

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 7, 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 March 7th, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Miller; Aldermen Cates, Breeding, and Hunsucker, PWD Zimbelman; Chief Padilla; Library Director Christensen; and Patti Hutton, Payroll Clerk

Absent with permission: Alderman Schoenrock

Guests present: 1

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

Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Cates to approve the minutes from the February 21, 2023, regular meeting, as presented.

Motion Carried Unanimously

Claims #27058 through #27097 (refer to the claims register).

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

Motion Carried Unanimously

Water contracts: None

Correspondence: Mayor presented a handout from the MMIA Executive Forum Conference in Helena as well as a memorandum from MMIA for the early employee benefits rate adjustment indication for 2023-2024.

Public Comment: None

Library Director Christensen presented the 2023 January and February monthly reports. Library visits and program attendance was up in January. In February the visits were lower than the previous year but overall circulation was up for both months. New programs have been implemented: a monthly digital resources class, a fiber arts meet-up group, and Cowboy Academy monthly visits on public school early out days. Meeting spaces at the library may be available for reservation (please schedule in advance). An employee has become a Notary Public; the library offers this service free of charge. Nelson Architects has provided contract for services in preparing a Preliminary Architectural Report (PAR) for the Library building with the Conrad Public Library listed as the Owner of the Project. Any future planning/construction decisions and documents will include the City of Conrad as the owner of the building. Shelby Glass will be evaluating the back door of the Library; Director Christensen will call PWD Zimbelman at that time.

Director Christensen also reported on the March 2, Growth Policy Committee meeting. Stahly Engineering provided draft copies of the Table

of Contents for the Pondera County and the City of Conrad Growth Policies; The Growth Policy Fact Sheet; Public Involvement Plan; and the Growth Policy Survey. The documents were reviewed and edited by the committee. A final draft of the Growth Policy Fact Sheet will be available for committee members to disperse to the public. Information from the Sweetgrass Economic Development Survey will be utilized, but the committee felt an additional survey would be beneficial. The committee survey be made available soon online and hard copies provided at several public locations throughout Conrad and Pondera County.

Public Works Director (PWD) Zimbelman presented the February 2023 report. The city received 20 new dumpsters and will be restoring rusted dumpsters as time allows. There has been more interest in bidding for the lift station. The heater/air exchanger at the wastewater facility has been having issues; Public works is looking into building a shelter for the system as it is currently exposed to weather elements; Keith passed his Building Inspector test and will be out for training next week. Two employees will be attending the annual water conference in Great Falls. There have been several pipes in residential buildings freeze up and break this winter.

Finance Report: In lieu of a Finance Officer, the Mayor reported on the Audit for FY 22/23. Overall the audit was good with some non-significant findings received. Another town clerk advised the Mayor that the findings were not major and some items have been already completed. Upon the auditor learning of the resignation of the Finance Officer, one finding was upgraded to a more significant 'Internal Control' finding. Another town Clerk did advise that the outstanding balancing needs to be addressed as soon as possible and made some suggestions on how to accomplish this. Alderman Breeding asked if this was a good place in the agenda to talk about the Finance Officers resignation, and her exit interview. The Mayor suggested this discussion could occur in "Other Business" later in the agenda.

Chief Padilla presented the January and February 2023 activity reports for the Police Department. The number of service calls in January was approximately 227 with 4 arrests, 4 alarms, 3 assaults/harassments, 5 burglary/thefts/shoplifting incidents, 4 child abuse/endangerment reports, 1 court orders/civil papers, 9 criminal mischief/trespass/vandalism, 9 domestic incidents, 3 lost/found property, 20 medical emergencies, 3 noise/nuisance complaints, 4 suicide/mental health calls and 13 suspicious activity/vehicles. In February approximately 180 calls for service were reported to PCSO Dispatch and /or Conrad Police Department. There were 7 arrests, 3 alarms, 8 assaults/harassment 3 burglary/theft/shoplifting, 3 child abuse/endangerment, 1 court order/civil papers, 5 criminal mischief/trespassing/vandalism, 6 domestic incidents, 14 medical emergencies, 5 noise/nuisance complaints, 7 suicide/mental health calls and 8 suspicious activity/vehicles calls.

Discussion about water/sewer rate increases. An update on the process was provided by the Mayor. The auditor noted we are expending more than revenue received in this area which has escalated the need to assess an increase soon however a bit more time is now needed to answer the outstanding questions in this area. The discussions will continue and an intent to publish/pursue the increases is being deferred for a bit until the City has some stability with a Financial Clerk in place.

Discussion Alderman Breeding asked about an exit interview for the Finance Officer. Mayor stated that if the Council wanted to do one that they

should. The Mayor offered to post the public notifications and/or assist with the process.

Executive session, if necessary: None

Other business: upcoming aldermen elections were reviewed as this will require an election process. Information from Kodi Farkell, election clerk, was shared. Aldermen Hunsucker and Schoenrock were reminded that their seats are up for re-election. The Mayor informed council downtown sidewalks will continue to be assessed for need of repair and the Public Works Director will be working on evaluating this along with the Mayor. The Mayor discussed training opportunities with MMIA and/or the MT City of Leagues and Towns and suggested Council could attend any upcoming events. The potential need for more training on issues or trends in our town/other towns would be helpful for our group. The training opportunities is something the Mayor would like to pursue in the future.

Items to appear on next agenda: Tabled items, if applicable and ready to be added to the agenda.

There being no further business to come before the Council, motion by Alderman Hunsucker, second by Alderman Cates to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

Motion Carried Unanimously



Mayor Jamie Miller

Attest:

Nathan Hunsucker

*Finance Officer

**Council President to sign in lieu of Finance Officer at this time*