy updates**

Moving on to new business, the group discussed current events and relevant food policy updates. Saunders shared his presentation from the prenatal and postnatal symposium, highlighting the growing interest in diet-related meals, nutrition training, and food access, particularly from Mohawk. He noted that the Medicaid coding used for these services could also apply to Medicare, private insurance, and direct primary care, which CCUA is exploring. It was mentioned that CMS had given CPC codes for food-related reimbursements, but HHS declined to review them, favoring larger companies over smaller programs. Trina Reagan in St. Louis is running a similar program, and there is optimism about pursuing this work despite some bureaucracy.

Updates were also provided on the Access to Healthy Food program through the Farmers Market. The program is accepting applications for the remainder of the year after receiving additional funding and will continue next year. Eligibility is set at 200% below the federal poverty level for households with children or individuals 55 and older, typically requiring participation in SNAP or WIC. Concerns were raised about re-enrollment challenges for SNAP, as many community members must reapply, and previous support from Extension has been lost due to staffing cuts. There was discussion about potential community strategies to assist with re-enrollment and verifying income eligibility for programs, including the state's common eligibility program, which would simplify documentation requirements for participants across multiple services like WIC, Parks and Recreation, and utilities. Overall, the conversation emphasized both opportunities and challenges in improving food access and nutrition support in

VI. GENERAL COMMENTS BY PUBLIC, MEMBERS AND STAFF

- The group briefly touched on holiday well-wishes, asking if everyone had a good Thanksgiving and whether they had enjoyed some food. The next meeting was scheduled for December 17th, and members were given a “homework” assignment: to think of potential themes for the five-year plan. Some participants noted that they had already brainstormed a few ideas and emphasized the importance of capturing these thoughts so they could be incorporated into the report when it comes time to write. This preparatory work is meant to help streamline the discussion and ensure that previously considered ideas are not overlooked.

VII. NEXT MEETING DATE

December 17, 2025

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

- Molitor moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:28 p.m. with Martin seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.