

COUNCIL WORKING MEETING
April 27, 2026
203 Broadway Ave N

PRESENT:

Douglas Howarth	Mayor	Jason Scott	Public Works Director
Marla Sisson	Council President	Jazmine Mills	P&Z Administrator
Ryan Loos	Council Member	Maegan Hanson	Library Director
Fred Bartlett	Council Member	Tim Stover	City Attorney
Cortlin Runyan	Council Member		
Chelsea Popplewell	Clerk/Treasurer		

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM:

Chelsea Popplewell confirmed a quorum.

PUBLIC HEARING #1:

Opened at 6:31 PM.

Chelsea explained the reason for the hearing was to amend the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget to accept a \$5,500 grant received for planning and zoning and use the funds for Trap the Trout, for \$15,000 in funding for the library repairs due to the flooding, and \$102,000 in water due to the timing of the well 5 failures. In water it also includes \$75,000 in URA reimbursement. Jazmine explained what Trap the Trout would be.

There was no testimony in favor on the proposed amendment.

There was no neutral testimony on the proposed amendment.

There was no testimony in opposition on the proposed amendment.

The hearing was closed at 6:39 PM.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Minutes of April 7, 2026 – Special Session
2. Minutes of April 13, 2026 – Regular Session
3. Claims for Payment
4. Department Head Report – Public Works
5. Clerk/Treasurer Report

Fred moved to approve the consent agenda. Marla seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. There was a roll call vote. Marla voted yes, Ryan voted yes, Fred voted yes, and Cortlin voted yes. The motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Review and Consideration of Amended Appropriations Ordinance for Fiscal Year 2025-2026: All members of the City Council having been furnished a copy of the proposed Ordinance No. 2026-05 and being fully apprised of the content and purpose of said Ordinance, Cortlin moved that the provisions of Idaho Code Section 50-902, which require said Ordinance to be read on three (3) different days, two (2) readings by Title only and one (1) reading which shall be in full, be dispensed with and that said Ordinance be passed upon one (1) reading by title only. He requested a roll call vote on the motion. Fred seconded the motion. There was no discussion. There was a roll call vote. Marla voted yes, Ryan voted yes, Cortlin voted yes, and Cortlin voted yes. The motion passed.

Cortlin moved to approve Ordinance 2026-05 amending the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Appropriations Ordinance. Cortlin read the title of ordinance 2026-05. Marla seconded the motion. There was a roll call vote. Cortlin voted yes, Fred voted yes, Ryan voted yes, and Marla voted yes. The motion passed.

Review and Consideration of Council Spending Priorities: Marla began the discussion with her priorities of police department wages and looking at options for health insurance coverage for city staff. She also noted possibly making the Planning and Zoning administrator position to a full time, exempt position. Her final priority was making sure that water, wastewater and sanitation are planning for repairs in the future. She mentioned grant opportunities for the pool and revitalize the tennis courts or make it into a pickleball court. Cortlin's priorities included spike strips for the police department as well as curb and gutter repairs throughout the City. Fred mentioned that he attended a water study meeting so water maintenance and pressure issues were on his priority list. He also mentioned that well #1 will need a rebuild so keeping that in mind as a priority. Marla reminded Council that utilities has to be self-sustaining meaning they can't borrow from the general fund. No action was taken.

Review and Consideration of Presentation of 10-Year Administration, Code, P&Z, Parks & Rec, Police, Library, Street, and Utilities Departments Future Needs: Chelsea spoke about admin's future needs including saving for HVAC replacement and water heater replacement, code replacement, Clearwater Financial retainer, building security, and furniture for the conference room that was the old planning and zoning. Planning and Zoning spoke about her future needs of additional staff, additional technology in a few years as well as support staff to improve the coverage and single person dependency in a department. She spoke about landline phones as well as some building or office repairs in the future. Marla stated her support of moving the administrator's position to full time before adding staff. Jeremy spoke regarding firearms, spike strips, and MDT replacement. He also spoke to code services and having some additional clean up costs for that position. Marla noted that she would like to keep these minimal so we could get the officers paid more. Fred asked about vehicle purchase and Jeremy explained they have a 10 car fleet so a new one just about every year is what is proposed. Maegan spoke about the water barrier between the siding and the brick of their building needing to be installed eventually and she spoke to additional staff. She also noted that their front doors will need to be fixed or replaced as well. Jason spoke to the needs to parks and recreation, streets and utilities. In parks, replacement of equipment was the main one. In streets, he talked about replacing a dump truck and hydro vac, both of which are pretty expensive. He also spoke about a line item for grants which is just in case we do get grants, that could serve as matching funds. In utilities, Jason talked about maintenance and upgrades like a new well, replacing and expanding water pipe

and plant equipment. He also spoke about the chlorine generator, SCADA upgrades, arsenic filters and relining the settling pond. In sanitation, she spoke about replacing a truck and replacement cans. In wastewater, he spoke about sludge removal and disposal, equipment replacement and the wastewater facility study.

Review and Consideration of Resolution outlining Council Meeting procedures and rules: Marla moved to approve Resolution 2026-04 to allow any matter of city business to be discussed during citizen comments. Cortlin seconded the motion. Fred questioned why it wasn't like that in the past. Chelsea explained that when dialogue happens about agenda items in the citizen comments section of a meeting, you run the risk of it technically turning into an unpublished public hearing and therefore violating open meeting laws. If it remains comment only, no question and answer, the comments could be about anything on or off the agenda. There was no further discussion. There was a roll call vote. Marla voted yes, Ryan voted yes, Fred voted yes, and Cortlin voted yes. The motion passed.

Council Discussion regarding Parking Ordinance: Fred referenced his idea sent to Chelsea regarding something in between 0 and 72 hours. Police thought they could enforce a 12 hour limit. Fred thought of always needing to be hooked up to a licensed vehicle. Cortlin and Ryan shared their alignment with the 12 hour thought. Marla liked them having to be hooked up to a vehicle at all times. She said that public safety is her concern but if the majority of people who are speaking out want it this way, that's how she needs to vote.

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

We need to make sure that we comply with the law regarding 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 noted that the area from a citizen comment from a previous meeting had been addressed. Public works had back filled the area so there is no longer a drop off.

Cortlin said he had reached out to a high school senior regarding the concern from a citizen at a previous meeting regarding the baseball fields. He also referenced the AIC training and that he got a look of good information out of the training.

Marla said she spoke to a citizen regarding some ADA concerns. She would like to start up a monthly coffee session or something with the community to share thoughts.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Ray Malberg, Buhl, ID – encouraged Council to read about Executive Order 13818

Amanda Hawkins, Buhl, ID – referenced the grants talked about during the meeting and encouraged reaching out to the community regarding a grant writer. She spoke about the parking ordinance and that fire and code enforcement said it was enforceable. She said when Council voted for it previously it was stated that it wouldn't be enforced. She encouraged Council to research the history of it. She stated that voices do matter and felt Marla's statement was the right thing. She also asked if police officers are still mowing the lawn.

Margaret Gray, Buhl, ID – Asked how many properties the City owns and how much it costs to maintain them.

Chelsea read a statement that Joshua Dowding, Buhl, ID, asked to be included verbatim in the minutes:

My name is Joshua Dowding. I am currently preparing for travel and am unable to attend this meeting in person, but I appreciate the opportunity to have this comment read into the record in my absence.

I am submitting this comment along with a full written letter regarding the current parking ordinance, as well as a petition signed by over 200 residents in this community.

I want to be clear about what I am asking. I am not simply asking that this be received. I am asking that this issue be formally addressed.

During the April 13 meeting, former Councilman Kelly Peterson stated, "People traveling 26 in a 25 don't normally get a ticket," and suggested that laws do not need to be enforced to the letter because they can rely on discretion.

That is not a defense of this ordinance. That is an admission that it does not function as written. Laws should not be written so broadly that they restrict normal, necessary activity and then depend on selective enforcement to make them tolerable. That is not fairness. That is arbitrary enforcement.

If a law only works when it is not enforced as written, then the law itself is the problem.

I also want to address a statement submitted by former Mayor Pamela McClain, who wrote that the "primary concerns appear to come from individuals who may be monetarily impacted," and cautioned the council not to view vocal opposition as representative of the broader community. That characterization is inaccurate and dismissive of what is actually happening.

The more than 200 residents who signed this petition are not raising minor financial concerns. They are describing the inability to park at their own homes, to load and use trailers, and to complete work without risking citation.

That is not inconvenience. That is a structural problem with how the ordinance operates in

practice.

Buhl is an older, working town. Many homes do not have driveways. Trailers and work vehicles are not cosmetic issues. They are essential tools for how people here live and work.

Under the current ordinance, normal, responsible activity is being treated as a violation. That is a clear disconnect between policy and reality.

There is a reasonable path forward. A seventy-two-hour allowance, a clear exemption for tradespeople, and continued enforcement of real safety concerns like blocking intersections, sidewalks, and emergency access.

Mayor Howarth has already proposed a more balanced approach. That proposal deserves consideration and action.

I am asking this council to place this issue on a future agenda for discussion and potential amendment, and to address the concerns that have been clearly raised by members of this community.

Finally, I request that my full submitted letter, representing over 200 signed residents, be entered into the official record and included with the meeting minutes or attached materials so it is fully available for public review.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

MEETING ADJOURNED –Marla moved that the meeting be adjourned. There was no discussion. All voted yes. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Minutes prepared by Chelsea Popplewell, City Clerk