

CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING-MOVED DUE TO HOLIDAY MINUTES
HELD FEBRUARY 18, 2025

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

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

CONSENT AGENDA: Councilor Price motioned to approve the consent agenda noting a correction on an invoice seconded by Councilor Piper with council voting as follows. Ayes: Lovering, Piper, Price, Robinson, Shepard, King and Barnhart.

Approval of Claims - \$170,167.32

Approval of Payroll Claims - Feb. 14, 2025 - \$116,997.85

Approval of 02/03/2025 Council Minutes

Approval of 02/10/25 Council Minutes

Change Order No. 3 - Prospect Construction, Inc.

Employee Incentive:

Fire Chief Karl Weeks - Five Years of Service

Mayor Barnhart thanked Fire Chief Weeks for his five years of service and presented him with a 5 years of service city pin.

NEW BUSINESS:

Waiver of Protest to Annexation

City of Columbia Falls request for sewer service and waiver of Protest to Annexation for 15 16th Street E. Columbia Falls.

City Manager Shrives said he believes the county identified the septic system as failing at the said address, so they need to connect the city sewer. The next step for the property owner is to sign a waiver of annexation. They will be required to pay a city sewer connection fee along with monthly fees to the city for usage.

Councilor Lovering motioned to approve the Waiver of Protest to Annexation, seconded by Councilor Robinson and the motion carried unanimously.

Grant Funding for a Full Time DUI Officer and overtime funding for STEP

Police Chief Stephens said the Montana Department of Transportation, through its State Highway Traffic Safety Section, has grant funding opportunities for FFY 2026 projects. The attached application contains two projects. The first is funding for a full time DUI officer with the Columbia Falls Police Department. The grant

CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING-MOVED DUE TO HOLIDAY MINUTES HELD ON FEBRUARY 18, 2025

supplies funding for 100% of the officer's salary and benefits. It also supplies funding for traffic related training and equipment. The second portion of this grant project is \$15,000.00 in funding for STEP overtime.

The Columbia Falls Police Department currently has a \$16,000.00 grant for STEP overtime funding. This STEP grant has been in place with CFPD for many years. The current STEP funding will be reduced to \$15,000.00. However, the city will receive \$135,262.56 to pay for the wages and benefits for a full-time officer to be assigned to DUI and other traffic related enforcement duties. Also included in the grant is an additional \$15,000.00 to pay for DUI enforcement specific training and equipment.

If the grant becomes defunded the council would have to decide whether or not to fund the position. There are currently five other communities in Montana who have this same grant.

Councilor Robinson asked if this is a reoccurring grant. Stephens said yes it is reoccurring and we will have to re-submit on an annual basis. Councilor Lovering asked if the city would be eligible each year. Shrives said he believes so and the new hire would be informed the position is on a year to year basis. Mayor Barnhart asked if the person you are talking about is a current officer. Shrives said it will be a current officer which will leave an open position in the department that the city will fill. Mayor Barnhart asked out of the 107 DUI's how many convictions we got. City Attorney Breck said he would have to consult with the prosecuting attorney for an accurate percentage. Councilor Price asked during the renewal application the city would remove training and equipment monies correct. Stephens said that is correct.

Councilor Piper motioned to approve the application for Grant Funding for a Full Time DUI Officer and overtime funding for STEP, seconded by Councilor King and the motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS / BUSINESS FROM MAYOR & COUNCIL

Councilor Piper said he spoke to the President of the Baseball Association and the abandon camper is scheduled to be removed from the ballpark parking area.

Councilor Price said there is sidewalk and tree removal concerns with residents on 4th Avenue W. Price asked if the city will give advance notice to folks. City Manager Shrives said everything that is going to be removed is in the city right of way and the city will be working with home owners. There is also a meeting this week in the council chambers with the engineers showing multiple maps and talking with residents about the project.

Councilor Shepard said he has been following the legislative session and will be keeping a close eye on proposed changes.

Mayor Barnhart said in looking at the Police Department report he is impressed and appreciates their hard work.

Mayor Barnhart said the landfill has a process to remove campers. The campers have to have a clear title along with a payment of \$300.

Mayor Barnhart stated the Baseball Association will be able to have their regular season at the Railroad St. Park and moving to the Jr. High after the season.

CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING-MOVED DUE TO HOLIDAY MINUTES HELD ON FEBRUARY 18, 2025

Mayor Barnhart discussed the expansion at the landfill in Lakeside and the need for the project.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Shrives said the Study Commission met last week and they have a survey on the city website. Printed copies are available at City Hall. The committee will be reviewing results of the survey at the March 12th meeting.

The city manager recruitment is down to 3 candidates scheduled for interviews on March 7th.

The work session with the Planning Commission is on February 24th.

Tomorrow night is the open house for the RAISE Grant from 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

As of right now, federal funds are on hold, but they've said they expect those to be released because our question was, so we're going to spend \$1.9 million on design and not be able to build. They're feeling confident that those funds will be released when it comes time for construction. The engineering will move forward because those funds are already under contract said Shrives.

Mayor Barnhart inquired about updating the City Council Policy and Procedures manual. Mr. Shrives said we put it on the March 17th meeting agenda.

MISCELLANEOUS

Fire Department Reports
Police Department Report
Correspondence

ADJOURN: Councilor Shepard motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilor King and the meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk