

CITY COUNCIL WORKING SESSION

APRIL 27, 2020  
203 Broadway Ave N

PRESENT:

Tom McCauley	Mayor	Karen Drown	Clerk
Michael Higbee	Council President	Scott Bybee	City Engineer
Pam McClain	Council Member	Regie Finney	Public Works Director
Sue Gabardi	Council Member	Jeremy Engbaum	Police Chief
Kelly Peterson	Council Member	Andrew Stevens	Fire Chief
Andrew Wright	City Attorney	Linda Henderson	Interim Library Director
Elizabeth Barker	Treasurer	Concerned Citizens	

Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic Buhl City Council held this meeting telephonically. Mayor McCauley outlined the process he was going to use to allow Council members a chance to have a turn at making motions and discussion. He added that all votes on the motions would be done by roll call vote.

PUBLIC HEARING #1 called to order at 6:10 PM.

Karen Drown confirmed a quorum.

Mayor McCauley stated the hearing was to receive testimony on a request to subdivide property in the southwest corner of the intersection of 1400 East Road and 4150 North Road (Lot 1, Block 1 of Fruitland Subdivision) submitted by John Hurley.

John Hurley, Castleford, ID, presented his plan to subdivide the property he purchased to improve. He noted the nice roads on two sides of the property for access to the proposed lots. He added that each of the lots would be approximately 1.5 acres. There would be no easements necessary and there would be little to no impact on city services. He concluded with the comment the subdivision fits well in exiting area.

Mayor McCauley asked if there were any questions from Council. Pam had no questions and stated she was at the Planning and Zoning meeting. Michael had no questions. Sue confirmed there were three lost proposed and plans for the other two lots. John noted that in the distant future those lots would have a home on each. Kelly had no questions.

Mayor McCauley asked if there was any testimony in support of the application, there was none.

Mayor McCauley asked if there was anyone against. Before he took testimony from callers, he read into the record testimony received in writing from Theresa Strolberg, Buhl, ID. He then asked if Theresa had any further testimony.

Theresa Strolberg, Buhl, ID, stated she has the constitutional right to meet in person and asked to have the hearing postponed until that meeting could take place. She also questioned if notices were not sent to everyone that attended the last hearing for this subdivision. Mayor McCauley noted that all the legal requirements for notifications were done for this hearing.

Michael Bourlotos, Buhl, ID, testified that the third property was the closest to him. He added the easement/right-of-way was actually a platted undeveloped roadway. He concluded by stating the location of his domestic well location is right next to the third lot.

Mayor McCauley asked if there was any testimony neutral. There was none. He then gave Mr. Hurley time for rebuttal of the concerns and questions asked.

Mr. Hurley noted that if the property would have been split into two lots the second lot would have a home and he would have built closer to the west side of it. He added with the concern of shooting, he noted that in the area there is no direction that there isn't a house with range for safe shooting. He concluded that all permits would follow health district requirements.

Mayor McCauley closed the public hearing #1 at 6:25 PM.

Mayor McCauley opened public hearing #2 at 6:25 PM.

Karen Drown confirmed a quorum.

Mayor McCauley stated the hearing was to receive testimony on a request submitted by Patrick Jones for a change of zoning and a conditional use permit, in the City of Buhl located at 1114 Main Street, Buhl, ID. The changes requested would change the zone from (B-1) Central Business District to (B-2) Neighborhood Business District. Patrick Jones is also requesting a Conditional Use Permit to operate a veterinary clinic at 1114 Main Street and was approved by planning and zoning pending approval of rezone by city council.

Dr. Patrick Jones, Buhl, ID, stated he owned property at 1114 Main Street where he currently had an herbal store. His request for a rezone would allow him to move his vet center to the Main Street location from 702 Highway 30.

Mayor McCauley asked if there were any questions from Council. Pam stated she had no question and noted she was at the planning and zoning meeting. Michael asked if there was an outdoor area in the back or area for kennels. Dr. Jones noted there was no significant room for

outside kennels or runs, but he added there would be very little boarding at the facility. Sue had no questions. Kelly also had no questions and was at the planning and zoning meeting.

Mayor McCauley asked if there was any testimony in support. There was none. Dr. Jones noted he felt it was good for downtown and that he had been contacted by other business owners to see what he was going to be doing. He added that he had been in town for 22 year and have been good neighbors.

Mayor McCauley asked if there was any testimony against the application. There was none. Mayor McCauley asked if there was any testimony neutral for the application. There was none.

Mayor McCauley closed the public hearing at 6:32 PM.

WORKING SESSION called to order at 6:33 PM.

#### CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM:

Karen Drown confirmed a quorum.

#### CONSENT AGENDA:

- 1. Minutes of April 13, 2020 – Regular Meeting
- 2. Bi-Monthly Claims for Payment
- 3. Clerk Report
- 4. Treasurer Report

Pam McClain moved to approve the consent agenda items 1, 3, and 4 but since the bi-monthly claims for payment had not yet been reviewed she would do that in a separate motion. Michael seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion passed.

Pam moved to approve the Bi-Monthly Claims for Payment after they have been reviewed by Kelly the following day. Michael seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion passed.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

Review and Consideration of Hurley Subdivision: Pam moved to approve the subdivision at 1400 East and 4150 North. Michael seconded the motion. There was discussion about the items brought up in the public hearing. Michael questioned Scott of the concerns and Scott stated the Planning and Zoning Commission had also reviewed the concerns and stated they would be noted in the minutes and informed everyone at the hearing the applicant would have to comply with all city and county codes. Michael also noted that spraying of weeds would be the same if split into 2 lots or 3 lots and that personal property rights are a big deal. He added these lots work

into the future planning for the area. Kelly questioned if Mr. Hurley had the right to build anywhere on the lot if within setback and meet health requirements. Kelly also noted he fully supported Ms. Strolberg rights. Scott commented that Kelly is correct about the setbacks and the health department would look at any setbacks for well and drain field which are larger for health reasons. Scott added the planning and zoning department will monitor this closely like they do all subdivisions. Andrew Wright commented that because of the current situation with the COVID-19 Pandemic the city is allowed to hold meetings such as this one for the time being. There was a vote on the motion and all voted yes. The motion passed.

Review and Consideration of 1114 Main Street Rezone: Pam moved to approve the Rezone and Conditional Use permit at 1114 Main Street. Michael seconded the motion. The only discussion what Michael noting he is thrilled to see any business on Main Street. There was a vote on the motion and all voted yes. The motion passed.

Review and Consideration of Appointment of Library Board Member: Pam moved to approve Marla Sission to the library board to finish the term vacated by Dennis Osman. Michael seconded the motion. It was noted she was a busy woman. There was a vote on the motion and all voted yes. The motion passed.

Review and Consideration of Library Director: Karen explained the Library Board was recommending Reba Puente as the new library director. Pam moved to approve Reba Puente as the new library director. Michael seconded the motion. There was discussion on this process of hiring a director and the different rolls of the library board and council. Mayor McCauley noted the director is chosen by the board. Karen added Idaho Code outlines the rolls of each and stated she has a book that details all the rolls of the library board within the State of Idaho. Kelly asked about the steps in the selection process and if Reba was currently an employee at the library. Linda Henderson commented there had been 4 applicants and overviewed the process that the board took in their interviews. Linda did confirm that Reba is a part time employee at the library. There was no further discussion. There was a vote on the motion and all voted yes. The motion passed.

Review and Consideration of Co-Sponsorship of Sagebrush Days Parade: Michelle Olsen, director of the Buhl Chamber of Commerce, came asking the city to co-sponsor the Buhl Sagebrush Days with the Chamber of Commerce. She described the route would be the same as last year as long as there are enough volunteers to cover all the intersections. And the check-in and staging areas would also be the same along Burley Ave.

Mayor McCauley noted concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic and the process the board is using. Michelle explained the board wanted to move ahead because there is a time crunch to complete the permitting with the Idaho Transportation Department. They are planning for the

event to take place but if it gets closer and there are concerns the chamber board with work with city council to address those. Pam moved to co-sponsor the parade with the chamber of commerce. Michael seconded the motion. The only discussion was Pam asked that if the pandemic goes on that the chamber stay in contact with the Mayor, office staff and council. There was a vote on the motion and all voted yes. The motion passed.

Discussion of Twin Falls County Public Meeting for Wilbur-Ellis: Tom explained the letter that was received from the Twin Falls County Commissioners concerning a proposal from Wilbur-Ellis for an exemption on improvements for the next five years. There was discussion and the understanding was the current tax assessments would continue on the current property, the waiver would just be for the future improvements. Tom explained this was a tool the county had to attract business to the area. There would be more information provided at the meeting on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Karen noted the original letter stated it was on a Tuesday but a correction was sent stating the meeting would be on Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>.

Discussion of Revenue Shortfalls: Elizabeth noted the information regarding potential shortfalls for the 2019-2020 budget year were the same as presented at the joint fire meeting. Since that meeting department heads had reviewed their current budgets and looked for areas where money could be saved. Those recommendations were presented in the document sent in packets. The discussion with department heads was before you spend think twice. It was explained that most of the areas that were found was in training, travel and building purchases. Chief Engbaum explained he will be bringing replacements on in a staggered schedule and that he would be reviewing the school resource officer position with the school district and new superintendent. There was concern with Council that no drastic cuts would have to be made. And short staffing is not something they want to do. Kelly noted he appreciated every department head and employee doing their best in this uncharted territory.

Budget Discussion: Elizabeth noted she had put together a memo for each policy to go over the details so each Council would have them in front of them. The memos contained her recommendations for the policies.

- a. Review of General Fund Reserve Policy: Pam moved to increase the policy from 17% to 20% which is equal to \$401,877.00. Michael seconded the motion. Pam noted the memo lined everything out perfectly. Michael noted it was a wise move. There was no further discussion. There was a vote on the motion and all voted yes. The motion passed.
- b. Review of Street Fund Reserve Policy: Pam moved to maintain the committed fund balance of \$100,000.00 in the street fund. Michael seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion. There was a vote on the motion and all voted yes. The motion passed.

c. Review of Utility Working Capital Policy: Elizabeth explained that she is expecting a 4% decrease in collections. She detailed that it is not a decrease in billings but the collections of those billings similar to the discussion at the fire meeting about property tax collections. Elizabeth recommended an increase to \$550,000.00 and amending the policy to state a dollar figure instead of a calculation. Pam moved to amend the Utility Working Capital Policy and increase the reserve to \$550,000.00. Michael seconded the motion. There was clarification in discussion that the obligation of the charges continued and will be collected. Elizabeth noted that some will end up being wrote off. She stated she is erroring on the side of caution. There was no further discussion. There was a vote on the motion with all voting yes. The motion passed.

d. Council spending priorities:

Pam started by saying she would like to see improvements to streets and sidewalks. She walks a lot and is seeing more families walking with what is going on with COVID-19. She normally walks the same route because the sidewalks are the best. She would like to see a way to entice residence to put sidewalks in. She would also like to see community development and added the Buhl Herald is not reporting on the community anymore. She would like to see more communication between the city and community. She concluded she would go to her grave wishing for the City of Buhl to be a very walkable city.

Michael was also very interested in sidewalks and paths that would connect the different parts of the city. He noted Broadway is great and would like to see others developed. Before COVID-19 there was one productive meeting with planning and zoning about future growth and development. He would like to continue working on the comprehensive plan and work for middle- and higher-income building lots.

Sue was in agreement with Pam and Michael about sidewalks and those are important to make a city a great place to live. One area she noted she has seen improvements is through the efforts of the code enforcement. As she had been walking, she has noticed a difference in properties and code enforcement is doing a wonderful job.

Kelly also had noticed the improvement to yards and lawns and code enforcement is doing it without being heavy-handed. Kelly also stated he would like to look at ways to incentivize employees to stay with the city. Somehow to improve employee retention especially in the police and fire department. Kelly noted that before COVID-19 he was hoping to set down with Elizabeth and review more of the budget process but since that didn't get to happen, he will be working through his first year slowly. Mayor McCauley noted that questions are sometimes what sparks a good discussion. There was no motion needed it was just information before department heads go to work on their budgets.

COUNCIL CONCERNS – Pam asked what the plans are with the stages of opening. Karen noted she is currently working on several areas to prepare. Those include sneeze guards and extra signage. She will also be getting with the other departments withing City Hall to see if they have any needs. The plan currently is to remain closed through May 16<sup>th</sup> but be reviewing the numbers and information between now and then.

Michael had four concerns:

- 1) The amount of COVID-19 cases had seen a massive increase in the last week in Buhl which he figured would come at some point.
- 2) He had recently had a couple of concerned ladies come to him about hay barns that were being put up on the corner of 1500 East and 4000 North. Scott noted he was aware of the hay barns and had been contacted prior by the owner. Scott also noted that they were within code for that area and didn't require a public hearing or conditional use permit for them. He had been out several times to confirm they were within code.
- 3) Michael stated he had taken part in about thirty call in meetings and had used Zoom and Uber which seemed to have worked better than GoToMeeting. He wondered what our options were.
- 4) Michael asked if an email could be sent to all those at retirement age to create a list to create a budget discussion. He asked if the library director was a planned retirement or a surprise. It was noted is was a surprise this year because of an error on her budget sheet that listed it for next year. There was a short discussion about how she had asked her staff not to do anything for her for her retirement.

MEETING ADJOURNED – Pam McClain moved that the meeting be adjourned; Michael Higbee seconded the motion and all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 PM.

Minutes prepared by Karen Drown, City Clerk