

**CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS  
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
HELD MARCH 15, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**ROLL CALL**

Councilor Fisher, Councilor Karper, Councilor Lovering, Councilor Robinson, Councilor Shepard (via ZOOM) and Mayor Barnhart. Absent: Councilor Piper.

Also present was City Manager Nicosia, City Clerk Staaland, City Attorney Breck and Police Chief Peters.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

Approval of Claims - March 15, 2021 - \$94,032.25

Approval of Payroll Claims - March 5, 2021 - \$80,278.43

Approval of March 1, 2021 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

Approval of Contract for Professional Services, PND Engineers, Inc, effective April 1, 2021 and authorize City Manager to execute

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

**VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENT (Items not on agenda)**

Gibson Lockhart, CFHS student, 1125 East Blackmer Lane, said he would like to request lights and a water fountain for the basketball court at Columbus Park.

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS/PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

Mayor Barnhart read the Notice of Public Hearings - April 5, 2021:

The Columbia Falls City-County Planning Board held a public hearing for the following item at their regular meeting on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 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 Monday April 5, 2021 starting at 7:00 p.m. in the same location. Both hearings will be conducted in accordance with the most current recommended and/or required public health and safety protocols in place at the time of the hearing. The City website will contain updated information if there is any change to the planned hearings.

**Request change the zoning from CSAG-10 (Suburban Agricultural) to CSAG-5 (Suburban Agricultural) in the Columbia Falls Zoning Jurisdiction:**

## **CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES HELD ON MARCH 15, 2021**

The applicant, Wayne Hull, is requesting a zone change for property at 7030 Highway 2 East, Columbia Falls from the current CSAG-10 (Suburban Agricultural) with a 10 acre minimum lot size to a CSAG-5 (Suburban Agricultural) with a five acre minimum lot size. Permitted and Conditionally permitted uses are almost identical in the two zoning designations. The vacant property is approximately 10 acres in size and is located approximately ¼ mile east of the bridge over the Flathead River. The property is described as Parcel 1 of COS 16981 of Section 16, Township 30 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M., Flathead County.

Mayor Barnhart read the Notice of Public Hearings - April 5, 2021:

The Columbia Falls City Council will hold public hearings for the purpose of allocating HB 473 Bridge and Road Safety and Accountability Program Funds and amending the 2021 FY Budget to account for the CARES Act Funding on Monday, April 5, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. The hearings will be held in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 130 6th ST. West, Columbia Falls, MT.

The City Council is proposing to request distribution of the 2021 HB 473 funds, in the amount of \$111,893.96, to overlay/repair 6th Avenue West from 9th St West to 13th St West.

The City Council will also hold a hearing to amend the 2020-21 Fiscal Year Budget to account for the CARES Act funds received during the 2021 FY.

Citizens are encouraged to attend the hearing or to provide written comments to the City Clerk at 130 6th Street West, Columbia Falls, MT 59912.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

CFAC Feasibility Cleanup Plan Letter(s) of Support

Mayor Barnhart asked Council if anyone would like to make any modifications to the letter as presented. Mayor Barnhart said his main concern is our community's drinking water and wonders if the letter should carry more weight with our concerns of river contamination and wells in Aluminum City. After discussion Council agreed with Mayor Barnhart to modify the letter to expand on their concerns. Nicosia said she will amend the letter to accommodate Council's request to include the ecological concerns of Flathead River and the wells outside of the city limits. Councilor Shepard reported that he talked Senator Tester's Kalispell Office and they encouraged sending the letter sooner than later.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Earth Day Proclamation

Mayor Barnhart read aloud the Earth Day Proclamation and proclaimed April 22, 2021 Earth Day in Columbia Falls.

Approval of Declaration of Surplus Equipment

City Manager Nicosia said the Public Works Department is looking to surplus the 1962 loader, 1984 paver, and the 1972 grader as the equipment has not been in use for years. Staff recommends approval to surplus the said equipment. Nicosia said the first step is to give notice of council's approval to surplus; then the City will ask for sealed bids.

Councilor Fisher motioned to approve to surplus unused equipment, second by Lovering and the motion carried.

**REPORTS / BUSINESS FROM MAYOR & COUNCIL**

Councilor Lovering said at the Parks Committee meeting last Monday they focused on Hoerner Park and the tennis courts. Lovering said they also discussed what Mr. Lockhart spoke of earlier, water and lights for the tennis and basketball courts. Lovering said it was mentioned by the Public Works Director that there is a light pole in place that we may be able to use. Nicosia said we will be discussing Cares Act Funding budget amendments to finish up the Hoerner park project.

Councilor Fisher reported on the Crystal Cedar Project north of town; the Gateway to Glacier trail group recently received a grant to put in a vault toilet at the trail head. Fisher said this is a great first step and hopefully they will get more grant money to work on the parking area.

Councilor Karper said the Tree Board was concerned about the Arbor Day celebration. The Board decided to plant the trees in Hoerner Park and hopefully have a celebration at the same time.

Mayor Barnhart inquired about the progress of the letters being sent out to non-compliant vacation rental owners. Nicosia said we are getting non-compliant letters and applications sent out. We are also working on updating the city website with a banner and instructions on conducting a legal vacation rental. Councilor Fisher asked if the vacation rentals will be subject to the Resort Tax. Nicosia said that is correct.

Mayor Barnhart asked if we can get the Fire Department to burn Pit to Park before it gets too late in the season. Nicosia said she will get with the Fire Chief to get it scheduled.

**CITY MANAGER REPORT**

City Manager Nicosia said the City is contracting with PND Engineers, Inc. for Tyler Bradshaw's hours working for the City up until June while we continue to recruit to fill the Public Works Director position.

The punch list items for the well project and Rivers Edge Park are winding down.

The bid opening on the tennis court project will be Tuesday 23, 2021, so we should have a recommendation to bring forward at the April 5th council meeting. Nicosia said Councilman Lovering provided information on a program through Lowe's, called 100 Hometowns, that we may be able to submit a request for parks projects.

Nicosia reported that last Thursday the American Rescue Plan was signed by the President and based on the 2019 estimated population our projected allocation is \$1,422,687. Nicosia noted that there are some very strict bullet points on what you can and cannot do with these funds, for example the City can't reduce taxes or fund pension plans. Nicosia stated that staff is looking into funding the bioreactor addition for approximately \$1m which would mean the City would not have to borrow money for the project. This would be a direct benefit to our residents as the City would not have to raise sewer rates in order to cover the debt capacity.

Pursuant to the federal announcement, the City should see 50% of this funding within sixty days.

Nicosia reported that we are gearing up for summer and advertising for a seasonal full time Parks position and seasonal pool positions. The City does not have an approved operation plan for this summer.

Nicosia reported that she and Tyler met via ZOOM with DOT and they will be chip sealing Nucleus Avenue before June 30th. They will also mill and fill on Railroad and pave from the viaduct up North Fork Rd.

**CITY ATTORNEY REPORT**

City Attorney Breck there is an appeal with the BOA decision in front of the District Court. On Friday, the attorney's office filed an answer as requested by the court to petition that the District Court review the decision. Additionally, the Deputy City Attorney will file a response by the following Friday. Breck said we will wait to hear if the court wants a hearing after receiving the response.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

February 2021 - Finance Report

**CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES HELD ON MARCH 15, 2021**

February - Police Activity  
Mayor and Council Correspondence

**ADJOURN**

Councilor Lovering motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Karper. The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

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Mayor

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City Clerk