

**CITY OF COLUMBIA FALLS
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HELD FEBRUARY 07, 2022**

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

ROLL CALL:

Councilor Fisher, Councilor Karper, Councilor Lovering, Councilor Piper, Councilor Robinson and Mayor Barnhart. Absent: Councilor Shepard.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Councilor Lovering motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Councilor Karper and the motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Councilor Robinson made motion to approve the Consent Agenda noting that all claims appeared to be in order, seconded by Councilor Piper with council roll call vote as follows. Ayes: Piper, Fisher, Karper, Lovering, Robinson and Barnhart.

Approval of Claims - February 7, 2022 - \$115,901.62

Approval of Payroll Claims - January 21, 2022 - \$124,937.74

Approval of Payroll Claims - February 4, 2022 - \$84,344.64

Approval of January 18, 2022 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

Excess Vacation Carryover and Compensation Approval

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS/PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Mayor Barnhart read the Notice of Public Hearings - Request for a Planned Unit Development:

The Columbia Falls City-County Planning Board will hold a public hearing for the following item at their regular meeting on Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at 6:30 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 Monday March 7, 2021 starting at 7:00 p.m. in the same location.

Request for a Planned Unit Development in the Columbia Falls Zoning Jurisdiction:

The applicant, DARCAR, is requesting a Planned Unit Development for property at 1123 9th Street West, Columbia Falls. The proposed PUD would allow the conversion of the basement to dormitory style apartments that could house up to four people. The main floor of the building will remain commercial use. The property is zoned CB-2 (General Business). The site is the State Farm Insurance building located just west of Backslope Brewing. The property is described as Lots 1, 2, & 3 excluding the S10 feet in Block 5 of Robindale in Section 8, Township 30 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M., Flathead County.

Mayor Barnhart read the public hearing notice:

Notice of Public Hearing - February 22, 2022 - Community Needs Assessment:

Notice is hereby given that at the Tuesday, February 22, 2022 Regular Council meeting, the City Council of the City of Columbia Falls, shall conduct a public hearing for the purpose of obtaining public comment to

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determine the greatest community development needs (public facilities, economic development, and housing needs).

The City will take public comment during the meeting in order to obtain the greatest public input. The intent of the needs assessment process is to provide the City with a list of potential projects or actions in the areas of housing, economic development and public infrastructure that could be pursued over a period of years in order to improve the community, particularly as those needs affect low and moderate income persons. Based on the results of the needs assessment, the City may apply for state or federal funding from the Montana Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and any other funding sources to fund local housing, public facilities, or other community needs and would like comments or suggestions from local citizens regarding the City's needs and types of projects which should be considered.

NEW BUSINESS:

Adoption of Firefighter/EMT Job Description and Related Personnel Policies

Mayor Barnhart said he met with Weeks and Nicosia to review and discuss the job description. He reported that the Job Description items had been discussed at the Public Safety Committee meeting. City Manager Nicosia reported that the City Personnel Policy Manual will be updated to reflect specific policies for the non-union firefighters. Staff reviewed the work week provisions under Section 207K of the Fair Labor Standards Act which provides for 106 working hours before Overtime for a firefighter. Staff is recommending a 90 hour work week as the first paid firefighters are working a typical 8 – 5 shift, not 24 hours shifts, and Nicosia said the City wants to treat our employees fairly. Other specific firefighter/EMT related policies to be put in in the City Personnel Policy includes: Uniform allowance and call out provisions. Nicosia said the City's goal is to have the paid Firefighters hired effective July 1, 2022. Nicosia and staff recommend formal adoption of the job description and concurrence with the proposed personnel policies. Nicosia noted that the Council will formally adopt an updated City Personnel Policy in the near future.

Councilor Lovering motioned to adopt the Firefighter/EMT job description, seconded by Councilor Piper and the motion carried unanimously.

Approve Letter of Support - FCEDA Brownfield Assessment Grant

City Manager Nicosia said Christy Cummings Dawson, President of Montana Economic West Development overseas the FCEDA Board, requested that the City of Columbia Falls submit a letter in support of the brownfield assessment grant application by FCEDA. The grant is county-wide and there could be a future project site within Columbia Falls that may need some cleanup in order to be redeveloped. Nicosia recommends Council to authorize the Mayor to sign the letter of support.

Councilman Fisher motioned to authorize Mayor Barnhart to sign the letter of support, seconded by Councilor Robinson and the motion carried.

REPORTS / BUSINESS FROM MAYOR & COUNCIL

Councilor Lovering reported that the Smith's parking lights are very bright and shine into neighboring properties. Nicosia said she will follow up with the manager as the City has received several comments about the lights.

Councilor Fisher said he is following planning decisions and issues throughout the county. He said it is a travesty what is going on with the Flathead County Library. Councilor Karper added that we are lucky to have the staff we have here at the Columbia Falls Library.

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Mayor Barnhart said the Health Department is also struggling to keep employees.

Mayor Barnhart said when they were proposing developing the industrial park, their engineers had applied for a permit to go underneath the railroad tracks by Van's Ave. and Frontage Road to extend sewer. Mayor Barnhart said the City should update the CIP to include extending the services. Mayor Barnhart has asked City Manager Nicosia to take a closer look at it.

Mayor Barnhart said he is hoping that some of the new developments are going to have affordable housing.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Nicosia said the agenda included giving notice for the next meeting to conduct the public hearing to do a community needs assessment, as the first step in any proposed grant projects. Nicosia noted that the City does not automatically qualify for Community Development Block Grant Funding; we have to certify a project.

Nicosia has looked at the AARP Community Project and they have funded a few parks projects. Nicosia would like to apply for pickleball court funding if available. The bathroom for Columbus Park has been ordered and the City will put out a bid for installation.

The engineer is working on the design for the 12th Ave W. EDA project. The original grant had a sewer forced main that is not connected to anything with this project. The current facility will connect to the existing forced main. Nicosia reported that the City received a letter from Department of Revenue approving the expansion of our Urban Renewal District to include the 23 acres on February 4th. Nicosia noted that it is to the city's benefit to connect to the other lift station and run gravity instead of force main.

Nicosia reported that the start-up documents for the WWTP ARPA project will be submitted once the City receives word on the HB 632 amendment, to use the full \$877k instead of the original \$857k as the water project wasn't approved.

Nicosia reported on the last Quiet Zone meeting. BNSF asked about Flathead County signing the agreement as the owner of 2nd Ave. and 4th Ave. roads. The City will now have to start a conversation and ask the county if the City can annex 2nd Ave. and 4th Ave for the Railroad right of way for those sections. The ultimate goal is to close 4th Ave EN RR crossing.

Nicosia reported that staff opened the only bid for the generator and it was double the engineers' \$120,000 estimate. The city budget was \$140,000 with engineering and the bid came in at \$240,000. City staff reviewed the bids with the contractor and engineer to understand the significant difference and to determine if there was an error. The engineers had changed the generator from 300kw to 350kw which resulted in a higher cost. City staff will work with the bidder to explore cost savings. Nicosia will make a recommendation to Council at the next meeting.

Nicosia reported that the EPA will give a short presentation at the next council meeting, Feb. 22nd, regarding the CFAC site.

ADJOURN – Meeting duly adjourned at 7:46 pm

Mayor

City Clerk