

CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HELD JULY 01, 2024

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

ROLL CALL: Councilor King, Councilor Lovering, Councilor Price, Councilor Robinson, Councilor Shepard via Zoom and Mayor Barnhart.

Also present: Acting City Manager Peters, City Clerk Staaland, City Attorney Breck, Finance Director Bates, Fire Chief Weeks and Sergeant Rice.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

Approval of Claims - July 1, 2024 - \$112,607.63

Approval of Payroll Claims - June 21, 2024 - \$119,645.50

Approval of Special Payroll - June 28, 2024 - \$51,697.79

Approval of Regular Council Meeting Minutes - June 17, 2024

PRESENTATIONS:

Detective Craig McConnell - 20-Year Pin, Street Lead Matt Cox – 10 Year Pin, Street Department Rick Lawrence – 10 Year Pin.

Mayor Barnhart thanked Craig McConnell, Matt Cox and Rick Lawrence for their years of dedicated service with the city and presented them with a service pin.

VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENT (Items not on agenda)

Ryan Wilbur with People and Carnivores updated council on programs in Columbia Falls. Evergreen Disposal has bear safe containers with a cost share option. September is bear aware month for the state of Montana, and he would like to put something together for the City of Columbia Falls said Mr. Wilbur.

James Druyvestein, 4190 Columbia Falls Stage Rd. said he was at the Rivers Edge Park fishing pond and there were no fish. Mr. Druyvestein asked if there was someone he could talk to about it. Acting City Manager Peters said Fish Wildlife and Parks stocks the pond and he will reach out to them to see what their schedule is for restocking the pond.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS/PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Public Hearing Continued - 2024-25 Fiscal Year Preliminary Budget Hearings to be continued until the adoption of the final budget in September 2024

Report on On-going and New Capital Outlay for the 2024-25 FY

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Acting City Manager Peters said for safety measures a wall is being constructed between the squad room and the booking area in the police department. The final cost of the wall is \$12,000 which was well below the original estimated cost of \$30,000. The city will also be looking at a replacement patrol vehicle said Peters.

Finance Director Bates said as council is aware the city purchased the pumper fire rescue vehicle which is slated to arrive in March.

In the parks department we are still waiting on the grant approval for the bathroom at Fenholt Skatepark said Bates. The city has \$50,000 of donated funds from the Church Women United for playground equipment.

5th Ave W. has gone to the top of the priority list due to deterioration last winter.

The city is working with the WGM group on the Raise Grant and should see something within the next week to bring it forward to the next council meeting.

The city is still finalizing the ARPA Grant and hopefully starting construction soon. The sidewalk project is wrapping up and is looking very nice said Bates.

Acting City Manager Peters said he has had the opportunity to meet with Finance Director Bates and City Clerk Staaland in evaluating the need for a new FTE in the finance department. This position will most likely have financial and accounting skills. Mayor Barnhart asked when the position will be advertised. Peters said after the budget is adopted.

Mayor Barnhart said the public hearing will remain open at this time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Ratification Agreement Regarding 2018 Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction Interlocal Agreement

City Attorney Breck said this process has been ongoing for the last few months. This is the transition from the prior interlocal agreement with the county to our current agreement as of June 30, 2024 where the county takes over the territorial jurisdiction. This is a ratification and acceptance of all subdivision actions taken by the city from the time of expiration of the 2018 second amendment to the interlocal agreement, which expired in August 2023 to today. It is official the city actions are ratified to the next phase, which is entrance to the City Planning Commission appointees and the city jurisdiction is now limited to just the city limits for land use, planning and subdivision regulations.

Councilor King asked if anything that was city responsibility would now go to the county. City Attorney Breck said during that time period the county through this agreement has ratified and accepted all those decisions, because that agreement expired in August 2023. The city wanted a transition agreement either extending the expiration or for the county to ratify everything the city has done during that time period.

ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution #1924 - A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, Montana, Amending Fund 2394 Building Code Enforcement Fund Budget Revenues and Appropriations for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024

Mayor Barnhart said the city received more in building permitting funds and through this resolution it will be corrected.

Councilor Robinson motioned to approve resolution #1924, seconded by Councilor Lovering with council voting as follows. Ayes: Lovering, Price, Robinson, Shepard, King and Barnhart.

Resolution # 1925 - A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, Montana Transferring Planning Board and Zoning Commission and Board of Adjustment to the Planning Commission

Councilor Lovering made motion to approve resolution #1925, seconded by Councilor King with council voting as follows. Ayes: Lovering, Price, Robinson, Shepard, King and Barnhart.

Resolution # 1926 - A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, Montana, Authorizing a Loan from the Cedar Creek Trust Fund for the Riverwood SID 38 Remaining Balance

Finance Director Bates said this loan from the Cedar Creek Trust is to pay off the Riverwood SID 38 remaining balance through Glacier Bank. This will avoid issues the city has had with Glacier Bank posting payments and late fees. The city will make regular monthly payments to the trust instead of Glacier Bank.

Councilor Lovering motioned to approve resolution #1926, seconded by Councilor Robinson with council voting as follows. Ayes: Price, Robinson, Shepard, King, Lovering and Barnhart.

REPORTS / BUSINESS FROM MAYOR & COUNCIL

Councilor Price said she has been in contact with MDT about the street lights on Nucleus Avenue and Railroad Street as there is no power on them. MDT owns the lights and a lot of them were not up to code, Price said she asked them what it would take to have outlets and they said there may be money in the budget for the lighting district. Price asked if there was money in the lighting district budget. Mayor Barnhart replied no there is not. Councilor King said in order to get an estimate there would need to be a scope of the underground conduit and the scope would need to be all of Nucleus Avenue.

Councilor King asked if council could get the application folder for the Public Works Director position. Acting City Manager Peters said he has reviewed the applicants and there are no qualified candidates at this time, and the city is currently advertising for the position. Councilor Robinson asked if it may be a pay issue. Peters said the city is competing with other cities for the same position and believes the city is competitive with wages starting at \$75,000 - \$90,000 DOE. Mayor Barnhart said sometimes the qualifications needed may need to be altered and look at experience.

Councilor Robinson thanked staff for stepping up.

Mayor Barnhart said the hiring committee is making progress on the City Manager candidates. Mayor Barnhart thanked Acting City Manager Peters for filling in until the permanent Manager is in place.

Mayor Barnhart recognized recently retired Firemen Tom Kemppainen and Mike VanHaverbeke for their 20 years of service on the Fire Department.

ACTING CITY MANAGER REPORT:

Acting City Manager Peters thanked Mayor and Council for entrusting him in the Acting City Manager role. Peters said he has enjoyed serving the last seven and a half years in Columbia Falls as the Chief of Police. Peters said the Acting City Manager role is just as important as being the Chief of Police. It was a good first day in trying to figure out how the city functions in all areas said Peters. He took a facility tour last week for everything the city owns from the dam to WWTP. Peters admitted he had no idea how everything worked and looks forward to learning more about each department.

Peters said he is keeping busy conversing with department heads on what their department needs are for the upcoming budget along with reviewing both union contracts as well as the City Attorney contract.

The pool closure on Monday, June 24th was due to filter and vacuum system malfunction and the Tuesday and Wednesday closure was due to a public health incident. Mayor Barnhart inquired about swim lessons if they

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would be extended due to closures. Peters said he will check with the pool manager to see what they have planned.

At the last council meeting there were questions about the gaps between the new and old pavement CR with Morrison and Maierle and staff determined that Knife River did their job as required and the city street department will go over it with some dura patching for the final finish.

The fish pond pier design should be complete by the end of the month. The city will look into available grants for funding.

On the 6th St. E. and 2nd Ave. E. area where there was the water leak a couple weeks ago, there is still water seeping from the hillside. Staff has determined it is not coming from the city service water line. The city is expecting to have the soil analysis report to us very soon. Councilor Lovering said she notice they took another cottonwood tree down, will they put something in place after the report comes in. Peters said the trees were removed along with debris that was piled up around them. Lovering added when it rains there is a lot of water running down 6th Street. Mayor Barnhart said when you start taking the trees away the water will find other area to go. Peters said hopefully Knife River will be paving the street in the next week.

The Police Chief position has been posted and will close on July 22nd. There are some qualified candidates coming in and more expected. This is a great place to be the Chief of Police said Peters. The Police Officer position was filled last week and the employee will start on July 14th.

5th Ave W. from 13th St. W. if the city is going to fix the road we should fix water line as well. We may not have enough money to get all three blocks fixed but we know it needs to be done.

The parts have arrived for the waterfall by Glacier Bank; the falls should be operating now. Horine Park will have a water fountain this week and Columbus Park should have one installed next week. The volleyball net and poles are due to arrive next week and installed upon arrival.

The city will be contracting the city budget and grant writing administration, it is imperative we have someone in place that has knowledge in all areas. Peters said his plan is to bring that contract forward at the July 15th Council meeting.

Mayor Barnhart said he noticed the bathroom at Rivers Edge Park that the stainless steel commode is rusting. Acting City Manager Peters said he would check with the Parks Lead to see if he can look into it.

Project Update and Follow Up

Kreck Riverside Park Update - Fence Install

Acting City Manager Peters said the Kreck Park fence has been installed and the signs will be go up when they arrive. Councilor Lovering asked where the fence ends, where that is in terms of the high water mark. Peters said it is well above the high water mark.

MISCELLANEOUS

Correspondence

June 2024 Preliminary Council Financial Reports

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ADJOURN: At 7:55 p.m. Councilor Lovering motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Robinson.

Mayor

City Clerk