

**CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HELD AUGUST 19, 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: Acting City Manager Peters, City Clerk Staaland, City Attorney Breck-via zoom and Acting Police Chief Rice.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Councilor Lovering made motion to approve the agenda after striking item #6, seconded by Councilor Piper and the motion carried.

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

Approval of August 19th Claims: \$100,553.43

Approval of Payroll Claims for August 16, 2024 - \$125,076.57

Approval of August 5, 2024 Regular Council Meeting Minutes

VISITORS/PUBLIC COMMENT (Items not on agenda)

Mayre Flowers with Citizens for a Better Flathead would like to see council members have email addresses, phone numbers and additional information listed on the city website. Ms. Flowers looks forward to meeting with council one on one when time allows. Ms. Flowers stated there is a CFAC public meeting tomorrow and hopes council will be in attendance. Ms. Flowers gave City Clerk Staaland a copy of correspondence for council.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS/PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Public Hearing - Conditional Use Permit - Drive-Thru Coffee Stand

The Columbia Falls City Planning Commission held a public hearing for the following item at their regular meeting on Thursday, August 8, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers of City Hall, 130 6th Street West, Columbia Falls, Montana. The Columbia Falls City Council will hold a subsequent hearing on August 19, 2024, starting at 7:00 p.m. in the same location.

Conditional Use Permit – Drive-Thru Coffee Stand: Jaqueline Smith and Carl Morsette are requesting a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to operate a drive-thru coffee stand at 262 1st Ave WN (Location of Glacier Grappling). The property is zoned CB-2 Commercial however all drive-thru's require a conditional use permit in this zone. The coffee stand was moved to the site but not opened while the applicants go through the CUP process. The property is described as Lots 2, 3, & 4; Block 129; Columbia Falls Addition; Section 8, Township 30 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M., Flathead County.

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City Manager Peters delivered Staff Report CCU-24-01 as Findings of Fact. The Conditional Use Permit went before the Planning Commission on August 8, 2024, and the project was approved to move forward to Council said Peters.

Mayor Barnhart opened the public hearing at 7:09 p.m.

Jackie Smith, 262 1st Ave. WN said she is an owner of the property for the coffee stand. She said they are trying to promote a family friendly business on the truck route.

With no further comments Mayor Barnhart closed the Public Hearing at 7:11 p.m.

Councilor Piper motioned to adopt Staff Report CCU-24-01 as Findings of Fact, seconded by Councilor Shepard with Council voting as follows. Ayes: Robinson, Shepard, King, Lovering, Piper, Price and Barnhart.

24-25 Fiscal Year Preliminary Budget Hearings Continued:

The City Council will continue the Public Hearing on the 24-25 Fiscal Year budget until final adoption by resolution. During the public hearing on Monday, August 19th, the City Council will review the Taxable Value and Mill Levy for the 24-25 FY. The Mill Levy will be set by Resolution at the next regular City Council meeting, Tuesday, September 3, 2024.

Susan Nicosia reviewed the Taxable Value and Mill Levy Calculations. Pursuant to state statute, the City Council will formally set the mill levy at the next meeting, Tuesday, September 3rd, by Resolution said Nicosia. The City received the certified taxable valuation from DOR on August 5, 2024. The taxable valuation increased by 1.81% as it is not a revaluation year; compared to the taxable valuation increase of 34.12% last year. Nicosia said she will also review the impact of the Resort Tax collections at that time. This year's tax relief is \$371,785 as discussed.

Ms. Nicosia reminded Council when values go up, mills go down. When you increase taxes, you have to let the property owners know, said Nicosia. Last year the City decreased property taxes but this year the City will have to increase them.

The recommendation is to levy the maximum, leaving the carryover from the Resort Tax and reducing the Study Commission funds.

Mayor Barnhart asked Nicosia if she included the resort tax with the given numbers. Ms. Nicosia said when she sees the tax bill she will have an accurate number for Council. Nicosia said she was looking at last year's collection which was not quite what the City anticipated. Mayor Barnhart asked when looking toward filling open positions if there was room in the budget to increase professional wages. Nicosia said there is \$50,000 in the General Fund that Council could move around as needed.

Mayor Barnhart said at this time the Public Hearing will remain open.

NEW BUSINESS:

Request for approval and execution of Comprehensive Affordable Housing Study and Analysis Contract (SB 382) MDOC Grant Funds and City Funds: Department of Commerce: \$30,000 Grant and City Matching Funds \$27,100

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City Manager Peters said SB 382 requires the City to have a Comprehensive Affordable Housing Study. The City received one proposal last week from WSW Consulting, Inc. There is a \$30,000 grant in place with matching funds of \$27,000 required by the City. Staff recommends approval of the Consultant Services Agreement with WSW Consulting, Inc.

Councilor King motioned to approve the Comprehensive Affordable Housing Study and Analysis Contract after making a name correction in the agreement, seconded by Councilor Lovering with Council voting as follows. Ayes: Shepard, King, Lovering, Piper, Price, Robinson and Barnhart.

Request for Approval and Execution of Consultant Services Agreement – RAISE Grant - Request for Council Approval Subject to FHWA Approval.

City Manager Peters said this is the first step in funding for the RAISE Grant; the City has allocated \$500,000 in matching funds. The City is excited to have the Skate Park moving along. Staff recommends approval of the Consultant Services Agreement with Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc.

Councilor Lovering made motion to approve the Consultant Service Agreement with Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc., seconded by Councilor Shepard with Council voting as follows. Ayes: King, Lovering, Piper, Price, Robinson, Shepard and Barnhart.

Recommendation to Award Skate Park Bid to Dreamland and Authorize City Manager to execute the contract, notice of award, and notice to proceed. Total bid cost of \$589,000 for 10,000 sq. ft.

City Manager Peters said the city is excited to see the Skate Park moving forward. Dreamland was the only bidder at \$589,000. Staff recommends execution of the bid to Dreamland.

Danyel Scott said she is excited for this project. The Skatepark Association has raised over 50% of the needed funds and is looking forward to breaking ground next week.

Councilor Lovering motioned to approve the City Manager to execute the contract with Dreamland, seconded by Councilor Shepard with Council voting as follows. Ayes: Lovering, Piper, Price, Robinson, Shepard, King and Barnhart.

ORDINANCES / RESOLUTIONS:

Resolution #1927 - A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS, MONTANA, ADOPTING AN UPDATED POLICE POLICY MANUAL FOR COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL REQUIREMENTS

City Manager Peters said it has been a long process in getting the updated Police Policy Manual in place. MMIA has reviewed the updated manual and agrees it will bring current police policies up to date. Peters said the updated manual will be utilized in the department for training purposes and comply with Federal, State and Local requirements.

Councilor King motioned to adopt Resolution #1927, seconded by Councilor Robinson with Council voting as follows. Ayes: Piper, Price, Robinson, Shepard, King, Lovering and Barnhart.

Resolution #1928 - Canceling the November 4, 2024, General Election of Local Government Study Commission Members and Appointing Members by Acclamation

City Manager Peters said Roger Hopkins was the only one that applied to serve on the Local Government Study Commission. The City did not have enough candidates for the General Election of the Local Government

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Study Commission; therefore, it can be canceled. City Council will accept letters of interest and appoint two members to the Commission.

Councilor Robinson made motion to approve Resolution #1928, seconded by Councilor Piper with Council voting as follows. Ayes: Price, Robinson, Shepard, King, Lovering, Piper and Barnhart.

Resolution #1929 - A Resolution of the City Council Approving an Application for Conditional Use Permit #CCU-24-01 for a coffee drive-thru at 262 1st Ave WN.

Councilor Shepard motioned to approve Resolution #1929, seconded by Councilor King with Council voting as follows. Ayes: Robinson, Shepard, King, Lovering, Piper, Price and Barnhart.

REPORTS / BUSINESS FROM MAYOR & COUNCIL

Councilor Piper asked when staff is going to remove the felt from the covers on the drywell grates. City Manager Peters replied today staff organized a final walk through and the felt will be pulled out this week. Mayor Barnhart asked what the deadline for cutting weeds was for non-compliant residents. Peters said Sept. 3rd is the date property owners must come into compliance. If they do not comply city staff will cut weeds, and the property owner will be responsible for payment. Ms. Nicosia said the county has responsibility for spraying weeds within the city.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Peters suggested changing City Hall hours of operation to 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. M-F. After an evaluation of public traffic and phone calls before 8:00 a.m. and after 5:30 p.m. we are not seeing a lot of use. City Manager Peters said for customer convenience there is a drop box in the back of the building, along with optional online payments. Council concurred with the change in City Hall hours of operation.

As Knife River is wrapping up the sidewalk project there are some small details that will be addressed this week. There are two yield signs that city staff will replace with stop signs. We met with the city engineer to discuss additional drywells on the east side of town.

The pool is closed for the season. Staff is getting the pool buttoned up for the winter. The boiler maintenance will be addressed closer to spring. It was a successful but challenging season with the number of closures due to public health issues.

MISCELLANEOUS

Acting Police Chief Rice said the Police Department has been patrolling heavily on Railroad Street. Rice said he looked on the east end of town to potentially put a patrol car. Rice said he has a call into Montana Law Enforcement Academy to see if they may have a vehicle available.

ADJOURN: At 8:03 p.m. Councilor Lovering motioned to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Shepard.

Mayor

City Clerk