

COMMON COUNCIL
 COUNCIL CHAMBERS
 & WEBEX
 CITY HALL
 DECEMBER 17, 2024

City Council President Frank Miller appeared in person and called a regular meeting of the City Common Council to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

I. Meeting Called to Order

- A. Pastor Dave Burnett provided the invocation.
- B. Councilor Josh Burnett led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- C. Roll Call was taken: Jerone Wood, Kent Anderson, Frank Miller, Jay Foyst, Josh Burnett, Tom Dell, and Grace Kestler were present in person. Elaine Hilber and Tom Dell were present via WebEx. Christopher Bartels was absent.
- D. Councilor Foyst made a motion to approve the minutes from the Common Council meeting on December 3, 2024, as presented. Councilor Kestler seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Elaine Hilber	Aye
Jerone Wood	Aye
Kent Anderson	Abstain
Frank Miller	Aye
Jay Foyst	Aye
Josh Burnett	Aye
Tom Dell	Aye
Grace Kestler	Aye

Motion passed by a vote of seven (7) in favor and zero (0) opposed.

II. Old Business Requiring Council Action

- A. Second reading of on Ordinance entitled "ORDINANCE NO. 53, 2024, AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE PUBLIC SAFETY LIT FUND FOR THE BUDGET YEAR 2024." Eric Frey, Executive Director of Administration, presented this Ordinance. He explained the request is for \$80,000.00 in additional funds for Public Safety LIT (Local Income Tax) for excess fees at the Emergency Operations Center. There were no comments from the public. Councilor Foyst made a motion to pass the second reading and adopt the Ordinance. Councilor Miller seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Frank Miller	Aye
Kent Anderson	Aye
Jerone Wood	Aye
Elaine Hilber	Aye
Tom Dell	Aye
Grace Kestler	Aye
Josh Burnett	Aye
Jay Foyst	Aye

Motion passed by a vote of eight (8) in favor and zero (0) opposed.

- B. Second reading of an Ordinance entitled "ORDINANCE NO. 54, 2024, AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUND FOR THE BUDGET YEAR 2024." Eric Frey presented this Ordinance. He stated the request is to utilize the balance of the American Rescue Plan funding. Eric indicated the funds were provided by the Federal Government to be used in a variety of different ways. The appropriation amount is \$1,979,242.00 and would be used for homelessness and affordable housing initiatives. Discussion followed. There were no comments from the public. Councilor Kestler made a motion to pass the second reading and adopt the Ordinance. Councilor Miller seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Frank Miller	Aye
Kent Anderson	Aye
Jerone Wood	Aye
Elaine Hilber	Aye
Grace Kestler	Aye
Tom Dell	Aye
Josh Burnett	Aye
Jay Foyst	Aye

Motion passed by a vote of eight (8) in favor and zero (0) opposed.

- C. Second reading of on Ordinance entitled "ORDINANCE NO. 55, 2024, AN ORDINANCE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS, INDIANA, AUTHORIZING A DIRECT LOAN TO THE DEVELOPER OF AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FACILITY (11th & WASHINGTON PROJECT) AND APPROVING OTHER MATTERS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH." Heather Pope, Redevelopment Director, presented this Ordinance. She explained the request is for a forgivable loan for a mixed-use multi-family development between Washington Street and Jackson Street. She provided details of the project. Heather stated the developers, Rubicon Investment Group LLC, are requesting a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) forgivable loan for \$6.4 million. She indicated the title of the loan is a bit misleading, the loan is not forgivable and they do have a taxpayer agreement with a minimum tax payment due each year. The agreement has the repayment taking place in approximately 21 years. Heather stated Michael Eaton with Rubicon; Andrew Lanam with Stifel Public Finance; Adam Steuerwald with Barnes & Thornburg; Ed Curtin with CWC Latitudes; Andrew Beckort, City Engineer; and Robin Hilber, Community Development Director, were available to answer any questions. President Miller opened the meeting for public comments. Sheryl Nulph, 1027 Franklin Street, stated she is a block away from the proposed project. She indicated the project has been given a green light in the hope that adding density to the downtown will help reignite its retail economy which is still suffering from the migration of a workforce that helped it survive. She stated \$6.4 million is a huge gamble of TIF funds of this "cart before the horse" theory. She suggested using the \$6.4 million to reimagine retail experience for the downtown residents. Dale Nowlin, 821 Franklin Street, provided a worksheet to Council members. He stated Rubicon's request for \$6.4 million for 120 apartments is \$53,000 of tax money for each apartment. Mr. Nowlin does not know why the City is giving away that kind of money to a corporation. Kerri Sinibaldi thanked the Council members who have listened to their concerns and thinks they have been mischaracterized as anti-development, which is not true. They want business downtown to flourish. Ms. Sinibaldi

stated this project only serves to increase the inequity and divide in our housing stock. Michael Mullett, 723 Lafayette Avenue, stated his concern is that the legal documentation represents a "pig in a poke," in terms of the series of documents that are incorporated by reference, at least two of which are not public at this time. He indicated issues have previously been raised regarding environmental contamination and stormwater detention, storage, and drainage, and questioned if these issues will require additional funds from the City and taxpayers. Michael Cartwright, 1040 Franklin Street, expressed concerns about this project. He stated he has learned a lot about how property matters are dealt with. Mr. Cartwright questioned what is due diligence for \$6.4 million. Marc Rape, 828 Franklin Street, stated the home that was demolished on site was done without a permit. He indicated these apartments are not affordable and doesn't believe this is what the community needs. Mr. Rape stated this development is on two large parcels and offering only 2600 square feet of retail space. Hutch Schumaker, 2335 Riverside Drive, reported he owns much commercial and residential property in downtown Columbus, and stated the City struggles with leasing space. He thinks this is a great project and it will help revitalize the downtown. Jason Hester, President of the Greater Columbus Economic Development Corporation, thanked the Council for their support of additional housing in our community; housing at all levels is an economic development matter. Ike DeClue, Office of Downtown Development, stated density matters in the downtown area and fully supports this project. Richard Sprague, 2816 Riverside Drive, stated he and his wife own the property at 11th and Washington. He indicated more downtown residents is an absolute must if we are going to have a downtown that is going to thrive and survive. Patty Mullett, 723 Lafayette Avenue, questioned why City taxpayers should subsidize a for-profit developer with a high return on investment to construct market rate apartments for people who can afford to pay the rent. She asked about affordable housing. She encouraged Council to reject this proposal and initiate a public participation process that will result in a community supported alternative plan. Grace Patchett, 4721 Clairmont Drive, provided information on TIF districts and incentivization. She suggested using TIF funds to benefit people at different income levels, not just luxury development. Zach Patchett, 4721 Clairmont Drive, stated he would like to see the City focus on making Columbus and the downtown area a place where people want to live and where developers want to build. Kurt Beach, 524 10th Street, stated he agrees there needs to be housing in downtown; however, \$6.4 million in TIF and \$3.1 million from the state is almost a third of this entire project. President Miller closed the meeting for public comment. Much discussion followed. Councilor Hilber made a motion to pass the second reading and adopt the Ordinance. Councilor Anderson seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Frank Miller	Aye
Kent Anderson	Aye
Jerone Wood	Nay
Elaine Hilber	Aye
Tom Dell	Aye
Grace Kestler	Nay
Josh Burnett	Aye
Jay Foyst	Nay

Motion passed by a vote of five (5) in favor and three (3) opposed.

III. New Business Requiring Council Action

- A. None

IV. Other Business

- A. President Miller stated one member of the audience requested to speak. Cole Bennett discussed Council members' attendance at Council meetings, specifically one Council member missing 10 meetings this year, which is almost 40% of all meetings held in 2024. He indicated this lack of attendance is unacceptable and suggested, for the benefit of the taxpayers, this Council member should resign. He stated constituents and citizens of the City of Columbus did not vote for truancy.

President Miller indicated this topic has already been discussed in *The Republic*. He stated this Council or Council President has no authority over Council members' attendance.

Councilor Wood provided a response stating he feels he was put into this position because of who he is and what he does for the community. He stated he is involved with youth in the community as a school teacher, basketball coach, and track coach, and secondly he is a great father.

- B. Standing Committee and Liaison Reports
- C. The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, January 7, 2025, 6:00 p.m.**
- D. Councilor Anderson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Burnett seconded the motion. Roll call vote as follows:

Frank Miller	Aye
Kent Anderson	Aye
Jerone Wood	Aye
Elaine Hilber	Aye
Tom Dell	Aye
Grace Kestler	Aye
Josh Burnett	Aye
Jay Foyst	Aye

Motion passed by a vote of eight (8) in favor and zero (0) opposed. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:04 p.m.



 Presiding Officer



 Deputy Clerk of the City of Columbus