

**City of Columbia Falls
City Council Regular Meeting Minutes
March 17, 2025**

**COUNCIL WORKSHOP – 6:00 P.M.
Council Rules of Procedures**

Mayor Barnhart called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

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

Also Present: Interim City Manager Shrives, City Clerk Staaland, City Attorney Breck, and Police Chief Stephens.

Interim City Manager Shrives presented the Council with the current Council Rules of Procedures, originally adopted in 1996, alongside a revised version. The Council reviewed the updated language to ensure compliance with state requirements. Additional modifications and updates were suggested. Interim City Manager Shrives was instructed to incorporate these changes and present a revised version at the April 21, 2025, Council meeting.

The workshop adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING – 7:00 P.M.

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

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

Also Present: City Manager Shrives, City Clerk Staaland, City Attorney Breck, Fire Chief Weeks, and Police Chief Stephens.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Councilor Lovering moved to approve the agenda. Councilor King seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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

Approval of Financial Claims – March 17, 2025 – \$284,884.07

Approval of Payroll Claims – March 14, 2025 – \$112,098.61

Approval of Regular Council Meeting Minutes – March 3, 2025

Approval of EGPS Actuarial Engagement

Approval of Letter of Support for the Northwest Montana Drug Task Force

NEW BUSINESS: City Manager Agreement – City of Columbia Falls and Eric Hanks

Interim City Manager Shrives reported that the only amendment to the contract involved allowing Mr. Hanks to work remotely for up to five days per quarter to focus on significant projects.

Councilor Price moved to approve Mr. Hanks' ability to work remotely five days per quarter, seconded by Councilor Lovering with council voting as follows. Ayes: Price, Robinson, Shepard, King, Lovering and Barnhart.

Interim City Manager Shrives confirmed that Mr. Hanks will commence work on April 1, 2025. Shrives added that he would consult with Mr. Hanks to determine if assistance is required during his first week.

Mayor Barnhart expressed gratitude to Mr. Shrives for his dedicated service and valuable contributions to the city.

REPORTS / BUSINESS FROM MAYOR & COUNCIL:

Councilor Lovering recommended the city publish a “fun fact” page on the city website to enhance public engagement.

Councilor Price supported the suggestion by Lovering. Price inquired about the Study Commission recent survey results. City Manager Shrives reported that 69% of responses were from outside city limits. The Study Commission is considering another survey targeting water and sewer customers to gather feedback on the city’s form of government.

Councilor Shepard commended Interim City Manager Shrives for his exemplary performance while employed at the City of Columbia Falls.

Mayor Barnhart expressed satisfaction with Mr. Hanks’ appointment and thanked Mr. Shrives for his service.

CITY MANAGER REPORT:

Interim City Manager Shrives thanked the Council for the opportunity to serve the City of Columbia Falls and expressed confidence in Mr. Hanks’ leadership.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Correspondence

Fire Department – February Report

Police Department – February Report

ADJOURNMENT: Councilor Lovering moved to adjourn the meeting.

Roger Hopkins, 949 Vans Ave. said there was some disappointment that folks in Columbia Falls do not understand our form of government. The intention of the new survey is to make sure people look specifically at some of the things that could be changed in our current form of government.

Councilor King seconded the motion, and the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk