

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

A Council Workshop was held in Council Chambers and called to order by Mayor Dave Waggoner at 6:30 p.m. on February 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 type="checkbox"/> Jodi Mackay

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Michele Braukmann, Civil City Attorney  
Brittney Moorman, Administrative Assistant  
Kurt Markegard, Public Works, and Planning Director

**Public Input:**

Bridger Fournier, 2810 S. 72<sup>nd</sup> Street W, read the attached statement into the record.

Jake Vannoy, 203 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, read the attached statement into the record.

Kent Kulesa, 810 W. Maryland Lane stated he is a 26 member of the Volunteer Fire Department. He voiced concerns that with every new administration, there is a new vision for the Fire Department without consultation of the members of the Fire Department. He requested that a joint vision be made for the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department publicly and transparently.

Reno Olivera, 3111 Chief Looking Glass Rd, read the attached statement into the record.

Jonathan Gotschall, 1011 Duval Drive, read the attached statement into the record.

Abbey Nagel, 2807 Brookway Drive, read the attached statement into the record.

Jayson Nicholson, 320 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, read the attached statement into the record.

**General Items**

1. Appointment of Steven Hurd to the Police Commission for the remainder of a three-year appointment ending April 30, 2024.

There was no discussion on this agenda item.

**Executive Review**

2. Resolution - A Resolution Of The City Council Adopting The Transportation Coordination Plan, Laurel Transit, For The City Of Laurel.

There was no discussion on this item.

2. Resolution - A Resolution Awarding The Bid And Authorizing The Mayor To Execute All Contract And Related Documents For Russell Park Landscape Improvements.

There was no discussion on this agenda item.

3. Ordinance - An Ordinance Amending Title Six Of The Laurel Municipal Code (Lmc § 6.16.010) Relating To Prohibited Certain Animals.

See the attached memo comparing the City of Laurel's proposed ordinance changes to other communities around the state.

It was questioned if there would be tags for the chickens, where unclaimed chickens will be housed, if a chicken tests positive for bird flu how will they, be disposed of, what methods of disposal will be allowed, and will there be a fine if deceased chickens are placed in the garbage.

It was clarified that Staff are looking into options for tagging the chickens; there will be a permitting process. The Mayor has spoken to a farmer south of town who will house any loose chickens for the City.

It was questioned whether there would be a fine for those not registered chickens, and it was clarified that this ordinance would be enforced.

### **Council Issues**

4. Expand Camping For CHS Turnaround

Park Board had discussed the option to open up additional camping areas within Riverside Park for those coming in for the turnaround. It would allow workers to be close to CHS, but they don't want all the regular camping to be taken up. It was thought to use the old campground area.

It was clarified there are issues with waste and trash, so this is not a good option this year.

5. Security Cameras At Riverside Park

Due to recent vandalism, Park Board has requested the City look into putting security cameras at Riverside Park.

### **Other Items**

There were none.

### **Attendance at Upcoming Council Meeting**

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

**Announcements**

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

This Saturday is Council Member Klose's wife's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. He is providing cake and ice cream at the Senior Center. Council is invited to attend.

Council thanked the firemen who showed up and spoke at tonight's meeting.

Laurel Urban Renewal Agency's next meeting is March 6<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. in Council Chambers.

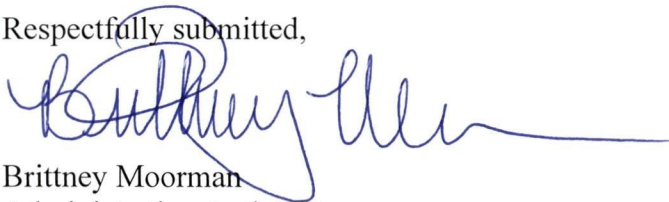
Mayor Waggoner congratulated the Nauman family on the birth of Willow Lynn.

Mayor Waggoner stated the City recently got the license plate designs back from the artists, which are attached to these minutes.

Mayor Waggoner thanked City Staff for filling in the pool and preparing it for the splash park to move forward. The goal is to have the splash park open and ready for use by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

The council workshop adjourned at 7:14 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.**

Bridger Fournier  
215 W 1st St, Laurel, MT 59044

Good evening Mr. Mayor. Good evening City Council. I come before you tonight to address a problem that the City of Laurel has. But before I can tell you about the problem I need to back up a little bit. I am a proud member of the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department and Laurel Volunteer Ambulance. I am going on my fourth year of being on the fire department. I currently serve as the maintenance captain for the fire department. I was appointed to this position by the fire chief and my fellow firefighters. I joined the fire department on a spur of the moment. My friend and I were driving by the department one day and we decided to walk in and grab an application and apply. At that moment I had no idea what I was getting myself into. Only being 20 years old at the time when I applied. Going on 24 now I have come to realize I have gained so much knowledge in my short period of time being on the fire department. I have gained many friends and already have so many memories that I will carry with me through the rest of my life.

Being a part of the fire department you see things no one should ever see in their life. Things that will haunt you for the rest of your life. Things you will have nightmares about. You will be going about your day just as if nothing is going on and something will catch your eye or something will have a certain smell and it

will bring you back to that very nightmare for you to relive it all over again. As a first responder this is a way of life. One moment you're with your family enjoying a family dinner then the next moment you are rushing into someone's house to provide life saving efforts to an individual that you have never met before. Or rushing out onto a busy interstate, putting my own life at risk, because someone decided to drive drunk. Why do we do this? Because we like to be the calm amongst the chaos in this crazy world we live in.

I remember a vivid memory. It was in this exact room that we are all in right now. It was when I was being voted on by the city council. I remember the fire chief getting up to speak, asking to have the council approve the newest members of the fire department. I remember the chief asking me and a couple guys to stand up and state our names. I also remember my mother and father and my sister sitting in the very back corner supporting me. As a family. Just like right now. As I speak to you now I have a family sitting behind me. A family that no one could ever break. A family that I have been on several calls with and experienced a lot of things that not your typical family may ever experience. As a family we stick up for each other. Right now my fire family is under some pressure and is in hard times. I feel that the leader of this family is being forced out. I have watched the fire chief put up with a lot of grief from the city and we are here for him. In my personal opinion you will not find someone like the current chief we have now. Someone that has countless hours of training and is certified in a number of

different things. He puts his heart and soul into running this department for basically nothing. No one that I know is more deserving of this position. Someone that goes above and beyond his role of fire chief. The City of Laurel would not be the same without him. I ask you Council members to be more involved in my family. I ask that you listen to my family's concerns and to think hard about the decisions ahead of you. Thank you for your time.

Intro (Vannoy)

Name - 215 W 1st St

Good evening Honorable Mayor Waggoner and council members,  
I have been a firefighter for almost 2 years. Never have I felt such comradery as I have with Laurel Volunteer Fire Department. Unfortunately, recent events appear to be attacking that ideology.

I am one of the top responders and have seen a lot in the past 2 years. From wildland fires, house fires, rescues on the river, to chaotic cpr calls.

There is something about this department and what we do that I have found my calling, my passion.

This community means more to me than most can appreciate under the smile and happy attitude I bring to the department with any and every call we receive.

I do not volunteer for the accolades, atta-boys, perks, or payment. I volunteer because I want to serve my community and am willing to lay my life down in service of this great city I live in, along with whom I consider my brothers and sisters.

Chief Peters has been pushed to the breaking point trying to advocate for the department, and has turned in his letter of resignation at this point in time.

It is very disheartening to see this be the outcome as a result of the city's actions. These acts are being done behind the scenes of the public and first responders, which ultimately puts the city in danger of not having a functioning fire department. I don't see Brent as just a Chief, I see him as a true leader, a brother, mentor, and friend.

The city does not see what we do on a daily basis of training, calls, or public relations, even being invited to meetings but to not show.

Again, I don't do this for payment, I do it for the love of what I do. These are my brothers and sisters whom I would do anything for.

Respectfully I submit this comment for the record and thank you for your continued joint service to the City of Laurel.

Thank you.  
Joint Vision

Name - 215 W 1st St

Good evening Honorable Mayor Waggoner and council members,

I stand before you tonight as a concerned constituent and a proud member of the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department. As such I find myself concerned that with every new administration there seems to be a new vision for the fire department without ever creating a documented vision or consultation with the members of the fire department.

As a fire family we stand united before you today to raise your awareness about our concerns and ask for your support. We kindly request that you work with us to develop a joint vision for the future of the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department. We pledge to work with you as the leaders of our community to develop this mission by attending council workshops, working with the emergency services committee and attending special meetings as often as we are placed on the agenda and are invited. By working together in a public and transparent manner, we can ensure that there is a working and constructive relationship between the City of Laurel and the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department.

We make this request with the knowledge that we do not have a union to represent us and our interests and that we are volunteers. These realities make us a unique department in the City and as such are making a unique request, seeking unique solutions. Our hope is to work with you to ensure the citizens of Laurel and surrounding Fire Districts continue to receive the services for which they pay and deserve.

People, the world over, love firefighters. This affection is not shown because we have any super powers, but because we show up for people in their worst moments. We wake up in the middle of the night and spend holidays away from our families to protect life and property. We are traumatized by the sights, sounds, and tastes we experience. Traumas that we carry with us for the rest of our lives. And yet, we do it day after day for the sake of our neighbor. We are not asking you to risk your health or safety, we just need your help and cooperation. Please work with us so we can continue to show up for those who need help.

Respectfully I submit this comment for the record and thank you for your continued joint service to the City of Laurel.

Leadership (Reno)

Name - 215 W 1st St



Good evening Honorable Mayor Waggoner and council members,  
An article was published on Thanksgiving 2022 in the Laurel Outlook that spoke towards my time in combat as a Marine, the hardships of returning home, and my new found purpose in the last decade being on the frontlines helping our veterans in need. Just after, I received an unexpected phone call from Chief Brent Peters of the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department who happens to be an Army veteran as well. He wanted to set up a meeting to talk with me about becoming a firefighter. I accepted.

A majority of military members who receive their last orders back into civilian life will tell you one thing they miss the most and that's camaraderie amongst their peers. They miss the loyalty and cohesiveness in working together as one machine to protect our country and provide safety to the loved ones we left behind. "...Camaraderie doesn't die when you leave the military, it becomes repurposed when you find a group of people with the same passion." Those words came from Brent's heart to me and were exactly what I needed to hear to become a firefighter.

After a detailed interview with the firefighters of Laurel, the life I once knew changed indefinitely. I am now a part of a group of people who share the same passions as I do: helping others, protecting the ones we love, and giving back to our community. I get to see the outcome of us saving people, our people...Americans... on our Homefront and not in Afghanistan or Iraq. Their smiles and gratitude aren't what being a firefighter is about but definitely helps. The outcome of what our community sees after a tragedy or an accident is the result of a full functioning fire station. Chief Peters, as a leader and mentor, has developed a well structured fire department over the years. Training is a rigorous yearlong endeavor to prepare Laurel's firefighters for the many hardships we encounter as a municipal fire department. Chief handles public safety and public relations while also maintaining order internally within the department. He keeps the department's equipment and gear in tiptop shape. Our department takes pride in the professionalism and traditions that Brent has upheld within the department for over a decade.

As he is the glue that keeps the department together, his goal isn't him trying to maintain job security as a full time Fire Chief. His passion far outweighs a paycheck. His passion is to pass the torch to the future of Laurel's Fire Department. The full time Fire Chief position would allow him time to lock in operating procedures that help the department years after his retirement. He would continue to share his knowledge and expertise within his team, us, so that we can carry the torch after his stead. See he is preparing us for success. As a true leader should.

I come in front of you with an ask that I feel is important. I ask that we put aside old biases and start fresh with our relationship between the fire department and the city. Let's find a galvanizing point, such as the love and safety for those in our community, and build a foundation together that sets a precedent for the future. However that looks, let us come to a common arrangement between the council and the fire department on expectations. Let us sit down and find clarity amongst each other to help the citizens of our community, not hinder them.

Thank you for your time.

FD Perception - Gotschall  
Name - 215 W 1st St

Good evening Honorable Mayor Waggoner and council members,

I stand before you tonight as a concerned constituent and a proud member of the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department. My experience on the Fire Department has lead me to a place of concern due to a perceived culture of animosity towards to the Fire Department.

Our perception is that there are members of the City Council, The Mayor, and the City Attorney view the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department as group that needs to be controlled and muzzled. This understanding is partially derived from an email sent to all city employees and volunteers from the City Attorney dated September 17th, 2022 that made threats of termination if we publicly expressed our concern about how the city is managed, despite our rights as citizens and tax payers. During the budgeting process there was clear animosity experienced by our members that was directed towards the Fire Department by members of the council that was not shown towards other departments. And various ongoing experiences. We feel that we are constantly receiving what seems to be conflicting information about the status of our Chief and the status of members. We are considered volunteers when it is convenient for the City to save money and employees when the City and the City Lawyer want to exert control over us.

Our hope is that by brining our concerns to lights is that you as council members might understand our struggles. We do not desire any animosity, and only hope that we can be treated with the same respect as the other departments in our city.

When we invite you to come to our open houses, please show up. When we host special demonstrations for our city council to see our new equipment and how it works, show up! We are not a high maintenance bunch, we don't even ask to be compensated for all of our time training which totals over 12,000 hours over the last five years, doing maintenance on vehicles at a significant savings to the City of Laurel, and all of our community service activities. On those occasions where we do receive your support, it is greatly appreciated and noted. A simple thank you for your service card goes a long way. Thank you Council Member Sparks for your cards.

If you are unable to support us for personal reasons we simply ask for your respect. We know that volunteers can be unwieldily because if we are fired our lives go on without significant financial consequences. If we are fired the things that change for us is that we would get more sleep, be at home with our families more, not constantly be risking injury, but also not experiencing the fulfillment that comes with serving our community. We may not be perfect, but we give our all to our community. Please do not treat us as the red headed step children of city departments as we have continually experienced with each new administration. Our desire to serve the City of Laurel, just like you. Let's work together to make Laurel a great place to live and work.

Respectfully I submit this comment for the record and thank you for your continued joint service to the City of Laurel.

Tradition of service - Abby  
Name - 215 W 1st St

Good evening Honorable Mayor Waggoner and council members,

I stand before you tonight as a concerned constituent and a proud member of the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department. You may have seen in multiple media outlets that I the newest member of the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department, and that I carry on my families tradition of service. It is from that family tradition of service that I express my concern about our ability to continue serving the City of Laurel and surrounding fire districts.

You may be aware that the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department is responsible for fireworks on the 4th of July, decorating the park and welcoming Santa to town for Christmas to Remember, supporting our schools during special events like state championships, and other community events throughout the year. During the current administration we have received criticism regarding our ongoing community support and involvement. We are not trying to create any problems, and are only trying to carry on the tradition of service to Laurel set forth by our predecessors.

When we interview potential members of the Fire Department we ask questions about firefighting, and we ask questions about community involvement. We take pride in serving our community when emergencies arise, and when there are times to celebrate. This commitment to service builds out trust with the community. When we do show up in emergencies its rarely our first interaction and we have already built a relationship of trust. Our involvement with the schools has lead to us responding to zero cases of youth set fires, by youth who attend our schools. Regularly engaging with our community keeps us all safer.

We fear that with extreme oversight of our department that we will no longer be able to serve our community like we have done for over 100 years. Will our ability to put on the 4th of July Firework show be taken away? Will we be prevented from celebrating our students when they win a state championship? Will you still support us to carry on the traditions that mean so much to our community or tighten your grip so much that we only show up when people are in crisis?

Please don't strip us of our legacy of service that I have dreamed of joining for years. Being a firefighter means so much more than just fighting fires, it is a commitment to serve our community in the good times and the bad, a commitment to make Laurel a better place each day through a legacy of service. Help us continue to love and serve Laurel.

Respectfully I submit this comment for the record and thank you for your continued joint service to the City of Laurel.

Life Together - Preacher  
Name - 215 W 1st St

Good evening Honorable Mayor Waggoner and council members,

I stand before you today as a concerned constituent and proud member of the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department. As you may have noticed we stand here united behind our Chief and asking for your support. We have no desire to be viewed with animosity, but simply stand here to express our concerns and ask for your cooperation.

Laurel is our home and only want the best for our community, and yet stand here wondering if there is a place for us to continue serving as firefighters. We are stand before you and ask that we be included in establishing a sustainable vision for the future of Laurel Volunteer Fire Department and that the conversations happen in a public and

accountable manner. We do not want any more closed door meetings where decisions are made by decree. We want to hold all parties, ourselves included, to the highest possible standard of accountability, as it should be. Please put us on the agenda for the next council workshop in two weeks so we can have a conversation and work towards solutions.

Our experience from this administration has been a posture of bullying and animosity towards the fire department and its members. We might ask for a lot of equipment, but please remember that our lives depend on our equipment working every single time. There is very little margin of error for us when we respond to a call, for our lives and the lives of others are at risk. We also raise the vast majority of our budget from our fire districts and not from City of Laurel. This may not be clear because of the opaque system of accounting currently used by the City of Laurel, that only serves to keep secrets and allow mismanagement of funds. Let's be more transparent to our tax payers about what exactly they are paying for and where their tax money goes. We know that when we show up for a call our citizens need our best, and they need your best too.

Our hope in coming here today that we would not allow our past to dictate our future and that we can work together to create. Lets create a future that ensures our citizens continue to receive the level of service from our fire department that they deserve. We want to have a seat at the table and a voice in the discussion when it comes to setting the vision for the future of the department that has been developed through our sweat equity.

We are stronger when we work together. The City of Laurel is a better place to live when we work together. Therefore I will continue to keep you in my prayers as the leaders of this community that we all love dearly. I pray that God gives you the wisdom to make decision that are for the best of our community, and that egos may be set aside. I pray that Christ gives you the heart to love without concern for self. And I pray that the Holy Spirit gives you the strength and courage to do what is right even when its hard.

Respectfully I submit this comment for the record and thank you for your continued joint service to the City of Laurel.

**CITY HALL**  
115 W. 1st. St.  
**PUB WORKS: 628-4796**  
PWD FAX: 628-2241  
**WATER OFFICE: 628-7431**  
WTR FAX: 628-2289  
**MAYOR: 628-8456**

# City of Laurel

P.O. Box 10  
Laurel, Montana 59044



## MEMORANDUM RE PROPOSED ORDINANCE

### **An Ordinance Amending Title Six of the Laurel Municipal Code (LMC § 6.16.010) Relating to Prohibited Certain Animals.**

#### *Comparable Municipal Information*

- I. Billings:** The City has an Ordinance comparable to the proposed Ordinance in front of the Laurel City Council. The City allows up to 6 chicken hens. Only single-family parcels can maintain chicken hens.
- II. Bozeman:** The City has an Ordinance comparable to the proposed Ordinance in front of the Laurel City Council. The City allows up to 15 chicken hens. Only single-family parcels can maintain chicken hens.
- III. Missoula:** The City has an Ordinance comparable to the proposed Ordinance in front of the Laurel City Council. The City allows up to 6 chicken hens. Both single family and multi-family dwellings can maintain chicken hens, assuming that all families in the multi-family dwelling consent in writing. Missoula also allows geese and ducks.
- IV. Belgrade:** The City has an Ordinance comparable to the proposed Ordinance in front of the Laurel City Council. The City allows up to 6 chicken hens. Only single-family parcels can maintain chicken hens.
- V. Dillon:** The City has an Ordinance comparable to the proposed Ordinance in front of the Laurel City Council. For the first 2,875 square feet of any residential parcel, up to 4 chicken hens are allowed and for each additional 1,000 square feet of any residential parcel, one additional chicken hen up to a total of 10.
- VI. Roundup:** The City has an Ordinance comparable to the proposed Ordinance in front of the Laurel City Council. The City allows up to 4 chicken hens.
- VII. Polson:** The City has an Ordinance comparable to the proposed Ordinance in front of the Laurel City Council. The City allows up to 6 chicken hens.

- VIII. Helena:** The City has never prohibited the keeping of chickens in City limits, and they have no applicable prohibitive Ordinance.
- IX. Kalispell:** The City allows chicken hens, and there is no maximum limit.
- X. Miles City:** The City has an Ordinance comparable to the proposed Ordinance in front of the Laurel City Council. The City allows up to 6 chicken hens. Only single-family parcels can maintain chicken hens.
- XI. Butte:** The City has no maximum limitation on the number of chicken hens, except that any property owner keeping chicken hens must have a lot at least 20,000 square feet.
- XII. Whitefish:** The City has an Ordinance comparable to the proposed Ordinance in front of the Laurel City Council. The City allows up to 5 chicken hens.
- XIII. Glendive:** The City has an Ordinance comparable to the proposed Ordinance in front of the Laurel City Council. The City allows up to 6 chicken hens.
- XIV. Livingston:** The City has an Ordinance comparable to the proposed Ordinance in front of the Laurel City Council. The City has no maximum limitation on the number of chicken hens.
- XV. Manhattan:** The City has an Ordinance comparable to the proposed Ordinance in front of the Laurel City Council. The City has no maximum limitation on the number of chicken hens.
- XVI. Red Lodge:** The City has an Ordinance comparable to the proposed Ordinance in front of the Laurel City Council. The City has no maximum limitation on the number of chicken hens.



MONTANA

AAA-000

LAUREL PARKS





MONTANA

AAA-000

LAUREL LIBRARY