



REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF CONRAD, COUNTY OF PONDERA, STATE OF MONTANA
HELD AT CONRAD CITY HALL ON MAY 7, 2024

The City Council of the City of Conrad, County of Pondera, State of Montana, met in regular session at the Conrad City Hall on May 7, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor David Cates, Alderman Karla Breeding, Alderman Nathan Hunsucker, Alderman Carrie Doty, Interim Chief Cory Smith, Public Works Director David Zimbelman, Library Director Tiffany Christensen, Admin/Payroll Clerk Julie Orcutt (via phone), Billing Clerk Kim Cooney

Absent: Alderman Schoenrock absent with permission

Guests: Don McClain, Gary Brown, Brad Koon, Jeremy Ranger, Tom Philipps, Darryl Burditt, Logan Creech, Angel Creech

Teleconference Guests: Jodi Rogers

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

Action: Read and Approve Minutes of the April 16, 2024 Regular Meeting

- Motion by Alderman Breeding, Second by Alderman Hunsucker, to approve the Minutes of the April 16, 2024 Regular Council Meeting, as presented
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Action on Claims:

Claims #s 27991 – 28042 (refer to the claims register/claims approval list):

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

Correspondence:

Mayor Cates read a thank-you note from the Conrad Pathway Committee for funds to help with the sprinkler system.

Department Reports:

- Police Department Report – Interim Chief of Police Smith reported. (Attached)
- Public Works Report – Public Works Director Zimbelman reported. (Attached)
- Library Report – Library Director Christensen reported. (Attached)

Discussion/Action: New Hire, Police Officer

Interim Chief Smith introduced Logan Creech who is Montana Post-certified as a law enforcement officer and passed the City of Conrad's background investigation. Mayor Cates proposed hiring Mr. Creech as a Patrolman I at \$24.08 per hour plus the Animal Control stipend with an effective date of today.



- Motion by Alderman Breeding, Second by Alderman Doty, to approve the hire of Logan Creech at \$24.08 per hour plus the Animal Control stipend, effective immediately
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Officer Creech was sworn-in as a Patrolman I by Mayor Cates and received his shield from Interim Chief Smith.

Water Contracts: Gary Brown, 301 N Front Street, Conrad

Mr. Brown of Big Sky Equipment Company requested a water contract to add a line to the business. Director Zimbelman said there will be an additional meter. The line will come off their existing line, so no System Development Line is required.

- Motion by Alderman Breeding, Second by Alderman Hunsucker to approve the water contract for Big Sky Equipment Company to install a second water line at 301 N Front Street
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Public Comment: (no action taken) Agenda Items and/or Not on Agenda Items

None

Discussion/Action: Strom & Associates contract renewal

Mayor Cates explained that the City lost its auditor earlier in the year, and they have now agreed to renew their contract for one year at a cost of \$16,475. Strom & Associates, P.C. was the City's previous auditor so this is very good news. The Mayor thanked Mrs. Rogers for her part in securing the auditor.

- Motion by Alderman Hunsucker, Second by Alderman Breeding, to approve Strom & Associates contract renewal, as presented
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Mrs. Rogers confirmed that the audit period is for the year ending June 2023.

Discussion/Action: Conrad Area Chamber of Commerce request for street closure for Whoop Up Parade.

- Motion by Alderman Hunsucker, Second by Alderman Breeding, to approve Conrad Area Chamber of Commerce's request for street closure for the Whoop Up Parade June 8th, 8:45 a.m. to noon, as presented
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action: Jeremie LaBarre request for Meadowlark School Final Mile Fun Run, assistance with traffic cones and traffic control

- Motion by Alderman Hunsucker, Second by Alderman Doty, to approve Jeremie LaBarre's request for Meadowlark School's Final Mile Fun Run, May 9th at 2 p.m., and assistance with traffic cones and traffic control
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

The Fun Run begins at 2 p.m. May 9th. Director Zimbelman will get cones out first thing Thursday.



Discussion/Action: Conrad Lions Club request for trash truck at Meadowlark School and Rodeo Grounds

- Motion by Alderman Hunsucker, Second by Alderman Doty, to approve Conrad Lions' request for the trash truck at Meadowlark School and the Rodeo Grounds during Whoop Up
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action: Sewer Rate adjustment for Tom Phillips, 9 S Delaware

- Motion by Alderman Hunsucker, Second by Alderman Breeding, to approve replacing Tom Phillips' 2024 January water use with his 2023 January water use to calculate his 2024 sewer average
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion/Action: Sewer rate adjustment for Julie Howard, 13 S Maryland St

- Motion by Alderman Breeding, Second by Alderman Doty, to replace Julie Howard's 2024 sewer average with her 2023 sewer average due to a water leak December 2023 through March, 2024
 - Motion Carried Unanimously
- Motion by Alderman Hunsucker, Second by Alderman Breeding to close the regular meeting and open the public hearing on the Waste Water PER
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Public Hearing 6:30 PM: Waste Water PER

Mr. Koon announced the public hearing for the Wastewater Preliminary Engineering Report and explained that the purpose of a PER is to evaluate a sewer or sewer-water system. The City chose to evaluate its wastewater system. Information was gathered and necessary improvements were identified. Mr. Koon reviewed the proposed scope of work and funding strategies and asked the Council for direction on the project. (Attached)

Director Zimbelman said the City doesn't consistently meet DEQ standards because the wastewater treatment plant is outdated. The plant gets about 10 violations per year, mostly due to the headworks and aeration system. Upgrades should happen about every 10 years and it's been 15 since the last time. The proposed improvements wouldn't be done until 2026. Director Zimbelman said DEQ works with him when violations occur and there are no fines. He noted that the threshold for violations changes when improvements are made.

Discussion on project direction and funding options. Mr. Koon will work with Mrs. Rogers this week to discuss details.

- Motion by Alderman Breeding, Second by Alderman Doty, to close the public hearing and re-open the regular meeting
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Discussion: Water/Sewer/Garbage Rate Adjustment



Mayor Cates said figures during last Friday's discussion with the State were encouraging but appear to be inconsistent (Attached). He noted that the City can write the resolution to adjust rates incrementally over 3 years to reach the its goal.

Mayor Cates said the City is mandated by the State of Montana to have self-sustaining utilities, and that is currently not the case. Increases proposed by the State last year were from 38% to over 100% which were too high, considering people in town on fixed incomes.

Mrs. Rogers will check the State's numbers and suggested waiting until a decision is made on the wastewater plant project. She said the process for advertising and mail-outs takes about 2 months. It's also best to change rates on all three utilities (W/S/G) at the same time so the City only has to do ads and mail-outs once.

Mayor Cates will send the State's spreadsheets to Council so they can manipulate the numbers themselves.

Discussion/Action: Boards and Commissions

Alderman Breeding said they had talked before about having a floating member for the Zoning Commission/Board of Adjustments, and having City office staff take care of the administrative requirements.

Mr. McClain asked if neighbors are notified individually. Alderman Hunsucker said it depends on the type of request. He notified neighbors a block up and a block down each way when he was on the commission. Mr. McClain was concerned over changes that would abolish some of the requirements for notifications, leaving the Council to have the final say.

Alderman Hunsucker asked to remove James Destaffany from the Zoning Commission.

Mayor Cates said that a lot of positions are still vacant because people haven't responded to requests for being on these committees. The County should have a member on the Planning Board, for instance.

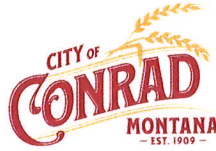
- Motion by Alderman Breeding, Second by Alderman Hunsucker, to approve members on the Conrad Boards, Commissions & Committees, as revised
 - Motion Carried Unanimously

Executive Session: None

Other Business:

Mayor Cates said he'd been in contact with some investment companies. They suggested that since the City has a relatively simple portfolio (renewing or moving CDs), investments could be managed in-house. Attorney Jones will look into severing the City's relationship with Raymond James.

The Mayor stated that the advantage of putting money into STIP is that it can be moved in and out easily. Alderman Hunsucker said Agnes put things into CDs because the money is harder to touch and the City needs so much in reserves to apply for loans.



Items to Appear on Next/Future Agenda:

- a. Growth Policy
- b. Lift Station Project

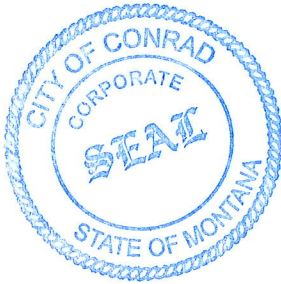
Meeting Adjourned

There being no further business to come before the Council, Motion by Alderman Hunsucker, Second by Alderman Breeding, to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

- o Motion Carried Unanimously



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



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Cates", written over a horizontal line.

Mayor, David Cates

Attest: _____

Billing Clerk, Kim Cooney

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kim Cooney", written over a horizontal line.