

**CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HELD OCTOBER 02, 2023**

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

ROLL CALL: Councilor Fisher, Councilor King, Councilor Lovering, Councilor Piper, Councilor Robinson, Councilor Shepard and Mayor Barnhart.

Also present: City Manager Nicosia, City Clerk Staaland, City Attorney Breck, Police Sergeant Rice and Fire Chief Weeks.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Councilor Robinson motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Councilor Piper and the motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA: Councilor King made motion to approve the consent agenda noting all claims appeared to be in order, seconded by Councilor Fisher with council voting as follows. Ayes: Piper, Robinson, Shepard, Fisher, King, Lovering and Barnhart.

Approval of Claims - September 18, 2023

Approval of Payroll Claims - September 29, 2023 - \$105,096.66

Approval of Regular City Council Meeting Minutes - September 18, 2023

Utility Billing Bad Debt Expense Approval

Approve Updated Neighbor works Environmental Review Agreement and Authorize City Manager's Signature

APPOINTMENTS:

Approve Appointment of Frank Vessels as Probationary Volunteer Firefighter and Administer Oath of Office
Fire Chief Weeks said Mr. Vessels has passed a background check and physical exam. Since submitting his application he has attended several trainings as an observer. Chief Weeks believes Mr. Vessels will be a great addition to the Fire Department and he and City Manager Nicosia recommend approval.

Councilor Piper made motion to appoint Frank Vessels as Probationary Volunteer Firefighter, seconded by Councilor Shepard and the motion carried.

City Clerk Staaland administered Oath of Office to Frank Vessels.

Mayor Barnhart noted the promotion of Sergeant Brandon Rice will be held at the October 16, 2023 council meeting.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS/PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Mayor Barnhart read the Notice of Public Hearing:

The Columbia Falls City-County Planning Board held a public hearing for the following item at their regular meeting on Tuesday, September 12, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 130 6th Street West, Columbia Falls, Montana. The Columbia Falls City Council will hold a subsequent hearing on October 16, 2023, starting at 7:00 p.m. in the same location.

Rocky Top Cabins Subdivision – A Two Lot Subdivision: A request by Herbert Enterprises LLC to create a two-lot subdivision. The property is 8.11 acres in size and the property is zoned CR-1 which allows a minimum lot size of one acre. The property is located at 269 Rocky Lane, Columbia Falls, and is described as Assessor's Tract 1 (Parcel A of COS 21669) located in Section 7, Township 30 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M., Flathead County.

ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution # 1910 - A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, Montana Approving the Final Plat of Urban Wood RV Park Subdivision Located at 201 Highway 2 East, Described as Lot 3 D&G Subdivision in Section 17, T30N, R20W, Flathead County, Montana.

City Manager Nicosia said this is the final plat for the Urban Wood RV Park. The applicant has met all submittals required and is in compliance with city conditions. Staff recommends approval of the resolution.

Councilor Piper motioned to adopt Resolution # 1910, seconded by Councilor Lovering with council voting as follows. Ayes: Robinson, Shepard, Fisher, King, Lovering, Piper and Barnhart.

Mayor Barnhart asked Fire Chief Weeks if he has looked at the fire hydrant on 3rd Ave. E., there is one in the empty lot and they have a wood fence around it. Chief Weeks said they will have look at it to ensure it is accessible.

REPORTS / BUSINESS FROM MAYOR & COUNCIL

Councilor Shepard said the City has waited for a sidewalk on RR Street for forty years and it looks like we will continue to wait. Nicosia said MDOT has instituted the right of way phase and DOT will purchase the property from the owner. MDOT is now looking at 2025 for construction said Nicosia.

Councilor Shepard asked why MDOT didn't let us know that there was not a District 1 transportation commissioner; he does not understand their process.

Mayor Barnhart asked who cleans our restrooms in city parks. Nicosia said the City's contract cleaner, 406 Cleaning, cleans River's Edge Park bathroom as it is open year around. The city parks and water departments clean the restrooms in Columbus and Marantette parks.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager's Report - Update on Projects and Operations

Nicosia said city officials had a good meeting with BNSF and MDOT on 12th Ave West. The city will purchase the concrete panels that were estimated at \$72,000. Our local BNSF folks were not opposed to granting an easement to complete the sidewalk before the street crossing was rebuilt.

Mayor Barnhart asked when they will install the concrete for crossing. Nicosia replied it is all part of the discussion. Mayor asked if we can put the sidewalk in before the cement is installed. Nicosia said based on the construction diagram she believes so.

The City parks department is collaborating with Ryan from People and Carnivores as they are completing their bear conflict assessment within the city. The city will put more bear proof garbage canisters in our parks with the People and Carnivores collaboration including bolting them to the concrete pads.

Nicosia said she is working with Jacqueline Demongin and the Columbia Falls Community Foundation on following up on adding lights to the monuments at Nucleus Ave. Demongin was finally able to get a quote of \$2,300 for electrical to the sign not including the light.

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Police Chief Peters was out of the office last week so we will discuss the Police Department capital overlay at the October 16, 2023 council meeting.

This morning city staff reviewed the WWTP project and are only at sixty percent engineering. Nicosia said she spoke with the engineering leads at HDR as we are literally nine months behind schedule. They are apologetic they are this far behind said Nicosia. The city will hopefully be on schedule to call for bids in December or January and award shortly thereafter. Mayor Barnhart asked if we can ask HDR to give us an explanation on why they are so far behind. Nicosia said our program manager at DNRC will work with us, the city can request an extension. At the next meeting we should have all the information to show all the deadlines and how we will amend the budget.

Nicosia said city officials met with Teamsters Local Unit No. 2 and have a tentative agreement on the 2024 FY wage opener; we are waiting on their signed notice of ratification which will be on the October 16, 2023 council agenda. The City also drafted a MOA that would permit the City to place a newly hired employee on the wage scale to include education and experience steps upon hire and not after the first year. We are currently advertising for a Lead Water Operator and this change will allow the City to be competitive in attracting qualified candidates.

City Manager Nicosia reviewed the new Flathead County 2023 property tax bill as it will look significantly different this year due to new software at the county level. The bill will reflect URD/TEDD funds as a separate line item despite the funds not generated as an additional mill levy but the incremental value on the property on applicable mills levied by the city, school, county, state and other districts. Nicosia said she will add information in the budget summary explaining how TIF/TEDD funds are generated and Flathead County and the City will add information on their respective websites.

MISCELLANEOUS

Correspondence

ADJOURN: At 7:43 pm, Councilor Lovering motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Robinson.

Mayor

City Clerk