

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF CONRAD, COUNTY OF PONDERA, STATE OF MONTANA
HELD AT CONRAD CITY HALL ON DECEMBER 17th, 2024**

The City Council of the City of Conrad, County of Pondera, State of Montana, met in regular session at Conrad City Hall on Tuesday, December 17th, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor David Cates, Alderman Amber Schoenrock, Alderman Carrie Doty, Alderman Karla Breeding, Alderman Darryl Burditt, Billing Clerk/Treasurer Kim Cooney, City Clerk Megan Werner

Absent: None

Guests: McKenzie Graye

Teleconference Guests:

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

Action: Read and approve minutes of the December 3rd, 2024 regular council meeting

- Motion by Alderman Breeding, Second by Alderman Schoenrock, to approve the minutes of the December 3rd, 2024 regular meeting as presented
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Action on any Claims:

Claims: #28585-28600, 28604-28615

- Motion by Alderman Doty, Second by Alderman Burditt, to approve the claims, as presented
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

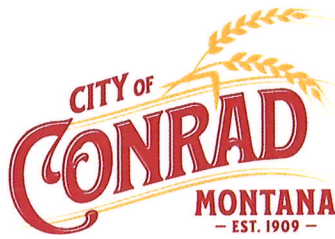
Action on Water Contracts: Transfer of water contract for 44 Prairie Park Lane from JC & Lucy Prewett to Ronald and Juanita Prewett

- Motion by Alderman Breeding, Second by Alderman Doty, to approve the transfer of JC & Lucy Prewett's water contract at 44 Prairie Park Lane to Ronald and Juanita Prewett
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Correspondence:

The Mayor noted that the City has received money donated in memory of Jeff Sutherland for the Splash Park and Park and Rec. So far, there's a total of \$980 Most are smaller donations, but they add up.

Public Comment (no action taken): None



Departmental reports:

Police Department – The Mayor read the November report, noting that Chief Smith has been very busy this month and unable to report in person (see attached report).

Mayor Cates pointed out the Situation Report which discusses the crime of Deliberate Homicide believed to have occurred in Conrad on or about November 21st, 2024. The Conrad PD has been working diligently with Montana DCI to investigate the incident. An arrest has been made based on various pieces of evidence.

The investigation has consumed a large amount of CPD's time, and that of multiple agencies involved. It has now moved from the Great Falls landfill to the Valier landfill. Cascade County has been very helpful in the investigation and has loaned the City use of their mobile command center and drones free of charge. The Mayor noted that one City officer is out sick, leaving three to handle the investigation, so they are very busy.

Discussion/Action: Budget Amendment Resolution 25-1315

- Motion by Alderman Schoenrock, Second by Alderman Breeding, to close the public hearing on Resolution 25-1315 Budget Amendment
 - Motion Carried Unanimously
- Motion by Alderman Breeding, Second by Alderman Doty, to approve Resolution 25-1315 Budget Amendment, as presented
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action: Free use of Norley Hall for Pondera Health Care Foundation annual fundraiser Friday, January 31st through Sunday, February 2nd, 2024

Horizon Lodge has made the facility available for the times and dates requested.

- Motion by Alderman Doty, Second by Alderman Burditt, to approve free use of Norley Hall for the Pondera Health Care Foundation annual fundraiser Friday, January 31st through Sunday, February 2nd, 2024
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion: Potential costs for assistance with ongoing investigation with Cascade County Sheriff's Office

Mayor Cates has been in communication with Cascade County Sherriff Jesse Slaughter. He met yesterday with the Sherriff and people from all other agencies involved with the investigation. All participating agencies are giving the City their time for free. They have only asked Conrad to pay for external costs, such as equipment to search the landfills (graders, excavators). Labor is not being



charged. Sherriff Slaughter said the total for 8 days of excavation in Great Falls would be approximately \$20-40K, but nothing has been invoiced yet. Mayor Cates received a memo from the Pondera County Undersherriff yesterday about the cost for using the same equipment in Valier. The cost is approximately \$2400/day for another 4 days, so the City should expect an additional \$9600 invoiced from the Pondera County Sherriff's Department.

Alderman Breeding asked why the City of Conrad might be responsible for costs when no one knows what really happened. The Mayor stated that since no body has been found, it's technically a missing person's case. If a body is found, most of the cost will go to the Sherriff's Department, but he wanted to bring this up to Council as a potential burden. As of yesterday, Sherriff Slaughter's Finance Department only had \$15K to invoice to the City, and the Mayor must approve everything before it's paid.

The Mayor said DCI has actually been heading up the investigation. They have forensic capabilities which the City does not. The Cascade County Sherriff's Department has a lot of "toys" that can help with the investigation, as well. This is just an "FYI." There's still some question over who has the ultimate responsibility for the investigation and cost. Right now, it looks like the City will be stuck with some costs. Further discussion.

Mayor Cates clarified that because the crime was first reported in Conrad, the City may be responsible for paying some costs, even though leads took the investigation outside CPD's jurisdiction.

The Mayor said this sort of thing is not budgeted, but there is money to pay for it, according to Financial Officer Rogers. He will keep Council updated as he learns more. He reiterated that there are a lot of moving parts to consider.

Alderman Doty said she visited with Sherriff Jesse Slaughter and he was very complimentary to Chief Smith and Officer Christiaens. She wanted to share that on record.

Executive Session: None

Other Business:

Alderman Breeding will likely miss the February 4th meeting in person, though she may call in.

Alderman Doty asked when Sherriff Slaughter will have invoices in.

The Mayor expressed gratitude for what the Cascade County Sherriff's Department and other agencies are providing for CPD.

Items to Appear on the Next Agenda:

None

There being no further business to come before the Council,



- Motion by Alderman Breeding, Second by Alderman Schoenrock, to adjourn the meeting at 6:22 p.m.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

A blue ink signature of David Cates, written in a cursive style, positioned above a horizontal line.

Mayor, David Cates

Attest A blue ink signature of Amber Schoenrock, written in a cursive style, positioned above a horizontal line.
Council President, Amber Schoenrock

