

**MINUTES  
CITY OF LAUREL  
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2024**

A Council Workshop was held in Council Chambers and called to order by Mayor Dave Waggoner at 6:28 p.m. on March 19, 2024.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tom Canape	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heidi Sparks
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michelle Mize	<input type="checkbox"/> Jessica Banks
<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:**

Brittney Harakal, Council Administrative Assistant  
Kelly Strecker, Clerk/Treasurer  
Matt Wheeler, Public Works Director  
Ryan Welsh, KLJ

**Public Input:**

There were none.

**General Items**

**Executive Review**

1. Resolution - A Resolution Of The City Council Approving A Professional Services Agreement Between The City Of Laurel And Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc. For A Water Rate Study.

There was no discussion on the item.

2. Resolution - A Resolution Of The City Council Approving A Professional Services Agreement Between The City Of Laurel And Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc. For A Wastewater Rate Study.

The sewer fund needs to be evaluated for a rate increase, which was the catalyst for moving this project forward.

It was questioned if the \$39k was for both studies or if it was just for the wastewater rate study. It was clarified that the cost is just for the wastewater rate study.

It was questioned if this needed to be bid, and it was clarified that it did not need to be bid because these are two separate rate studies.

Raftelis was chosen because they had recently done a rate study for Lockwood, and they had an excellent experience using them. There are limited companies that do rate studies. Engineering firms are no longer doing rate studies. Rate studies merge engineering and accounting.

3. Resolution - A Resolution Of The City Council Authorizing The Additional Extension Of Approval Of Application For Special Review For J. Johnson Properties Pursuant To Resolution Nos. R22-07, R23-05, And R23-75.

Black Chip Casino is approximately one month from being completed. There was some specialized equipment that was delayed in getting shipped out. They are asking for a 60-day extension to finish the work that is needed.

The Mayor stated that he had toured the location, and it looked very nice. Once Lucky Louis's has moved over to the new location, they have a buyer lined up to turn the space back into a storefront.

4. Resolution - A Resolution Of The City Council Approving A Memorandum Of Understanding By And Between The City Of Laurel And Yellowstone County For The Golf Course Road Paving Project.

The Public Works Director recently received a call from the County Public Works Department stating that the County planned on overlaying Golf Course Road from Old Highway 10 to the Saddleback subdivision. The City annexed a portion of Golf Course Road last year and the County is asking that the City pay for that portion of the road. The cost is approximately 100k for the City's portion.

The City was asked if it has the money to cover the cost of the overlay. It was clarified that the City does have the funds to cover the cost. It would cost more if we chose to do the project ourselves. It was also noted that this road is receiving high traffic volumes, and the overlay will help preserve the road. It is wise for the City to move forward with this overlay.

It was questioned if the road was in bad shape. It was clarified that there is cracking on the road, and there is a higher speed limit on that road. Golf Course Road provides access to the Elena subdivision as well, so this impacts Laurel residents.

5. Resolution - A Resolution Of The City Council Approving Accrued Vacation Payout For City Clerk-Treasurer.

The Clerk/Treasurer has accrued a lot of vacation. She has found it hard to be gone, given the demands of the position. She is requesting a payout of 100 hours. That puts her at her cap for the next year.

It was questioned how payouts work. It was clarified that if she did not ask for a payout, then she would not accrue any more vacation time until she was under the hours cap.

## **Council Issues**

## 6. West Railroad Funding Discussion

A while ago, MDT came to the Council and proposed the project. At that time the ask of the City was 2.5 million. Now, the estimated cost has increased, and the City is being asked to cover the additional 2.7 million shortfall.

The Public Works Committee asked for a breakdown of costs between the blocks the TIF District can help pay for and the blocks not included in the TIF District. The TIF District included blocks 1 through 5.

The total amount of funding requested from the City is 5.2 million. The estimate does include a 30% contingency. That contingency is appropriate given the stage they are in for this project; as they progress through the design process, that contingency will decrease to approximately 5% to 10%.

It was questioned if these are two separate projects or if they are both part of the same project. It was clarified that both parts are part of the same project.

It was questioned how much of the 5.2 million will come out of the enterprise funds. It was clarified that there is not much infrastructure under W. Railroad Street; however, any infrastructure will be paid for out of the enterprise funds.

It was questioned how the 100k for the overlay on Golf Course Road would be funded and if those funds should be used for this project instead. It was clarified that the Golf Course Road overlay will be using BAARSA or Gas Tax funds and will not be paid out of the Street Maintenance fund. W. Railroad is the next big project for street maintenance. The City will be saving the Street Maintenance assessments for this project.

It was questioned what the City has available in Street Maintenance currently and if we have these funds on hand. It was clarified that, as of right now, the City does not have those funds on hand. The estimated construction date is 2026. The City will be using street maintenance from FY24 and FY25, as well as gas tax and BAARSA funds, to fund this project. The City is also looking at a RAISE grant to help with this project as well. HB 255 has helped out tremendously in assisting with covering other projects, which will free up funds for this project.

Right now, they have completed the project analysis phase. The project is on hold until the City agrees to fund the remainder of the project. The City will have a better understanding of the final cost as they begin the design process.

It was questioned what the rate of inflation is each year. It was clarified that the estimate for inflation is 5% to 9% each year. The longer we wait, the more expensive this project will become. The State can also borrow up to five years ahead of the STIP funds.

The County did agree to pay for half of the overlay costs with W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street. There will be an MOU coming before the Council at some point.

Council noted that LURA has big plans for the money that is sitting there. It was questioned who gets to decide how those funds are spent. It was clarified that LURA is an advisory entity, and the Council decides how to spend those funds.

It was questioned if the railroad paid for the railroad crossings. It was clarified that they do not pay for the crossings.

### **Other Items**

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

#### **Announcements**

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

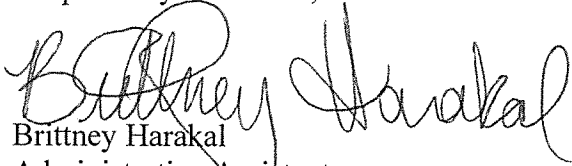
Hunter's Safety has wrapped up for this spring. They graduated 50 students this year.

License plates are available in the Laurel DMV office.

Mayor Waggoner reminded everyone to fill out and return their Lead and Copper survey.

The council workshop adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Brittney Harakal  
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.**