**Mayor:**
David Cates

**City Council:**
Amber Schoenrock
Carrie Doty
Karla Breding
Darryl Burditt

**City of Conrad**
413 S. Main St.
Conrad, MT 59425
**406-271-3623**
cityofconrad.com

**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 SEPTEMBER 15th, 2026**

The City Council of the City of Conrad, County of Pondera, State of Montana, met in regular session at Conrad City Hall on Tuesday, September 15th, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor David Cates, Alderman Amber Schoenrock, Alderman Darryl Burditt, Alderman Karla Breding, Police Chief Andy Lund, Public Works Director Dave Zimbelman, Finance Officer Jodi Rogers, City Clerk Jerad Walston.

Absent: Alderman Carrie Doty, with permission

Guests: Brad Koon, Jody Hellegaard, Ross Hanson

Teleconference Guests: Michael Miller

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

1. Action: Read and approve minutes of September 1st, 2026, regular council meeting.
    - Motion by Alderman Karla Breding, Second by Alderman Amber Schoenrock, to approve the minutes of the September 1st, 2026, regular meeting, as presented.
        - Motion Carried Unanimously

2. Action on any Claims and Payroll:
    Claims: 30053-30083
    Total: $93,296.02
    - Motion by Alderman Amber Schoenrock, Second by Alderman Karla Breding, to approve the claims as presented.
        - Motion Carried Unanimously

3. Action on Water Contracts: None

4. Correspondence: None

5. Public Comment (no action taken):
    - n/a

6. Department Reports:

**Mayor:**
David Cates

**City Council:**
Amber Schoenrock
Carrie Doty
Karla Breding
Darryl Burditt

**City of Conrad**
413 S. Main St.
Conrad, MT 59425
**406-271-3623**
cityofconrad.com

- Finance Officer
  - Finance Officer Jodi Rogers reported that financial reports have been submitted to the state, and updated reports now have actual percentages, making it look much better than the previous versions of the report.
  - Jodi also noted that work has begun on closing entries for fiscal year 2026, with the next meeting report expected to be completed soon.

7. Discussion: North Central Montana Regional Water Authority, on Conrad's future water needs with NCMRWA.
   - Jody Hellegaard and Ross Hanson from NCMRWA gave a presentation outlining the city's future water needs and a summary of the logistics and costs involved in connecting to the regional water project's infrastructure.

**The presentation outlined several major points, included below:**

- **Project Overview & Timeline:** The regional water project has been in development since the late 1990s and received a significant funding boost from the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill. The water treatment plant at Rocky Boy is scheduled to start in March 2028.

- **Funding & Local Match:** Tribal core elements are 100% federally funded. Non-tribal core and non-core elements utilize an 80-10-10 matching structure (80% federal, 10% state, and 10% local match). Conrad's specific local financial share will be calculated based on its final "nominated capacity".

- **Capacity Decision Mandate:** The Federal Bureau of Reclamation will not allow infrastructure to be built at 100% capacity if a city only intends to utilize 35%. The authority explicitly stated that the option of building a larger pipe and only using partial capacity is no longer feasible, meaning Conrad must formally decide between a full or partial connection so engineers can determine the size of the pipeline trunk.

- **Trunk Line Alternative (Route E1C):** Engineers are evaluating a new southern alternative route south of Tiber Reservoir that would connect directly to an existing 24-inch main. This route is highly favored as it saves roughly 7 miles of pipe, uses smaller pipe sizes, requires smaller pump stations, and improves operational flexibility.

- **Financial & Operational Comparisons:** According to Triple Tree's engineering report's net present value analysis, a full connection is the most cost-effective option over 20 years (estimated at $11.4 million). A partial connection is the most expensive option because the city would have to pay for regional water while simultaneously funding the full rehabilitation of its own aging system. The "no connection" alternative is estimated at $19.2 million.

**Mayor:**
David Cates

**City Council:**
Amber Schoenrock
Carrie Doty
Karla Breding
Darryl Burditt

**City of Conrad**
413 S. Main St.
Conrad, MT 59425
**406-271-3623**
cityofconrad.com

- **Cybersecurity & System Reliability:** The regional system is highly resilient against cyber threats. The water plant at Tiber can be run 100% manually with an air-gapped system completely disconnected from the internet, and the local pump stations operate locally via data radio without internet access.

- **System Operations & Handoffs:** Core infrastructure is owned and operated by the tribe, which is executing a nationwide search for a highly qualified, licensed water treatment plant superintendent. The remaining segments will be managed by the authority using qualified staff or local operations contracts. Water rates will feature a minimum take amount to ensure budget stability.

- **Potential System Expansion:** The state has awarded the authority a $100,000 planning grant to study expanding the pipeline past Power to Tri-County and Fairfield to address critical water shortages there. This expansion would be incrementally upsized, and those entities would absorb all associated upsize and connection costs.

  *(Note: All additional supporting documents are included in the full meeting packet.)*

10. Executive Session: None

11. Other Business: None

12. Items to Appear on the Next Agenda:
    - Discussion on CPD/PCSO merger and potential Town Hall.

There being no further business to come before the Council,

13. Motion by Alderman Amber Schoenrock, Second by Alderman Darryl Burditt, to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 PM.
    - Motion Carried Unanimously

Mayor, David Cates

Attest: _____
City Clerk, Jerad Walston

CITY OF CONRAD CORPORATE SEAL STATE OF MONTANA