

CITY COUNCIL WORKING MEETING

FEBRUARY 24, 2025

203 Broadway Ave N

PRESENT:

Pamela McClain	Mayor	Autumn Jones	Treasurer
Marla Sisson	Council President	Jazmine Mills	P & Z Administrator
Amanda Hawkins	Council Member	Jason Scott	Public Works Director
Sue Gabardi	Council Member	Andrew Wright	City Attorney
Karen Drown	Clerk	Concerned Citizens	

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM:

Karen Drown confirmed a quorum.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Minutes of February 10, 2025 – Regular Session
2. Claims for Payment
3. Clerk Report
4. Treasurer Report

Marla moved to approve the consent agenda. Sue seconded the motion. It was noted Andrew Wright was no present at the meeting as listed in those present section. And it was added the printed copy provided to Council had the correction of Marla making the statement for the Mayor and Council comments section. There was no further discussion. There was a roll call vote. Marla voted yes, Amanda voted yes, and Sue voted yes. The motion passed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

Review and Consideration of Buhl Chamber of Economic Development and Commerce Sagebrush Days Special Event Permit including Co-Sponsorship of Parade and Beer Garden at Eastman Park: Amanda moved to approve the Buhl Chamber of Economic Development and Commerce Sagebrush Days Special Event Permit including Co-Sponsorship of Parade and Beer Garden at Eastman Park. Marla seconded the motion. Sue questioned the closure of Clear Lakes

Road and that people didn't know where to park. Pam Pehrson, Chairman of the Sagebrush committee for the Chamber, presented to Council they are going to do way better advertising and media coverage to explain how access the parade routes and where to park. Amanda referred to a previous discussion and feedback she had heard from people about this and problems people had getting into town. Marla thanked Pam and the Chamber for doing all this work for this event. There was no further discussion. There was a roll call vote. Amanda voted yes, Sue voted yes, and Marla voted yes. The motion passed.

Review and Consideration of Buhl Chamber of Economic Development and Commerce Christmas Light Parade Special Event Permit including Co-Sponsorship of Parade: Amanda moved to approve the Buhl Chamber of Economic Development and Commerce Christmas Light Parade Special Event Permit including Co-Sponsorship of Parade. Sue seconded the motion. Marla stated she had heard last year was a good turnout. Chief Engbaum noted it was the biggest night light parade there had been in Buhl. There was no further discussion. There was a roll call vote. Sue voted yes, Marla voted yes, and Amanda voted yes.

Presentation and Update on Comprehensive Plan Activities, Survey, Demographic Report, Calendar, and Next Steps: Cameron Arial with Clearwater Financial presented an update on the Comprehensive Plan project. He reviewed project logistics and looking at the city's financials. He noted it is a pleasure to work with the staff who have been identifying stakeholders and creating a list of a citizens committee. He noted they will continue to provide update to Council at stages throughout this process. He then reviewed information retrieved from the current survey which is meant to be educational and solicit feedback which he strongly encourages getting from the community. He noted a word cluster that was compiled with how respondents had described Buhl and added Jazmine had pointed out the biggest word was "SMALL". He noted the super majority agree with the rate of growth Buhl has seen. Amanda questioned if that included growth around Buhl. Cameron stated this was for inside city limits but the growth outside will affect the city. He then reviewed a summary of the responses that had been received for the different questions through the survey. These included transportation, economic development, housing and infrastructure. He continued with reviewing how people felt growth should be funded and the different type of funding option. In the implementation portion of the plan people are concerned about property rights and followed closely by schools. It was noted 211 have been submitted but it was noted that all 211 hadn't completed every question.

Cameron then reviewed the growth projects that had been analyzed and noted this report would be included in the final plan. He explained that if growth was on the high end of the calculations that by 2060 Buhl will double from its current size, but added they do anticipate the mid-range growth. Regarding housing vacancies are down, which means town is full and he added owning is up. In income residents the median income has gone up and poverty has dropped and there is a high employment rate. He stated the question is how do we maintain the steady growth. He noted the information was pulled from the 2020 Census and the Department of Labor along with other sources.

Karen explained that presentations had recently been done at the West End Senior Center, Rotary and Kiwanis. Staff had identified several hundred stakeholders and another 27 for the citizen committee. The committee will hold 4 to 5 meetings to work on the plan. Mayor McClain asked everyone to share the social media posts.

Review and Consideration of Refunding of Outstanding Water and Wastewater Bonds: Cameron presented that as the city fiduciary advisor they do an annual check of financials and outstanding water and sewer bonds. They also review any opportunities to refinance the bonds. He reviewed calculations if the city went to market on their own credit or if they went through the bond bank. He noted that reviewing right now with going through the bond bank there would be a potential savings of approximately \$2 million. He explained the application process and the fees of that process is \$500.00; he added it would be done through a competitive bid sale. Marla questioned if it would be a fixed rate. Cameron confirmed it would. Mayor McClain asked if it would pay the bonds off early. Autumn noted there were options to consider including paying off early or to keep the maturity date the same and take the savings to reduce the utility rate, or look at capital improvements that might be needed. Cameron stated once it goes through the bidding process there is underwriting and bond counsel fees which are calculated in the savings. Autumn stated staff had started looking at this in the fall and watched it through the elections and change in presidential administration change for any change in interest.

Marla moved to approve moving forward in refunding the water and sewer bonds. Sue seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. There was a roll call vote. Sue voted yes, Marla voted yes, and Amanda voted yes. The motion passed.

Review and Consideration Planning and Zoning Board Member Recommendation: Marla moved to approve Regie Finney to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Sue seconded the motion. Amanda asked if the process for his recommendation could be explained. Karen stated there had been three applications received for the empty seat. Since Buhl had never had multiple applicants prior the process was modeled after that of the Twin Falls County process. Interviews of each applicant had taken place before a panel that included Jeff Gabardi, P&Z Chairman, Jazmine Mills, P&Z Administrator, Marla Sission, Council President and Rocky Matthews, Twin Falls County Commissioner. Their recommendation was taken to the full commission. It was noted if all three candidates could be combined it would be great as they all had different experiences. Mayor McClain noted Rocky Matthews has a strong planning and zoning background and will be a great asset. There was no further discussion. There was a roll call vote. Marla voted yes, Amanda voted yes, Sue voted yes. The motion passed.

Review and Consideration to move to Public Hearing for Planning and Zoning Commission Recommendations of amending the Buhl City Zoning Code 9-8-1: "Schedule of Land Use Controls," Commercial table, to designate MINI-STORAGE UNITS (STORAGE FACILITIES) as a CONDITIONAL USE in the B-3 Community Business District and amending Title 9, Chapter 12, Section 6, "Unique Land Uses," to establish specific standards for storage facilities: Marla moved to go to public hearing for amending the Buhl City Zoning Code 9-8-1: "Schedule

of Land Use Controls,” Commercial table, to designate MINI-STORAGE UNITS (STORAGE FACILITIES) as a CONDITIONAL USE in the B-3 Community Business District and amending Title 9, Chapter 12, Section 6, “Unique Land Uses,” to establish specific standards for storage facilities. Amanda seconded the motion. Amanda questioned section 9-12-6 ii and the 20% coverage. Karen explained the original proposed ordinance had that be the Planning and Zoning Commission had changed that in the review and removed the 20% coverage completely. There was no further discussion. There was a roll call vote. Amanda voted yes, Sue voted yes, and Marla voted yes. The motion passed.

Review and Consideration to move to Public Hearing for Planning and Zoning Commission Recommendations of amending the Buhl City Zoning Code by adding a new chapter to Title 9 which outlines the required improvements for water and sewer connections for properties inside city limits and the area of impact: Marla moved to go to public hearing for amending the Buhl City Zoning Code by adding a new chapter to Title 9 which outlines the required improvements for water and sewer connections for properties inside city limits and the area of impact. Sue seconded the motion. There was discussion about properties in the area of impact and Amanda questioned if they would be required to hook up. Jason noted they would have to hook up if they are within the distance of a current water line for new construction or if they had to drill a new well or redrill and exiting well, repairing a pump would no require hooking up. Karen noted this ordinance is modeled after the City of Twin Falls. Amanda voiced concerns that she understands this for new construction but hard for an already established property with a well and they are not part of the city. Karen noted the distance to the water line is based on property line distance on potential well location. There was no further discussion. There was a roll call vote. Sue voted yes, Marla voted yes, and Amanda voted yes. The motion passed.

Review and Consideration to move to Public Hearing for an amendment to Title 7, Chapter 1, Article B. Public and Industrial Wells: Sue moved to go to public hearing for an amendment to Title 7, Chapter 1, Article B. Public and Industrial Wells. Marla seconded the motion. There was no discussion. There was a roll call vote. Marla voted yes, Amanda voted yes, and Sue voted yes. The motion passed.

Review and Consideration of Work Order #01 under General Agreement for Professional Services with HMH Engineering for Materials Source Development: Jason presented that he had been working with HMH Engineering to look at a possible material source location on city owned property. Jim Whitbread, a geologist with HMH Engineering explained if this works out this would be a great source right in the city’s backyard. Marla moved to approve Workorder #1 with HMH Engineering. Sue seconded the motion. Jim explained they had done some abrasion testing but this project would drill 2 holes 60’ deep which would give them an idea of the quality of rock available. It would also include an earthquake study. If phases 1 and 2 come to where they need to be then phase 3 would be to develop a business model but this won’t be done unless the rock is found viable.

Jason explained the recent costs for the city to purchase gravel plus the additional expense to haul it from Hagerman. Amanda noted we needed to be mindful of the use of taxpayer's money. Jim added the crushing would be a bid process and would need someone who does this commercially. Amanda questioned the need to notify the neighbors. Jim noted they will have hoops to jump through and regulatory agencies to work with including reclamations plans but added this is exciting of the possibility. There was no further discussion. There was a roll call vote. Marla voted yes, Amanda voted yes, and Sue voted yes. The motion passed.

Review and Consideration of Acceptance of Idaho Transportation Department of Aeronautics Matching Grants for Runway Reconstruction Project: Karen noted that each grant included a resolution. Karen explained these two grants are state grants for the larger FAA grant for the runway reconstruction. She explained when the FAA grant was accepted the split between the state and local funding was a 5%/5% split and that is what was calculated. She noted since that acceptance there have been a number of changes at the state office in staffing. These changes have caused confusion with these matching grants. The two before Council are a 5% match on the smaller grant and a 2.5% match on the larger grant. In conversations with the state, they are saying more money is available but it must be applied for, which Karen stated is the next agenda item. Her recommendation is to accept the two grants and amounts they are offering now and Kent with JUB Engineers will complete the applications requesting additional funding. Mayor McClain questioned who had wrote the grants. Kent stated the state had sent those. She stated she would sign them as the mayor's name was wrong. Karen noted the confusion since the beginning of the process with names being wrong, project numbers being wrong, and funding years being wrong. Kent stated if Council approved the mayor to sign, he would get corrected copies for her to sign before submitting.

Marla moved to approve Resolution No. 2025-4 and accept \$68,459.00 and authorize the mayor to sign. Amanda seconded the motion. There was no discussion. There was a roll call vote. Amanda voted yes, Sue voted yes, and Marla voted yes. The motion passes.

Marla moved to approve Resolution No. 2025-5 and accept \$23,303.00 and authorize the mayor to sign. Amanda seconded the motion. There was no discussion. There was a roll call vote. Sue voted yes, Marla voted yes, and Amanda voted yes. The motion passes.

Review and Consideration of Additional Applications of Idaho Transportation Department of Aeronautics Matching Grants for Runway Reconstruction Project: Kent presented his plan to apply for an additional 5% on the larger grant which would be \$136,917.61 and an additional 2.5% on the smaller grant which would be \$11,651.20. Marla moved to approve the mayor to sign the two grant applications for Idaho Transportation Department of Aeronautics Matching Grants for Runway Reconstruction Project. Amanda seconded the motion. There was no discussion. There was a roll call vote. Marla voted yes, Amanda voted yes, and Sue voted yes. The motion passed.

MAYOR & COUNCIL COMMENTS: Mayor McClain read the below statement.

We need to make sure that we comply with the law with regards to employee privacy issues. If a member of City Council would like to discuss any issues pertaining to complaints, discipline, etc. of a city employee, those will first need to be discussed with the mayor, who is the chief city administrator per Idaho Code 50-602. After review of the complaint, discipline, etc. if it needs to go before City Council it will be listed under an executive session on the upcoming meeting agenda.

Mayor McClain thanked the street department for all the work they had done with the rain water on Sawtooth Ave to help with the flooding of a home. She noted they had been out several times pumping the new system out because of the amount of rain we had received.

Autumn wanted to inform Council of House Bill 166 currently going through the legislature and explain recent frustrations staff had had with publishing legal notices in the Times News. She detailed the recent publication for the RFQ for the RCIF grant administrator had not published on one of the required dates which then required changing her notice and deadline to follow requirements of Idaho Code. She and Karen explained publishing of legal notices has to follow the code and when there are issues such as this it causes more work for staff. House Bill 166 would give cities the option to use an online public portal to publish our notices for all citizens to see. Karen also noted that currently the city pays the Times News to publish the legal notices and only those who pay for the print or online subscription can see the notices. And several citizens had commented their online subscription wouldn't allow them to see anything.

MEETING ADJOURNED – Marla moved that the meeting be adjourned; Sue seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted yes. The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Karen Drown, City Clerk