

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 21, 2023

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 21, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Miller, Aldermen Cates, Breeding, Hunsucker, and Schoenrock; Patti Hutton, and Finance Officer Ritter. PWD Zimbelman and Kim Cooney present by phone.

Absent with permission: Police Chief Padilla

Guests present: Maria Cates, Daryll Burditt

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

Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Hunsucker to approve the minutes from the February 7, 2023, regular meeting, as presented.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Claims #27033 through #27057 (refer to the claims register).

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

Motion Carried Unanimously

Water contracts: None

Correspondence: Email from a citizen regarding concern for Honor Society students walking to the elementary school. These students are walking to the elementary school to participate in a "reading buddies" program with the elementary students. The two homes on the corner of Wisconsin Street and 3rd Avenue that do not shovel their sidewalks. The concern is for the children/students walking.

Pathway Committee sent in a thank you for the Genevieve Rankin Funds.

Public Comment:

Maria Cates commented on the dog park prospect; there is potential for the Port Authority to assist in helping manage funds. Rob Cook is out of the office, but will be notified of the request. A citizen has expressed to the mayor willingness to assist in a dog park project and could be contacted as well. Additionally, Mayor Miller reported the local hospital also recently inquired about helping with a community project and this might be a project they would like to participate in. Ms. Cates agreed to continue looking into the funding and possible other volunteers who might want to participate. Mayor Miller mentioned another local citizen is researching a Folf Course as an idea for the community. The Mayor is happy there is interest in progressing the town parks with ideas that encourages outdoor activity and community participation.

Maria Cates presented with a Pathway Committee update. According to Ms. Cates, there were four [4] attendees at their last meeting. The committee has the money to place an arbor over the Phyllis Phillips bench. Ms. Cates reported that they are looking into putting up more light poles and they will request permission from the school and 811 dig. A \$2100 grant was received from "100 Strong Women". A split rail fence between the pathway and a citizen's property running north-south to help separate pathway property is an idea the committee is also pursuing. It was reported by Ms. Cates the hospital foundation no longer wants the responsibility of the Pathway Committee on their 501c3. The Port Authority will be helping the committee obtain their own 501c3. \$20,000 was donated for sprinklers on the pathway and the committee is in the process of obtaining quotes for the water system. The committee needs a 4-wheeler to drag bed springs to help groom the pathway. Gophers and weeds along the pathway will need to be monitored and managed again this coming year. Mayor Miller said a citizen is inquiring about installing a Veteran's memorial and there's a possibility the pathway could be placed in contact with that person if at any point the pathway is considered for placement. Alderman Breeding asked if there is a right-of-way on the pathway. Discussion ensued if the old bike trail is on school property or not - the city owns the pathway thus there is probably an easement. (FO) Ritter and (PWD) Zimbelman will look into the easement.

Bid for City Engineer Contract

Mayor Miller presented with the Bid for City Engineer Contract. No action taken. Alderman Hunsucker asked about the evaluation criteria. Breeding asked if we only published it in the IO or if it should possibly be sent out to other engineering firms and/or the Tribune and wondered if Bid packets were sent out previously. Breeding mentioned that this should have been possibly been approved to send into publication. Mayor Miller said time was of the essence as the contract is due April 3rd and the process had to be started for proper publication. The process is new to the current city staff thus the bid was sent with the lift station bid schedule and was copied from Choteau's process. This is for discussion only, no action taken.

No Action Taken.

Water, Sewer, Garbage Rate Increases

Mayor Miller informed the Council that a decision is needed if a plan is to proceed with moving the water, sewer and garbage rates increases forward; a formal 'intent' will need to be published and decided at a future meeting. Mayor Miller said she did not receive responses or questions from Council after the last meeting, other than hearing of one Council member inquiring of the clerk with one question. Discussion continued about undetermined questions about some details is needed including if the plan is to increase summer and winter months water allowances (and time frame increased by one month) and/or if the plan would be to still base the averages on December, January, February and March. Ms. Cooney explained the question and that some people would possibly go up and some may be lower. If the city were to go with a "flat rate," that would change they the averages as well. Alderman Breeding explained sewer rates are based on Averages used for non-irrigation months. Discussion regarding averaging rates for commercial ensued; commercial properties are not averaged unless have irrigation. Residential properties are eligible.

Alderman Cates asked how the multiplier calculations climb for waterline diameter size and would like more information on this, especially regarding 1.5" lines. Finance Officer Ritter will review to ensure that the calculations are correct in the rate multiplier worksheets and check the multiplier on the 1 ½" line.

Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Hunsucker to approve moving forward with the rate increase process with the provision of additional numbers and calculations.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action Building Inspector Contract Termination

Mayor Miller would like to give 30-day notice for termination as an employee is pursuing this responsibility for the city. The mayor explained a meeting with the State to verify the process was done last week and it was confirmed the State offered class will be acceptable for meeting State certification requirements for a new building inspector. The State allows 6-months for a new inspector to complete the requirements. If the City were to default to State inspectors, the State only supports commercial inspections and not residential. The intent is to move the city employee into the role of building inspector.

Motion by Alderman Hunsucker, second by Alderman Breeding to terminate the building inspector contract for Inspection Services XI, LLC.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Northern Transit Interlocal (NTI) yearly commitment of funds. This is a free service. An example of their services is dropping off at the Great Falls bus station for public transport, as well as drop off and pick up individuals for medical appointments. The service is free/a donation service, to citizens in the community. Mayor Miller expressed gratitude for having this service offered in the community.

Motion by Alderman Hunsucker, second by Alderman Cates commit \$5,000.00 to NTI from the City Funds for FY23-24 budget.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action Water/Wastewater Operator II/Building Inspector Stipend for Building Inspector Duties

Mayor Miller is asking for a stipend of \$600.00/month for the building inspector duties. March will be prorated at \$300.00, with Keith Thaut starting the building inspector duties on March 17th. The mayor also stated that the stipend will be increased by \$100/mos. for the next FY (\$700.00 a month). Mr. Thaut will have to attend Rural water Conference and complete the certification classes. The requirements will have to be met within 6-months to continue in the position.

Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Hunsucker to approve the additional \$600.00/month stipend and March being prorated at \$300.00/mos. and increasing to \$700.00/mos. as of July 1, 2023 for the building inspector duties.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Executive session, if necessary: None

Other business: None

Items to appear on next agenda: BSV Reserve Fund Surplus Letter (if applicable), Chief of Police Department Report and Library Report.

There being no further business to come before the Council, motion by Alderman Hunsucker, second by Alderman Breeding to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.



Motion Carried Unanimously

Mayor

Jamie Miller

Attest:

Nathan Hunsucker

*Finance Officer

*Council President in lieu of