

**MINUTES
CITY OF LAUREL
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2023**

A Council Workshop was held in Council Chambers and called to order by Mayor Dave Waggoner at 6:30 p.m. on March 21, 2023.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

<input 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"/> Jodi Mackay

OTHERS PRESENT:

Michele Braukmann, Civil City Attorney
Brittney Moorman, Administrative Assistant
JW Hopper, Interim Fire Chief

Public Input:

There were none.

General Items

1. Appoint JW Hopper as Interim Fire Cheif.

JW Hopper, Interim Fire Chief, introduced himself to Council. He has been with the Fire Department for 16 years, the last four of which he was a Deputy Chief. He is a Safety Superintendent at the mine.

It was questioned how long there would be an Interim Chief, and it was clarified the job would be posted internally soon. Anyone in the Department may apply and be interviewed, and the Mayor will bring forward his appointment as Fire Chief.

It was questioned if this position would still be considered volunteer, and it was clarified that it would be considered a volunteer.

2. Appointment of Bridger Harkins and Seth King to the Laurel Fire Department.

Interim Chief Hopper introduced Mr. Harkins and Mr. King to Council. This will bring the Department to 35 firemen.

Executive Review

3. Resolution - A Resolution Adopting Amended And Revised Personnel Policy Manual For The City Of Laurel.

Council noticed that the City does not have an HR person and is referred to the City Attorney numerous times in the Personnel Policy Manual. It was questioned if that is common for Cities our size. It was clarified that, generally, Cities our size do not have a dedicated HR role. It is an expensive position to fill, and a City Attorney can act in that role and is a common mechanism utilized. It was further questioned if the duties of HR would keep the City Attorney from being able to work on other key aspects of their job.

Council received two versions of the Personnel Policy Manual in their packets. One is the redlined version. However, some redline edits are just formatting changes, and the second version is clean.

It was questioned if City equipment could be used with Mayor's approval, such as the fire trucks for ticket sales, parade, Christmas to Remember, etc. It was clarified that this was correct. The City will ensure it has a hold harmless agreement in place if any non-employee people are riding in the vehicles as they are not covered by workers comp. The City can secure Special Events coverage with MMIA.

It was questioned if emergency services can use social media to inform the public of an incident. It was clarified that this is an appropriate mechanism as long as their Department Head approves it.

It was questioned if Department Heads were active in reviewing this document. It was clarified that this document has been in the works for the last nine months. The personnel Policy must cover all employees and volunteers in order for the City to secure work comp coverage.

Significant changes were made to the following sections: FMLA, reporting discrimination, and probationary period.

Henry Fox, a 12-year member of the Fire Department, stated he noticed how the personnel policy manual states numerous times that volunteers are the same as employees. What he did not understand was striking the work volunteer out of the name "Laurel Volunteer Fire Department." The volunteer status is a point of pride for many in the Department.

Civil City Attorney Braukmann stated that she had used Laurel Fire Department as a level of respect in communicating with those in the Fire Department. Last spring, she spoke with former Fire Chief Peters about the perception that volunteer firemen do not have the same training and expertise as a non-volunteer. Unfortunately, that gave the perception that it minimized the tradition of the volunteer fire department.

That has minimized the tradition of the volunteer department. Have no problem fixing it moving forward.

4. Resolution - A Resolution Of The City Council Authorizing The Mayor To Execute A Small Services Contract With Play Space Designs.

This resolution is the contract with Play Space Designs to construct the Splash Park. Once approved, they will be heading up from Utah to begin construction. The cost of Phase One is \$258k.

Council Issues

5. Resolution - A Resolution Calling For An Election On Supplemental Funding For Public Safety Services And Capital Needs For The City Of Laurel, Montana.

The City is moving forward with a mill levy for emergency services. Staff are looking at what each Department needs in order to see what will be included in this levy. The City has not had good luck with levies in the past. Our departments need employees, new equipment, and safety measures. The Ambulance needs the most assistance and is running on a shoestring budget. An incredible amount of work will need to go into educating the public about the need for this mill levy. The ask will be only what is absolutely needed.

It was questioned if the Budget/Finance Committee and Emergency Services Committee would have input in this process. It was clarified that, yes, they will have input.

Council noted that the school is also going out for a bond that will increase taxes. It was clarified that the school district is going for a bond in May. The superintendent will be here in the next few cycles to discuss their proposal. This mill levy will be before the voters in November.

The City is also exploring the idea of ambulance districts, which would be in conjunction with a mill levy. The City also has the choice between perpetual vs. sunseting. The City will want a perpetual mill levy. Creating an ambulance district is a lengthy process, and the mill levy would be the stopgap. The City is also looking into making it an enterprise fund. Right now, the Ambulance Department is not self-supporting.

Council noted that the school bond affects anyone within the school district, while the mill levy will only affect those who live within the City limits.

This resolution is to start the discussion. All three services have staffing needs.

It was questioned why Fire was not included in the grant writing portion of the resolution; wouldn't it create more utility to include all three departments for a grant writer?

Mr. Fox cautioned using a sunseting mill structure. Fire Districts are desirable to county residents because of the ISO rating that lowers their insurance rates, and there is no rating associated with Ambulance that makes a district desirable.

It was questioned if the Fire Department and Ambulance Department were combined, would there still be an ISO rating, and would that assist in the discussion. It was clarified that the ISO rating has nothing to do with the medical response to your home.

Other Items

Care 2 is close to its last legs. Last week the opportunity to purchase an ambulance from a service shutting its doors. See attached handout with the specs on this new Ambulance.

Attendance at Upcoming Council Meeting

All Council Members present will be in attendance next week.

Announcements

Emergency Services Committee's next meeting is Monday at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

The council workshop adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brittney Moorman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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.



2004 Ford F450
123,011 Miles
~~**\$55,000**~~ **\$52,000**

History/Maintenance

This 2004 Ford Ambulance was purchased new by a small service in Wyoming. Most recently a local inter-facility transport company used this truck for local and long-distance transports. All service/maintenance records from both owners have been provided.

Laurel Ford did some diagnostic testing on the truck last week and found the Engine, Transmission and Cooling system to be in *Great condition*.

We also had members of the Laurel Fire Department that maintain their trucks do a “head to toe” look at this truck.

They found between \$3,000 (low end) to \$5,000 (high end) worth of maintenance that would need to be done on the truck. Laurel Ford agreed with this estimate of costs.

- Ball Joints
- Shocks
- Tire Rotation/Alignment
- Serpentine Belt

Equipment

This truck is being sold with all the equipment currently in it.

- Power Lift Cot and Power Load (Valued at approximately \$40,000)
 - This is the same system we have in Care 3 and Care 2
 - Full-time and volunteer staff are familiar with this system and will not have to learn new gurney equipment.
- Radios
- Backboards
- Misc. Equipment

Purchasing a New or Used Truck

EMS Director Gurchiek spoke with a local ambulance dealer last week.

- New Ambulance wait time is 2.5 years from order date.
- Used 4x4 ambulances are selling for \$100,000 sight unseen.
- Used 4x2 ambulances are selling for \$60,000 sight unseen.

Getting this truck into service

EMS Director Gurchiek spoke with the State of MT and they would offer a provisional license immediately with a follow up inspection in the next few months.

Will also need:

- Maintenance repairs completed
- Radios programs to LEMS frequencies
- Brief Training on the truck
- Striping to mimic Care 3

What happens to Care 2

- Will be parked behind the ambulance office/quarters
- Backup truck when a truck needs to go in for maintenance or service
- Extra truck for events or ARMAGEDDON