

COUNCIL OF COLUMBUS, GEORGIA
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES

Council Chambers
C. E. “Red” McDaniel City Services Center- Second Floor
3111 Citizens Way, Columbus, GA 31906

July 29, 2025
9:00 AM
Consent Agenda/Work Session

C O N S E N T A G E N D A / W O R K S E S S I O N

PRESENT: Mayor B. H. “Skip” Henderson, III and Councilors Travis L. Chambers, Joanne Cogle (arrived at 9:03 a.m.), Charmaine Crabb, Glenn Davis (arrived at 9:07 a.m.), R. Walker Garrett, Byron Hickey (arrived at 9:07 a.m.), Bruce Huff (arrived at 11:19 a.m.) and Toyia Tucker (via teleconference). Deputy City Manager Lisa Goodwin, City Attorney Clifton Fay and Clerk of Council Lindsey G. McLemore and Deputy Clerk of Council Tameka Colbert.

ABSENT: Mayor Pro Tem R. Gary Allen and Councilor John Anker were absent.

The following documents have been included as a part of the electronic Agenda Packet: (1) Columbus Police Department; (2) 2021 SPLOST Fire Station Project Update PP; (3) Department of Public Works Homeless Camp PP; (4) Columbus Correct Care PP

The following documents were distributed around the Council table: (1) Amended Agenda

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor B.H. "Skip" Henderson, III, Presiding

INVOCATION: Offered by Deputy City Manager Lisa Goodwin

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Mayor Henderson

W O R K S E S S I O N A G E N D A

- I. Youth Council Placemaking Grant Award – Sadie Krawczyk, Managing Director for GeorgiaForward, Tavari Turner, Program Manager for GeorgiaForward, and Lisa Goodwin, Deputy City Manager

NOTE: Councilors Davis and Hickey arrived at 9:07 a.m.

Ms. Lucile Choudhury, President, Youth Advisory Council, expressed gratitude for the grant supporting the Kindness Rocks Project. She explained that the project was chosen to foster support, connection, and community by spreading positivity and kind affirmations.

Ms. Sadie Krawczyk, Managing Director, GeorgiaForward, expressed gratitude and excitement about partnering with the City of Columbus through the Georgia Municipal Association and GeorgiaForward. She highlighted their shared commitment to helping young people make an impact in creating positive change within their community.

She explained that GeorgiaForward is a nonprofit within the Georgia Municipal Association. Its key focus areas include child and youth well-being, leadership development, and promoting childhood literacy.

II. Public Safety Update - Stoney Mathis, Chief, Columbus Police Department

Police Chief Stoney Mathis, CPD, provided an update on recent accomplishments and initiatives within the Columbus Police Department, to include staffing adjustments, operational enhancements, zoning adjustments and changes in technology and infrastructure.

Deputy Chief Roderick Graham, CPD, provided a snapshot of key departmental data. He presented a comparison of Part I crime statistics for the 1st and 2nd quarters spanning the years 2021 through 2025, explaining that the data shows a decrease in crime over the years. He highlighted areas where improvement has been most significant and noted the department's continued efforts in crime reduction. In addition, he shared a comparison of sworn personnel staffing levels for the same quarters and years, noting shifts in departmental capacity over time.

In response to a request made by Councilor Cogle, **Deputy Chief Graham** stated that the matter regarding the pension plan had been previously discussed and will eventually be brought before Council. He recommended reviewing the possibility of removing the current three-year extension, explaining that such a change would support the development of a succession plan.

At the request of Mayor Henderson, **Chief Mathis** shared his philosophy on crime prevention. He emphasized the importance of law enforcement and accountability but expressed a desire to return to a model of policing where officers are viewed as peace officers. He stated that the department's goal is to be present in the community, actively working to build relationships and foster trust and cooperation with residents. He also shared that the department uses intelligence-led policing to identify crime hotspots and to address issues in targeted areas.

Assistant Chief Lance Deaton, CPD, provided a breakdown of murder clearance rates and part one crimes from 2021 through 2025. He reported that all murder cases in 2025 have been cleared, except for one still under investigation.

In response to questions from Councilor Davis regarding procurement procedures, **Finance Director Angelica Alexander** explained that Council has flexibility regarding the threshold amount that initiates the procurement process for certain items. She noted that some state requirements still apply. She also reminded Council that they increased the purchasing limits in September 2024.

REFERRAL(S):

FOR THE CITY MANAGER:

- Can we get an update on the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) and how the retirement of officers impact both incoming personnel and the department overall. *(Councilor Cogle)*

FOR THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT:

- Would like a list from the State outlining items that can and cannot be procured under current regulations. *(Councilor Davis)*

III. Fire Station SPLOST Update, Ryan Pruett, Director, Inspection & Code

Inspections & Code Director Ryan Pruett provided an update on the ongoing fire station projects, highlighting the progress made to date. He mentioned that there have been concerns related to the renovations of Fire Stations #4 and #8 and presented recommendations from the Columbus Fire Department addressing those concerns.

IV. Proposed Camping on Public Property Discussion - Chief Stoney Mathis, Police Department, Chief Sal Scarpa, Fire & EMS, Pat Frey, Vice President of United Way, Terrika Barnes, Director of Community Case Management, and Drale Short, Director of Public Works

Public Works Director Drale Short provided a presentation outlining the process Public Works follows to clean homeless camps. The presentation detailed the steps involved and the responsibilities carried out by the department during these clean-up efforts.

Ms. Terrika Barnes, Director of Community Case Management, United Way, provided additional information on the process of closing homeless camps, emphasizing the role of the United Way in the process. She outlined the services offered to individuals during closures, including outreach and support efforts. She also mentioned the ongoing challenges related to affordable housing and funding.

Ms. Pat Frey, Vice President, United Way, advised that, according to the most recent Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, there are 303 individuals currently considered homeless. She noted that this is a fluctuating number, subject to change over time.

NOTE: Councilor Huff arrived at 11:19 a.m.

Sergeant Katina Williams, CPD, shared an overview of the Police Department’s role in addressing homelessness, specifically focusing on the procedures used when clearing homeless camps. She explained how the department works in coordination with other individuals and agencies to ensure a safe and respectful process.

NOTE: Councilor Cogle left the meeting at approximately 11:45 a.m.

Chief Sal Scarpa, Fire & EMS, shared the Fire Department’s role in assisting with homelessness. He provided data on the Columbus Correct Care Initiative and announced the launch of the first Mobile Integrated Healthcare Unit.

REFERRAL(S):

FOR THE DEPUTY CITY MANAGER:

- Would like to develop some initiatives to deal with the homeless situation in the community, with a focus on partnering with other entities and organizations. *(Councilor Hickey)*
- A request was made to develop a comprehensive plan to address homelessness in the community, incorporating components such as zoning, healthcare access, food availability, and self-sustainability. *(Councilor Garrett)*
- A request was made to research and consolidate information on what other communities are doing to address homelessness. *(Councilor Cogle)*
- We need to clarify the language in paragraph C of the ordinance. *(Councilor Crabb)*

C O N S E N T A G E N D A

MINUTES

1. Approval of minutes for the July 22, 2025, Council Meeting and Executive Session. Councilor Garrett made a motion to amend the minutes as described by the Clerk of Council and to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Councilor Crabb and carried unanimously by the seven members being present, with Councilor Cogle being absent for the vote, and Mayor Pro Tem Allen and Councilor Anker being absent from the meeting.

Clerk of Council Linsey G. McLemore requested an amendment to page 4 of the July 22, 2025, Council Meeting Minutes, under the Public Comments for Item #3 on the City Attorney's Agenda, the name listed as "Amy Borgen" should be corrected to "Amy Borden."

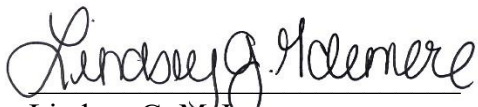
RESOLUTIONS:

2. **Resolution (224-25):** A resolution excusing Mayor Pro Tem R. Gary Allen from the July 29, 2025, Consent Agenda / Work Session. Councilor Garrett made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Councilor Crabb and carried unanimously by the eight members being present, with Councilor Cogle being absent for the vote and Mayor Pro Tem Allen and Councilor Anker being absent from the meeting.
3. **Resolution (225-25):** A resolution excusing Councilor John Anker from the July 29, 2025, Consent Agenda / Work Session. (ADD-ON) Councilor Garrett made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Councilor Crabb and carried unanimously by the eight members being present, with Councilor Cogle being absent for the vote and Mayor Pro Tem Allen and Councilor Anker being absent from the meeting.

CITY MANAGER POSITION UPDATE:

Mayor B. H. "Skip" Henderson, III, provided a brief update on the status of the search for a City Manager.

With there being no further business to discuss, Mayor Henderson entertained a motion for adjournment. Motion by Councilor to adjourn the July 29, 2025, Consent Agenda/Work Session, seconded by Councilor Garrett and carried unanimously by the six members present, with Councilors Cogle and Davis being absent for the vote, and Mayor Pro Tem Allen and Councilor Anker being absent from the meeting, with the time being 12:34 p.m.



Lindsey G. McLemore
Clerk of Council
Council of Columbus, Georgia