

CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HELD JULY 18, 2022

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

ROLL CALL:

Councilor Karper, Councilor Lovering, Councilor Piper, Councilor Robinson, Councilor Shepard and Mayor Barnhart. Absent: Councilor Fisher. Also present: City Manager Nicosia, City Clerk Staaland, City Attorney Breck, Fire Chief Weeks and Sergeant Murphy.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Councilor Robinson motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Councilor Piper and the motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Councilor Karper motioned to approve the consent agenda noting all claims appeared to be in order, seconded by Councilor Shepard with Council voting as follows. Ayes: Karper, Lovering, Piper, Robinson, Shepard and Barnhart.

Approval of June and July Claims - \$165,931.17

Approval of July 8, 2022 Payroll Claims

Approval of July 5, 2022 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

Approval of Engineering Agreement - 5th Ave EN Water Main (ARPA) Project and authorize City Manager to execute.

Adoption of Updated Job Description - Firefighter/EMT

Adoption of Updated Job Description - Public Works/GIS Technician

Approve Voiding Checks Outstanding Longer Than One Year

VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENT (Items not on agenda)

Andrea Getts, resides at 336 7th St. E. said she is concerned with the intersection at 6th St. E. and 1st. Ave E. and believes it would be a good place for a 4-way stop.

APPOINTMENTS:

Approval of Appointment - Volunteer Firefighter Dale Pinneke/Administration of Oath of Office

Fire Chief Weeks said the department has voted to approve Dale Pinneke as a Probationary Volunteer

Firefighter. Weeks said since submitting his application he has attended several trainings as an observer and believes he will be a great addition to the department. Nicosia and Weeks recommend approval.

Councilor Lovering motioned to approve Mr. Pinneke as Probationary Volunteer Firefighter, seconded by Councilor Piper and the motion carried.

City Clerk Staaland administered Oath of Office to Mr. Pinneke.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS/PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Mayor Barnhart read the following revised notice:

REVISED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS - PLANNING/ZONING ITEMS:

The Columbia Falls City-County Planning Board held a public hearing for the following item at their regular meeting on Tuesday, July 12, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. at the Council Chambers of City Hall, 130 6th Street West, Columbia Falls, Montana. The Columbia Falls City Council will hold a subsequent hearing on August 1, 2022 starting at 7:00 p.m. in the same location.

Request for a Zoning Map Amendment in the Columbia Falls Planning Jurisdiction:

Mick Ruis is requesting a zoning map amendment on behalf of HC 246 LLC in the Columbia Falls Zoning Jurisdiction. The property is located at 230 Highway 2 East in Columbia Falls and is described as Assessor's Tracts 2E, 2EC, 4EA, 4EAA and 4E Section 17, Township 30 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M., Flathead County (See Exhibit A for Metes and Bounds Description). The property is currently zoned CB-1 (Neighborhood Business) and the applicant is proposing CB-2 (General Business).

The Planning Board postponed the public hearing on the following three items until August 9, 2022 – 6:30 P.M., the date and time of the next regular Planning Board Meeting. The location of the hearing will be at the Columbia Falls Junior High in the Cafetorium, Legal Notice in the Newspaper, Letters to the adjacent property owners, and at City Hall on the City's Planning/Council Bulletin Board.

Request for a Zoning Map Amendment in the Columbia Falls Planning Jurisdiction:

James Barnett on behalf of Flathead Mountain River LLC is requesting a zoning map amendment in the Columbia Falls Zoning Jurisdiction. The property is located at 264, 316, 378, 494 River Road in Columbia Falls and is described as Lots 1, 2, & 3 of Loffler Subdivision and Assessor's Tracts 7 B and 7BB (Tracts 1 and 3 of COS 14045) in Section 16, Township 20 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M., Flathead County. The property is currently zoned CR-3 (One Family Residential) and the applicant is proposing CR-4 (Urban Residential).

Request for a Planned Unit Development in the Columbia Falls Zoning Jurisdiction:

James Barnett on behalf of Flathead Mountain River LLC is requesting a Planned Unit Development in the Columbia Falls Zoning Jurisdiction; the development is called River Highlands Apartments. The property is located at 264, 316, 378, & 494 River Road in Columbia Falls and is described as Lots 1, 2, & 3 of Loffler Subdivision and Assessor's Tracts 7 B and 7BB (Tracts 1 and 3 of COS 14045) in Section 16, Township 20 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M., Flathead County. The project consists of 65 attached single family row houses, 390 apartment units and 10 row house units dedicated to the Northwest Montana Community Land Trust. The total unit count is 455 units on 49.1 acres gross for a density of 9.2 units per acre. The applicant is proposing 21.5 acres (43%) of the site as park and open space. With the project, the applicants are proposing to move River Road further east on Highway 2 and if supported by the MDOT the applicants would install a traffic signal at Highway 2 and River Road. Two deviations are requested with the PUD; the applicant is requesting to zoning deviations, one would allow an increase in height of ten feet allowing a portion of the apartment buildings to approach 45 feet in height and the second deviation would reduce the parking requirement from 2 spaces per unit down to 1.5 spaces per unit.

Request for a subdivision in the Columbia Falls Zoning Jurisdiction:

James Barnett on behalf of Flathead Mountain River LLC is requesting a Subdivision in the Columbia Falls Zoning Jurisdiction. The property is located at 264,316,378, & 494 River Road in Columbia Falls and is described as Lots 1, 2, & 3 of Loffler Subdivision and Assessor's Tracts 7 B and 7BB (Tracts 1 and 3 of COS 14045) in Section 16, Township 20 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M., Flathead County. The subdivision will create 21 lots (17 residential and 4 open space lots). The subdivision will extend Municipal water and sewer services along with reconstructing River Road and incorporating a detached pedestrian path. The new roads within the project will be privately maintained but open to the public. The proposed subdivision is part of the zone change and PUD application for River Highlands Apartments

Mayor Barnhart read the following notice of hearing:

Notice of 22-23 Fiscal Year Preliminary Budget Hearings - Beginning August 1, 2022:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, Montana, will hold public hearings beginning on August 1, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Columbia Falls City Hall, 130 6th St West, Columbia Falls, Montana, for the following purposes:

Preliminary Budget

Presentation and consideration of the preliminary budget for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023. This hearing will be continued until final adoption of the budget after receiving the certified taxable valuation.

Special Assessments

Consideration of the adoption of the Street Lighting District and Street Maintenance District assessments for FY2022/2023. Council will hear any objections to the final adoption of the resolution levying special assessments for FY 2022/2023. Special Assessments are estimated as follows:

Street Lighting District	\$ 30,049
Street Maintenance District	\$316,000

Individual property payment schedules are available for inspection ten (10) days from this notice, in the office of the City Clerk, 130 6th Street West, Columbia Falls, Montana, during regular hours Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

Permissive Medical Levy

Consideration of adoption on the proposed tax levy to fund health insurance premium contributions for group benefits beyond the amount of contributions in effect on the actual mills for consideration will be made available upon receipt of the certified tax valuation for the year.

Taxpayers are encouraged to attend the hearings and give written or oral comments on any or all of the budget-related items. Written comments may be mailed to the City Clerk, Barb Staaland, 130 6th St West, Columbia Falls, MT, 59912. Questions regarding the proposed items can be made by contacting City Manager Susan Nicosia at 892-4391.

NEW BUSINESS:

Authorize Call for Bids - 2022 Street Construction Projects

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City Manager Nicosia said staff recommends Council authorizing the Call for Bids for the 2022 Street Construction projects. Advertising for bids will begin on Sunday, July 24th and July 31st, with the bid opening on Wednesday, Aug 10th. There is a pre bid meeting scheduled for July 27th.

Councilor Shepard motioned to approve the call for bids, seconded by Councilor Lovering and the motion carried.

2022-23 FY Budget Overview Presentation

City Manager Nicosia presented council with Fiscal Year 22-23 Budget highlights:

- No increase in Special Assessments (Lighting or Street Maintenance)
- No increase in Water or Sewer Rates (no new debt due to ARPA \$\$ for Sewer) – evaluate future increases with PER projects
- First Year for Resort Tax Property Tax Revenue offset
- Not a revaluation year for property taxes – 1.77% Inflation Adjustment - \$24,842 plus newly taxable (First Monday in August)

Public Works Projects:

WWTP Upgrade as planned in 2018/19 PER:

\$5.5 m – includes Lift Station #2 upgrade and 13th/Hilltop Area Sewer Main Upgrade

Funding: \$2 m competitive grant

\$1.4 m ARPA Direct Allocation

\$877k HB 632 grant

\$1.267 m City \$\$ - Expansion

Water: 5th Ave EN Water Main Upgrade \$290k

\$143k Competitive Grant (letter)

\$100k ARPA Direct Allocation

\$ 47k City \$\$ - Expansion

Water: Generator - \$182k

TA Grant – RR Street Sidewalk – City share 13.42% - \$126k 22-23 FY

12th Ave West EDA/TIF - \$1.2 m engineering started, calling for bids

Downtown parking/sidewalk/curb and gutter – preparing for calling for bids – TIF - \$500k

Street Projects – Calling for bids – engineers' estimate - \$900k – includes 1st Ave W angled parking (Construction Fund, Special Gas Tax and TIF)

Parks:

Columbus Park:

Pickleball Courts - \$93k with \$25k donation

Sand Volleyball - \$10k w/donation

Complete restroom and expand playground

Pinewood Park:

Add Bathroom - \$20k

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Nicosia reported on other projects that the City is or will be seeking funding include the Quiet Zone \$633,400 2nd Ave WN improvements, 4th Ave EN Closure \$83,000 plus required 25% contingency along with additional engineering; 6th Ave W sidewalk/bikepath - \$226k; River's Edge Park path repairs/bank stabilization (FEMA).

Mayor Barnhart inquired about funds from the resort tax for parks and other infrastructure. Nicosia said infrastructure includes parks, paths, water and sewer. 14% of the resort tax goes into infrastructure or approximately \$74,000 for the 22-23 Fiscal year. Councilor Shepard asked if the City has the funds to repair River's Edge Park path. Nicosia said the Council can make it a priority; seeking FEMA Public Assistance Funds and will know soon if eligible. Lovering said the parks crew did a good job on making the path useable.

ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution # 1879 - A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, Montana, Setting the Salary and Compensation of Certain City Officials and Employees Pursuant to Title 7, Chapter 4, Part 42, M.C.A for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year

Councilor Piper motioned to approve Resolution #1879, seconded by Councilor Shepard with council voting as follows. Ayes: Piper, Robinson, Shepard, Karper, Lovering and Barnhart.

REPORTS / BUSINESS FROM MAYOR & COUNCIL:

Councilor Piper inquired about the plumbed bathroom at Columbus Park. Nicosia said the plumber was scheduled to be there last week. Piper said he noticed 1st Ave E. is becoming a racetrack as vehicles are speeding down it. Lovering said parking at Vaqueros along the street is becoming problematic to see traffic and believes stop signs would be beneficial. Nicosia said City staff will complete a warrant study.

Councilor Shepard said it's nice to have Sergeant Murphy back with the department. Shepard congratulated Fire Chief Weeks on a good job getting 29 volunteers in the Fire Department when it is difficult getting employees.

Mayor Barnhart said he does not know how to inform folks of the facts on the proposed River Highland project and not believe the non-facts posted on social media. He noted that the meetings were treated differently years ago with respect of public officials, it is sad this is no longer the case. The people of Columbia Falls need to act like people of Columbia Falls he commented. Shepard added if residents want to speak at the meeting it is important for them to state their name and physical address.

Mayor Barnhart said there is concern that the City does not have the capacity for the new subdivision, after visiting with the City Manager and reviewing the Water and Sewer PER's, the City certainly does have capacity to serve the homes because the City has planned for growth.

Mayor Barnhart inquired on if the leak detection company came back for a second round. Nicosia said they are due to come back soon and noting the known leaks that have been repaired have resulted in 6-8 million gallons of savings each month.

CITY MANAGER REPORT:

Nicosia confirmed the next Planning/Zoning Board meeting is Tuesday, Aug 9th at the Jr. High at 6:30. The Council will hold a Special meeting on Monday, Aug 22, at 7:00 p.m. at the Jr. High to hear the August 9th Planning Board items. There will be regular Council meetings on August 1st and August 15th.

Nicosia said staff revised the CDL requirement for the new firefighter job description and replaced it with Driver/ Operator Apparatus Equipped with Fire Pump certification through the State of Montana. Mayor

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Barnhart asked if we are giving candidates one year to acquire the certification. Nicosia said that is correct. Nicosia noted that the City will begin advertising the firefighter positions this week as Council formally established the wage schedule with Resolution #1879 and updated the job description. Nicosia noted that the Personnel Policy will be updated to reflect the non-union firefighter items previously discussed: FLSA work schedule, call-out and uniform allowance.

MISCELLANEOUS

Finance - May 2022 Report

Police Activity - April, May and June 2022

Fire Department - May and June Activity

ADJOURN:

Councilor Lovering made motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Shepard and the meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk