

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 JUNE 21, 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 June 21, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Miller; Aldermen Breeding, Cates, Hunsucker and Widhalm; PWD Zimbelman, Finance Officer Ritter, City Attorney Jones

Absent: None

Guests present: Cody Shaw, Alex Linn, Carolyn Donath, Darryl Burditt, Keith Thaut, Lacie Vermulm, Jim Aiken, Tiffany Christensen, Agnes Fowler, Kimberly Hueske, McKenzie Graye, and Rob Cook.

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

Motion by Alderman Cates, second by Alderman Widhalm, to approve the minutes from the June 7, 2022 meeting.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Claims: Claims 26399, 26412, 26421-26445 presented to Council.

Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Hunsucker to approve the claims as presented.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Water Contracts: None

Correspondence: None

Public Comment: Appreciation expressed the road at 5th Ave SW and Iowa Street SW is completed. PWD Zimbelman stated now funding can be utilized for maintenance of street. Kimberly Hueske introduced as pool manager.

Library Director Report: Carolyn Donath would like to thank everyone for allowing her to serve as Library Director since 1994. During the last year Tiffany Christensen has been training to take over as Library Director, effective July 1, 2022. Christensen would like to thank Donath for training and time spent with her to take over as Director. Library stats: visits 1,129, finally exceeding covid numbers; 1,629 items circulated, 129 computer users. Upcoming projects: replacing front and back exterior doors to allow for ADA accessibility and replacing two outdated public use computers. Library MOU: Library Director and City Attorney are in discussions on the MOU, based on MMIA's criteria. Thank you to Director Donath for her years of service.

Update on pathway committee/dog park. Two individuals have been awarded a grant/scholarship to install exercise stations on the walking path and are moving forward with this project. Alex Linn will present ideas pertaining to locations and give pros and cons of these potential locations. PWD Zimbelman will do a ride along and seek out additional potential locations.

The MSU Extension Office would like to renew the Farmer's Market in Legion Park Use Agreement for every Tuesday, June 29, 2022 through August 30, 2022.

Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Hunsucker to approve the MSU Extension Farmer's Market Use Agreement w/date corrections.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Request by Mayor Miller for a Saturday morning Farmer's Market at street in front of Orpheum Theater as it is City property, not a state highway. Vendors could donate to the local food pantry for participation (in lieu of payment). Mayor Miller would like to draw a little bit of a crowd on Saturday mornings in Conrad. Discussion on if this would detour from the Tuesday evening Farmer's Market. Competition is not the intent. Mayor Miller has spoken to business owners on that street and they voiced agreement to the Mayor. Potentially to start the first Saturday in July. Mayor Miller has been in contact with the county sanitarian for requirements. Request to approve with exclusion of required business licenses.

Motion by Alderman Cates, second by Alderman Breeding to approve a Saturday morning Farmer's Market.

Amending motion by Alderman Cates, second by Alderman Breeding to add the exclusion of business license requirement for vendors.

Motion Carried Unanimously

The Pondera 4H Shooters have requested approval of a permit to sell fireworks within the City limits across the street from Town Pump, 400 Block North.

Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Hunsucker to approve the Pondera 4H Shooters request to sell fireworks across the street from Town Pump upon inspection/approval of Fire Chief, Kevin Moritz.

Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Hunsucker to amend the above motion to include the American Legion to sell fireworks in the City limits upon inspection/approval of Fire Chief, Kevin Moritz.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Swim Team Pool Use agreement. Needs dates of beginning and ending. June 6 as beginning date. August 20 ending date. Liability insurance is on file. Will get this agreement.

Motion to approve NH/DC through Aug 20

Rob Cook, Director of the Pondera Regional Port Authority presented to Council information regarding the Splash Park survey requirements. The State informed us in December we would need better boundaries for the Splash Park. Currently, we do not know what the boundaries are. There are three potential options: 1. Survey swimming pool and splash park (call that the property); 2. New property for splash Park; and 3. The boundary is the park. The property designated will always remain as for outdoor recreation use. Recommendation to reaffirm the name of the

swimming pool park, as Swimming Pool Park. If we do the survey, we will need to get a bid and approval for survey. Suggestion to survey whole block, future growth is going to be recreational. Using the original plat would potentially avoid the survey if the park is broken into lots. Recommended to give minimal space. First discussion of naming of park. Funding will not be available until the latter part of the year. The official legal description for the swimming pool park is Lots 1, 19 and 20, of Block 18, of the First Addition to the townsite of Conrad, Montana, and Lots 2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 17 and 18 of Block 18, of the Fourth Addition to the townsite of Conrad, Montana. Rob Cook will submit this information to the State.

Motion by Alderman Hunsucker, second by Alderman Breeding to designate Lots 1, 19 and 20, of Block 18, of the First Addition to the townsite of Conrad, Montana, and Lots 2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 17 and 18 of Block 18, of the Fourth Addition to the townsite of Conrad, Montana as the Swimming Pool Park.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion on wages. Discussion was had with a 5% increase for the average wage, roughly +/- \$1/hr. This is lower than the government rate of 8.6%. The proposal of a percentage is to keep employees competitive across the state. Additional discussion on preference to give the same amount for COLA across the board. In using a percentage, the average increase would be \$1.13 across the board approximately 5%. Historically, the COLA rates have been done in different ways with no consistency. Need to address an increase for pool and advocate for a higher wage for pool manager.

Union Steward Keith Thaut and Jim Aiken were present on behalf of the Union. City Attorney Jones asked Union Steward Thaut if the Union wanted City Attorney Jones to describe the Union's prior proposals. Union Steward Thaut gave his consent and City Attorney Jones described the Union's proposals. The Union proposed three changes to the agreement: Union proposal 1. Increase clothing allowance \$50 to \$250/yr, on-call pay to \$1.75/hr, COLA + \$.50/hr; Union proposal 2. Increase clothing allowance \$50 to \$250/yr, on-call pay \$1.60/hr, COLA + \$.40/hr (these have nothing to do with longevity); 3. Mayor Miller on behalf of the City recommended a counterproposal: Increase clothing allowance \$50 to \$250/yr, increase on-call pay to \$1.60, and no additional cost of living increase except for that which is given to all City employees. This is negotiations not recommendations. The council was aware to what the City is extending forward. City Attorney Jones will convey to the Union that Council is ok with an increase to the clothing allowance by \$50/year to \$250/yr and increasing on-call pay to \$1.60/hr. City Attorney Jones recommended tabling the matter until the next meeting.

Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Hunsucker to table Union Contract until the next Council meeting pending negotiations.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Renewal of City Judge/Clerk Agreement. The contract remains the same with the exception making the judge/clerk contract labor instead of employees. A request to increase the pay to \$1000/mo for the judge and \$450/mo for the clerk and extend the contract to a two-year term.

Motion by Breeding, second by Hunsucker to approve the City Judge Agreement based on City Attorney Jones explanation of the revised contract.

Motion Carried Unanimously

The County proposed a significant increase to the Dispatch Agreement and was countered by the City. Negotiations were made to \$21,000 annually in two payments with a 4% increase per year for 4 years. The County/Sheriff will sign off on this negotiation if approved per City Attorney Jones.

Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Cates to approve the Dispatch Agreement between the City of Conrad and Pondera County as read.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Resignation of Ron Widhalm from City of Conrad Alderman. Last day June 30, 2022. Alderman Widhalm has served on the Council for 10 years. Alderman Widhalm expressed having learned so much throughout his time as Alderman and stated, "Good things can happen in time." Thank you on behalf of the City for Alderman Widhalm's time and dedication.

Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Hunsucker to accept the resignation of Alderman Widhalm as of June 30, 2022.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Board and Commission appointments/resignations: Jodi Kassner is happy to continue the Zoning Commission Board of Adjustment. It needs to be confirmed that April Zelenka is still sitting on the committee. The Safety Committee needs to include Tiffany Christensen and Hilary Ritter to fill the open positions of retired persons and Kevin Moritz will be on the Safety Committee as the present Fire Chief.

Motion by Alderman Widhalm, second by Alderman Cates to approve the above appointments to Boards and Commissions.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Executive Session: None

Other: Reaffirm Pool Park name,

Items to appear next: Wages, Union Contract, Ordinance 424

Motion by Alderman Widhalm, second by Alderman Cates to adjourn at 7:58 p.m.

Motion Carried Unanimously



Jamie Miller

Mayor

Attest:

H. R. T.

Finance Officer