

PROCEEDINGS OF CITY COUNCIL
September 21, 2026

A regular meeting of the mayor and council of the City of Columbus, Nebraska, was convened in open and public session on September 21, 2026, at 6 p.m. in the Columbus Community Building, Community Room, 2500 14 Street, Columbus, Nebraska. Notice of this meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Columbus Telegram on August 26, 2026, with a copy of the proof of publication being on file in the office of the city clerk. Notice of this meeting was given simultaneously to the mayor and members of the city council, with a copy of the acknowledgment of receipt of notice being on file in the office of the city clerk. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the advance notice and in the notice to the mayor and city council of this meeting. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the public.

1. **STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN MEETINGS ACT AND ROLL CALL:** Mayor Bulkley announced that a copy of the Open Meetings Act is available in the meeting room on the agenda table. Present were Mayor James Bulkley and Council Members Cynthia Alarcón, Charlie Bahr, Troy Hiemer, Rich Jablonski, Kat Lopez, and Ron Schilling. Members AJ Palensky and Prent Roth were absent and excused. City staff members included City Attorney Neal Valorz, City Administrator Tara Vasicek, Director of General Services Betsy Eckhardt, City Engineer Rick Bogus, City Clerk Shuraya Choat, Police Chief Bret Strecker, and Finance Director Chris Norquest.
2. **PRAYER:** Hiemer led in prayer.
3. **NATIONAL ANTHEM AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The National Anthem was played and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
4. **CONSENT AGENDA:** The following items are considered to be routine by the city council and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a city council member or citizen so requests, in which event the item will be removed from consent status and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda. The items on the consent agenda were approved as presented with a motion by Hiemer and a second by Bahr. Alarcón, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Schilling voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Roth were absent.
 - 4.A. **Minutes of September 8, 2026, budget hearing.**
 - 4.B. **Minutes of September 8, 2026, City Council meeting.**
 - 4.C. **Reappointment of Diane Scheffler and Joyce Schmid to the Columbus Senior Center Advisory Board for three-year term.**
 - 4.D. **Resolution No. R26-115 authorizing the mayor to sign the Municipal Annual Certification of Program Compliance 2026 to Nebraska Board of Public Roads Classifications and Standards.** Resolution No. R26-115 is entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO SIGN THE MUNICIPAL ANNUAL CERTIFICATION OF PROGRAM COMPLIANCE 2026

TO THE NEBRASKA BOARD OF PUBLIC ROADS CLASSIFICATIONS AND STANDARDS, A COPY OF WHICH IS ATTACHED HERETO AND INCORPORATED HEREIN; AND TO REPEAL ALL RESOLUTIONS OR PORTIONS THEREOF IN CONFLICT HERewith.

4.E. Resolution No. R26-116 authorizing payment of various improvement projects. Resolution No. R26-116 is entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, TO AUTHORIZE AND DIRECT THAT A CHECK BE ISSUED AND MADE PAYABLE TO THE RESPECTIVE CONTRACTOR(S) FOR LABOR, EQUIPMENT, AND MATERIALS FURNISHED FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE FOLLOWING DESIGNATED DISTRICTS AND PROJECTS WITHIN THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, ALL AS SET FORTH ON THE ATTACHED CERTIFICATES OF PROGRESS PREPARED BY THE RESPECTIVE SPECIAL ENGINEER TO WIT: MIDLANDS CONTRACTING, INC DBA JOHNSON SERVICE CO., \$110,788.25; RUTJENS CONSTRUCTION INC., COLUMBUS NORTH WELL 20, \$633,152.70

4.F. Payroll and bills on file. B=Bnd Pymnts; CP=Capt'l Proj; E=Expns; G=Grnts; I=Insrnc; L=Lic; M=Mbrshp; P=Pymt; R=Rfnd; RT=Rent; S=Srv & Supp; T=Trng; 9/25/26 payroll 923,072.79; 911 Custom 1,876.00 S; A to Z Msgng 148.50 S; Ace Hdwr 700.10 S; Advnce Auto 47.49 S; Advntg Archives 3,000.00 S; Akrs Equip 2,041.60 S; Aqua-Pure 14,770.63 S; Arnold Mtr Sup 314.94 S; AT&T 1,625.10 S; Auxiant 143,844.85 I; Barcel Lndscp 26,000.00 S; Behlen Twng 1,200.00 S; Benchmark Gvrnmt 87.65 S; Black Hills 2,312.49 S; Bickstn Pub 115.15; Blackstrap 11,298.00 S; Bomgaars 2,521.09 S; Bound Tree Med 2,134.51 S; Buersh Golf 540.00 S; Casey's Mail Serv 5,916.50 S; CDW Gvrnmt 22,167.10 S; Cntrl Sand 3,378.21 S; Cntrl Valley Ag 347.25 S; Chrome N Steel 5,564.61 S; Clay Hills Ag 932.50 S; CNC Rpr 803.23 S; CCH 2,454.94 S; Col Cstm Emb 635.68 S; Col Fam Rsrc Ctr 11,491.30 RT; Conner Psych Srvcs 1,868.90 S; Connoisseur Media 900.00 S; Core & Main 334.64 S; CPPD 527.30 S; Culligan 29.00 S; Distar Ind 52.00 S; C & E Douglass 85.71 R; D Dunbar 51,805.97 P; Eakes 7,006.12 CP; Ed M Feld Equip 17,498.95 S; Elec Pump 31,431.36 S; Envisionware 75.00 S; FNBO 23,688.45 S; Frontier 909.32 S; Frontier Coop Co 15,417.02 S; Galls 175.40 S; Gehring Const 6,010.50 S; Grainger 119.86 S; Grt Plns Comm 1,502.99 S; Grt Plns Nursery 27,007.00 CP; Hawkins 4,661.22 S; HDR 14,073.52 CP; Hrtlnd Ntrl Gas 1,665.39 S; Hobby Lobby 61.32 S; M Howerter MD 1,303.75 S; Ingram Lbry 1,969.72 S; Jackson Serv 2,465.35 S; J Bethune 775.00 S; JEO 8,641.25 CP; J Deere Fin 354.09 S; Jones Auto 839.76 S; Kelly Sup 174.94 S; Language Ln Serv 201.36 S; LARM 2,905.01 I; League of NE Mun 66.00 T; Lbry Frntr Intl 19,695.07 S; Lncln Wnwtr Wrks 3,064.43 CP; Loup 142,912.82 S; Menards 1,979.84 S; MES Srv Co 320.00 S; Mdlns Cntrctng 110,788.25 CP; Mdwst Lab 1,005.27 S; Mdwst Tape 6,000.00 S; Mdwst Turf 725.75 S; Mike's Twng 1,350.00 S; Motion Ind 816.68 S; Mntn View 6,512.41 S; Napa Auto 44.42 S; NE State Fire Mrshl 72.00 S; NE Title Co 456,191.98 CP; Comm Cllg 4,247.21 T; NE NE Econ Dev 475.00 S; NE NE Slid Wste 75,704.51 S; NoSwett 2,423.42 S; Novicki Fire Prvntn 192.50 S; Occ Health 630.00 S; One Call Cncpt 304.32

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S; O'Reilly 279.71 S; Osborn for Senate 272.00 R; Overdrive 7,759.00 S; Pete Lien 7,791.76 S; D Pfeifer 397.09 R; Platte Cnty 4,267.54 S; Platte Vllly Comm 115.00 S; Points Cnsltng 3,465.00 CP; Port-A-Johns 450.00 S; Quadient 1,000.00 S; RDO Truck 57.83 S; Reardon Lawn 48.99 S; Rembolt Ludtke 2,500.00 S; R A Comi 1,775.00 S; Rvr Vllly Tire 120.00 S; Rvrsd Prtbls 110.00 S; Rutjens 633,152.70 CP; Rutt's 7,990.00 S; S & S Srvcs 975.00 S; Sapp Bros 57,539.24 S; M Sargent 28.80 E; Schieffer Sgns 52.00 S; Schuyler Rbbr 4,987.43 S; G Sealock 150.00 S; Shvln Sup 166.63 S; Shirts R Us 216.00 S; Sipple, Hansen, Emerson 2,713.95 S; S Houston Equip 121.68 S; Sunbelt Rntls 289.27 S; Super Svr 47.52 S; R Sutherland 100.00 R; Sysco 12,742.46 S; The Glf Shp 5,660.29 S; The Pttstrgh Pnts 3,566.40 S; Tire Outlet 1,331.56 S; Titan Mchnry 2,871.01 S; TK Elevator 272.17 S; Tooley Drug 4.98 S; Truck Cntr 1,235.63 S; Twin Rvrs Vet 173.40 S; Ty's Outdoor 37.37 S; UPS 69.98 S; USA Blue Book 1,964.01 S; C Van Dyke 175.00 S; J Van Iperen 305.06 E; Van Wall 890.91 S; Vandenberg Elec 753.77 S; C Wagner 224.00 S; Waste Conn 713.11 S. Total \$3,025,331.51.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Included in Consent Agenda

6. **SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS:** None

7. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

7.A. **Public hearing - Property tax request for 2026-2027.** Norquest reviewed the proposed budget and confirmed the property tax request amount of \$7,899,955.48. He noted that property taxes cover approximately 17 percent of the city's total budget and the City Council's decision to reduce the maximum allowable property tax request resulted in the City foregoing \$246,529.54 in property tax revenue. No public testimony was heard. The public hearing closed with a motion by Hiemer and a second by Bahr. Alarcón, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Schilling voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Roth were absent.

7.A.1. **Resolution No. R26-117 setting the property tax request at \$7,899,955.48.** Resolution No. R26-117 entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, SETTING THE 2026-2027 PROPERTY TAX REQUEST AT \$7,899,955.48 was adopted with a motion by Jablonski and a second by Schilling. Alarcón, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Schilling voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Roth were absent.

8. **PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:** None

9. **REPORTS OF CITY OFFICES:**

9.A. **Update on Nebraska Department of Transportation Loup River South Bridges project.** Bogus noted that the project remains on schedule with traffic expected to switch to the new bridge around Thanksgiving to allow repairs to begin on the northbound bridge.

10. **REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES:** None

11. REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES: None

12. REPORTS ON LEGISLATION: None

13. NEW BUSINESS:

13.A. Appointment of Russ Strehle to the Civil Service Commission filling unexpired term until April 2029. It was noted that board members must live within city limits to serve on the Civil Service Commission. The appointment was removed from the agenda with a motion by Bahr and a second by Hiemer. Alarcòn, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Schilling voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Roth were absent.

13.B. Application from Nissen Winery, Inc. for special designated liquor license at 1554 18 Avenue from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., December 6, 2026, for a craft fair. The application from Nissen Winery, Inc. for a special designated liquor license was approved with a motion by Hiemer and a second by Lopez. Alarcòn, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Schilling voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Roth were absent.

13.C. Comments from mayor and city council members. Bulkley commended the culinary and cultural diversity event that was hosted by the House of Bah Foundation and Centro Hispano this past Sunday at the Columbus Community Building. He noted the great turnout and that it was a wonderful celebration of the diversity within the community.

14. RESOLUTIONS:

14.A. Resolution No. R26-118 approving Change Order No. 2 with Rutjens Construction, Inc. in the amount of \$57,369.10 for Change Proposal Requests 6 and 7 for North Well No. 20. CIP#25-67 Resolution No. R26-118 entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, APPROVING CHANGE ORDER NO. 2 WITH RUTJENS CONSTRUCTION, INC. FOR CHANGE PROPOSAL REQUESTS 6 AND 7 IN THE AMOUNT OF \$57,369.10 FOR COLUMBUS NORTH WELL NO. 20 PROJECT was adopted with a motion by Schilling and a second by Bahr. Alarcòn, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Schilling voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Roth were absent.

14.B. Resolution R26-119 approving total acquisition in the amount of \$235,000 plus closing costs for Walter Lee Kittrell and Tami Renee Kittrell in conjunction with the 8th Street 12th Avenue Intersection Improvements project. CIP #25-35 Resolution No. R26-119 entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, APPROVING THE CITY OF COLUMBUS ACQUISITION CONTRACT WITH WALTER LEE KITTRELL AND TAMI RENEE KITTRELL, HUSBAND AND WIFE, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$235,000 PLUS CLOSING COSTS, WITH RESPECT TO LOT 1, AND THE EAST 10' OF LOT 2, BLOCK 174, ORIGINAL

CITY OF COLUMBUS, PLATTE COUNTY, NEBRASKA; ALL FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE 8 STREET AND 12 AVENUE INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT was adopted with a motion by Lopez and a second by Alarcòn. Alarcòn, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Schilling voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Roth were absent.

- 14.C. Resolution No. R26-120 adopting Schedule of Fees for Fiscal Year 2026-2027.** Resolution No. R26-120 entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, ADOPTING THE SCHEDULE OF FEES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027, EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2026, A COPY OF WHICH IS ATTACHED HERETO AND INCORPORATED HEREIN; AND TO REPEAL ALL RESOLUTIONS OR PORTIONS THEREOF IN CONFLICT HERewith was adopted with a motion by Alarcòn and a second by Jablonski. Alarcòn, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Schilling voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Roth were absent.

15. ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING:

- 15.A. Ordinance No. 26-18 adopting Pay Plan for Fiscal Year 2026-2027.** The rules were suspended and Ordinance No. 26-18 entitled: AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, REGARDING THE SALARIES OF OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES; PAY PLAN FOR ALL CLASSIFICATIONS WITHIN THE CITY; AND HOURLY SALARY RANGES FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL CLASSIFICATION was read by number only with a motion by Hiemer and a second by Schilling. Alarcòn, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Schilling voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Roth were absent. Ordinance No. 26-18 was adopted with a motion by Hiemer and a second by Bahr. Alarcòn, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Schilling voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Roth were absent.

- 15.B. Ordinance No. 26-19 adopting Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027.** The rules were suspended and Ordinance No. 26-19 entitled: AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, ADOPTING THE BUDGET STATEMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027 TO BE TERMED THE ANNUAL APPROPRIATION BILL; TO APPROPRIATE SUMS FOR NECESSARY EXPENSES AND LIABILITIES; AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE PUBLICATION OF THIS ORDINANCE IN PAMPHLET FORM; AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE EFFECTIVE DATE was read by number only with a motion by Bahr and a second by Lopez. Alarcòn, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Schilling voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Roth were absent. Ordinance No. 26-19 was adopted with a motion by Bahr and a second by Lopez. Alarcòn, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Schilling voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Roth were absent.

16. ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING: None

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17. **ORDINANCES ON THIRD READING:** None
18. **CONSIDERATION OF PAYROLL AND BILLS ON FILE:** Included in Consent Agenda.
19. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None
20. **ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Presented and approved this 5th day of October 2026.

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

: Shuraya Choat