

**MINUTES
CITY OF LAUREL
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, JUNE 21, 2022**

A Council Workshop was held in Council Chambers and called to order by Mayor Dave Waggoner at 6:29 p.m. on June 21, 2022.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emelie Eaton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heidi Sparks
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michelle Mize	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Herr
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Casey Wheeler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Irv Wilke
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Klose	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bill Mountsier

OTHERS PRESENT:

Michele Braukmann, Civil Attorney
Brittney Moorman, Administrative Assistant
Brent Peters, Fire Chief
K.C. Bieber, Fire Captain
Jean Kerr, Judge
Jamie Swecker, Fire Marshall
Kent Kulesa, Assistant Fire Chief

Public Input:

Shawn Mullaney, 1629 Cove Lane, read the attached letter into the record.

General Items

Executive Review

1. Resolution - A Resolution Amending Resolution No. R21-132.

Joe Johnson Equipment purchased Titan Machinery. They are honoring the bid price, but a surcharge had to be passed to us. This resolution is to add that surcharge to the price of the jet rodder. Budget/Finance Committee has reviewed and approved the surcharge. However, the resolution needs to be amended.

Council Issues

2. Fire Chief Discussion

Brent Peters, Fire Chief, briefly described how this item came before Council. He retired in February and is looking into other employment opportunities. He would like the option of becoming the full-time Fire Chief to be explored. At 7500 residents, the City will need a partially paid Fire Department, and by creating a Fire Chief position, they are meeting that requirement. With 10,000 residents, the City will need a full-time Fire Department. He briefly ran numbers on what a full-time Fire Department will cost the City; see attached.

One project he would like to tackle is billing. He anticipates additional revenue of \$200k to \$300k annually, and that revenue would go to General Fund. He would also like to identify a better formula for billing the Fire Districts. He would also like to create a new Fire District for Molt as they currently have no structure coverage. Under the current mutual aid agreement, the City cannot bill for those calls. The City has not updated its emergency plan since it was written in 1998. This needs to be written and kept current. He would also take care of all things related to fire codes.

It was questioned how billing for services would be done and what kind of enforcement could be done. The City can put liens on the property and send a sheriff out for collections. Medicare or Medicaid does not govern collections. Typically there are insurance policies that are triggered and paid out.

It was questioned what hours the Fire Chief currently puts in. He stated he puts in the number of hours needed, and he puts in more hours than the average City employee. His availability is excellent now, and he can dedicate many hours to the department.

It was questioned what kind of wage he was thinking. He stated that he would want to be competitive with other Department Heads and would like to be considered as the Police Chief and Public Works Director.

3. Closed Executive Session

Mayor Waggoner skipped forward in the agenda and returned to this item after the regular meeting portion was complete.

Council entered into Closed Executive Session at 7:07 p.m. to discuss litigation strategy. Closed Executive Session ended at 7:57 p.m.

Other Items

There were none.

Attendance at Upcoming Council Meeting

Council Member Wilke will be absent from next week's meeting.

Announcements

The Emergency Services Committee meets next Monday at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

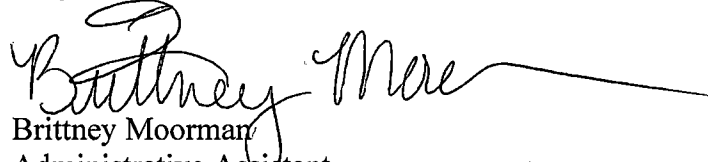
Council requested a financial report on LURA. Council also requested that LURA be reconfigured and brought back to them.

Riverside Park had some flooding during last week's flooding event. The park is open again. Mayor Waggoner sent Staff to Fromberg to help haul loads to the dump.

Mayor Waggoner closed the regular portion of this meeting at 7:02 p.m. and entered into Executive Session after a five-minute recess.

The council workshop adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Brittney Moorman", with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Brittney Moorman
Administrative Assistant

NOTE: This meeting is open to the public. This meeting is for information and discussion of the Council for the listed workshop agenda items.

The TIF District which generates capital for private and public improvements has been successfully administered here in Laurel for several years under the acronym LURA Grant. Taxpayers within the district pay the same amount as they would if they were located outside the district. The fund that is generated inside the TIF district is used for a variety of public and private uses that benefit the entire community. LURA Grant funds have been modeled after successful TIF district funds throughout the state and Billings in Particular. When LURA Grant funds are used in privately held property to control urban blight, that property is increased in value and consequently the taxable value is increased, which then regenerates taxes back to the Lura Grant. The LURA Grant program is a positive way to keep the downtown business district alive and thriving. When these funds are used on private businesses, the Grant will fund up to half of expenses incurred while allowing the district to thrive.

When used on public improvements such as streets curbs and gutters, while allowed and sometimes necessary, the funds used in this way do not contribute to the adjoining property's taxable value and thus is a net expenditure and does not regenerate the Lura fund.

Last fall Ms. Eaton, acting as temporary Mayor, introduced a resolution that was passed by the City Council which only allows the LURA Grant funds to be used for public works projects. This resolution takes away the incentive of a private investor to improve or even purchase a building in the district. Why would an investor buy a 100 year old building that often costs more to improve than to build new? Especially when it can be built outside the city limits depriving the city of any and all tax base. The LURA grant, which was modeled after the TIF district around the Montana Ave area in Billings, was working great! Many of the downtown businesses look better than they have in 30 years. New energy efficient windows, updated facades, decorative awnings all contribute to an atmosphere and energy that is slowly growing downtown. The LURA Grant board has done a great job in distributing the funds downtown and my wife and I have benefited from the Lura Grant. We obtained a professional sign that we could not have afforded without help from the LURA Grant.

Another concern about the prior Mayors' resolution is that the funds are distributed by the city but only at the recommendation of the LURA Grant board. The City can't just take the TIF district funds to use as they wish. If you don't have a quorum on the LURA Grant board to make recommendations to the city council the money can not be distributed. Who would want to join the board of the Lura Grant simply to distribute money for street and sewer improvements? The city already collects the taxes for this purpose.

I'm disappointed in the Council's actions last fall, regardless of the legality of the resolution. I am requesting the Council propose a Resolution that will eliminate the exclusion of all private investors from eligibility for LURA funding. Thanks for your time.

Respectfully,

Shawn Mullaney

Minimum Number of Firefighters for a Fulltime Fire Department

Operating costs are not included in these numbers

	Average	High
Fire Chief	\$74,701.00	\$107,616.00
Battalion Chief	\$72,643.00	\$104,651.00
Captain	\$74,637.00	\$92,331.00
Fire Marshal	\$60,492.00	\$87,146.00
Engineer	\$62,326.00	\$77,600.00
Firefighter	\$44,356.00	\$65,498.00

Structure Fire or High Impact Call	
Fire Chief	1
Battalion Chiefs	1
Captains	1
Engineers	2
Firefighters	
Entry Team	2
Backup Entry	2
Rapid Inter	2
Ventilation	2
Support	1
	14

A Crew	B Crew	C Crew	D Crew	Total/ shift					Average	High
Shift numbers minus day positions										
1	1	1	1	4	\$72,643.00	X	4	\$290,572.00	\$418,604.00	
1	1	1	1	4	\$74,637.00	X	4	\$298,548.00	\$369,324.00	
2	2	2	2	8	\$62,326.00	X	8	\$498,608.00	\$620,800.00	
9	9	9	9	36	\$44,356.00	X	36	\$1,596,816.00	\$2,357,928.00	
13	13	13	13	52						
						Fire Chief	X	1	\$74,701.00	\$107,616.00
						Fire Marshal	X	1	\$60,492.00	\$87,146.00
						Training	X	1	\$50,000.00	\$56,000.00
						Admin	X	1	\$38,000.00	\$42,000.00

Total min.	56	\$2,907,737.00	\$4,059,418.00
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These are totals for just salaries and wages. This does not include the operational budget, benefits and overtime.