

CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HELD NOVEMBER 04, 2024

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

Approval of Claims - November 4, 2024 - \$1,206,167.75

Approval of Payroll Claims - Oct. 25, 2024 - \$185,085.68

Approval of Regular Council Meeting Minutes - September 21, 2024

Approval of MT DOT STEP Contract for 2025 and Authorize City Manager and Police Chief to Execute

Approval of Task Order #3 - Professional Services Contract with Susan Nicosia

VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENT (Items not on agenda)

Matt Hutcheson, 227 7th St. E. requested an update on concerns he brought forward at the last council meeting regarding the crosswalk and stop sign on 3rd Ave. E. Mr. Hutcheson would also like to know what council has come up with for audio system in the council chambers.

Mr. Hutcheson said in a past meeting it was brought up that the public could not address the council other than at the council meetings. A concern he has is citizens don't have a say in what gets approved at meetings.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mayoral Proclamation - Nov. 30, 2024, Small Business Saturday in Columbia Falls

Mayor Barnhart read the Proclamation for Small Business, Saturday, November 30, 2024.

ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:

RESOLUTION #1934 - A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF COLUMBIA FALLS, MONTANA APPROVING THE FINAL PLAT OF RIVERBEND AGAIN SUBDIVISION A TWO LOT RESIDENTIAL MINOR SUBDIVISION LOCATED AT 67 HIDDEN CEDAR LOOP AND 544 EVENING STAR LANE, FURTHER DESCRIBED AS LOT 20A, OF THE AMENDED SUBDIVISION PLAT OF LOTS 20, 21, 30 & 31 OF RIVERBEND ESTATES PHASE 1 IN THE IN SECTION 17, TOWNSHIP 30 NORTH, RANGE 20 WEST, P.M.M., FLATHEAD COUNTY, MONTANA.

City Manager Shrives said this subdivision has been in the process for some time and this is the final plat for approval.

Councilor King motioned to approve Resolution #1934, seconded by Councilor Lovering.

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Mayor Barnhart said this parcel is a large lot near Julies Park, and are the last buildable lots in the Riverbend subdivision.

Ayes: Robinson, Shepard, King, Lovering, Piper, Price and Barnhart.

REPORTS / BUSINESS FROM MAYOR & COUNCIL

Councilor Piper thanked city staff for taking care of the pipe near the sidewalk on the side of City Hall. Piper also thanked city crews for painting the yellow curbs by Posh Nails; noting it has made a significant difference.

Piper asked about the abandoned camper at the Sapa-Johnsrud Memorial Field. Chief Stephens replied the camper is in the county and on private property. The property owner has come with a solution to have a tow company remove the camper. Before they can remove the camper the propane system, AC and refrigerator must be removed before tow company will take it off site. Councilor King asked if it was at the expense of property owner. Chief Stephens replied that is correct.

Councilor Price said they are moving forward on the Skatepark and are hoping to be complete by December. Price asked if the police department has made progress on the theft that occurred at the construction site. Chief Stephens replied some equipment has been tracked to various pawn shops around the country such as Texas and California. Staff has spent several hours reporting serial numbers to pawn shops and looked for video from neighbors in the area. Price asked when the Skatepark is finished will cameras be installed. City Manager Shrives said he was not certain and will check on it.

Councilor Shepard said he noticed trucks parked all day in the 15 minute parking spots on Nucleus Ave. Shepard asked how the city can change the parking on Nucleus Ave. without it being a city street. City Manager Shrives said it could be employees parking in front of the businesses.

Councilor Lovering wanted to follow up with lighting at the Skatepark. Mayor Barnhart said the Skatepark is still a city park and our parks close at 10 p.m. City Manager Shrives said the plans he saw for the Skatepark did not include lighting.

Mayor Barnhart said he inquired with a public works operator on when the bathrooms were going to be installed and was told the contractor doesn't have it on their work list yet. The City has the concrete pad complete and ready for the building.

Mayor Barnhart asked about the audio system in the council chambers. City Manager Shrives said staff has called tech support on the microphones and will continue working through existing equipment. Staff will reach out to audio companies to get a quote on a new system.

Mayor Barnhart responded to a question Mr. Hutcheson had on the way the City Manager form of government is set up. If a resident has questions they take it to the City Manager and part of the City Manager duties is to address those concerns. City Manager Shrives said that is correct. There is also opportunity to comment on actions that are in the process, public hearings are an opportunity to speak in front of the Planning Commission and the Council before a decision is made.

Mayor Barnhart said there was concern that council emails were not made public, all council correspondence goes through the City Clerk, who then passes the information on to Councilors. Matt Hutcheson said he did

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speak to the City Clerk and she said the same thing, to contact her and she would forward the email on to council when needed.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Shrives said the Public Works Director is looking at the stop sign and crosswalk that Mr. Hutcheson brought up at 3rd Ave. E. intersection.

Public Works Director Bates will be getting in touch with the Parks Committee to schedule a meeting very soon.

City Manager Shrives said we are looking for an ex officio member for the Local Government Review Study Commission. Mayor Barnhart asked council if anyone was interested in serving as the ex officio member for the commission. With no one wishing to serve on the commission, Mayor Barnhart said he would volunteer to be the ex officio for the commission.

There were 9 proposals submitted from recruiting firms for hiring the new City Manager. City Manager Shrives said he would like to meet with the hiring committee to review the proposals and schedule a follow up meeting next week. Mayor Barnhart asked Mr. Shrives to review the timeline for the process. Mr. Shrives said the hiring committee should select a recruiting firm by the November 18, 2024 council meeting. We will then be able to negotiate the contract. In looking at their time lines they will be working with the city potentially December through February with a recruiting process in January. Most firms said it is an 8 to 10 week process after advertising. In December the city will work with the firm on a city profile for advertising purposes.

Mayor Barnhart asked if there were any applicants for the Finance Director position. City Manager Shrives said staff has completed interviews and we are in the process of finalizing the background check on a selected individual. We will be making an offer upon a successful background check.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

Chief Stephens said staff is in the process of completing a background check on a new probationary Patrol Officer, and anticipate an appointment the first part of December.

Chief said the Police Department remodel is complete and invited council to take a tour of the department.

Fire Department October Activity Reports

Police Department October Activity Report

ADJOURN: Councilor Lovering motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilor King and the meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk