

PROCEEDINGS OF CITY COUNCIL
March 2, 2026

A regular meeting of the mayor and council of the City of Columbus, Nebraska, was convened in open and public session on March 2, 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 February 25, 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:** Council President Troy Hiemer announced that a copy of the Open Meetings Act is posted in the meeting room. Present were Council Members Cynthia Alarcòn, Charlie Bahr, Troy Hiemer, Rich Jablonski, Kat Lopez, and Prent Roth. Council Mayor James Bulkley and Council Members AJ Palensky and Ron Schilling were absent and excused. City staff members included City Administrator Tara Vasicek, City Clerk Shuraya Choat, Police Chief Bret Strecker, Director of General Services Betsy Eckhardt, Fire Chief Ryan Gray, Communications Director Rachel Pensick, Park and Recreation Director Sydney Mroczek, Street Superintendent Clete Borchers, Water Utility Crew Leader Chris Gernstein, Engineering Coordinator Renee Whiting, and Communications Manager Matt Lindberg.
2. **PRAYER:** Jablonski 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. Alarcòn, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Roth voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Schilling were absent.

Bulkley arrived at 6:03 p.m.
 - 4.A. **Minutes of February 17, 2026, City Council meeting.**
 - 4.B. **Minutes of February 17, 2026, Community Development Agency meeting.**
 - 4.C. **Northeast Nebraska Area Agency on Aging FY2026-2027 funding for the Senior Center.**
 - 4.D. **Resolution No. R26-35 approving third one-year extension of Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with Platte County in the amount of \$51,210.45**

- for prosecution services.** Resolution No. R26-35 is entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, APPROVING A THIRD ONE-YEAR EXTENSION OF THE INTERLOCAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH PLATTE COUNTY FOR PROSECUTION SERVICES AT A REVISED ANNUAL COST OF \$51,210.45.
- 4.E. Resolution No. R26-36 authorizing payment of various improvement projects.** Resolution No. R26-36 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: B-D CONSTRUCTION, INC., GEHRING CONSTRUCTION & READY MIX CO., INC., CONCRETE PAVING IMPROVEMENTS 2026, \$27,930.60.
- 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. 3/13/26 payroll 890,629.79; 911 Custom 535.00 S; Ace Hdwr 289.40 S; Allo 146.07 S; Arnold Mtr Sup 1,079.60 S; Auxiant 193,944.90 I; Axon Ent 3,418.90 S; Baird Holm 468.00 S; B-D Const 3,522.00 S; A Benesch 5,054.50 CP; Black Hills 575.14 S; Blackstone Pub 168.75 S; Bobcat of Omaha 458.92 S; Bomgaars 1,053.26 S; Bound Tree Med 971.76 S; CDW Gvrnmnt 6,862.80 CP; Cengage Lrng 26.99 S; CCC 75.00 T; Chrome N' Steel 432.11 S; CCH 27.30 S; Col Cstm Emb 201.00 S; Confluence 7,282.50 CP; Culligan 36.50 S; DAS St Acctng 1,663.99 S; DEMCO 153.44 S; Digitech 2,856.14 S; Eakes 995.42 S; Ed M Feld 87,447.40 CP; T Egger 43.50 E; Elect Eng 1,995.00 S; Electrnc Eng 270.24 S; Galls 252.60 S; Gehring Const 28,233.35 CP; Gene Stffy 372.83 S; S & S Giustra 205.63 R; Godfathers 175.19 S; Grt Plns Comm 209.95 S; Grt Plns Uniforms 179.00 S; Hawkins 4,390.77 S; HD Sup 271.06 S; HDR 27,404.35 CP; Holiday Inn 1,619.40 S; Hmtwn Lsng 708.59 S; Ingram Lbry 4,309.40 S; Jackson Serv 2,124.43 S; J Deere Fin 1,211.69 S; Kelly Sup 329.77 S; Lawson Prod 82.59 S; Lncln Wnwtr Wrks 1,330.56 S; K Lingenfelter 28.00 E; Macqueen Equip 1,268.50 S; Matheson-Lnwld 179.91 S; MD Aquatics 4,790.00 S; Medline Ind 308.90 S; Menards 1,936.24 S; MARC 832.00 S; Mdwst Machine 275.00 S; Mdwst Turf 144,205.32 CP; Miller & Assoc 4,500.00 S; Motorola Sol 40,091.00 S; Mueller Sprnklr 107.78 S; NAPA 93.33 S; NE Golf & Turf 2,250.05 S; NE Harvestore 1,142.38 S; NE IAI 375.00 M; NE Law Enfrcmnt 175.00 T; NEL Prof Develop 3,500.00 T; Occptl Hlth 1,194.00 S; O'Reilly 18.97 S; Otte Elec 8,801.00 S; PACE Anlytcl 1,347.00 S; Pete Lien 6,883.97 S; Petty Cash 144.17 S; N Porter 45.20 E; Prestox 152.32 S; T Purkerson 750.00 S; Quadient 681.00 S; Reardon Lawn 28.99 S; Rvr Villy Tire 25.00 S; Rvrsd Prtbls 110.00 S; Schaeffer Mfg 4,863.10 S; Security Equip 6,304.50 S; Srvcmstr by Shevlin 465.00 S; Settje Plmbng 85.00 S; Shevlin Sup 591.73 S; Shirts R Us 286.00 S; P Siemek 47.00 E; SRF Cnsltng 16,154.70 CP; Stericycle 73.96 S; T-Bone 80.97 S; The Sprnklr Co 4,111.49 S; Tire Outlet

363.00 S; Titan Mach 2,583.92 S; Truck Cntr 998.46 S; Turfwerks 394.24 S; Tweet's 17.98 S; UPRR 6,154.55 CP; UPS 93.72 S; USA Blue Bk 330.99 S; Van Wall 863.05 S; Wemhoff Rfg 314.95 S; Westmor Fluid Sol 463.24 S. Total \$1,557,978.06.

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Included in Consent Agenda
6. **SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS:**
 - 6.A. **Proclamation declaring March 2026 as National Athletic Training Month.** Bulkley read the proclamation and presented it to the local athletic trainers in attendance.
7. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:** None
8. **PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS:** None
9. **REPORTS OF CITY OFFICES:**
 - 9.A. **Columbus in Focus – Public Safety.** Gray explained that the Public Safety Leadership team consists of himself, Vasicek, Strecker, and Pensick. He presented the group's mission and vision statements as well as providing an overview of recent accomplishments, 2026 action goals, and individual department updates. Looking ahead, the group anticipates these weekly leadership meetings will continue to strengthen interdepartmental coordination and trust, improve response consistency and operational readiness, enhance transparency and engagement with the community, and provide a more unified approach to public safety leadership.
10. **REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES:** None
11. **REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES:** None
12. **REPORTS ON LEGISLATION:** None
13. **NEW BUSINESS:**
 - 13.A. **Appointment of Moses Snyder as police officer.** Hiemer read a brief resume and the mayor's appointment of Moses Snyder as police officer was ratified with a motion by Bahr and a second by Jablonski. Alarcòn, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Roth voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Schilling were absent. Snyder stated that as a news reporter traveling all over the country he connects easily with people. He believes he can use that skill as a police officer to be a light for individuals dealing with a variety of issues and become someone they can trust. He is excited to be a part of the community and make a change for the better.
 - 13.B. **Appointment of Luis Rocha as police officer.** Hiemer read a brief resume and the mayor's appointment of Luis Rocha as police officer was ratified with a motion by Jablonski and a second by Alarcòn. Alarcòn, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Roth voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Schilling were absent. Rocha said he looks forward to serving the Columbus community.

13.C. Comments from mayor and city council members. There were no comments from the mayor and council members.

14. RESOLUTIONS:

14.A. Resolution No. R26-37 approving farm lease agreement with Wilke Cattle Company for farm ground at Columbus Municipal Airport. Resolution No. R26-37 entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, APPROVING A LEASE AGREEMENT WITH WILKE CATTLE COMPANY TO RENT FARM GROUND AT COLUMBUS MUNICIPAL AIRPORT PROPERTY CONTAINING 265 CROPLAND ACRES MORE OR LESS, SITUATED IN PLATTE COUNTY, NEBRASKA FOR THE ANNUAL AMOUNT OF \$49,025, FOR A TERM COMMENCING JANUARY 1, 2026, AND ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2028; A COPY OF WHICH IS ATTACHED HERETO AND INCORPORATED HEREIN BY THIS REFERENCE; AND TO REPEAL ALL RESOLUTIONS OR PORTIONS THEREOF IN CONFLICT HEREWITH was adopted with a motion by Jablonski and a second by Alarcòn. Alarcòn, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Roth voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Schilling were absent.

14.B. Resolution No. R26-38 approving agreement with Metropolitan Community College for Columbus Fire Department to provide practicum experience for EMT and paramedic students. Resolution No. R26-38 entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, APPROVING AN AGREEMENT WITH METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOR COLUMBUS FIRE DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE COLLEGE'S HEALTH PROFESSIONS PROGRAMS, A COPY OF WHICH IS ATTACHED HERETO; TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE THE SAME ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA; AND TO REPEAL ALL RESOLUTIONS OR PORTIONS THEREOF IN CONFLICT HEREWITH was adopted with a motion by Lopez and a second by Alarcòn. Alarcòn, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Roth voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Schilling were absent.

14.C. Resolution No. R26-39 approving Professional Services Agreement between City of Columbus and JEO Consulting Group, Inc. for Loup River Levee Piping Assessment and Geographical Information System Development in an amount not to exceed \$49,750. CIP #22-23 Bulkley pointed out that it is a requirement of federal agencies to conduct periodical inspections to prevent potential dangerous or costly issues. Resolution No. R26-39 entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, APPROVING A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN CITY OF COLUMBUS AND JEO CONSULTING GROUP, INC. IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$49,750 FOR LOUP RIVER LEVEE PIPING ASSESSMENT AND GEOGRAPHICAL

INFORMATION SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT; A COPY OF WHICH IS ATTACHED HERETO AND INCORPORATED HEREIN BY THIS REFERENCE; TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE THE SAME ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS; AND TO REPEAL ALL RESOLUTIONS OR PORTIONS THEREOF IN CONFLICT HEREWITH was adopted with a motion by Bahr and a second by Hiemer. Alarcón, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Roth voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Schilling were absent.

- 14.D. Resolution No. R26-40 approving Professional Services Agreement between City of Columbus and JEO Consulting Group, Inc. for Loup River Levee Erosion Repairs 2026 in an amount not to exceed \$11,750. CIP #26-10** Resolution No. R26-40 entitled: A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA, APPROVING A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN CITY OF COLUMBUS AND JEO CONSULTING GROUP, INC. IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$11,750 FOR LOUP RIVER LEVEE EROSION REPAIRS 2026; A COPY OF WHICH IS ATTACHED HERETO AND INCORPORATED HEREIN BY THIS REFERENCE; TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO EXECUTE THE SAME ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS; AND TO REPEAL ALL RESOLUTIONS OR PORTIONS THEREOF IN CONFLICT HEREWITH was adopted with a motion by Roth and a second by Alarcón. Alarcón, Bahr, Hiemer, Jablonski, Lopez, and Roth voted "Aye" and none voted "Nay". Palensky and Schilling were absent.
- 15. ORDINANCES ON FIRST READING:** None
- 16. ORDINANCES ON SECOND READING:** None
- 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 6:25 p.m.

Presented and approved this 16th day of March 2026.

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
: Shuraya Choat