City of Columbus Council Proceedings

and Public Hearing
November 2, 2026
Unofficial Minutes

Public Hearing regarding Resolution 2026-003 Utility rates: At 7:00 pm, the mayor opened the hearing to receive public comment regarding changes in the utility rates for the city of Columbus. Questions were answered regarding the items on the current bill, an application fee of $25 (non-refundable) will be added for new service users, the amount of increase in bulk water was questioned, and penalties and procedures for non-payment were discussed. The public hearing closed at 7:19 pm.

The November meeting of the City of Columbus was called to order at 7:19 pm on Monday, November 2, 2026, by Mayor Chris Kihle at the Columbus City Hall with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present: Mayor Kihle, Darla Westerness, Katie Nygard, and Scott Sandy; Auditor Sandy Raines. Amber Nygard was absent.

Guests Present: Shannon and Laura Burau, and Brian Julius, Ackerman-Estvold Engineering.

Agenda: Motion by Westerness and second by K. Nygard to approve the agenda as presented. The mayor called for the vote. Ayes: Sandy, Westerness, and K. Nygard. Nays: None. Motion approved.

Minutes: Motion by Westerness and second by Sandy to approve the City Council minutes of October 5, 2026, as presented with the corrections from 600/602 to 200/202 Robin Street. The mayor called for the vote. Ayes: Sandy, Westerness, and K. Nygard. Nays: None. Motion approved. Motion by K. Nygard and second by Sandy to approve the special meeting minutes from October 7, 2026, as presented. The mayor called for the vote. Ayes: Sandy, Westerness, and K. Nygard. Nays: None. Motion approved.

Public Comment: One member of the community commented that in the future the City should consider Hansen's Tree Removal and Wood Services as their work is excellent and reasonable. There being no additional public comments, Mayor Kihle proceeded with the meeting.

- **City Engineer**: City Engineer, Brian Julius, stated that he had submitted the DWSRF questionnaire and three CWSRF questionnaires for Columbus. Motion by Westerness and second by K. Nygard to approve the submittal of these questionnaires. The mayor called for the vote. Ayes: Sandy, Westerness, and K. Nygard. Nays: None. Motion approved. He also stated that Patrick will be working with Columbus to formulate the LC replacement plan which is due November of 2027. A planning meeting was scheduled for December 7, 2026, at 5:30 pm at City Hall to begin formulating a water/sewer replacement plan for submittal in 2027.
- **City Attorney**: No report
- **City Maintenance**: Mowing, patching streets, assembled park benches for basketball court, Christmas decorations will be going up in Lions Park and on Main Street.
- **Auditor**:

***Building Permits**: Motion by Sandy and second K. Nygard to rescind previous motion to approve Building Permit 2026-018 due to non-receipt of permit. The mayor called for the vote. Ayes: Sandy, Westerness, and K. Nygard. Nays: None. Motion approved.

***Financials**: Motion by Westerness and second by K. Nygard to pay the November bills and file the October financial report. The mayor called for the vote. Ayes: Sandy, Westerness, and K. Nygard. Nays: None. Mayor voided warrant #22286 for $26,467.70 to Safetyfirst Playground Maintenance.

Old Business:

- **Water and Sewer**: Reviewed water usage versus amount billed. Two accounts are scheduled for shutoff on November 25th.
- **Fee Structure**: Changes will be added to resolution. Next Public Hearing and final passage will be December 7th at 7:00 pm.
- **Columbus Community Club**: No activity in November; discussing Santa Visit.
- **AARP Livable Community Grant**: Flooring scheduled for week of Thanksgiving. Maintenance will purchase gray paint for hallway and back wall.
- **Toddler-Preschool Playground**: No update
- **Vault Toilet**: No update
- **Nuisance Properties**: No roll-offs currently available for use in demolition and clean-up.
- **Sewer main tree roots on South Robin St**. – Maintenance will contact Gustafson for jetting of ½ of Columbus this year.
- **Community Center Roof**: Maintenance will get roof replacement estimate.

New Business:

- **Burke County Tax Deed Sale:** Motion by Sandy and second by K. Nygard to authorize auditor to bid on Parcels #7158000 & #7161000 with a cap of $2500 and the auditor is directed to accept deeds on all Columbus properties not sold in auction as well as parcel #06124000. The mayor called for the vote. Ayes: Sandy and K. Nygard. Nays: Westerness. Motion approved.
- **Residential Zoning Questions**: Per the most recent comprehensive land use plan lots in Columbus are zoned for single family units only. Any other uses would need to follow variance and conditional use permitting.
- **Burke-Divide Counties Multi-Hazard Mitigation Resolution**: Motion by Sandy and second by Westerness to approve Resolution No. 2026-002 adopting the Burke-Divide Counties Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan 2026. The mayor called for the vote. Ayes: Sandy, Westerness, and K. Nygard. Nays: None. Motion approved.
- **Light-Up Columbus**: The City will host the 2026 Light-Up Columbus contest. It will run from Dec. 1-25th and the winners will be announced at the January 4th council meeting.

Announcements:

• **Next meeting** is Monday, December 7, 2026, at 7:00 pm following the Water Utility Resolution Public Hearing

• **Adjournment**: Motion by K. Nygard and second by Sandy to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 8:49 pm.

Bills to Pay: Intuit $340.00; BDEC $11.50; Verizon $288.69; NWRW $2449.27; NCC $325.87; EFTPS $1392.46; MDU $1221.11; USPO $410.00; BC Sheriff $400.00; Burke County Tribune $236.50; Circle Sanitation $1967.00; First District Health $120.00; Jerry's Transfer $35.00; Visa Maintenance $464.27; Visa Auditor $2074.79; ND-DEQ $183.55; Teagan's Interiors $8031.02; Next Level Excavating $11,830.00; Dept. of the Treasury $243.05; Banyon Data $1730.00; One Call $1.80; ND Users Assoc. $175.00.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandy Raines, Auditor
November 11, 2026