

CITY COUNCIL WORKING MEETING

FEBRUARY 26, 2024

203 Broadway Ave N

PRESENT:

Pam McClain	Mayor	Karen Drown	Clerk
Michael Higbee	Council President	Autumn Jones	Treasurer
Kelly Peterson by Zoom	Council Member	Jeremy Engbaum	Police Chief
Amanda Hawkins	Council Member	Andrew Wright	City Attorney
Marla Sisson	Council Member	Concerned Citizens	

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM:

Karen Drown confirmed a quorum.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Minutes of February 12, 2024 – Regular Session
2. Claims for Payment
3. Clerk Report
4. Treasurer Report

Michael moved to approve the consent agenda. Marla seconded the motion. There was a roll call vote. Marla voted yes, Michael voted yes, and Amanda voted yes. The motion passed.

Kelly entered the meeting by phone.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS:

Review and Consideration of Twin Falls Canal Company Water Share Transfer for 2024:

Autumn explained the city shares are leased to the property owners. The owners and share amounts are the exact same as the previous year. Marla moved to approve the 2024 water share transfers. Michael seconded the motion. There was clarification on the list of the lottery that took place in 2021. There was no further discussion. There was a roll call vote. Michael voted yes, Amanda voted yes, Kelly voted yes, and Marla voted yes. The motion passed.

MAYOR & COUNCIL COMMENTS: Mayor McClain read a 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.

Marla read a statement:

The past few months have been pretty heavy being on the council. I am also aware that these feelings do sometimes come with the job. I have watched videos, listened to interviews, and read posts on social media saying things like:

- raising the utility rates was illegal
- they don't want to hear from you
- the city council abuses its citizens

My role is to work with the council as a body to pass ordinances that work for our town, and create a budget. Sometimes those decisions are not easy and we have to weigh each decision to the best of our ability, and with the information in front of us. For utility discussions, we have a rate committee comprised of important shareholders in town that recommends a utility rate to the council each year. I would encourage all citizens that have concerns about misinformation and our utility bill to go back specifically to the August 7, 2023 meeting minutes and focus on our discussion on the Utility Rate Resolution.

Citizen comments are very important and we do want to hear from you. Allowing 2 minutes was meant to create more productive meetings, not to silence. Our email is also posted on the city page. We are not allowed to comment on personnel issues, however.

Lastly, I would like to comment on the accusation of the council abusing its citizens, which I take the most offence to. Those that know me, know my dedication and service to our town. I care deeply about Buhl and its citizens. It pains me to see such division in our community. The only way, in my opinion, to combat this is to challenge yourself to be a helper in our town. Once you start being part of the solution, attracting people who see the good in others, you will have a newfound appreciation. As I've said before, those that have concerns about city matters are encouraged to speak. But the ones who constantly bad mouth our town and the people in it, ask yourselves what is your prime objective? Do you want to create a more welcoming environment, or do you want to use your energy to complain?

Michael also stated his frustrate with division in the community. He added he has citizens coming into his business commenting on social media posts and the misinformation is unbelievable. He noted he isn't getting rich off city council, but is trying to create a better place for our families. He stated individuals don't work on projects but continue to jab employees and ask long as people are willing to spread information will then staff will have to continue to fight it.

Amanda asked if there was an update on pool grants from Marla. Marla noted she has not heard anything yet. She is making contact with another lady who works with big business in Twin Falls. Michael noted he had seen the City of Caldwell won't open again this year because of construction costs.

Kelly said thank you to everyone who has reached out by email or phone; even if he hasn't responded.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Michael moved to enter executive session with provisions of Idaho Code 74-206, subsection 1.b to consider the evaluation, dismissal or disciplining of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent. He requested a roll call vote. Marla seconded the motion. Amanda voted yes, Kelly voted yes, Marla voted yes, and Michael voted yes. Executive session was entered at 6:47 PM.

Attendees in executive session were Mayor McClain, Michael Higbee, Kelly Peterson by ZOOM, Amanda Hawkins, Marla Sisson, Karen Drown and Autumn Jones. Toni Lee was called into Executive Session for a portion.

Michael moved to adjourn Executive Session. Marla seconded the motion. There was a vote; all voted yes. Executive Session was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Michael moved to enter executive session with provisions of Idaho Code 74-206, subsection 1.f to communicate with legal counsel for the public agency to discuss the legal ramifications of and legal option for pending litigation, or controversies not yet being litigated, but imminently likely to be litigated. He requested a roll call vote. Kelly seconded the motion. Kelly voted yes, Marla voted yes, Michael voted yes, and Amanda voted yes. Executive session was entered at 8:47 PM.

Attendees in executive session were Mayor McClain, Michael Higbee, Kelly Peterson by ZOOM, Amanda Hawkins, Marla Sisson, Karen Drown and Autumn Jones.

Michael moved to adjourn Executive Session. Marla seconded the motion. There was a vote; all voted yes. Executive Session was adjourned at 9:40 PM.

MEETING ADJOURNED – Kelly moved that the meeting be adjourned; Marla Sisson seconded the motion. There was no discussion. There was a roll call vote. Marla voted yes, Michael voted yes, Amanda voted yes, and Kelly voted yes. The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Karen Drown, City Clerk