



**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 JULY 11, 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 July 11, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Jamie Miller; Aldermen: Nathan Hunsucker, Karla Breeding, David Cates and Amber Schoenrock; Police Chief Ernie Padilla; Public Works Director David Zimbelman; Library Director Tiffany Christensen; Payroll Clerk Patti Hutton; Building Inspector/Water-Waste Water Operator Keith Thaut; Maintenance Worker Jim Aiken.

Absent: 0

Guests present: 6

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

- Motion by Alderman Schoenrock, second by Alderman Breeding to Approve Minutes of the June 20, 2023 Regular Meeting.
  - Motion Carried Unanimously

Claims #27307 through #27363 (refer to the claims register)

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

Water Contract: None

Correspondence: None

Public Comment: (no action taken): Alderman Breeding reported that Representative Llew Jones asked her to share that the Department of Commerce is looking to put electric vehicle charging stations at Courtesy Ford.

City of Conrad Department Reports:

a. Police Department

Chief Padilla reported 254 calls for service in June 2023. 1 arrest was made, 5 alarms, 11 burglary/thefts/shoplifting, 2 child abuse/criminal endangerment reports, 12 criminal mischief/trespass, 10 domestic calls, 3 lost/found, 11 medical emergencies, at the end of June we had 10 noise complaints, most of those calls were dogs barking and a few fireworks, 6 mental health calls, and 24 suspicious activity/vehicles reports. The PD responded to 5 wanted/ missing persons calls, 25 citizen assists, 4 civil standbys, 12 informational calls, 5 vehicle lockouts, 2 vin inspections, 15 welfare checks, 6 juvenile complaints, 8 accidents, 24 animal calls.

b. Public Works

Director Zimbelman reported the east side lift station's electronics had some damage during the mid- June storms. Kronebusch Electric was able to get them running again but they are not running as well as they should be. Parts to start on the new lift station are still out 2-3 months. Mailing the sewer samples to Helena and getting them there on time has been difficult, which is common for this time of year. Shipping E-coli samples requires that it get to a laboratory within a 24-hour time frame. Dave is researching in house

testing and the potential money it could save as the testing currently costs \$239.00 to send a weekly sample. The initial cost of the equipment would be more upfront but could be a savings over time thus the PWD will do some calculations to see how long it would take to pay for the equipment. The Public Works crew helped with setting up for the All-Star Baseball Tournament and some urgent areas of concern at the ballfields were addressed prior to the tournament: the leaning backstop was straightened and secured, 16 loads of half-inch gravel and 3 loads of pea gravel were brought in, 5 additional 3-yard dumpsters along with the 4 1.5-yard dumpsters were brought over, for example. Additionally, most of the leaks in the ballfield irrigation system have been fixed but there is still more to do. The Public Works Department had a surprise inspection from the Department of Labor and Industries even though the last one done was in March of 2022. The inspection went well with only one violation: the finding was regarding putting the safety tips on the air wands to control air flow better which has been done. There were a few other minor violations that have already fixed. The supplies for chip sealing have been ordered and will start next month. The city crew will start doing patches this week. The swimming pool had an inspection and passed. The Building Inspector has been very busy. The Pathway committee is planning on putting a 3-foot-tall decorative fence for a stretch of 200 feet; they will get a permit and have asked for assistance with digging the holes. The contract for the Northern Montana Joint Refuse Disposal District should be evaluated for an update.

c. Library

Library Director Christensen reported the library had 1,402 visits in the Month of June, and 2,506 items circulated. They held 11 programs which attracted 138 attendees. The computers were utilized by 307 people and the Wi-Fi was accessed 20,193 times. New hours started July 10<sup>th</sup>. The library will be closed on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and be open on Saturdays from 10:00am-2:00pm. There will be three Saturday craft days and three general operating Saturdays before school starts. Anna Pollard's Library Board Trustee term ended on June 30, 2023. Applications are being accepted to fill this Mayor-appointed position.

Discussion/Action: Employee Wages

Mayor Miller mentioned that our city police officer's wages are low in comparison to what the county is hiring at for a starting wage. Chief Padilla reported that Hardin, MT wage the starting wage is at \$24.00/hr. while Manhattan is \$25.76/hr. and Cut Bank is \$19.96/hr. up to \$24.05/hr. and a sign on bonus with post certification. Public Works Director Dave Zimbelman stated that the wages for his department are also low compared to other communities. Alderman Hunsucker stated that health insurance went up about \$0.38 hr. which is about 2%; a wage increase of \$1.10 hr. for employees would be around a 7% increase.

- Motion by Alderman Hunsucker, second by Alderman Cates, to approve a \$1.10/hour cost-of-living increase for all permanent employees effective as of July 1<sup>st</sup> 2023.
  - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action: Library MOU

- The Library MOU was not available in time for the meeting. Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Hunsucker, to table the Library MOU.
  - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action: Financial Service Agreement Amendment. Montana League of Cities and Towns provided a solution to help in the interim of hiring a finance officer. The agreement is for a contracted person to help us at the rate of \$50.00 hr. for up to \$6,000.00. The priorities are submission of the AFR, to bring balancing up to date as we had not been balanced since July of last year, and to assist with the budget preparations.

- Motion by Alderman Hunsucker, second by Alderman Breeding, to approve the Montana League of Cities and Towns Financial Service Agreement Amendment for a total of \$6,000.00 (per the contract amendment terms).
  - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion: Agenda Request

Ms. Karen Burditt requested a discussion about placing a disc golf (folf) course at Legion Park. Ms. Burditt explained that while at a Special Olympics in Great Falls, she was introduced to disc golf. She commented that there are activities for the younger kids to do at the park but not much for the older kids or adults. Mrs. Burditt has been in contact with Shane Knott from Electric City Disc Golf Club in Great Falls and he would be willing to help design and possibly install a course locally. Mrs. Burditt is willing to start fundraising for the project, if needed, however permission to use the Legion Park and/or a combination of the Legion Park and the Swimming Pool Park is needed first. PWD Dave Zimbelman was concerned that with the size of the park and mentioned someone could get hit with a disc. The Mayor Miller and Alderman Cates mentioned there may be other locations in town to consider, if not the park, as this would be a nice feature to the town. Mayor Miller recommended asking Mr. Knott or someone from the Great Falls group be asked to visit Conrad to help evaluate the proposed park to let us know if this area and/or another location would work for installing a course.

Discussion/Action: Cornhole Tournament Request for Legion Park

- Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Schoenrock to approve the use of the Legion Park for the Cornhole Tournament on July 13, 2023, with insurance for the event provided.
  - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action: Conrad Youth Soccer Request for Use of Baseball Fields #3 & #4 August 21<sup>st</sup> through Sept 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

- Motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Hunsucker, to approve the request by Conrad Youth Soccer Program to use the Baseball Fields during this time, provided the associated agreement is reviewed by Council beforehand.
  - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action: Pondera Arts Council Request to Use Swimming Pool Park (Shakespeare in the Park).

- Motion by Alderman Schoenrock, second by Alderman Breeding to approve the request by the Pondera Arts Council to use the SW corner of the Swimming Pool Park on Saturday August 26<sup>th</sup> for Shakespeare in the Park.
  - Motion Carried Unanimously

Executive Session: None

Other Business: Blue Sky Villa (BSV) Committee Update

The city BSV committee met last week with City Attorney Jones to review the letter received from Horizon Lodge Inc. with their proposal of lease terms. The committee determined the rate increase proposed is too low, based on inflation costs, and an increased amount is planned to be proposed in response. There was discussion regarding changing the lease terms to a triple net lease but with some parameters included in regards to inspections, reporting, and maintenance expectations. Attorney Jones is working on drafting a response letter.

Items to Appear on Next/Future Agenda: Library MOU

Meeting Adjourned:

There being no further business to come before the council, motion by Alderman Breeding, second by Alderman Schoenrock, to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

- Motion Carried Unanimously

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Mayor *Jamie Nulle*

Attest:

*Kathie Hurson*  
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\*Finance Officer

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

