

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL

AUGUST 24, 2021

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana, was held in the Council Chambers and called to order by Mayor Tom Nelson at 6:30 p.m. on August 24, 2021.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Emelie Eaton Heidi Sparks
 Bruce McGee Richard Herr
 Scot Stokes Irv Wilke
 Richard Klose Don Nelson

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHER STAFF PRESENT: Jean Kerr, City Judge
 Sherri Phillips, Court Clerk
 Fran Schweigert, Union 316 President
 Matt Wheeler, Public Works Superintendent
 Matt Smith, KLJ
 Stan Langve, Police Chief (via Zoom)
 Nick Altonaga, Planning Director
 Nancy Schmidt, Library Director (6:45 p.m.)
 Brent Peters, Fire Chief

Mayor Nelson led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

Mayor Nelson asked the Council to observe a moment of silence.

MINUTES:

Motion by Council Member McGee to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 10, 2021, as presented, seconded by Council Member Eaton. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight council members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Fire Monthly Report – July 2021
- Ambulance Monthly Report – July 2021

COUNCIL DISCLOSURE OF EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS: None.

PUBLIC HEARING: None.

CONSENT ITEMS:

- **Claims entered through August 20, 2021.**
A complete listing of the claims and their amounts is on file in the Clerk/Treasurer's Office.
- **Approval of Payroll Register for PPE 8/8/2021 totaling \$223,709.48.**

The Mayor asked if there was any separation of consent items. There was none.

Motion by Council Member Eaton to approve the consent items as presented, seconded by Council Member Klose. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight council members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

CEREMONIAL CALENDAR: None.

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

- Budget/Finance Committee Minutes of August 10, 2021.
- Park Board Minutes of August 5, 2021.
- Library Board Minutes of May 11, 2021.
- Library Board Minutes of June 8, 2021.
- Library Board Minutes of July 8, 2021.
- Tree Board Minutes of June 17, 2021.
- Public Works Committee Minutes of July 19, 2021.
- Emergency Services Committee Minutes of July 26, 2021.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (THREE-MINUTE LIMIT):

Eric Perkins, Laurel Ford, stated he would like to take this minute on behalf of Laurel Ford to speak on the LURA Large Grant request. They have consistently invested in their property and will continue to bring commerce to the area. Currently, they have 12% of their normal stock but are still improving their property. He asked Council to reconsider their denial.

Ken Fichtner, 2025 Saddleback Lane, stated he is working to rebuild his old dealership. They will submit a Large Grant application next year. He asked Council to reconsider Laurel Ford's denial.

Jennifer Jones, 1320 Nez Perce Drive, here in Laurel, and my husband and I, Carl Jones, own the Laurel Auto Clinic over there on Main Street. We've owned the business since 2013 and 2020; we were finally able to purchase the property and are looking forward to fixing it up and finally giving it the attention it needs or has needed for so long. That includes removal of blight; there's a building on the property that has just...it needs to go. Unfortunately, that building is the only building that has bathrooms in the facility. There are no bathrooms in the business. And so, we've been wanting to fix this property up for the longest time; now we own the property, we can. We applied for the Large Grant under items that we feel were eligible improvements, and it specifically lists so; all that we have to go off of is this application. From our understanding, our application was denied because of some confusion based on what was in there, interior improvements specifically. And, umm...within the application itself says that these improvements flooring, interior walls, roof, ceiling, what-not are specifically eligible. We would like to ask that you guys reconsider this application and get it before you guys again for a vote because all we have to go off of is application. We can't read your minds. We don't know what your preferences are, and all we have to go off of is this. If you want to change the process for the eligible requirements of the application, please do so outside of this application period. Because it is just causing...creating confusion. So please reconsider and bring this forward to a vote again because we would like to continue doing business in this City and improving and beautifying our property so that we can serve more people and hire more people and fix more cars, you know, bring more people to this City. Thank you.

SCHEDULED MATTERS:

- **Appointment of Bynnan Miller to the Laurel Volunteer Ambulance Service.**

Mayor Nelson stated that the Ambulance Director could not attend this evening's meeting as she had a conflict. See attached letter from the Ambulance Director.

Motion by Council Member Stokes to approve the Mayor's appointment of Bynnan Miller to the Laurel Volunteer Ambulance Service, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight council members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Appointment of Adam Dennis to the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department.**

Brent Peters, Fire Chief, introduced Mr. Dennis to Council; see attached recommendation letter.

Motion by Council Member Nelson to approve the Mayor's appointment of Adam Dennis to the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight council members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Resolution No. R21-71: A Resolution To Authorize The Mayor To Sign An Agreement With Laurel Public Schools, District 7 And 7-70, Continuing The School Resource Officer (SRO) Program For The Laurel Middle School.**

Stan Langve, Police Chief, stated that this is the 20th anniversary of this program. The only changes to both SRO contracts are the wages.

Motion by Council Member Klose to approve Resolution No. R21-71, seconded by Council Member Sparks. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight council members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Resolution No. R21-72: A Resolution To Authorize The Mayor To Sign An Agreement With Laurel Public Schools, District 7 And 7-70, Continuing The School Resource Officer (SRO) Program For The Laurel High School.**

Council questioned if there was one SRO or if there was an officer in each school. It was clarified there are two SRO's.

Motion by Council Member Wilke to approve Resolution No. R21-72, seconded by Council Member Eaton. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight council members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Resolution No. R21-73: A Resolution Of The City Council Selecting Askin Construction, LLC As The Successful Bidder For The City Project Known As The Lindy Lane Sewer Replacement Project.**

Matt Wheeler, Public Works Superintendent, stated this project has been in the works for a long time. The sewer line is cracked and needs to be fixed.

Matt Smith, KLJ, this sewer main is fairly large diameter and transfers sewage across the interstate down into the sewer plant. There is a large crack on the pipe that they are afraid will collapse and create many problems. It is 110 feet of sewer main. It is very costly to repair; however, the damage it would cause if it collapsed would be far worse. They will need to do bypass pumping, and it will be a week of hard work to get it replaced.

Motion by Council Member Herr to approve Resolution No. R21-73, seconded by Council Member Sparks. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight council members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Resolution No. R21-74: A Resolution Of The City Council Approving A Task Order Between The City Of Laurel And KLJ Engineering Inc. To Authorize Service For The 2022 Pavement Maintenance Project.**

Matt Smith, KLJ, spoke about this at previous Workshops. This project replaces water, sewer, and pavement on S. 4th. It will set the stage for work to be done on W. Railroad. The W. Railroad project still needs an updated cost estimate, and the City needs to hear back from Bond Counsel on the bond capacity of the TIF District. The TIF District runs from 1st Ave. to 5th Ave. A portion of the TIF District could be used for the railroad crossings, bridge replacement, and replacement of that street. This is an intensive project, and they do not feel that it can be done in a single year. They also still need public input on what they want this street to look like. If you look at the Pacer study, the City is out of the easy projects (chip sealing, crack sealing). We are now down to the projects that need structural overlay or complete reconstruction.

Council noted that public input is still needed and that the boulevards may need to be removed. It was questioned if this cost estimate included that. It was clarified that when determining an estimate for this task order, they took a conservative approach, including the most expensive estimate with sidewalks and boulevards.

It was questioned if the residents give the feedback that they would like to see the boulevards removed will it increase the cost of this project. It was clarified when doing the estimate; they took the widest street possible. They do not anticipate that change to change the scope very much. It was further clarified that the street would have room for two driving lanes and parking on both sides. A narrower road will reduce the speed naturally through the area. Another item for discussion will be if

the City wants to build-outs at the intersections. It helps reduce speeds and offers protection for pedestrian traffic. They can also consider putting the little circles in the road to slow people down.

It was questioned what the cost increase would be if the street were to be wider. When they did the estimate, it was clarified that they pulled the widest street that would work in the area. If anything, it would be narrower and would decrease the cost.

It was questioned if all the funds would be coming out of Street Maintenance. It was clarified the water and sewer would come out of their respective funds.

Motion by Council Member Sparks to approve Resolution No. R21-74, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight council members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Resolution No. R21-75: A Resolution Of The City Council Authorizing The Mayor To Sign A Contract With True North Contracting For Asphalt Replacement And Repair On Various Streets And Intersections Within The City Limits.**

Matt Wheeler, Public Works Superintendent, this is for the last year's water breaks. Instead of having them pave after each break, it saves the City money on mobilization fees to batch them together.

Motion by Council Member Eaton to approve Resolution No. R21-75, seconded by Council Member McGee. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight council members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Resolution No. R21-76: A Resolution Of The City Council Approving A Memorandum Of Understanding To Implement The Two-Year Wage And Benefit Agreement Negotiated Between The City Of Laurel And Local Union Local 316, American Federation Of State, County And Municipal Employees, AFSCME.**

Fran Schweigert, 402 Forrest Ave, stated he is the Public Works Union President. Last year they signed a three-year collective bargaining agreement. They decided at that time due to Covid to leave the last two years of wages and benefits till this year. They were able to finish negotiations within three hours; see attached changes.

Motion by Council Member McGee to approve Resolution No. R21-76, seconded by Council Member Eaton. There was no public comment.

Council Member Nelson recused himself from the vote. He sits as the Treasurer at the State level.

A vote was taken on the motion. All seven council members present voted aye. Motion carried 7-0.

- **Resolution No. R21-77: A Resolution Of Intent To Adopt An Official Schedule Of Fees And Charges For The City Of Laurel Repealing All Previous Resolutions That Set Fees Or Charges That Conflict With The Schedule Attached Hereto Upon Its Effective Date.**

Nick Altonaga, Planning Director, briefly reviewed the suggested changes. Most of the Building Departments' fees had not been raised in a very long time. These proposed changes will make our fees competitive to Billings and a few City's from around the State.

Motion by Council Member Klose to approve Resolution No. R21-77, seconded by Council Member Wilke. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight council members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Resolution No. R21-78: A Resolution Of The City Council Approving An Amendment To The Previously Approved Task Order Between The City Of Laurel And KLJ Engineering Inc. Authorizing Additional Compensation For Additional Engineering For The 5th Avenue Water Main Re-Route Project.**

Matt Smith, KLJ, stated this task order amendment includes the additional construction management fees associated with connecting the water main between 4th Ave and Valley Drive.

It was questioned how long it would be before this area was paved. It was clarified they would begin paving by the end of next week.

Motion by Council Member Sparks to approve Resolution No. R21-78, seconded by Council Member Eaton. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight council members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Resolution No. R21-79: Resolution Authorizing Owner's Request To Seek Annexation Of 306 West 12th Street Pursuant To The City Of Laurel Annexation Policy.**

Nick Altonaga, Planning Director, stated that because this area is less than 2.06 acres, the applicant has to request Council's permission before applying for annexation. There is a meeting with the applicant to discuss installing a curb box before the road is paved.

It was questioned if this is a vacant lot. It was clarified that it is. There is currently a camper on the lot that someone is residing in. That is part of the discussion at the meeting. The City does not allow living in campers within City limits.

It was questioned if the City hopscotched its boundaries. It was clarified that it does. The Planning Director is working on updating the annexation policy. The annexation policy was last looked at in 2008.

Motion by Council Member Wilke to approve Resolution No. R21-79, seconded by Council Member Eaton. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight council members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA: None.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS (ONE-MINUTE LIMIT): None.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

Emergency Services will be meeting tomorrow, August 31, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Council noted that they were interested in discussing the LURA Large Grants at a future Workshop. The Mayor stated he needed to speak with Sam regarding those grant applications.

Laurel High School is allowing Hunter's Safety to come back into their schools. That will begin on September 7th. So far, they have 10 out of 50 signed up.

Tomorrow at 10:00 a.m., there will be a ceremony at the National Cemetery for unaccompanied remains. There are at least five peoples whose remains were unclaimed by family.

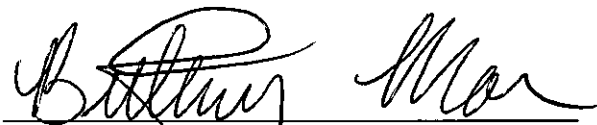
MAYOR UPDATE: None.

UNSCHEDULED MATTERS: None.

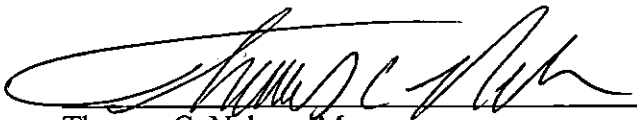
ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Council Member Stokes to adjourn the council meeting, seconded by Council Member Eaton. There was no public comment or council discussion. A vote was taken on the motion. All eight council members present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.


Brittney Moorman, Administrative Assistant

Approved by the Mayor and passed by the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana, this 14th day of September 2021.


Thomas C. Nelson, Mayor

Attest:


Bethany Langve, Clerk/Treasurer





**CITY OF LAUREL
MONTANA
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**
215 W 1ST ST
LAUREL, MONTANA – 59044
OFFICE: (406) 628 – 1611 | DISPATCH: (406) 628 - 8737



Dear Mayor and City Council,

We have an EMT interested in joining our EMS service as a volunteer. We have interviewed her and would be excited to bring her onto our team.

- Brynna Miller, EMT, she is a new EMT, she is engaged to one of our firefighter/EMT volunteers and lives here in Laurel. She does not have any EMS experience but is very excited to get started and help out the community she lives in. I believe that she would be a great addition to our team and also living in Laurel is a positive for our service as well.

Thank you very much for your consideration on this candidate.

Lyndy Gurchiek, NRP, Director
Laurel EMS
215 W 1st Street
Laurel, MT 591044
lgurchiek@laurel.mt.gov
406-860-8233



LAUREL FIRE/EMS

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City of Laurel
PO Box 10
Laurel, Mt. 59044

August 19, 2021

Mayor and Laurel City Council,

The following have been selected by the members of the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department/ Association to become volunteers.

Firefighter
Adam Dennis

He has been selected unanimously by the Department, approved by the Chief of the Department and are seeking your appointment.

Brent Peters
Fire Chief
Laurel Volunteer Fire Department

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "JP", is located in the bottom right corner of the document.

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

City of Laurel ("City"), Laurel Library Board of Trustees ("Library"), and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees ("Union")

In accordance with Article XX – Terms, Amendments, and Modifications of the Agreement of the collective bargaining agreement (CBA 2020-2023), the City, Library, and Union negotiated wages and benefits for the remaining two years of the contract (7/1/2021, 7/1/2022).

City, Library, and Union agree as follows for all Union positions covered under the CBA:

1. Library Tech position base wage increase from \$15.90 to \$17.90 (Reference Library MOU, section 4).
2. Flex Plan increase from \$600 to \$650.
3. Retro pay to July 1, 2021.
4. Longevity Increase from \$7.75 to \$8.00.
5. Increase of boot allowance from \$200 to \$250.
6. Wages increase:
 - a. July 1, 2021: 3% increase to base wage
 - b. July 1, 2022: 2% increase to base wage

Consensus by all parties reached during Interest Base Bargaining negotiations with mediator from the Montana Board of Personnel Appeals on July 26, 2021 at 3:55pm.

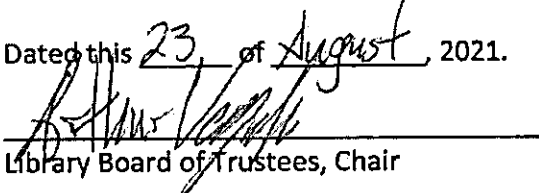
Dated this 14th of September, 2021.


City Mayor

Dated this _____ of _____, 2021.

Union President

Dated this 23 of August, 2021.


Library Board of Trustees, Chair