



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes

City Council

Tuesday, January 19, 2021
5:00 PM

Pre-Council

Council Chamber
Columbia City Hall
701 E. Broadway

I. CALL TO ORDER

The City Council met on January 19, 2021 at approximately 5:05 p.m. in the Council Chamber of City Hall, 701 E. Broadway, Columbia, Missouri.

Council Member Karl Skala, Council Member Ian Thomas (arrived at approximately 5:25 p.m. via videoconference), Council Member Matt Pitzer (arrived at approximately 5:23 p.m. via videoconference), Council Member Betsy Peters, Mayor Brian Treece, Council Member Pat Fowler, and Council Member Mike Trapp were present.

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

This item is open to the public: Consideration of Video Conference Participation

Mayor Treece called the meeting to order at approximately 5:05 p.m. The first order of business was the discussion of Council Member Thomas' request to attend the meeting virtually. Treece mentioned that this had been done once before when the stay at home order was originally put in place. Treece said that there was not a policy in place, and wanted Council to have a discussion on that.

Council Member Trapp said that there is very little different between the meetings that had been held earlier in the year and the remote meetings held previously. The precedent has been established, and the emergency order still stands. The pandemic has been going on for a long time to where it may not feel like an emergency, but it is. There are still a lot of COVID cases, as well as Thomas has been gone due to a family emergency. Trapp mentioned that Pitzer is also under quarantine right now. By not allowing either of them to participate virtually undermines the legitimacy of the process that Council goes through at meetings.

Council Member Skala added that they are torn due to still being under the emergency order. Skala asked if it was legal, or if it conflicted with State Statute.

City Counselor, Nancy Thompson, said that Missouri law does allow governmental bodies to meet virtually as long as there is a quorum in the room. The City of Columbia has a seen and be seen requirement. On the agenda later in the evening there is an item to add better technology to allow for this.

Skala shared reassurance that there was no law being broken through virtual attendance, but added that there should be a stipulation that this should be allowed only under emergency times.

Treece asked if we allow a member of Council to participate virtually, are we then allowed to allow a member of the public to attend and comment virtually? Thompson shared there is a difference between elected officials and members of the public. It is not required under sunshine law that members of the public comment and attend virtually. Thompson shared that there is the ability to give public comments in other ways that remove the reason to allow the public to attend virtually to share their comments.

Treece asked if Council adopts this for their practice, are they obligated to do the same with other boards and commissions? Thompson shared that it is currently the practice to allow quorum in the room to allow for the remaining members to attend virtually. Council adopted that a while back, which has allowed commissions to meet in hybrid forms. Treece asked if it was recommended to formally adopt those rules formally for emergency driven situations.

Council Member Peters agreed with Trapp and Skala, and said as long as we have a quorum in the room they agree with allowing for virtual participation of Council members.

Council Member Fowler added that they have heard that other Cities across the country are introducing regular public participation via video conferencing. Our Disabilities Commission is talking about access to our meetings as a disabilities rights issue. Fowler asked that Council adopts a policy that when a Council Member or Commission member is quarantining or isolating that we do not leave them out of the decision process as long as quorum is present in person.

Skala commented that there is a difference in some Boards and Commissions. Some of them have their own independent authority, for example Planning and Zoning, Board of Adjustment and others. Skala shared that there are staff limitations available to accommodate virtual meetings as a meeting they attended for the Board of Adjustment had issues meeting and their audio link. Overall, Skala prefers to consider tying allowance of virtual meetings for emergency orders.

Fowler asked if this discussion was for the decision of tonight's meeting for Thomas and Pitzer, or looking to give staff guidance on a policy for the future. Treece said they are two different things and that we should get the zoom link out to the two attending virtually, but to also see if the City Manager can put together a three month policy for Council Members to attend virtually. Treece said there needs to be a policy in place to still allow access and transparency. Fowler added that the public may want to have input on. Many members of the public are still protecting themselves by not attending meetings or being out in person. Treece shared that the concerns they had was about if you open up public comment to virtual submissions when do you say no? Do you allow people from St. Louis? Kansas City? California?

There was discussion from the City Clerk, Sheela Amin, on sending the link for all of the meetings for tonight. Treece mentioned that there was a closed meeting at some point and that would be a concern. Fowler added that they were under the impression that the Conference Room 1A/1B was not technically set up or prepared for it. City Manager John Glascock shared that the room was prepared and ready for a closed meeting.

This item is open to the public: Labor Group Presentations

- Fraternal Order of Police, Columbia Police Officer's Association Lodge, #26 (CPOA)
- International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF Local 1055)
- Local 995, Laborers International Union of North America (LiUNA)

Attachments: [CPOA Letter](#)

[CPOA Presentation](#)

[IAFF Local 1055 Presentation](#)

[LiUNA 955 Presentation](#)

CPOA:

Dale Roberts, Executive Director of the Columbia Police Officers Association (CPOA) began his presentation for Labor Discussions. Roberts started off with a discussion of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and how he lived through that instead of learning about it in school.

Roberts started off that labor issues for CPOA really revolve around pay compression within the Officers at CPD. The situation arises because in order to remain competitive, the City has had to increase starting salary, but has not increased the pay for existing officers. A brand new officer right out of the academy, with zero experience will start at \$22.29 per hour. An experienced officer with 9 years on the streets will be making \$22.34 an hour. Roberts said that this is the reason why CPD is losing officers. CPD has lost 37 officers in the last 4 years, which equates to 20% of the entire department. Because of this turnover, 45% of CPD's Patrol Officers have less than 2 years' experience.

We know pay compression hurts officers, but how it hurts the City is what Roberts shared next. With the loss of 37 officers the City has lost the cost of pay and benefits to train them, the step-up pay for their Field Training Officers during that training, all of these expenses paid for just for that officer to leave the city and replace with a new officer with zero experience. How else does it hurt the City? From the continuing loss of experience and these 'permanent vacancies' have given Columbia Officers more calls on average. This means keeping them busy, and slowing down response times compared to benchmark cities.

Roberts shared that officers cannot keep up with the demand within the City. The solution proposed was to continue the corrective pay plan process. This was agreed for the 2020 Fiscal year, and Roberts is asking the City to continue on it moving forward. A new component they are asking for is that Officers move to midpoint within 5 years, but there are few raises after attaining the midpoint.

Treese asked if CPOA was in year one of a three year agreement for financial and wage issues. Roberts answered stating this was not a wage reopener. The City had asked to wait on wages last year due to waiting on COVID and the unknowns of that. Roberts stated we were simply back to that conversation since it was postponed for a bit.

Fowler shared that an officer used to attend neighborhood meetings and would share that they were working basically a second full time job, when they were not out on the streets policing. The concern Fowler brought up was how are the officers rested and ready to work their full time job for the City when they work so many additional hours elsewhere? The concern was shared because all of the labor contracts on the table tonight are all dangerous jobs. Roberts shared that

many officers feel called to the profession to serve, but work other part time jobs to be able to live the life they would like to live. Roberts went on to list off other places that officers could make more money, for example Dollar Tree, Walmart, etc. Roberts used this to say if the officers were already paid more, then they would not have to work other jobs. Fowler reiterated that the issue is how to address the state of policing in Columbia and the tension that exists between officers and citizens. When you put an officer that is not well rested and unable to make decisions because they are exhausted or tired, that does that improve the relationships of officers and citizens.

Fowler also asked when it would be a good time to have a social media policy in the Police Officers contracts? The question was also brought up adding language in their contracts for community policing to be as a guardian model of policing compared to a warrior model.

John Glascock, City Manager, added that there was already a social media policy being created. It is being reviewed by Human Resources and Legal. For the contracts, that would have to be negotiated.

Roberts added that for Community Policing, the Union has actively supported it. Some of the older officers will argue that is what they do, that is what they have been doing. Roberts shared the story of one officer who would always keep a baseball glove in their car and if they saw any kids out on the streets, the officer would stop and play ball with the kids. But now, due to staffing shortages they do not have time to do any of that. One of the main components of Community Policing is having an officer assigned to a certain area, but when you have high turnover you do not have officers assigned to one area to have any ability to maintain relationships with their community.

Matt Nichols, President of the Union, shared that the officers have embraced Chief Jones model for Community Policing. The 150 officers are dedicated to it and moving forward to move forward in the best interests of the citizens. Many of the officers currently live within Columbia, and most of them grew up here. With 152 officers on the roster, approximately 48% of them have 5 years or less of service. Of that remaining, approximately 98 of those officers are not assigned to specialty roles, they are assigned to patrol. 26 officers in patrol cars have more than 5 years experience serving Columbia. 73% of patrol cops are less than 5 year cops. If we want to continue hiring and recruiting the best and the brightest we need to fix the issues of pay.

Nichols reiterated that we need to stop the revolving door of training and paying for an officer, and then leaving the City for a better pay.

IAFF 1055:

Zachary Privette, President of IAFF, presented the Fire Departments collective bargaining. A lot of the details that will be seen and discussed will happen during the collective bargaining discussions. What IAFF is asking from Council is to give the bargaining team the commitment to compensation, staffing, holidays and professional development. Compensation, they are asking for a commitment to annual raises. They are looking for a staffing commitment to having 4 persons to a truck. For Holidays they are asking for a commitment to addressing the two holidays that are paid at 11.25 hours, when they work 24 hours. They are also asking for a commitment to training budget increases for professional development for the fire department.

IAFF is prepared to submit a proposal that will ask the City for annual pay raises. This is needed to address compression against other grades, promote members making less than those below them, and bringing in the engineers that were left behind in the last pay raise cycle. People want to know that they are valued when they commit to support the City. IAFF is wanting to see this sort of commitment throughout the entire contract rather than year after year. In order for that to happen pay and compensation need to be the top priority of the budget process, not what is left over.

When it comes to staffing, they are asking for four person staffing on all in-service apparatus. They are more efficient with more staff on a truck, and they want to help develop a plan to increase staffing in the department.

Privette pointed out that during their normal scheduled time, it is difficult for the department to attend the City trainings. Because of this, they are asking for increased professional development funding to be able to have their own outside training to still meet requirements.

Treece began questioning by asking for a better understanding why two holidays were only compensated for 11.25 hours rather than 24 hours? Treece said their theory is that it was due to the frequency that not all firefighters don't work the holidays. Privette said that they believed it was due to the balancing act of other employees get 8 hours of holiday pay and it is only the firefighters who do 24 hour shifts.

Peters asked the question of understanding the shifts. Peters believed they had moved recently to a 48/96 hour schedule. Privette explained that all members work 24 hours for holidays, but they still have their 48/96 hour schedule. Peters also asked to better understand the training of the City issues. Privette explained that the City's training schedule isn't always open for their schedule because of how their schedule works out and it does not coincide with the training with the City.

Fowler asked how they work 48 hours on and 96 hours off and how it came to be. Specifically asking how it came to be considering they cannot make it to City training. Privette explained there are different shifts that firefighters work across the country. The 48/96 is a new thing for the department, it started in the West Coast where people come in and work their 48 hours and then are able to go away for 96 hours. Fowler brought up that someone had mentioned at a prior update from the unions that many of the firefighters had a second job. Fowler stated this and shared concern that they wonder how rested the firefighters are when they come to work their primary job for the City if they are working second jobs. This then would impact the budget for workers injuries, and would put the firefighters to be more vulnerable as they run into burning buildings if they are not properly rested.

Fowler also went on to discuss the funding cut for training. Privette explained that the City provides the minimum training to keep up with their annual certification. If the firefighters want to have other more advanced training they would have to ask to take the time off, and most of the times pay for their own travel, training, and opportunities for advancement.

Local 955:

Andrew Hutchinson, the local field representative for workers 955 for service and maintenance workers for the City of Columbia presented on their wage opener for collective bargaining.

Hutchinson started with Chapter 19 discussing shift differentials and standby pay. Currently there are mechanics who are working at the grissom building who are fixing everything from City busses to solid waste trucks. Local 955 is asking for an increase in shift differential for all hours worked between 6pm and 6am to change from \$0.65/hr to \$1.00/hr and to add shift differentials for all hours worked on weekends. They are also asking for an adjusted standby pay from \$15/day to \$45/day and an added hazard pay for mechanics who are asked to fix a truck on the side of the road and for workers in hazardous winter weather conditions. These numbers have not gone up significantly for a long time, so Local 955 is just asking for them to be adjusted with inflation.

Local 955 is also asking for allowance changes. This would entail winter outwear, protective footwear, and a tool allowance. Mechanics have been forking over their own money to be able to buy adequate tools to be able to accurately work on the trucks for the city.

The Local 955 union also asked for the reinstatement of the \$750 deductible health insurance plan, vacation accrual adjustments, and adding funeral leave of 3 days. Hutchinson mentioned how many of the workers have had to take a lot of COVID leave due to the pandemic and family getting sick. The funeral leave stems from the fact that there is not much allocated now, and there could be a worker burying their wife today and tomorrow have to be driving a street sweeper or a City bus. It would be for the safety of the City to allow for more funeral leave.

Moving from Chapter 19 to Collective Bargaining proposals Hutchinson talked of union representative site visits, representation at discipline and at orientation. For section 7, there is the proposal to add language that union representatives shall not be hindered nor harassed by supervisors and/or management during site visits. Hutchinson shared a story of a time they were accosted by a site supervisor even though proper notice was given. There also was the proposed language added to ensure that at times of discipline a union representative be present, as well as having a union representative during orientation to ensure new hires know their union rights.

Wage proposals reflected a proposed 11% increase across the board. There were also the proposals of inserting 5 year to midpoint language. Hutchinson reiterated that people hit their five year marks and do not hit the midpoint range. There also was the request for a longevity/loyalty raise.

Fowler asked where the congruence was for providing uniforms and equipment since the City provides it all for the police and firefighters, but not for the maintenance workers. Fowler mentioned they appreciate what Local 955 has put together and presented to Council tonight.

Skala said that it seems that most of the requests have two categories: pay and benefits, and one time costs like tool allowances and trainings. Skala asked for a priority from the Local 955 when it comes to funding. Hutchinson said they would prioritize building in staggered raises of small amounts to not allow inflation to affect the amount of money people take home.

This item is open to the public: Motion for the City Council to go into closed session in Conference Room 1A/1B to discuss:

- 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) RSMo.

- Sealed bids and related documents, until the bids are opened; and sealed proposals and related documents or any documents related to a negotiated contract until a contract is executed, or all proposals are rejected pursuant to Section 610.021(12) RSMo.

At approximately 6:16 p.m., 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 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) of the Revised Statutes of Missouri, and sealed bids and related documents, until the bids are opened; and sealed proposals and related documents or any documents related to a negotiated contract until a contract is executed, or all proposals are rejected pursuant to Section 610.021(12) of the Revised Statutes of Missouri.. The motion was seconded by Mr. Skala.

The vote was recorded as follows: VOTING YES: SKALA, THOMAS, PITZER, PETERS, TREECE, FOWLER, TRAPP. VOTING NO: NO ONE.

At approximately 6:20 p.m., the City Council went into closed session pursuant to RSMo Sections 610.021(9) and (12).

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

II. ALL OTHER ITEMS COUNCIL MAY WISH TO DISCUSS

III. ADJOURNMENT

The closed meeting adjourned at approximately 7:06 p.m.

Tentative future item topics:

Members of the public may attend any open meeting. For requests for accommodations related to disability, please call 573-874-CITY (573-874-2489) or email CITY@CoMo.gov. In order to assist staff in making the appropriate arrangements for your accommodation, please make your request as far in advance of the posted meeting date as possible.