

**MINUTES
CITY OF LAUREL
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2023**

A regular Council Workshop was held in Council Chambers and called to order by Mayor Dave Waggoner at 6:29 p.m. on September 19, 2023.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

<input checked="" 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
Kelly Strecker, Clerk/Treasurer
Brittney Harakal, Administrative Assistant
Kurt Markegard, Planning Director

Public Input:

There were none.

General Items

1. Owl Cafe Presentation

An error was on the agenda; the Laurel Senior Center members were present to discuss their remodeling project.

Bea Ann Melichar, a volunteer at the Laurel Senior Center, briefly reviewed the attached letter.

Civil Attorney Braukmann noted there will be an EMS Mill Levy presentation at the Laurel Senior Center on September 29, 2023, at 11:45 a.m.

Executive Review

2. Resolution - A Resolution Of The City Council Authorizing The Mayor To Execute The Task Order And All Related Documents For The 5th-7th Avenue Sewer Line Replacement By And Between The City Of Laurel And KLJ Engineering, Inc.

Planning Director Markegard stated this project is a carry-over from his time as the Public Works Director. This sewer pipe has been an issue for the last few years. When they put the sewer camera in the line, they pull back the pipe's pieces. This line is 10 feet deep, surrounded by fiber optic cable, and in a narrow alley. It is not something City crews can repair. It is also a mainline for the City. The car wash owner would like to pave the alley at their expense but does not want to do so until the line has been repaired.

It was questioned why the City would be repairing this line instead of finishing the project on the south side. It was clarified that this project is for next year, but we need to have the design done so that we can go out for bid on the project in early spring.

It was questioned if this project would cross 5th Avenue. Council noted that this intersection has more traffic congestion due to the project on the south side. It was clarified that this project is not slated to start until next spring.

It was questioned if this project was budgeted for. It was clarified that it is budgeted for.

It was questioned why the City could not use the \$90k for this project to pave streets on the south side destroyed during the S. 4th Street project. It was clarified that this project is being paid out of the Sewer Fund. The Sewer Fund cannot be used to pave streets.

3. Ordinance O23-03: An Ordinance Amending Sections 13.01.010 (Adoption) And 13.01.020 (Updated References) Of The Laurel Municipal Code Related To The Adoption Of The International Fire Code.

The State has adopted the 2021 International Fire Code. The City has six months to adopt the code as well.

It was noted that another ordinance will come before Council with additional areas of LMC that need to be updated for the exceptions to the fire code.

Council Issues

4. Judge Wage Discussion

Civil Attorney Braukmann stated she sent out a draft resolution this afternoon as requested by Council Member Mize; see attached.

Council Member Klose stated they have an issue addressing the Judge's wage during an election cycle. They felt that this sets a precedent for this Judge and future Judges. The matrix helps with the budgeting process. The matrix also protects the Judge in that they could receive a wage reduction if their efficiency is not up to standard. They felt this discussion needed to be delayed until closer to the next election cycle.

Council Member Mize questioned how is the Judge's wage different from those of the Mayor or Council.

Council Member Klose stated he did not ask for a raise.

Council Member Mize asked how a president was not already set.

Council Member Klose stated those conversations are between the Council President and the Clerk/Treasurer.

Council Member Sparks asked how the matrix as it stands today came about.

Council Member Eaton stated that the matrix was developed because of numerous requests by the Judge for her wage to be reconsidered and to receive longevity. The \$500 increase in an election year was to accommodate the longevity request. The matrix mitigated the number of times the Judge appeared before Council requesting a raise. It was meant to give predictability.

Civil Attorney Braukmann spoke at length with former City Attorney Painter. There were many City Council meetings related to the Judge's compensation and longevity.

Council Member Sparks asked if other cities use a matrix similar to ours. It was clarified that other cities are not using a matrix similar to ours.

Council Member Mize stated that she liked the proposed resolution and saw it as a way to catch up the matrix to meet the increased inflation in recent years.

Motion by Council Member Mize to add the Judge's wage resolution to next week's meeting.

Mayor Waggoner asked if there was a second. There was none. Motion dies.

Other Items

Attendance at Upcoming Council Meeting

Council Member Eaton will be absent from next week's meeting.

Announcements

Emergency Services Committee will meet on Monday at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Council noted that at last night's Public Works Committee meeting, it was announced that a Love's Truck Stop will be coming to the West Laurel interchange.

Mayor Waggoner also noted that they will pay to get water and sewer out to their location.

Council noted that last night, there was a news report about the EMS Mill Levy. The Ambulance crew did a great job on the interview.

There will be various interviews with various media outlets over the next few weeks.

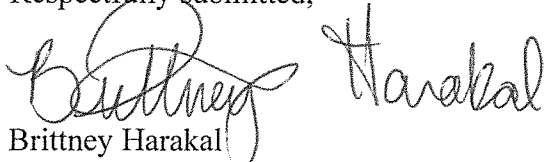
Yard signs will be in this week and available for pick up at City Hall if anyone is interested.

The Fire Department will have an open house on October 11th from 6 to 9 p.m. for their Fire Prevention Week festivities.

A special thanks to the Police Chief and Fire Chief for their support in educating on this mill levy.

The council workshop adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Brittney Harakal". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

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.

Laurel Senior Citizens Center
720 S. 4th Street
Laurel, Montana 59044
Tax ID #81-0386537

History and Expansion Information

This group began with a Senior Dinner Program out of the Owl Cafe in 1976. It was sponsored by the Yellowstone County Council on Aging, now the Adult Resource Alliance of Yellowstone County. In December of 1976 a group of seniors met with board members from the Council on Aging, Mayor Yovetich and several Laurel city councilmen to discuss formally organizing this group. There were a total of 29 people in attendance including those who had lunch at the Owl Cafe and those who were active in the social group that met once a week at Our Savior Lutheran Church. That was the beginning. They rented space in a building next to the Owl Cafe which they soon outgrew. That began the search for their "forever home". A year of frustrating search for a location found them back with the City Council. They were donated a ½ city block across from the pond as a building site. The grand opening of the center was held on February 23, 1979. This building included areas for activities, offices, and a kitchen so the Monday through Friday meals for the Meals on Wheels participants and the people who come to the center, could be prepared on site. Thanks to some special grants and lots of fundraising the loan was paid off in 3 years.

Fast forward 44 years. It is estimated that over 10,000 people have used this building during the 44 years it has been here. Volunteers continue to deliver meals to home bound individuals Monday through Friday, individuals and couples continue to come to the center not only for the nutritious noon meals but also for the companionship that it offers. While there are no longer pool tables at the center there are several exercise groups, card groups and Bingo that make up some of the current activities. All of this is lead by a volunteer Board of Directors. Funding to support this organization comes from the Adult Resource Alliance, membership dues and fundraising.

For many years it has been apparent that the front entry on the north side of the building needs to be changed. There has been a drainage issue for many years and even with many "fixes" it was often a hazard in the winter months. The widening of 4th Street also brought home the reality that having people getting out of cars on that street would be a greater hazard.

This is where we are today. The Board is working with Schutz Foss Architects for a plan to extend the building on the east side to accommodate a new entrance and an activities/meeting room. This addition will be 22 X 10 feet. Soil samples and a land survey have found drainage issues on this flat piece of land and the estimated cost for the project is now around \$180,000. Bids for the project will be opened the end of September.

While the Area II Agency on Aging and the Adult Resource Alliance are both assisting with some of these costs, and the center will be financing a portion through a local bank, the board is committed to raising \$50,000 over the next year.

Any assistance that you can provide will be greatly appreciated and recognized.

Bea Ann Melichar bmelichar@yahoo.com 406 690 2133

RESOLUTION NO. R23-_____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL SETTING THE SALARY OF THE CITY COURT JUDGE EFFECTIVE THE DATE OF THIS RESOLUTION (IF APPROVED) TO JULY 1, 2026.

WHEREAS, the City of Laurel City Council previously adopted R15-51, which set the City Court Judge's salary pursuant to an adopted scale to provide both certainty and fairness to the City and elected City Court Judge; and

WHEREAS, the City of Laurel City Council thereafter adopted R17-71, which set the City Court Judge's salary for the four-year term of January 2018 to January 2022; and

WHEREAS, R17-71 specified that the City Council would set the City Court Judge's salary for the four-year term of January 2022 to January 2026 through the budget process for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 and every four years thereafter; and

WHEREAS, the City of Laurel set the City Court Judge's salary for January 2022 forward through the budget process for Fiscal Year 2021-2022; and

WHEREAS, the City Court Judge's salary has been paid since January 2022 in accordance with the budget approval; and

WHEREAS, since the City Court Judge's salary was set, the City Court Judge has requested a salary increase; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor has the authority to recommend and the City Council has the authority to approve, pursuant to the Laurel Municipal Code 2.68.100, a change in the salary of the City Court Judge by way of Resolution.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana that the City Court Judge's salary for the three-year term beginning July 1, 2023 to July 1, 2026 shall be set as follows:

1. Commencing July 1, 2023 to the date of this Resolution, if approved: The City Court Judge's salary will remain as was previously set by the City of Laurel through the budget process for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. No retroactive changes will occur with regard to the City Court Judge's salary.
2. Commencing the date of this Resolution, if approved, to July 1, 2024: The City Court Judge's salary shall be increased by Four Percent (4%) from the previously-set budgeted salary for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

3. Commencing July 1, 2024 to July 1, 2025: The City Court Judge's salary shall be increased by an additional Three Percent (3%) from the previous partial-year period of the date of this Resolution, if approved, to July 1, 2024.
4. Commencing July 1, 2025 to July 1, 2026: The City Court Judge's salary shall be increased by an additional Three Percent (3%) from the previous year of July 1, 2024 to July 1, 2025.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana that the City Court Judge's salary for the Four-Year Term beginning July 1, 2026 to July 1, 2030 shall be set through the budget process for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 and shall be in effect for the following Four-Year Term, and then resolved by way of Resolution every four years thereafter; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana that the City Court Judge's increased salary shall be incorporated into the City of Laurel's annual General Fund Budget, effective July 1, 2023.

Introduced at a regular meeting of the City Council on the ____ day of September, 2023, by Council Member _____.

PASSED and APPROVED by the City Council of the City of Laurel the ____ day of September, 2023.

APPROVED by the Mayor the ____ day of September, 2023.

CITY OF LAUREL

Dave Waggoner, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kelly Strecker, Clerk-Treasurer

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Michele L. Braukmann, Civil City Attorney

MEMO

DATE: September 15, 2023
TO: City Council
FROM: Finance Department
RE: Judge's Wage

Per the Mayor's request I have provided the judge's wage at a 4%, 3%, 2% increase for this year only based on current matrix.

Current Wage is: \$44386.00 / \$1707.15

Benefits: \$29,247.44/\$1218.64

Total: \$73633.44

4%

Wage at 4%: \$46161.44/\$1775.44

Benefits: \$29408.38/\$1225.35

Total: \$75,569.82

3%

Wage at 3%: \$45717.58/\$1758.37

Benefits: \$29368.08/\$1223.67

Total: \$75,085.66

2%

Wage at 2%: \$45273.72/\$1741.30

Benefits: \$29328.04/\$1222.00

Total: \$74,601.76

Sincerely,



Kelly Strecker