

**MINUTES  
CITY OF LAUREL  
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2020**

A Council Workshop was held in the Council Chambers and called to order by Mayor Tom Nelson at 6:31 p.m. on March 17, 2020.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emelie Eaton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heidi Sparks
<input type="checkbox"/> Bruce McGee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Herr
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scot Stokes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Irv Wilke
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Klose	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don Nelson

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Nick Altonaga, Planning Director

**Public Input:**

Author Voge, 520 Date Avenue, read the attached statement from the Library Director.

**General Items**

**Executive Review**

1. Resolution - Resolution Relating To \$3,055,000 Tax Increment Urban Renewal Revenue Bond (Laurel Urban Renewal District), Series 2020; Authorizing The Sale And Prescribing The Forms And Terms Thereof And The Security Therefor  
Mayor Nelson stated that the Clerk/Treasurer had brought this item to Council already. The City received three replies. Western Security Bank gave the best proposal and rates. The interest rate is 3.38%.
2. Resolution - Intent to abandon alley  
Nick Altonaga, Planning Director, stated because of City code issues, the developer would like the alley vacated. Certain codes mandate curbing; this would make it hard to make one continuous development. The Public Works Director sent in a letter of support that was included in tonight's packet. This is a way to make a more cohesive parcel for development. There are no City utilities under this alley. There are private utilities in the alley that would still need access to their infrastructure.

It was questioned if other portions of this alley had already been vacated as it looks to be only a portion of an alley. It was clarified that this alley is an artifact, all others had been vacated.

3. Resolution - DOJ Task Order for Riverside Park Campground  
Mayor Nelson stated this item had been pulled. The City does not have a complete task order from the State.

4. Resolution - Pavement Maintenance 2020 - Notice of Award

Matt Smith, KLJ, stated last Thursday bids were opened for crack sealing for the City of Laurel. The bid came in significantly under the engineer's estimate of \$800k. This includes all streets that were designated for crack and chip sealing. This bid also includes doing a mill and fill on Roundhouse. The bids came in around \$495k. There are 41k linear feet of crack sealing and 26k linear yards of chip sealing. Not sure why the bids are so low.

It was questioned if the City will be chip sealing like they did on Cottonwood and put the seal coat on top. It was clarified that it was correct.

Mayor Nelson noted that there was very little winter damage this year. There is funding to do additional work. There will be a change order to increase the scope.

### **Council Issues**

5. Update on Ambulance Levy

There is no update on this item. This item will stay on the agenda every two weeks for the near future.

Mayor Nelson stated his focus has been on COVID-19. He is looking at the availability of FEMA funding. The State declared an emergency. The City does not need to levy two mills, as it is only required if the State does not declare a state of emergency. He is hoping to work with information from other communities that have gotten safety levies passed.

Mayor Nelson stated that the City of Laurel has also declared a state of emergency. Ambulance Staff is working overtime. The State of emergency allows the City to recoup that expense.

6. Update on West Railroad

Mayor Nelson stated there is no update at this time. If Council passes the bond for the EDII project, then the Clerk/Treasurer will be able to give an update to Council for TIF District for W. Railroad project.

### **Other Items**

Mayor Nelson stated he would add an appointment to the Cemetery Commission to next week's Council meeting.

Mayor Nelson stated that there would be an amendment to the current purchasing policy. He stated he is concerned about the COVID situation. This amendment would be for when the City is in a state of emergency and where meetings are limited or not allowed. It would allow for the Council President and Mayor to approve claims. It would also allow the Mayor and Council President to approve purchase requests between \$5k and [\$79,999]. There is also discussion about a contingency plan for signing checks if either the Mayor or Council President is ill or quarantined.

Mayor Nelson stated that he would curtail all subcommittee meetings until further notice. Unless the Chair brings forward an urgent reason to meet, this is to reduce if not eliminate exposure. He stated he is also looking into not allowing public attendance at the meeting and may have meetings where Council Members participate virtually. He stated that this pandemic is the most significant issue we have faced since World War II. Things are changing quickly. The goal is to have the least amount of people contract the virus.

Information will be posted on the City's Facebook page, website, and in emails. May be closing City Hall and also looking at other ways to have people pay their bills. Possibly going and getting money from people who don't want to come in. Doors are being cleaned hourly.

It was questioned that when the City went with the new provider for the website, there was supposed to be bill pay. It was clarified that had not been implemented yet. The Mayor stated he would follow up.

As stated this evening, the Library has moved into a higher phase of precautions. Across the State, they are doing the same thing. Some offices are shut down entirely and working from home.

It was stated that Northwestern Energy is not shutting off people. Is the City looking to do the same for water? Mayor Nelson stated that there is discussion currently, that will be brought up in meetings in the next day or two. He wants to make sure everyone is taken care of, and no one is disadvantaged at no fault of their own. He stated he is in conversations with the County Commissioners.

It was questioned if there was a way to find out who was still open in town and who is closing. As of yesterday, all dine-in was closed to take out and drive up only. Mayor Nelson stated he would reach out to the Chamber for a list of who is remaining open.

Mayor Nelson reminded Council that the better we take care of ourselves, the better we can take care of others. The virus has to enter through your eyes, nose, or mouth. It attaches itself to the tissues in the lung. We won't be working from home but limiting how we go to work. Some employees have issues with daycare. He will stay in contact with the School Superintendent. Any employee whose family members are quarantined will be quarantined as well. They will work from home if possible. Employees that test positive will shelter in place.

Council Member Klose stated that the Laurel Senior Center is no longer providing dine-in meals but is still doing meals on wheels. Call ahead of time to get a meal. Meals can be delivered as well. Mayor Nelson stated he would have the City of Laurel Executive Order (EO-01-2020), the press release, and the sanitation guidelines from the CDC taken to the Senior Center.

It was questioned if the DMV will close. Mayor Nelson stated he was unsure and that he has a meeting with the County Commissioners tomorrow. This is a very fluid situation. Some states are extending temporary tags expirations. The goal right now is to restrict people's access to try and keep the social distance of six feet and less than ten people.

#### **Review of Draft Council Agendas**

Mayor Nelson stated that City Staff is exploring options for a virtual meeting such as GoToMeeting. The City will adhere to all open meeting laws in the State of Montana. He stated he is hoping we get back to normal soon.

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

All in attendance will be at next week's meeting.

#### **Announcements**

Council Member Sparks and Stokes stated that their plans to be out of the City for more than ten days had been canceled.

Council Members reminded residents not to hoard household items. Both Walmart and Target had toilet paper today.

Council Members reminded residents to stay healthy.

The council workshop adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black 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.**



# Laurel Public Library

720 West 3rd St. • P.O. Box 68 • Laurel, MT 59044  
(406) 628-4961 • [library@laurelpubliclibrary.org](mailto:library@laurelpubliclibrary.org) • [www.laurelpubliclibrary.org](http://www.laurelpubliclibrary.org)

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Mayor Nelson, Council Members, and residents of Laurel –

In light of recent developments concerning the COVID-19 (Corona) virus the library has made the decision to move from Stage One preparedness to Stage 2.5. We will be limiting walk-in access for patrons to a call-in curbside service starting Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Library staff will still be working to provide reading/entertainment materials using the curbside system as well as quick access to reference questions, tax forms, and fax/copy services. All extra activities have been cancelled for the next couple of weeks including story time and guitar lessons. Patrons will be able to access the library card catalog online to place holds on library items to be picked up at Laurel. This new curbside service will run Monday through Thursday, 9:00 am to 6:00 pm and Saturday 9:00 am to 3:00 until further notice. All returned items will be washed/sanitized before being returned to the shelves. Any questions may be directed to the library by calling 406-628-4961 or emailing library staff at [laurelpl@mtlib.org](mailto:laurelpl@mtlib.org). We appreciate your understanding during this time of keeping everyone safe.

I also want to let everyone know that we have partnered with the Laurel Schools to offer “curbside” breakfast and lunch each weekday. Breakfast is available 7:30 – 8:30 am, lunch is available 11:00 – 11:30. Please let as many people know about this as possible. We want our students to eat whether school is in session or not. Note: children must accompany parent/guardian for the meals. There are no income restrictions for these meals. They are available to anyone 18 and under.

Thank you,

Nancy L Schmidt  
Director  
Laurel Public Library