

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF  
CONRAD, COUNTY OF PONDERA, STATE  
OF MONTANA, HELD AT CONRAD CITY HALL  
ON February 1, 2022

The City Council of the City of Conrad, County of Pondera, State of Montana, met in regular session at the Conrad City Hall on February 1, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Miller; Alderman Karla Breeding, David Cates, Nathan Hunsucker & Ron Widhalm; Finance Officer Agnes Fowler; PWD Zimbelman; Acting Chief Padilla; Attorney Jones(remotely)

Absent: None

Guest present: Mike & Jessie Lytle, Mike Lytle Jr., Alex Linn, Stephanie Hurley, John & Melinda Burns, Brad Koon, Rob Cook

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Miller at 6:00 p.m.

Motion by Alderman Breeding 2<sup>nd</sup> by Alderman widhalm to approve the minutes from the January 18, 2022 regular meeting, as presented.  
Motion Carried Unanimously

Mayor Miller asked for a motion to amend the agenda to include the recommended addition of a payroll/office clerk job description and revisions to the billing/office clerk job description within the Finance Department. she also requests amending the agenda to include the resignation of the fire chief.

Motion by Alderman Breeding and second by Alderman Cates to approve the recommended amendments to the agenda as presented as item 7a and 7b.  
Motion Carried Unanimously.

Claim checks #38858 through #38880 January claims (refer to the claims register) and payroll were presented to the Council.

Motion by Alderman Hunsucker and second by Alderman widhalm to approve the claims & payroll, as presented.  
Motion Carried Unanimously.

A water contract transfer from Russell & Jeanne Offerdahl to Alex Giles for the property at 1438 US Hwy 91 N., with the fees paid was presented for approval.

Motion by Alderman Cates and second by Alderman widhalm to approve the water contract transfer from Offerdahls to Giles, as presented.  
Motion Carried Unanimously.

Public Comment: None was heard.

PWD Zimbelman reported on the Public Works Department January 2022 activity. They have been doing street sweeping during the nice weather. The annual Tri City Interlocal Banquet was held January 21<sup>st</sup> with Nathan Hunsucker being elected as the chairman and Finance Officer Fowler being re-elected to the Sec/Treasurer position for the upcoming year. The items they declared as scrap has been disposed of through Pacific Recycling. He attended a class on water loss

management and learned of potential copper and lead requirements that will need to be addressed. He will attend the annual Pondera County Canal & Reservoir meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> as the voting delegate for the City's water shares. He will also serve as the voting proxy for the North Central Montana Regional Water Authority. The annual wastewater report was completed and submitted to DEQ. Day to day operations continue to run smoothly.

Acting Chief Padilla presented the January 2022 Activity report for the Police Department. There were approximately 207 calls for service reported to the PCSO Dispatch and or Conrad Police Department. Some of the calls were as follows: 3 Domestic Incidents; 3 Burglary/Thefts/Shoplifting reports; 4 Criminal Mischief/Trespass/Vandalism; 24 Medical Emergencies; 15 Suspicious Activity/Vehicles with the neighborhoods becoming more active in reporting. 36 various Public Assists; 4 Juvenile Complaints, which are down due to working with parents and the schools. 42 Traffic Stops; 18 Assists to other agencies. There were 10 dog calls and 3 cat calls. The department is working closely with the internet crimes task force and the school through the reinstated RSO program within the schools to assist in social media concerns. Mayor Miller asked if they are finding the predators are local-no they are moving around from WA to TX. Snap Chats are the biggest culprit.

Stephanie Hurley as the Coordinator of the Crime Victim Advocates, working with the City and County Attorneys in Toole, Liberty, Pondera and Choteau Counties. She has contacted the Conrad City Attorney, Daniel Jones, to establish a working relationship as well. An MOU has been presented for the City of Conrad to participate in this joint venture, with no financial commitment. Mayor Miller asked Daniel Jones if his costs for this would be in or out of scope, per his contract, with the City. Daniel stated the time spent on these cases would be within the scope of his contract. Liberty County wrote the grant through VOCA which requires match hours through meetings and a review of cases. Daniel asked what services are provided to the victims-they offer emotional restitution and financial resources, if necessary. Daniel stated this program would be a fantastic service to our community. They would only work with cases that the City Attorney presented them with. Alderman Breeding asked about the confidentiality of the victim and if they had to participate in this program-Stephanie stated the victim has the say.

Motion by Alderman Breeding 2<sup>nd</sup> by Alderman Cates to participate in the MOU with Liberty County for the Crime Victim Advocate Program.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Brad Koon presented an update on potential grant funding options for the stormwater/lift stations. In April or May the City should be notified if we were successful in the ARPA 2 grant cycle for up to \$2,000,000. There are planning grants available through MSEP and RRGL to update our PER. These could be used as part of the match for the ARPA 2 grant. These funds would not be awarded until May of 2023 so only a portion of the project could be started. Lowest risk is to apply for the RRGL \$8,000 grant for the planning grant to update the PER for the stormwater which is necessary for the MSEP grant. There would be a match equivalent to the grant, if awarded.

Motion by Alderman Hunsucker 2<sup>nd</sup> by Alderman Breeding to approve the RRGL planning grant application for the stormwater PER update.  
Motion Carried Unanimously.

Brad also gave an update on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Lift Station, the bulk fill station and water treatment plant.

Kevin Moritz submitted his resignation letter as Fire Chief for the Conrad Volunteer Fire Department, effective January 31, 2022. He will remain as a volunteer on the department and will continue to assist the current Assistant Fire Chief.

Motion by Alderman Hunsucker and second by Alderman Breeding to accept the resignation of Kevin Moritz as Fire Chief.  
Motion Carried Unanimously.

Mayor Miller is requesting a new job description titled Payroll/Office Clerk and to revise the Billing/Office Clerk job so that the two were more closely unilateral for cross working/training. She is wishing to keep the Administrative Clerk I job description for potential advancement. They will be reviewed by Attorney Jones and MMIA.

Motion by Alderman Breeding second by Alderman Widhalm to approve the two job descriptions, with the condition that Attorney Jones and MMIA approve.  
Motion carried Unanimously.

Mike Lytle S. asked why a person has to wait 6-8 months for a building permit to be acted upon. He wants to know the status of these permits as he was told there wasn't a building inspector. That is his concern, what is a citizen to do when they have submitted but can't proceed. The City does still retain a Building Inspector and Alderman Hunsucker volunteered to contact him to try and get some answers. Acting Chief Padilla explained the part he has played with trying to get this taken care of. There has been some interest expressed in a person who may want to be the building inspector and wants the information to become one. Mike's next concern was over the denial of his sons request to operate a General Auto Repair business-he has never received an answer to this question. Alderman Hunsucker stated as Chairman of the Zoning Board there was an overwhelming amount of concerns from the neighbors at both hearings against his request. Acting Chief Padilla stated there have been no complaints logged through dispatch nor directly to the police department. The neighbors were told any concerns had to be officially logged in order for his department to investigate. Alex Linn stated he has no opposition to an individual trying to start a business as well as trying to upscale the neighborhood. Alderman Hunsucker stated he has witnessed a concerted effort being made to bring the property into compliance. Mike Lytle Jr. was encouraged to resubmit an application and go through the process again. He also is encouraged to contact the neighbors and work through the issues prior to reapplying. He would like copies of the letters submitted so he knows their concerns.

No action taken on this issue at this time.

Melinda Burns the DES coordinator for the county explained that the State of Montana will pick up the costs for the Mitigation Plan which normally is required to be updated every 5 years. The city would just have to be an active stakeholder by attending the meetings to review

what the State has in place for this. This would streamline the process for future upgrades which is part of the FEMA hazard mitigation that then relates to insurance costs. The Mayor's signature is required.

Motion by Alderman Cates and second by Alderman Hunsucker to opt into the Mitigation Plan with the State of Montana, based on the City Attorneys approval, with a retroactive date of January 31, 2022.  
Motion Carried Unanimously.

Acting Chief Padilla is requesting the use of the CARE's Act Funding for the purchase of a camera system for the police department and city hall. The current system is antiquated and cannot be supported. The estimated costs for this is \$2,500 to \$3,000. He also is requesting the purchase of 3 "watchguard" systems for the police vehicles to offer protection in the case of an investigation. The cost of this system is \$15,060.

Motion by Alderman Hunsucker and second by Alderman widhalm to approve the purchase and installation of a camera security system for City Hall and the Police Department for up to \$5,000, pending quotes and bids and to purchase 3 watchguard systems for up to \$15,060 from the CARES Act Fund.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Alex Linn submitted a letter expressing his interest in Conrad consideration of the Urban Chickens following Choteau's Ordinance. Alderman widhalm researched other communities noting Roundup's and how clearly it was spelled out.

Motion by Alderman widhalm second by Alderman Hunsucker to table the Urban chicken discussion.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

MT Rural Water is requesting the use of one City day at Norley Hall on February 15<sup>th</sup> for a training.

Motion by Alderman Breeding second by Alderman Hunsucker to approve the request for one day of the City use for MT Rural Water on February 15, 2022.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Conrad Chamber of Commerce has requested 4 days of City use at Norley Hall on April 21-24 for their annual Chamber banquet.

Motion by Alderman Breeding and second by Alderman Hunsucker to approve the Chambers request for 4 days of use at Norley Hall, April 21-24, 2022.

Motion Carried Unanimously.

Motion by Alderman Hunsucker and second by Alderman widhalm to table the Boards and Commission appointments.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Resolution #22-1266 was presented for approval for 1<sup>st</sup> Liberty FCU signing authority on accounts at their bank.

Motion by Alderman Hunsucker and second by Alderman Breeding to sign and approve Resolution #22-1266-1<sup>st</sup> Liberty FCU signing authority.  
Motion Carried Unanimously.

Mayor Miller wishes to appoint Ernest Padilla as the Chief of Police. He has agreed to an annual salary of \$65,000 with an additional monthly salary of \$150/ month for animal control services as well as all other benefits offered to full time employees.

Motion by Alderman Hunsucker and second by Alderman Cates to approve the appointment of Ernest Padilla at Chief of Police with the terms presented.  
Motion Carried Unanimously.

No Executive session was necessary.

Other Business: None


Next agenda: Urban Chickens; Board & Commission Appointments.

Motion by Alderman Hunsucker 2<sup>nd</sup> by Alderman Cates to adjourn.  
Motion Carried Unanimously

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Attest:

  
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Finance Officer

  
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Mayor