

**CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HELD OCTOBER 16, 2023**

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

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

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

CONSENT AGENDA: Councilor Fisher motioned to approve the consent agenda noting all claims appeared to be in order, seconded by Councilor King and the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Claims - October 2023

Approval of Payroll Claims - October 13, 2023 - \$103,641.29

Approval of 3rd Quarterly Report Claim - \$23,808.51

Approval of Regular City Council Meeting Minutes - October 2, 2023

APPOINTMENTS:

Brandon Rice - Promotion to Sergeant/Oath of Office

Police Chief Peters said it was a pleasure to promote Brandon Rice to Police Sergeant. We are excited to watch him grow within the department.

Councilor King made a motion to recognize the promotion of Brandon Rice to the Sergeant position, seconded by Councilor Lovering and the motion carried unanimously.

City Clerk Staaland administered Oath of Office to Sergeant Rice.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS/PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Public Hearing: Rocky Top Cabins, a Two-Lot Subdivision:

Mayor Barnhart read the notice of the public hearing and asked for the staff report presentation.

The Columbia Falls City-County Planning Board held a public hearing for the following item at their regular meeting on Tuesday, September 12, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 130 6th Street West, Columbia Falls, Montana. The Columbia Falls City Council will hold a subsequent hearing on October 16, 2023, starting at 7:00 p.m. in the same location.

Rocky Top Cabins Subdivision – A Two Lot Subdivision: A request by Herbert Enterprises LLC to create a two-lot subdivision. The property is 8.11 acres in size and the property is zoned CR-1 which allows a minimum lot size of one acre. The property is located at 269 Rocky Lane, Columbia Falls, and is described as Assessor's Tract 1 (Parcel A of COS 21669) located in Section 7, Township 30 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M., Flathead County.

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City Manager Nicosia presented Staff Report CPP-23-02 as Findings of Fact, reviewing each of the findings and the conditions of approval. Nicosia reported that the applicant was requesting a variance to the road dividing Lot 2. The Planning Board held a Public Hearing on September 12, 2023, and recommended approval to the City Council. Nicosia reported no public comments have been received on the request. Staff recommends approval.

With no one wishing to speak to the council on the application, Mayor Barnhart opened and closed the public hearing at 7:13 p.m.

Councilor Fisher motioned to approve Staff Report CPP-23-02 as Findings of Fact, seconded by Councilor King with council voting as follows. Ayes: Shepard, Fisher, King, Lovering, Piper, and Barnhart.

NEW BUSINESS:

Call for Bids - Sidewalk and Parking Improvements Project

City Manager Nicosia said the City is ready to call for bids on the Sidewalk and Parking Improvements Project. There will be a pre-bid meeting for contractors on October 25, 2023. The bid opening will be scheduled for November 16, 2023, then award the bid at the December 4, 2023, council meeting. Work is expected to begin in the spring of 2024. Staff recommends approval of the call for bids.

Councilor Lovering motioned to approve the call for bids for the Sidewalk and Parking Improvements Project, seconded by Councilor Piper and the motion carried.

Mayor Barnhart asked if the money that was not used last year will carry forward. Nicosia replied yes, that is correct, the 24 FY budget includes the roll over. Mayor Barnhart asked if the angled parking would be in place at that time. Nicosia said yes, it will.

Approval of Teamsters Local No 2 Memorandum of Agreement and 23-24 Wage Opener

City Manager Nicosia said City Administration met with the Teamsters representatives and negotiated the 23-24 FY wage opener along with the Memorandum of Agreement. Nicosia reported that the Memorandum of Agreement allows the city to place new employees on the step that corresponds with their education and experience instead of waiting for the end of their first year as well as amending the step placement when there is a promotion. This will allow the City to be competitive in hiring open positions in order to meet the collective goals of attracting good candidates and retaining employees. Teamsters have ratified this memorandum of agreement along with the 5% increase on the wage scale. City Administration recommends Council approve the Agreement and Wage Opener and authorize City Manager to Execute.

Councilor Fisher motioned to authorize the City Manager to execute the Memorandum of Agreement and the 23-24 FY wage opener.

Councilor King asked which City employees are in the Teamsters Union. Nicosia replied all of the public works operators (Water, Streets, Sewer, Floaters).

Motion carried with voting as follows: Ayes: Fisher, King, Lovering, Piper, Shepard and Barnhart.

Capital Outlay Review - Police Department

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Nicosia reported that the funding for Capital Outlay for the Police Department comes out of the General Fund and may include funding from the resort tax. Nicosia and Peters gave an overview of police vehicles, noting that currently there are five on the road. Chief Peters explained the upgraded mobile camera system. Mayor Barnhart asked if the City could expect more mileage out of the new vehicles. Chief Peters said he believes so as they pay close attention to maintenance and do a lot of research before purchasing. Councilor Piper asked if the body and vehicle cameras are activated manually. Chief Peters said the cameras are activated when the emergency lights or siren are on, if there is a crash, or the vehicle is traveling up to 75 mph it starts recording. Peters noted that the officer can also manually record, and it will go back two minutes in time.

City Manager Nicosia said it's already been 12 years since the Police Department underwent a significant remodel in 2011 for approximately \$250k. The carpet is in rough shape and will be replaced with laminate flooring as discussed during the budget review. The squad table will be replaced with a more suitable workspace. The Police Chief would like to put a wall between the booking room and squad room to separate the two. The projected cost is approximately \$30,000 and is included in this year's budget.

Nicosia and Peters also reviewed the brown shed that houses records and serves as storage primarily for the Police Department. The City has talked about tearing down the brown shed but it serves a useful purpose and will have to be rebuilt or replaced in the future.

City Manager Nicosia and Police Chief Peters reviewed the current cost of outfitting a Police Officer.

Councilor Piper asked if it was really \$30,000 to build the small wall. Nicosia replied that is the estimate from the contractor. It will include a door and potentially two observation windows.

ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution # 1911:

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF COLUMBIA FALLS, MONTANA CONDITIONALLY APPROVING THE PRELIMINARY PLAT OF ROCKY TOP CABINS SUBDIVISION A TWO LOT RESIDENTIAL SUBSEQUENT MINOR SUBDIVISION LOCATED AT 269 ROCKY LANE, FURTHER DESCRIBED AS PARCEL A, COS 21669 IN THE NE1/4 NE1/4 IN SECTION 7, TOWNSHIP 30 NORTH, RANGE 20 WEST, P.M.M., FLATHEAD COUNTY, MONTANA.

Councilor Piper Motioned to approve Resolution # 1911, seconded by Councilor Lovering with council voting as follows. Ayes: King, Lovering, Piper, Shepard, Fisher and Barnhart.

REPORTS / BUSINESS FROM MAYOR & COUNCIL

Councilor King said when DOT attended the Council meeting, they asked the City to submit letters formally asking them to study the traffic issues raised by council; King inquired where we are on the letters. Nicosia said she is currently drafting letters as she has talked with MDOT officials and still needs to reach out to the County Commissioners.

Councilor King asked where we are with Northwest Mutual Land Trust. Nicosia said they have purchased a lot, but it may not work for the donated house. Nicosia said she met with Kim Morisaki for further discussion and the City will continue to work with her.

Mayor Barnhart said Glacier Gateway School is having an open house on October 24, 2023, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. to tour the new school.

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Mayor Barnhart reported that he attended the MT League of Cities and Towns Conference and the head of MDOT said they are looking at ways to work with communities. Mayor Barnhart would like the city to clear snow from intersections on Nucleus Ave. near the post office, Smith's, 6th St. and 7th St.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

Nicosia said the City's Land Water Conservation fund grant application for the bathroom and the skate park has made it through the phase 2 review. Fish, Wildlife & Parks staff will recommend that our project move forwards and by the end of next week we should get a formal letter letting us know if our project has been accepted. At that point we put together the formal application.

Nicosia reported that the RAISE grant is one step closer to having all of the final signatures needed to proceed.

On 12th Ave. W., the City had a positive meeting with BNSF. They sent back engineering comments and as soon as Morrison-Maierle respond to their comments, BNSF will finalize the project and the City will be able to proceed. Nicosia said she talked to the EDA representative and until the City has the easement for the sidewalk their attorney won't sign off on the title, which means the City will not receive reimbursement until the site title is final.

City Manager Nicosia reviewed the 2023-24 Fiscal Year budget book with Council. She noted that City staff would like to put together a one-page budget sheet for council and public.

Nicosia reported on the City's Water loss. While it is still 10.5 million gallons per month, the City has improved water loss by approximately 50%. The city will replace meters as needed but we do not have plans for a large-scale meter replacement project. The City will continue to have service lines replaced when leaks develop, said Nicosia.

MDOT came back with an updated Urban Boundary Map. They concurred with the City's request to take out the Roger's Road area but did not make all the adjustments requested by the City. Nicosia noted that the map is tied to urban funding and not the City's urban planning area.

A major topic at the League of Cities and Towns was the implementation of SB 382 with significant changes to how the City does planning and zoning. The city will schedule a workshop in November or December to discuss the changes. Mayor Barnhart said Belgrade is moving forward with a new growth policy, housing study, transportation and utility PERS at a cost of \$600,000.

Mayor Barnhart inquired about the status of the Boys and Girls Club facility. Nicosia said they have to submit a Conditional Use Permit and they are in the process of doing so.

Mayor Barnhart said he visited with the Fire Department on getting a fourth firefighter and hopes to have one in place for the next fiscal year. Mayor Barnhart said he would like to make it a priority.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

City Attorney Breck concurred with Nicosia and Barnhart on the League of Cities and Towns Conference, there was good information provided. There were great presentations on marijuana DUI's, the role AI can play and creating amazing efficiencies. A huge portion was dedicated to land use and social media use for elected officials.

MISCELLANEOUS

September - Fire Department Activity

Police Department - September Activity Report

ADJOURN

Councilor Lovering motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Fisher and the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Mayor

City Clerk