

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 MARCH 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 March 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; Chief Padilla.

Absent: None

Guest present: Hilary Ritter, Ryan VanDyke, Tammy VandenBos, Darrel Burditt, Alex Linn, Ryan Dailley, Dave Thomas, Rob Cook, Jay Coombs. Angela Thomas-remotely

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

Motion by Alderman Breeding 2nd by Alderman Cates to approve the minutes from the February 1, 2022 regular meeting, as presented.
Motion Carried Unanimously

Claim checks #38881 through #38930 with #38904 void for February claims (refer to the claims register) and payroll were presented to the Council.

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

No water contracts were presented.

Public Comment: None was heard.

PWD Zimbelman reported on the Public Works Department February 2022 activity. The shop yard has been cleaned up. He and two other operators took a water training course held here in Conrad put on by MT Rural Water. If they become aware of any lead pipes they may need to report. Alderman Hunsucker answered some questions as well regarding solder and lead. They will be adding media (sand/anthracite) to the filters at the water plant this week. MMIA is hosting a virtual roundtable discussion on March 8th regarding lift stations and potential liabilities. The MT Rural Water conference will be held March 23-25 with himself, Jerry and Keith attending.

Chief Padilla presented the February 2022 Activity report for the Police Department. There were approximately 253 calls for service reported to the PCSO Dispatch and or Conrad Police Department, which is higher than normal. Some of the calls were as follows:10 Arrests; 15 Domestic Incidents; 9 Burglary/Thefts/Shoplifting reports; 4 Criminal Mischief/Trespass/ Vandalism; 18 Medical Emergencies;27 Suspicious Activity/Vehicles. Various Public Assists with 16 welfare checks;10 Juvenile Complaints;35 Traffic stops; multiple assists to other agencies. There were 10 dog calls with one coyote call. The Police Department is seeking a new officer due to a recent resignation

and have currently received 4 applications, two of which have certification. Cases adjudicated in Conrad City Court have increased from 95 cases in 2020 to 155 total cases in 2021 4 applications have been submitted, 2 have certifications, at this time.

Ryan Dailley, coach for the Cardinal's representing the Conrad Park & Rec is requesting the City's approval to place LED lights at the American Legion baseball field. LSI Industries out of Billings, with Border States electric would be doing the installation. Having lights on the field would allow them to host more tournaments and night games to potentially increase the roster size and bring more to our community. All three communities that are members of the Tri City Cardinals- Conad, Choteau and Shelby will benefit. Electrical costs are anticipated to not be more than \$500 per year. They would be requesting the City of Conrad to pay this cost. The installation of lights would allow more activities such as soccer, not just baseball. Ryan VanDyke stated the lights would be most beneficial to the pre and post season games. The Port Authority will provide the loan which will be paid back through fund raisers. The project cost estimate for this is \$150,000 and would be funded through the Economic Development Co. They may seek some of the Genevieve Reiken Anderson funds in the future as well as donations from the other major industry players such as Burlington Northern. Alderman Cates asked if there had been any contacts or research with the area homeowners- not at this time but they have worked with FAA and have gotten their approval. There is a 5 year warranty on the lights and NW Energy has agreed to assist with maintenance. Questions were asked as to the location of the poles, effects of light, height of poles, depth of poles, future maintenance etc. The group stated they would meet with the City engineers, Public Works Department and anyone else effected by this project to make this work. They will gather additional information and distribute to PWD and Council prior to the next meeting.

Resolution #22-1267-changes/additions to the Personnel Manual, regarding the Payroll and Billing Clerk's job descriptions, was submitted for signing and adoption. It had been introduced and passed at the regular City Council meeting on February 1st.

Motion by Alderman Breeding 2nd by Alderman Hunsucker to adopt and approve Resolution #22-1267-changes/additions to the Personnel Manual.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

Finance Officer Fowler is requesting a \$1/hour wage increase for Kim Cooney, the Billing Clerk, effective March 1, 2022. She has exhibited exemplary work during the transition of staff in the finance office. She performs accurate and detailed work and has been willing to take on extra tasks. Council expressed their appreciation of her as well.

Motion by Alderman Breeding 2nd by Alderman Cates to approve the request to increase Kim Cooney's wage by \$1/hour, effective March 1, 2022.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

Logan Health is requesting one City use at Norley Hall on March 29th for a training course.

Motion by Alderman Hunsucker and second by Alderman Breeding to approve one day of City use at Norley Hall for Logan Health on March 29th.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

Mayor Miller is requesting approval of the appointment of Hilary Ritter as Finance Officer. Background checks are being performed. Council was polled individually, with approval being given at that time which allowed Hilary to give notice to her current employer. She is scheduled to start March 7th. This will allow Finance Officer Fowler to work with Hilary until the end of the month. Approval of the wages of \$58,000 per year with a \$500 annual increase following 6 months of employment and an additional \$500 annual increase at 12 months, both with positive evaluations. Upon the receipt of her MT Municipal Clerk's Treasurers Certification she will receive an additional \$500 annual salary. The position has a 12 month probation period ending March 7, 2023.

Motion by Alderman Breeding second by Alderman Hunsucker to approve the Mayor's recommendation of the appointment of Hilary Ritter as Finance Officer with the wages so stated, effective March 7, 2022.
Motion carried Unanimously.

Stephen Bergeron submitted his resignation from the Police Department, effective February 18th, 2022. Advertising for a replacement has been started.

Motion by Alderman Breeding and second by Alderman Cates to accept the resignation of Stephen Bergeron from the Police Department.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

No Action at this time to the Boards and Commission, it will continue to the next agenda.

Motion by Alderman widhalm second by Alderman Breeding to table the Boards and Conditions moving it to the next agenda.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

Discussion on Urban Chicken continued-no additional information has been presented, at this time. Alderman Hunsucker asked the highest number of chickens Alex Linn would like to have, it is the 20 he currently has. His four lots can accommodate that number while others wouldn't be able to. Dave Thomas asked what the hold ups on this issue are-the City is just gathering more information in order to make an informed decision. Alderman Breeding asked why, if the city ordinance states they are out of compliance, what is being done now. Chief Padilla noted he and City Attorney Jones felt while the Council is coming to a solution no citations would be issued. If Council desired citations to be issued the Chief would issue. Alderman Cates asked Alex if the Council decided on a lesser amount of allowable chickens would he comply? He said he would. Council members have received positive comments on the allowing of such. The parameters need to be determined so that the ordinance can be drafted by the attorney. This topic will continue to the next agenda.

Motion by Alderman Breeding and second by Alderman Hunsucker to table the discussion on Urban Chicken to the next meeting.
Motion Carried Unanimously

No Executive session was necessary.

Other Business: Alderman Breeding asked what Alderman Hunsucker found in his communications with the City Building inspector. There are two interested parties who may want to serve in that capacity. Possible solutions/alternatives were discussed. Mayor Miller stated she had terminated an employee, within the probationary period on January 31st, 2022.


Next agenda: Engineer update Urban Chickens; Board & Commission Appointments, Lights at the American Legion Field, Chief Padilla request; Whoop up request.

Motion by Alderman Breeding 2nd by Alderman Hunsucker to adjourn.
Motion Carried Unanimously

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.



Mayor

Attest:


Finance Officer