

**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 April 4, 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 April 4, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Miller; Aldermen: David Cates, Nathan Hunsucker, Karla Breeding and Amber Schoenrock; Public Works Director Dave Zimbelman; Chief of Police Ernest Padilla; and Library Director Christensen.

Absent: 0

Guests present: 2

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 March 21, 2023 regular meeting with a correction (typo in Ms. Schoenrock's name on page 2) and the March 24, 2023 special meeting.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Claims #27118 through 27148 (refer to the claims register)

- Motion by Alderman Schoenrock, second by Alderman Cates to approve the claims, as presented.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Water Contract: None

Correspondence: Letter to the Mayor dated 3/28/23 from Mr. Durnell was read.

Public Comment (was presented by a guest at the end of the meeting): Warden Bludworth from CoreCivic – Crossroads Correctional Center explained that he was here on behalf of CoreCivic to build a relationship with the community. The correctional facility in Shelby is a job resource and offers other resources to communities such as a K9 training location, can be a resource in times of tragedy (e.g. the train derailment where bedding and/or hygiene products were provided), financial investments and donations to community projects, or volunteering time with local projects. CoreCivic is reaching out to communities nearby in hopes of building a resource for one another, including housing needed for employees and other areas of community involvement. Mr. Bludworth offered a tour of the facility to Council and the Mayor. Mr. Bludworth also asked for the possibility of being present on the agenda again in the future. Council and the Mayor thanked him for his time and for building this connection with the City.

Library Director Report: Ms. Christensen presented the Conrad Public Library Report including the March statistics (1,248 library visits, 2,290 items circulated, which is the highest since Covid, 25 programs holding strong, and more). Nelson architects has started working on the PAR (Preliminary Architecture Report) and held a kick-off meeting, and completed a walk-through of the facility. The plumbing has been scoped and existing plans are being drawn up. The report is expected to be complete in September or October. The Library Board is in the process of creating a Strategic Plan to comply with new Montana Public Library Standards. They are asking for feedback from organizations and leaders to help assess how the library might better serve us/the community. Mayor Miller requested an emailed copy from Ms. Christensen for distribution to Council members. A library employee has resigned and this position will be posted soon. The library is hosting the Growth Policy meeting on Thursday, April 13th at 6:00 pm at the library and all are invited to participate (public included).

Public Works Director Report: Public Works Director Zimbelman presented his report dated April 4, 2023. He and another employee attended the annual rural water conference in Great Falls. Frost is coming out of the ground thus

there is visible frost heaving out of the ground. He is working with the engineer on the upcoming lift station and splash park projects, both projects are moving forward. The department is cleaning sand from winter. The department is advertising a public works position but has not received applications as of yet. He is working with an asphalt company to replace asphalt areas around town, especially in the areas affected by water leaks. He has been receiving questions about Tom's Station area on Main Street in regards to a clean-up project for a potential purchaser that require digging into 3rd Avenue and would then need asphalt, curb, and gutter replacements. Met with the Mayor and the Splash Park Committee this week to review updates on the project. The department is getting spring recreation projects going; the power is turned on at the ballfields. The ballfield 4-wheeler was evaluated and is more expensive to fix than the value of its worth. He is proposing moving the department 4-wheeler to the ballfields and the city purchasing a cabbed side-by-side. The side-by-side would help with snow removal as well as allow for improved cleaning of the ice-skating rink. It could also be used in summer months for emptying walking trail maintenance and weed spraying. The cost of the side-by-side will be ~\$25,000 and can be off-set by other ways, including possibly placing some equipment in surplus.

Police Chief Report: Chief Padilla reported approximately 204 calls for service in March, 10 alarms (mostly due to weather), 16 medical emergencies, 22 suspicious activities (including increased activity at the rest area), 17 citizens assist, 14 welfare checks (mostly related to weather), 19 traffic stops in March, assisted other agencies including MHP (2), Sherriff's Office (6), Fire Department (12), and other agencies. Animal Control calls were 13 for dogs. Applications for the police department openings have been reviewed and two candidates are in the interview process.

Discussion/Action: Alderman Cates has requested to leave town for greater than 10 days.

- Motion by Alderman Breeding, seconded by Alderman Schoenrock, to approve Mr. Cates request for an absence.
 - Motion Carried (Alderman Cates abstained from voting)

Discussion/Action: A Conrad Park and Rec Use Agreement for Ballfields was presented for the term of April 1, 2023 through August 31, 2023. A small change from last year was noted in section #12 ("Concession Stand").

- Motion by Alderman Breeding and second by Alderman Cates to approve the presented Park and Rec "City of Conrad Sports Complex Lease Agreement"
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action: A Conrad Highschool Baseball Complex Use Agreement for the Ballfields was presented for the term of April 1, 2023 through May 31, 2023. It was noted the group began using the fields in March and did not present an agreement for approval by the City prior to this. Alderman Breeding asked the school be reminded to obtain approval prior to using the ballfields in the future. The format of the document did change from the prior year to

- Motion by Alderman Schoenrock, seconded by Alderman Hunsucker, to approve the Baseball Complex Lease Agreement with the dates presented, with a request be made for approval of an agreement being in place in the future, prior to start of the season/using the field, and with verification from MMIA the proper insurance is in place.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action (Agenda Items #11 and #12): A letter from Attorney Gary Bjelland regarding the Blue Sky Villa (BSV) facility (on behalf of Horizon Lodge Garden Apartments, Inc.) was presented and reviewed with Council. The letter provided by the attorney is in a more acceptable format in terms of the reporting of the surplus funds and capital improvements (although it was noted the letter also includes lease agreement discussion). The City's BSV Committee met last week agreed this letter format is more acceptable and provided the information that the City requested. Surplus funds as of May 31, 2022 were reported as a balance of \$293,502.56. Capital improvements completed to date were reported. Capital improvements planned/pending are: Antifreeze Solution for Boiler in Building 300 (\$3,500.00), Estimated cost of replacing parts in each of 18 units in Building 300 (\$36,000.00), Replace Driveway #3 FD (Bid amount -\$2,200.00), and Replace 2 Additional Driveways, sidewalks (estimation cost,

awaiting bid - \$15,000.00) was also provided. The letter requests "...no surplus funds need to be paid to the City of Conrad pursuant to the Lease" with taking into consideration the reinvestment of surplus funds in capital improvements already done and those projected to be done.

- Motion by Alderman Cates and seconded by Alderman Breeding to approve Blue Sky Villa's (known as Horizon Lodge Garden Apartments, Inc.) proposed Capital Improvements.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously
- Motion by Alderman Cates, seconded by Alderman Schoenrock, to approve Blue Sky Villa's (known as Horizon Lodge Garden Apartments, Inc.) request that no surplus funds be paid to the City of Conrad, from the balance reported at the fiscal year ending May 31, 2022.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action: Montana State University Extension Office Farmer's Market Use Agreement was presented to Council by Mr. Severson. Mr. Severson explained he had surveyed a local group for location, time, and day options with the majority choosing Tuesday from 4-7 pm at Legion Park; concerns of advertising and getting the word out were mentioned by the polled group. The request was made for use of Legion Park on Tuesday afternoon's from 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm beginning June (day to be determined) to August (day to be determined) in 2023. The charge will be again \$1.00 a time or \$10.00 for the season. The group was not interested in hosting a Saturday Farmer's Market.

- Motion by Alderman Breeding, seconded by Alderman Schoenrock, to approve signing the MSU Extension Office Farmer's Market Use Agreement pending finalization of the dates be identified in the agreement.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action: Mayor request for approval of a city managed Farmer's Market, as was requested/approved in the year prior, to be held on Saturdays from 08:00 am to 12:00 pm (with set-up/tear down 30 min prior/after) on 4th Street (in front of the Orpheum), starting May 24, 2023 to a date to be determined in September, 2023. No payment for vendor participation is being taken. MMIA confirmed last year the City carries an event insurance policy and insurance coverage for this event was confirmed at that time. A Vendor's Application was reviewed. The business' on this street last year were in agreement. Volunteers identified will be reviewed with MMIA for insurance purposes.

- Motion by Alderman Cates, seconded by Alderman Breeding, to approve the Mayor's request for a Saturday Farmer's Market starting May 24th to a day in September (weather permitting date to be determined).
 - Vote: In favor = 3; Opposed = 1 (Alderman Hunsucker)

Discussion/Action: MMIA Employee Benefits (Insurance) Plan – Group Enrollment for Employee Benefits was presented for the upcoming year, noting a 9% medical rate adjustment. The majority of employees are currently on the Mission Plan. Discussion ensued on the current plan covered by the City and what was previously approved by Council for employee insurance coverage in comparison to what is currently being covered by the City. Questions about differences in covered costs were noted and discussed. More information and/or clarifications was determined to be needed before a decision could be made.

- Motion by Alderman Hunsucker, seconded by Alderman Breeding, to table this decision pending clarifications
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action: A new Town Revitalization Committee and Member Appointment was presented by the Mayor. The Mayor explained the intent is to form a committee to help the City be prepared for different grant options that might help improve the town, determine how, what, and where to progress the town. The areas the committee could evaluate are priorities in beautification, theming, areas to bring life to the town, and/or how to build-up like other towns in the State have (e.g. Philipsburg). She explained this was mentioned on her personal Facebook page and quite a few people voiced interest in participating. The Growth Policy is currently being revisited thus assessing areas the town could be revitalized is important to consider. The request is to appoint one person to the Committee, Mary Klette, who is also participating in the Growth Policy, with additional members to be brought to Council in the future.

- Motion by Alderman Breeding, seconded by Alderman Cates, to approve the Mayor's request for a new Town Revitalization Committee and approve the appointment of Mary Klette.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion: A Splash Park Committee update was provided. A committee meeting was held with the engineer this week to review the proposed plan and review challenging areas, such as the bathrooms and fencing around the pad. There will need to be some construction to lock the front window, access to the lifeguard centered area, new locks to the pool deck doors, and operations on how to keep the splash pad open when the pool is closed, etc. The goal is to have the splash park open sometime this summer, hopefully in time for use before the season ends. The next steps are finalizing the drawings, approval by the State Health Department, looking at the funding, and a few other steps before the project can be started.

Executive Session: None

Other Business:

- A Blue Sky Villa committee meeting update in regards to the lease agreement was discussed. Council was informed the BSV group agreed to use their fiscal year reporting period going forward to eliminate confusion with reporting dates. Discussion was held on moving to a 5-year lease agreement. Other lease terms are now with the BSV group for them to respond.
- Black Mountain Software Cloud Hosting quote was reviewed with Council. The plan is present this as a request to Council at the next meeting as it is being advised, for improved back-up purposes, us to move to a cloud-based system. This will also allow the onboarding temp clerk to work remotely from our system. Choteau is on the Black Mountain Cloud and is pleased with this service.

Items to appear on next agenda: MMIA Employee Benefits; Black Mountain Software Cloud Hosting

Items tabled at prior meetings/ongoing and/or to be added to future agenda: Water, Sewer, Garbage Rate Increases.

There being no further business to come before the council, motion by Alderman Hunsucker, seconded by Alderman Schoenrock, to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

- Motion Carried Unanimously



Mayor Jamie Miller

Attest:

Matt Hunsucker

*Finance Officer

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