

Mayor:
David Cates

City Council:
Amber Schoenrock
Carrie Doty
Karla Breeding
Darryl Burditt



City of Conrad
413 S. Main St.
Conrad, MT 59425
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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 JULY 23rd, 2026

The City Council of the City of Conrad, County of Pondera, State of Montana, met in regular session at Conrad City Hall on Thursday, July 23rd, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor David Cates, Alderman Amber Schoenrock, Alderman Darryl Burditt, Alderman Karla Breeding, Alderman Carrie Doty (remotely), Police Chief Andy Lund, Finance Officer Jodi Rogers, Library Director Tiffany Christensen, Administrative Clerk Julie Orcutt, City Clerk Jerad Walston.

Absent: None

Guests: Fire Chief Kevin Moritz, Karen Burditt

Teleconference Guests: McKenzie Graye, Michael Miller

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

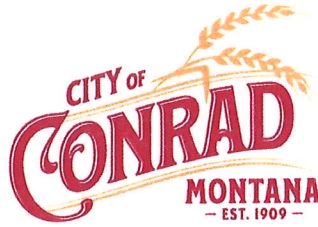
1. Action: Read and approve minutes of July 7th, 2026, regular council meeting.
 - Motion by Alderman Amber Schoenrock, Second by Alderman Darryl Burditt, to approve the minutes of the July 7th, 2026, regular meeting, as presented.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously
2. Action on any Claims and Payroll:

Claims: 29914-29951
Total: \$300,339.82

 - Motion by Alderman Karla Breeding, Second by Alderman Amber Schoenrock, to approve the claims as presented.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously
3. Action on Water Contracts:
 - Motion by Alderman Karla Breeding, Second by Amber Schoenrock, to approve a Single Use Rural Water Permit at 115 Union Lane.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously
4. Correspondence: None
5. Public Comment (no action taken):

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- Fire Chief Kevin Moritz of the volunteer fire department proposed purchasing a new 2026 fire truck for \$515,000 to replace aging equipment and maintain the department's high ISO rating.
- The total cost would reach \$531,000 including a cold weather kit and air pack modifications. The department is offering \$104,000 in personal funds and asks the city to finance the remaining \$300,000, aiming to secure the vehicle before a significant price increase due to future emission regulations.

6. Department Reports:

- **Public Library**
 - Library Director Tiffany Christensen reported on library activity for June, and welcomed a new assistant, Riley Reynolds, to the library. Tiffany also noted the library had completed its dinosaur-themed summer reading and are preparing to host a face painting booth at National Night Out.
 - Additionally, solar panel paperwork is progressing smoothly with Bozeman Greenbuild, and major construction is complete aside from ongoing plans to move an exterior downspout inside the wall of the historic building.
- **Finance Officer**
 - Finance Officer Jodi Rogers reported that the preliminary municipal budget is currently underway with basic expenses like insurance included, though key details such as salaries, loan payments, and building code adjustments are still missing.
 - Tax revenue is expected to see a stable but modest increase because the state's inflation cap rose from 2.11% to 2.97%, though new residential construction will now only be taxed at 75% instead of 100%. While the preliminary figures have been shared for casual review, final state valuation numbers are expected on the first Monday of August.
 - Jodi strongly recommends waiting until the second council meeting in August to open the public hearing on the preliminary budget, allowing adequate time to input the final data before official passage in September.

7. Discussion/Action: Megan Martin's request for Youth Soccer at fields 3 & 4 at the sports complex.

- Motion by Alderman Amber Schoenrock, Second by Alderman Karla Breeding, to approve Megan Martin's request for Youth Soccer at fields 3 & 4 at the sports complex.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

8. Discussion/Action: COLA Raise.

- Finance Officer Jodi Rogers and Administrative Clerk Julie Orcutt presented cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for regular employee wages, comparing proposed increases of 3%, 3.5% (approx. \$32,000 total), and 4% (approx. \$37,000 total) before adding stipends or overtime.

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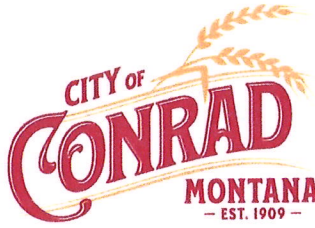


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- Budgeting is aided by a minimal 3% rise in health insurance premiums, though public works staff insurance must be paid from separate enterprise funds rather than permissive levies. Union employees are also in the second year of a contract providing a \$1.00 per hour raise plus longevity pay.
 - Motion by Alderman Carrie Doty, Second by Alderman Darryl Burditt, to approve a 3.5% COLA increase for fiscal year 2026-2027.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously
9. Discussion/Action: Library Director Tiffany Christensen's request to recommend the appointment of Karen Berg to the Library Board of Trustees.
- To fill a vacancy left by departing trustee Glenda McKeone, Library Director Tiffany Christensen recommended appointing Karen Berg to the library board from among three candidates that had submitted letters of interest.
 - Motion by Alderman Amber Schoenrock, Second by Alderman Karla Breeding, to approve the appointment of Karen Berg to the Library Board of Trustees.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously
10. Discussion/Action: Karen Burditt's Request re Disk Golf
- Karen Burditt presented a preliminary layout for the proposed "Cougar Course" disc golf facility, designed carefully around the available property's space constraints. If approved, the course will feature a \$1,600 cougar statue donated by Tilleras Nursery to serve as an obstacle or a starting marker on the course.
 - Motion by Alderman Karla Breeding, Second by Alderman Amber Schoenrock, to approve Karen Burditt's request for the proposed "Cougar Course", as outlined in the preliminary layout diagram.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously
11. Discussion/Action: Triple Tree/Veola Water Technologies Proposal Water Treatment Plant upgrade.
- Mayor David Cates outlined a proposed inspection by Veola Water Technologies for \$4,050 to determine if specific components can be replaced instead of rebuilding the entire system. This inspection, which could save the city thousands of dollars, will be fully funded through an existing grant with no out-of-pocket costs for the municipality.
 - Motion by Alderman Amber Schoenrock, Second by Alderman Darryl Burditt, to approve Veola Water Technology to inspect the City of Conrad Water Treatment Plant and provide upgrade recommendations.
 - Motion Carried Unanimously
12. Discussion: IRS Mileage rate increase.
- Motion by Alderman Karla Breeding, Second by Alderman Amber Schoenrock, to approve IRS Mileage rate increase to \$0.76 per mile.

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- Motion Carried Unanimously

13. Executive Session: None

14. Other Business:

- Audit received and to be posted.

15. Items to Appear on the Next Agenda:

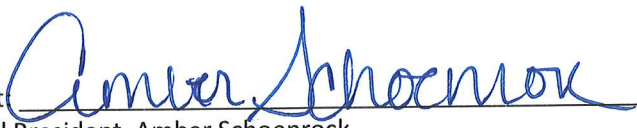
- Discussion on purchase of new fire truck.

There being no further business to come before the Council,

16. Motion by Alderman Karla Breeding, Second by Alderman Darryl Burditt, to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 PM.

- Motion Carried Unanimously

Mayor, David Cates

Attest 
Council President, Amber Schoenrock

