

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 AUGUST 23, 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 August 23, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Aldermen Breeding, Cates, Schoenrock, and Hunsucker, Finance Officer Ritter, Library Director Christensen, and PW John Calahan

Present by Phone: Mayor Miller

Absent: None

Guests present: Daryl Burditt

The meeting was called to order by Alderman Hunsucker at 6:00 p.m.

Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Cates to approve the minutes as presented from the August 9, 2022, regular meeting and August 16, 2022, special meeting.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Claims: Claims 26532-26587 presented to Council.

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

Motion Carried Unanimously

Water Contracts: None

Correspondence: None

Public Comment: None

Finance Officer Ritter has no financial report due to working on the budget.

Library Director Christensen presented with July 2022 report. 1,128 visitors, 18 new patrons, 181 computer users and 2014 circulation of items. All statistics are up from last year except circulation, and this was only down by 52. Director Christensen and Assistant Director Thiessen attended the Montana Library Association Annual Conference. The library was issued the Excellent Library Service Award (ELSA) for 2022 from the MT State Library. The capital improvement projects (CIP) in progress are the network cabling, which is completed, pending electrical work. We are still waiting on plumbing, roofing, interior painting, and the exterior doors. We have reached out to Montana Department of Transportation about removing the dead trees in front of the library, they are in contact with PWD Zimbelman. Triple Tree cannot offer the services needed. A Preliminary Architectural Report (PAR) is needed, and Triple Tree does not do these. May need help from City and have discussions on who can do a PAR. Safety is a factor. Director Christensen is looking into other avenues. Summer Reading and Kindergarten Camp is wrapping up; there was higher program attendance, but lower reading

participation than last year. Tracy Cook from State Library did a debriefing for the Director Christensen, and we are getting on track.

Discussion/Action for appointment to Library Board of Trustees. There is one candidate. Mayor Miller spoke in support of this candidate.

Motion by Alderman Hunsucker, second by Alderman Cates to approve the appointment of Helen Bingaman to the Library Board of Trustees.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action on 9th Annual Guns & Hoses Game between local law enforcement and the Conrad Volunteer Fire Department. This is scheduled for September 18, 2022. In the past the City has sponsored the game by waiving the use fee for the field and covering event insurance. Finance Officer Ritter will call MMIA on the insurance portion of the request.

Motion by Alderman Cates, second by Alderman Breeding to approve the 9th Annual Guns & Hoses Game pending approval of insurance.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action of MT Ag buy/sell request for Pondera Regional Port Authority (PRPA) to receive a 1% finder's fee on the sale of lots in the East Industrial Park. This has been standard practice in the past, due to the Port Authority facilitating the sale for the City. The facilitated sale of lot 4 (\$203,350) and lot 5 (\$187,600) to MT Ag totaling \$390,950 at 1% would be \$3,909.50 finder's fee to PRPA.

Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Hunsucker to approve 1% finder's fee of \$3,909.50 to PRPA pending the buy/sell agreement.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action on extending employee COVID pay. The City extended COVID pay through June 30, 2022, on Resolution 22-1261. John Calahan presented with recent cases of COVID in the Public Works Department and having to use sick leave. It is felt this is unfair because during the pandemic some employees did not use COVID pay, and others received the benefit of COVID pay. Discussion was had on new quarantine rules/regulations and how they have changed. The suggestion was made to contact MMIA and ask if there could be a set number of sick days for COVID, if COVID pay was not used before. Finance Officer Ritter will contact MMIA and see if that is a possibility.

Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Hunsucker to table the Discussion/Action on extending employee COVID pay to the next meeting pending more information.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Open Public Hearing on Preliminary Budget FY22-23.

Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Schoenrock to open the Public Hearing on Preliminary Budget FY22-23.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Finance Officer Ritter presented with budget worksheets separated by department with expenditures and revenues, cash report, debt owed and balances for CD's and STIP. This is a different process than previous years and brought many questions. The draft budget will remain open for public comment until the City Council's September 6, 2022, meeting, when the Council is to adopt the budget. The budget is retroactive from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. Also, presented by Finance Officer Ritter was the Mill Levy, 1 Mill Yields \$2,881.25 which is a slight increase from \$2,865.63 from last fiscal year. This is less than a 1% increase and complies with the Montana Department of Revenue. The current tax valuation is \$2,881,252 up from \$2,865,683 from last fiscal year. The current levied mills are 171.76 up from 165.86 from last fiscal year.

Discussion/Action of appointment to Police Commission. A letter of interest was submitted for the board opening on the Police Commission by Ashley Johnson. Johnson has strong skills and qualifications for this position. Mayor Miller is in support of and would like to recommend Johnson to the board.

Motion by Alderman Hunsucker, second by Alderman Cates to appoint Ashley Johnson to the Board of Police Commission.

Executive Session: None

Other Business:

Motion by Alderman Hunsucker, second by Alderman Cates to resurrect the tabled police car purchase and Pro Suite RMS System from the August 16, 2022, Council meeting.

Much discussion was had on the police car, whether it would be fully dressed and the necessity at the \$64,177 cost. This cost includes the car being fully dressed and operational. As for the Pro Suite RMS System, Chief Padilla has worked very hard to get the price down and we will be allotted a \$20,000 MT BCC grant to reduce the price to \$36,353.25. The update of this system will get the Police Department in compliance with XML, Department of Justice.

Motion by Alderman Cates, second by Alderman Schoenrock to purchase the new police car at \$64,177 and the Pro Suite RMS System for \$36,353.25.

Ayes: 3

Nays: 1

Motion Carried

Items to appear next: Request for City Budget at a separate meeting. COVID pay. Contest for a City logo.

Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Cates to adjourn at 7:25 p.m.

Motion Carried Unanimously



Mayor *Jemie Miller*

Attest:

Hay Putter

Finance Officer