



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes

City Council

Monday, December 16, 2019
5:00 PM

Work Session

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:06 p.m. Councilman Thomas arrived at approximately 5:53 p.m.

Present: 7 - Ruffin, Trapp, Thomas, Peters, Treece, Skala, and Pitzer

This item is open to the public: Contact Center Update

Attachments: [Contact Center Update Presentation](#)

[Contact Center KPI FY19](#)

[Top Request Types](#)

Stephanie Brown, Assistant Director of Community Relations, provided an update on the Contact Center. Ms. Brown explained that the Contact Center serves as a central location for quick access to customers. There are 7 customer service representatives (CSR) taking calls, one also serves in the lobby of City Hall and handles walk-ins, chat and email. The hours of operation are 7:30 am to 5:00 pm, with plans to extend that close time to 5:30 pm. 82% of Contact Center calls are answered by a CSR within 30 seconds. Ms. Brown stated that the top calls have been for transit, utilities, and solid waste. Ms. Brown added that there was a drastic drop in calls regarding transit when the new routes began in June. They also analyze call data to be proactive about queue messaging, especially around holiday solid waste schedules.

Ms. Brown explained that the Contact Center has assisted with the new water rate structure, parking ticket process changes at the Municipal Court, added the chat feature, improved performance even with increasing calls, they are also assisting with two-way communication efforts underway and they are involved with utility customer service requests. Councilman Skala understood the City has social media efforts and inquired if the Contact Center is involved in that. Ms. Brown replied that they are involved and notify the appropriate staff when social media messaging is needed about issues receiving a lot of calls.

Ms. Brown discussed future initiatives including an upgrade to the Tyler 311 system, integration with Building and Site Development, Utility Customer Service, work orders, and Health Department systems. They are also looking to add new citizen self service features and they will be hosting the 2021 Association of Government Contact Center Professionals Annual Conference. Ms. Brown added that they are testing new chat-bot features in Transit to auto-reply to some frequent questions. That would be available by chat or text. Steve Sapp, Director of Community Relations, added that in March 2020 we will be upgrading the Tyler system and that will initiate the ability for more self service features.

Mayor Treece stated that the Contact Center staff always seems to be happy, engaged and helpful. He appreciates the work they do and asked what other resources might be needed to be successful. Ms. Brown stated that the customer service work is not easy, so they are working on techniques to keep them engaged and happy. They are lacking things in the phone system that sometimes require callers to hang up and call back. But software is being looked into that will address that. Mayor Treece inquired if there is anything out there that will assist with monitoring social media and how to manage comments on social media. Ms. Brown stated that there are more robust systems that capture social media aspects, but we would need a larger system to be able to accommodate that.

This item is open to the public: Policing Update

Attachments: [2020 Staffing Presentation](#)
[Community Policing Plan](#)

Police Chief Geoff Jones explained that a report was previously brought to Council on community policing. That report has been withdrawn and this is an update on what has been done since that time on community policing. Chief Jones defined community policing and stated that the department's vision set the standard for where they want to go and how to get there. They do not want to do saturation policing and instead want to utilize strategies that include intelligence-based, community input and joint training, service referral, and workload distribution. They are looking to implement policies that allow for community input, procedural justice, balanced community caretaking and law enforcement. They strive for practices that empower officers to solve problems, allow for open communication and input sessions and will include community oriented evaluation goals.

Chief Jones explained that School Resource Officers (SRO's) are currently at local schools. They are also exploring partnerships with the Fire Department, adding teaching opportunities for SRO's, and working to mitigate crime in the schools through a comprehensive plan for restorative practices.

Chief Jones added that community policing is a community-centered approach and they intend to recruit from schools, civic and faith based groups and those groups that are reflective of our community.

Lt. Hestir stated that training for officers will be infused with a community oriented philosophy. This will ensure a community-centered message in all CPD training, identify joint training opportunities which will include community members in CPD training, and they will train all CPD employees in customer service and service delivery principles.

Chief Jones stated that some changes to policies have been made, but additional changes are needed that will empower officers to act as guardians. Policy changes will be presented publicly and will allow for public input, transparency and allow for the development on fair and impartial police practices. Chief Jones discussed a reorganization which will streamline communication and increase efficiency. Instead of one deputy chief and three assistant chiefs, there will be four assistant chiefs (one per bureau). He added that officer performance evaluations will also include measures on community policing.

Assistant Chief Hunter stated that a Violent Crime Task Force has been formed with a goal to reduce violent crime in Columbia and surrounding areas. CPD is also working diligently to address violent crime and shootings will be worked as homicides. All leads will be followed and all resources utilized. CPD Officers will responsibly enforce the law to

ensure the safety of our community. Chief Jones added that the newly formed Task Force will have staff assigned to it. They are working on data collection which will be used to measure effectiveness, examine areas of concern, and check solutions to address community and policing issues. Chief Jones added that they are also focused on transparency and member of the Command Staff will meet regularly and include members from every unit/division/bureau. CPD will also work with citizens and the media to keep everyone informed.

Sgt. Sinclair stated that there is a staffing plan and he explained the current staffing levels at CPD and how those officers are assigned to the 8 beats in the city. He reviewed a time lapse depicting the officers in the beats and the times the shift changes occur that may add or decrease staffing throughout a 24 hour rotation. This does not account for illness, time off, vacation, etc. He stated that when an incident occurs, the resources deplete very quickly. Sgt. Sinclair reviewed an hourly breakdown of calls for service per hour. Chief Jones added that they would like to also include discretionary time for officers to do community policing. The numbers presented here, do not allow for discretionary time, but these are the minimum number of officers needed only to address calls coming in. Sgt. Sinclair stated that 1.6 officers are recommended per 1,000 residents and Columbia is currently at 1.4. He reviewed the breakdown of sworn officers and how they are divided up. He reviewed the number of officers needed when considering the 2% population growth rate. Sgt. Sinclair stated that the staffing proposal is to add 5 positions per year. This include officers, detectives and supervisors. This will help maintain the projected growth over the next ten years and will move us closer to the 1.6 recommend staffing per 1,000 by putting us at 1.5. The proposal also includes dividing the current 8 beats into 16 beats. This will be smaller areas for officers to enforce, increase beat accountability, reduce response time, and allow for more frequent officer interaction in those neighborhoods. He added that the vacancy rate is 7.5% compared to the national average of 7%.

Sgt. Sinclair added that the in the first year, a traffic unit will be revitalized, the beat subdivision will occur and there will be a residency program for officers living in their beat. Year 4 officers will be hired to fill specific neighborhoods. He briefly reviewed civilian staffing roles and how we compare to benchmark cities which is low. 28 more civilian staff members are needed to meet needs moving forward. There is also a need for two more airport public safety staff. There was general agreement among the Council that a lot of great work has been done over the past year. Trapp has some concern about the chase policy given the recent circumstance that ended in a facility.

This item is open to the public: The City Council of the City of Columbia, Missouri, will meet on Monday, December 16, 2019 pursuant to the City Council Work Session agenda, in Conference Room 1A and 1B of City Hall, 701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri, for a Closed Meeting to discuss the leasing, purchase or sale of real estate by a public governmental body where public knowledge of the transaction might adversely affect the legal consideration therefor, as authorized by Section 610.021(2) of the Revised Statutes of Missouri.

At approximately 6:35 p.m., Mayor Treece 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, 701 E. Broadway, Columbia, Missouri, to discuss the leasing, purchase or sale of real estate by a public governmental body where public knowledge of the transaction might adversely affect the legal consideration therefor as authorized by Section 610.021(2) of the Revised Statutes of Missouri. The motion was seconded by Mr. Skala.

Yes: 7 - Ruffin, Trapp, Thomas, Peters, Treece, Skala, and Pitzer

This item is closed to the public: See attached Notice of Closed Meeting

Attachments: [Notice of Closed Meeting](#)

At approximately 6:36 p.m., the City Council went into closed session pursuant to RSMo Section 610.021(2).

II. OTHER ITEMS THE COUNCIL MAY WISH TO DISCUSS

None.

III. ADJOURNMENT

The closed meeting adjourned at approximately 6:52 p.m.