

**CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HELD APRIL 19, 2021**

Mayor Barnhart called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

Mayor Barnhart, Councilor Fisher, Councilor Karper (via zoom), Councilor Lovering, Councilor Piper, Councilor Robinson and Councilor Shepard.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Councilor Robinson, seconded by Councilor Piper and the motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion made by Councilor Piper, seconded by Councilor Lovering, with Council voting as follows. Ayes: Mayor Barnhart, Councilor Fisher, Councilor Robinson, Councilor Lovering, Councilor Piper and Councilor Shepard.

Approval of Claims - April 19, 2021 - \$171,707.68

Approval of Special Payroll - April 6, 2021 - \$5,601.81

Approval of Payroll Claims - April 16, 2021 - \$113,854.49

Approval of April 5, 2021 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

Approval of EDA Grant Financial Assistance Award, \$633,146, and Authorize City Manager to Execute Award Documents

APPOINTMENTS:

Appoint Probationary Volunteer Firefighters - Chris Hanley and Jade Thomas

Fire Chief Weeks recommended approval of Chris Hanley as a probationary member. Weeks reported that Mr. Hanley has attended several trainings as an observer and has completed the background check and physical. City Manager Nicosia concurs with Fire Chief Weeks on the approval of Chris Hanley as Probationary Volunteer Firefighter.

Fire Chief Weeks said Jade Thomas is an EMT and works for the Hungry Horse Ranger District as a Firefighter. Ms. Thomas has shown great interest since submitting her application and has attended several trainings as an observer and has completed the background check and physical. City Manager Nicosia concurs with Fire Chief Weeks on the approval of Jade Thomas as Probationary Volunteer Firefighter.

Councilor Piper motioned to approve Chris Hanley and Jade Thomas as Probationary Volunteer Firefighters, seconded by Councilor Shepard and the motion passed unanimously.

City Clerk Staaland administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Hanley and Ms. Thomas.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION - FALLEN OFFICERS BY DETECTIVE DENHAM

Detective Gary Denham gave a presentation on the history of the two fallen Town Marshals that were employed by the City in the early 1900's. Jake Neitzling died in the line of duty on April 19, 1931 (90 years ago today) and Leslie Green on October 2, 1937. Detective Denham unveiled two shadow boxes made in remembrance of the slain Marshals, which will be on display in the Council Chambers at City Hall. The grandson and two great-grandsons of Mr. Green were in attendance as well as all of the current Columbia Falls Police Officers except the officer that is currently attending the Academy.

VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENT (Items not on agenda)

Presentation - CFAC

John Stroiazzo with the Columbia Falls Aluminum Co. said he was in attendance virtually to speak about the Superfund process. Andrew Baris, also attending virtually, introduced himself as the project manager for the remedial investigation and reviewed the Draft Feasibility Study Report in detail and discussed the path moving forward.

Mayor Barnhart requested a copy of the presentation for Council. Mr. Stroiazzo said they will make copies available. Mayor Barnhart thanked them for the information.

ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution No. 1845 - A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, Montana, Approving Elected Officials Participation in the Employee Benefits Program

City Manager Nicosia said the City has allowed Council members to participate in the city's medical insurance program. It was brought to our attention by MMIA that the City had not submitted a resolution allowing council participation. Nicosia recommended adopting, noting that this Resolution will bring the City into compliance with MMIA requirements.

Councilor Shepard motioned to approve Resolution # 1845, seconded by Councilor Lovering with Council voting as follows. Ayes: Karper, Lovering, Piper, Robinson, Shepard, Fisher and Barnhart.

Resolution No. 1846 - A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, Montana Amending Fund and Budget Line-Item Appropriations for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2021 to Account for CARES Act Funds

City Manager Nicosia noted that the Council held a hearing at the last meeting and discussed the specific line items. This resolution will appropriate the Cares Act Funds as recommended to cover the reimbursed items as well as the recommended capital items. Nicosia said there is a remaining balance of approximately \$80,000 of revenue that is not expended with this resolution that can be carried forward and appropriated at a later date by Council. Staff recommends approval as presented.

Councilor Fisher made motion to approve Resolution # 1846, seconded by Councilor Piper with Council voting as follows. Ayes: Lovering, Piper, Robinson, Shepard, Fisher, Karper and Barnhart.

Resolution No. 1847 - A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, Montana, Declaring a Blighted Area Exists within the City of Columbia Falls, Montana and that the Redevelopment of that Area is Necessary in the Interest of Public Health, Safety, or Welfare of the Residents of Columbia Falls

City Manager Nicosia said this is the first step in the process to expand our Urban Renewal District to include the 23 acres owned by Cedar Palace, LLC. As noted in the report, the expansion meets all of the statutory

criteria and acknowledges that it has inadequate infrastructure and is undeveloped. Staff recommends approval.

Councilor Shepard motioned to approve Resolution # 1847, seconded by Councilor Piper with council voting as follows. Ayes: Piper, Robinson, Shepard, Fisher, Karper, Lovering and Barnhart.

REPORTS / BUSINESS FROM MAYOR & COUNCIL

Councilor Piper said he is interested in the long term effect on the proposed plan for CFAC.

Councilor Shepard said the CFAC plan has been looked at in Spokane, WA at another plant that is already having contaminated waters around the site. Shepard said he too is interested in the long term effect. It is concerning to him that the company doesn't want to spend money to remove it. Shepard said nothing is fail safe.

Mayor Barnhart reported that he had received a call from John Stroiazso who explained the removal option. His point was if the material was hauled through Columbia Falls there would be an opportunity to contaminate much more than the vehicles. Mayor Barnhart said he certainly understands where the recommendation not to remove is coming from and wanted to pass it onto Council. Shepard said in the initial study the whole plant site is contaminated with four feet of carbon in the soil. Shepard previously inquired if they tested to the west of the North Fork Road and they could not answer the question.

Mayor Barnhart asked City Manager Nicosia when the surplus equipment advertisement will be in the newspaper. Nicosia said staff will get it in the newspaper and on the website as soon as possible.

Mayor Barnhart said it looks like the highway department is getting ready to work on Nucleus. Nicosia said the DOT staff is currently doing the prep work and the contractor will be done before June 30th. Mayor Barnhart inquired if the City can watch to make sure the needed repairs are made. Nicosia said she will reach out to Justin Juelfs.

Lovering reported that her students used several legislative websites and thought the City website was the easiest to navigate.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

Nicosia reported that staff has fixed a water leak that sprung up on 3rd Ave W., from an unused service line, and we will continue to look for leaks throughout the City. Nicosia noted that the monthly water loss drops significantly after the city and school irrigation lines are shut off for the season so the water department will take a closer look at those lines this spring.

Nicosia reported that the Well Project is down to the punch list noting that the paving repairs and landscaping are scheduled to be completed soon. Nicosia noted that the project engineer is present. CR Leisinger reported that the contractor is working on the parking lot at this time.

Nicosia also noted that city staff is working with Morrison and Maierle on the 2021 Transportation Alternatives (TA) Grant to put the long-planned sidewalk along Railroad Street and down 4th Ave West to the school. This sidewalk was also planned in the Build Grant that was not funded. If the City can get the TA Grant through the state it could bring the Build Grant request \$10M.

Nicosia noted with Council consent approval, the next step in the EDA grant is to start the engineer selection process and start the BNSF project as soon as we can; noting that we have to work through the EDA staff.

Nicosia reminded Council that the special outdoor recreation planning project through UM, known as CORR, is looking for community stakeholders including a City representative.

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MISCELLANEOUS

Financial Activity Report - March 2021

Police Activity Report - March 2021

Correspondence

ADJOURN

Councilor Karper motioned to adjourn at 8:17 p.m., seconded by Councilor Lovering and the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor

City Clerk