

CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HELD JUNE 03, 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, and Mayor Barnhart.

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

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 Lovering motioned to approve the consent agenda noting all claims appeared to be in order, with council voting as follows. Ayes: Robinson, Shepard, King, Lovering, Price and Barnhart.

Approval of Claims - June 3, 2024 - \$164,302.35

Approval of Payroll Claims - May 24, 2024 - \$164,782.43

Approval of Regular Council Meeting Minutes - May 20, 2024

Approval of 2024-25 FY Teamsters Local No. 2 Amended Collective Bargaining Agreement - 24-25 FY Wage Opener and Authorize City Manager to Execute

Approval of Columbia Falls Fraternal Order of Police Lodge # 6 - Collective Bargaining Agreement Amended for 24/25 Wage Opener and authorize City Manager to execute.

Approval of Subdivision Improvement Agreement - Rocky Top Cabins Subdivision and authorize City Manager to execute.

VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENT (Items not on agenda)

Justin Ping, 1205 10th Ave W., said he is in attendance with a simple but urgent plea. Mr. Ping would like to see more stop signs near 10th Ave. W. and 12th Street W. With increased traffic there is excessive speeding that at some point will be catastrophic, said Ping. There are no sidewalks in the area and pedestrians are required to walk on the street. Mr. Ping suggests getting more traffic signs in the area.

Matt Hutcheson, 227 7th St. E. said 7th St. E. did not get chip sealed last week when a lot of other city streets did. Mr. Hutcheson asked if there was a plan to slope the road to the south at the bottom of 7th St. E. and 3rd Ave. E. for drainage purposes.

Susan Wheeler, 170 River Road, said she concurs with Mr. Ping.

Mayor Barnhart said the council was just talking about stop signs in town. There is a process that the city goes through when adding new signs. Your comments have been received and heard noted Mayor Barnhart. Police Chief Peters said there is a stop sign request form residents can complete; staff will evaluate the specific intersections to determine the need for added signage. Chief Peters said he is familiar with the section of town Mr. Ping is referring to and has extra patrols in the area. City Manager Nicosia said a federal regulation specifically states that the city cannot use stop signs to control speed. The City will do a warrant study and evaluate if there is a need for traffic signs.

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City Manager Nicosia said the city did not chip seal 7th St. E. due to the neighboring development has not completed paving the area, the City is waiting to have the pavement completed before chip sealing. That section of street will be added to next year's chip sealing project. Councilor Lovering said it seems odd that they have to wait for a year. Nicosia noted that the city always waits one year after new pavement to chip seal.

Mayor Barnhart asked about the drainage at 7th St. E. Nicosia said city staff has looked at it and the paving was not accepted by the City.

Mr. Hutcheson said he believes there is a need for stop signs near 7th St. E. Chief Peters said the city did a warrant study on 7th St. E. three years ago and it was less than 1% of vehicles traveling over 25mph.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS/PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Mayor Barnhart read the Notice of Public Hearings - 24-25 Fiscal Year Preliminary Budget:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, Montana, will hold public hearings beginning on June 17, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Columbia Falls City Hall, 130-6th Street West, Columbia Falls, Montana, for the following purposes:

Preliminary Budget

Presentation and consideration of the preliminary budget for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025, will begin on June 17, 2024, and will be continued until final adoption of the budget after receiving the certified taxable valuation in August. The City Council will review various departments and funds at each hearing until the budget has been presented in its entirety.

Special Assessments

Consideration of the adoption of the proposed Street Lighting District and Street Maintenance District assessments for FY2024/2025. The council will hear any objections to the final adoption of the resolution levying special assessments for FY 2024/2025. Special Assessments are estimated as follows:

Street Lighting District	\$ 30,049 (no change)
Street Maintenance District	\$346,500 (5.0% increase)

Individual property payment schedules will be available for inspection ten (10) days from this notice, in the office of the City Clerk, 130 6th Street West, Columbia Falls, Montana, during regular hours Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

Permissive Medical Levy

Consideration of adoption on the proposed tax levy to fund health insurance premium contributions for group benefits beyond the amount of contributions in effect on. The actual mills for consideration will be made available upon receipt of the certified tax valuation for the year.

Taxpayers are encouraged to attend the hearings and give written or oral comments on any or all of the budget-related items. Written comments may be mailed to the City Clerk, Room A, Questions regarding the proposed items can be made by contacting City Manager Susan Nicosia at 892-4391.

NEW BUSINESS:

Solid Waste Board - City of Columbia Falls Appointment

This appointment is to fill the remaining term thru December 31, 2025, of Susan Nicosia, effective July 1, 2024. City Manager Nicosia said she has served on the Solid Waste Board for 13 years. The Board is made up of an appointee from each city, county commissioner, health board representative and two members at large; it is a great Board to serve on noted Nicosia. The city needs someone there to represent Columbia Falls.

Mayor Barnhart asked if the council wished to wait for the new City Manager to serve on the Board or appoint a Council Member. Councilor Shepard asked how heavy the workload was for the Board. Nicosia said there are

multiple projects coming up, but the board only meets monthly; It is a well-run department, and she has enjoyed serving on the Board. Mayor Barnhart said after having conversations with City Manager Nicosia about the Board he would consider serving on the Solid Waste Board as the Columbia Falls representative. Mayor Barnhart said he currently serves on the Flathead County Health Board.

Councilor Lovering made motion to appoint Mayor Barnhart as the city representative on the Solid Waste Board thru December 31, 2025, seconded by Councilor Robinson and the motion carried unanimously.

Award Bid - WWTP Improvements Project - Prospect Construction, Inc. and authorize City Manager to execute the agreements and documents.

City Manager Nicosia said this project has been interesting due to the base bid being \$5,125,000. and bid alternatives an additional \$4,585,000. The city is currently in the process of modifying the grant agreements with DNRC as well as applying for up to \$750,000 in SRF funds. City staff went back through the bid with HDR and Prospect Construction, Inc. and they have potential deducts they can present to the city. DNRC indicated they will accept the reduced scope of work. The current SRF funding is at 2.5% and potentially the city could have a portion of that forgiven said Nicosia.

Staff recommends awarding the WWTP Improvements Project bid to Prospect Construction, Inc. with the final contract amount and scope of work to be amended based on the Base Bid and modifications.

Councilor Shepard motioned to award the WWTP Improvements Project to Prospect Construction, Inc. and authorize City Manager Nicosia to execute the necessary agreements and documents, seconded by Councilor Robinson and the motion carried unanimously. Nicosia noted that final documents will come back to the council on the consent agenda.

ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution # 1918 - Final Plat Approval - Rocky Top Cabins Subdivision

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF COLUMBIA FALLS, MONTANA APPROVING THE FINAL 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.

City Manager Nicosia said the council previously approved the preliminary plat and the developers are now requesting final plat. The Planning staff prepared the final plat report, CFP-24-01, and recommend approval of the final plat. Nicosia noted that the council was also approving an SIA for the Rocky Top Cabins Subdivision on the consent agenda.

Councilor King made motion to approve Resolution #1918, seconded by Councilor Shepard with council voting as follows. Ayes: Shepard, King, Lovering, Price, Robinson, and Barnhart.

Resolution # 1919 - Resolution Authorizing City's Environmental Certifying Officer

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS, MONTANA, AUTHORIZING CALEB SOBCZAK, PUBLIC WORKS/PLANNING/GIS CLERK, FOR THE CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS TO SERVE AS THE CITY'S ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFYING OFFICER.

Caleb Sobczak, Public Works/Planning/GIS Clerk, has worked with the current environmental certifying officer Nicosia for the past 2.5 years assisting with the completion of such assessments, and is qualified to conduct such assessments and certify the findings, or to contract with an appropriate party and certify their findings on behalf of the City.

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Councilor Lovering motioned to approve Resolution # 1919, seconded by Councilor Shepard with council voting as follows. Ayes: King, Lovering, Price, Robinson, Shepard, and Barnhart.

REPORTS / BUSINESS FROM MAYOR & COUNCIL

Councilor Lovering said the intersection at 6th St. E and 1st Ave E. has much more traffic and asked to have more patrol in the evenings, to ensure proper parking and avoiding U-turns.

Councilor Lovering noticed that the pothole on 13th Ave. W. that she reported at the last council meeting is still eating cars.

Councilor Shepard said he noticed the letter in correspondence on parking on Railroad Street. Nicosia said there is designated parking on Railroad St. and MDT has marked it as such; staff reviewed and found the parking to be safe.

Shepard said he concurs with Mr. Hutcheson on drains on 7th St. E.

Shepard said he is impressed with the chip sealing project being done in town.

Councilor Price was wondering if MDT has talked about the left-hand turn signals on 9th St. City Manager

Nicosia said they are reviewing them per the Council's last request.

Mayor Barnhart said the contractor did a fantastic job on chip sealing. Nicosia said the council used special gas tax funding on the project.

Mayor Barnhart said the City has approved paying for fencing on 2nd St. W. due to the sidewalk construction and there is another citizen similarly situated, Mrs. Ogden who has complained about bushes that were destroyed near her home. Mayor Barnhart asked the council if they would like to pay half the price of the bushes. After council discussion it was decided the City Manager Nicosia would talk to Mrs. Ogden about a solution.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

Nicosia noted that the City was selected to receive a Montana Community Reinvestment Act Planning grant award in the amount of \$30,000 in support of a housing study to develop community-based solutions to increase affordable and attainable housing. The City will send out a request for proposals.

The deadline for the second round of City Manager applications closed today.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

City Attorney Breck apologized for his unplanned absence at the last council meeting.

Breck noted that he had approved the final version of the Fire apparatus agreement, and the city can move forward with the process.

City Attorney Breck reported that he will be attending the June 17, 2024, council meeting via zoom due to being out of the country.

MISCELLANEOUS

Correspondence

ADJOURN: Councilor Lovering motioned to adjourn at 7:55 p.m., seconded by Councilor Shepard.

Mayor

City Clerk