

CITY COUNCIL WORKING MEETING

July 22, 2024
203 Broadway Ave N

PRESENT:

Pamela McClain	Mayor	Jeremy Engbaum	Police Chief
Michael Higbee	Council President	Jason Scott	Public Works Director
Kelly Peterson	Council Member	Scott Bybee	City Engineer
Amanda Hawkins	Council Member	Maegan Hanson	Library Director
Marla Sisson by ZOOM	Council Member	Jazmine Mills	P & Z Admin
Karen Drown	Clerk	Concerned Citizens	
Autumn Jones	Treasurer		

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM:

Karen Drown confirmed a quorum.

PUBLIC HEARING

The applicant, Patterson Living Trust represented by David Fisher, Buhl, ID stated they were requesting for the subdivision of the property into seven lots. Five of the lots would be accessed from Church Street and two from Poplar Street. He stating they have plans to tie into existing services in the area.

Kathy Schofield testified in support of the application. She stated Buhl needs more single-family homes.

Michael noted their plan was well put together and a good package.

There was no testimony in opposition or neutral to the application.

The hearing was closed at 6:34 PM.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Minutes of July 8, 2024 – Regular Session
2. Claims for Payment
3. Clerk Report
4. Treasurer Report

Michael moved to approve the consent agenda. Amanda seconded the motion. Amanda questioned the minutes from the last meeting on the committee for sanitation and if a Council member needed to be on the committee. Autumn noted it was not necessary but up to the mayor, she noted the committee has staff members, Karen, herself, Jason, Mayor McClain, and Jeff Gabardi as a citizen representative. There was no further discussion. All voted aye. The motion passed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Review and Consideration of Utility Rate Committee Recommendations: Autumn reviewed a graph showing the bond ratio calculations to the required covenants. She then explained the separate water bond and sewer bond information broke down annually. She added she would be comfortable dropping the water bond but not sewer bond based on her projections. She stressed the calculations are contingent with collection rate remaining the same. Michael thanked Autumn for the information. There was a discussion about the annual change in the ration in water; Autumn noted it is affected on water connection fee, which is noted as non-system revenue, as these are new connection installs which fluctuate from year to year. Karen noted that while Autumn and herself were reviewing the bond covenants it states that if there is not enough bond reserve to pay the bond payments then operating and maintenance funds are used to make the payments. Autumn added it is kind of a double edge sword and again noted she would only be comfortable dropping the water bond for this year. Autumn also explained the \$1.18 change would provide an increase to the operating and maintenance of approximately \$26,000, but it would be approximately a \$34,000 decrease to the water bond revenue because of commercial and industry equivalencies. So, it is not an apples-to-apples exchange. Amanda noted she was personally comfortable this year but added it might not be possible every year. Autumn added after audit is complete this year she would like to discuss with Council the actual Fiscal Year 2024 numbers and look at a financial policy with the ratios and what is a good comfort zone. Mayor McClain questioned how often the ration could be checked, and Autumn noted it can only be checked annually after the audit is complete. Kelly commented he would like to see a small increase than get behind and added no one can see the future. He added he feels comfortable with where we are at. Marla stated she agreed with Kelly. Michael moved to decrease the water bon collection by \$1.18 and increase \$1.18 in the operating and maintenance fee from the rate committee recommendation. Amanda seconded the motion. Michael noted the figured are shown as a ratio and we are 25% above what we need. He added historically we have been conservative with the bonds, but more homes are being built that are paying into that revenue. There was no more discussion. There was a roll call vote on the motion. Michael voted yes, Amanda voted yes, Kelly voted yes and noted he was doing so in an effort to get along, and Marla voted yes and noted it makes her nervous. The motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Review and Consideration of Patterson Living Trust Subdivision Preliminary and Final Plat:

Marla moved to approve the Patterson Living Trust Subdivision Preliminary and Final Plat. Michael seconded the motion. Kelly noted this application had more preparation than from anybody. Michael added the city needs single family lots like this. There was no further discussion. There was a roll call vote. Amanda voted yes, Kelly voted yes, Marla voted yes, and Michael voted yes. The motion passed.

Review and Consideration of Nuisance of Property at 829 Aiken Ave: Rick Brook, Code Services, presented information regarding the property. Karen referred to a letter from July 15th and the attached Buhl City Code 3-2-4. She added the review at this stage was to determine if Council wanted to put it to a hearing. The owner would be notified of such and the hearing would be between Council and the owner, not the public. Mayor McClain questioned if the owner had been notified of this meeting; Karen stated he was not as to not confuse the process. Amanda also noted the owner had failed to appear in court; Rick confirmed that was accurate. Michael made a motion to move forward to a hearing. Kelly seconded the motion. Rick noted he had been working on this since March. Kelly questioned if the owner lived there; Rick confirmed he did and added the owner had communicated with him all of his ailments. Mayor McClain noted it looked like a fire hazard. There was a discussion about the different avenues Rick had tried to work with the owner to get the property cleaned up but nothing had changed except for the weeds were mowed in April. Michael noted he feels bad for the neighbors in situations like this. Rick concluded the owner was given a citation and he didn't show up on time to court so bringing it to Council was the next step. There was no further discussion. There was a roll call vote. Amanda voted yes, Kelly voted yes, Marla voted yes, and Michael voted yes. The motion passed.

Review and Consideration of Airport Runway Grant Application Submittal: Neil Ring, airport manager, and Kent Atkin with JUB Engineers presented to Council information for the proposed runway construction project. Neil explained the current runway asphalt is 40 years old. He detailed the history of the construction plans and the process that had taken place from the original cost they hoped to be \$2 million and the bid came in at \$4 million. That bid was rejected and it was rebid early this calendar year; the new bid came in at \$2.9 million. Neil added the FAA was tentatively coming in with 90%. Kent noted this was back before Council to submit the grant applications to the FAA; he noted it will come in as two different grants. He also noted the State of Idaho would come in with 5% and that would leave a 5% local match. Kent added the construction costs, admin fees, and construction engineering cost have the project at \$3.2 million. This would leave the local match at approximately \$160,000. Neil noted the airport is currently about \$80,000 short of that match; but would like to look at a loan from the city to be paid back. Kent added he had talked to the contractor about timeframe and he also explained the FAA had turned down other projects in other communities to do this project. Kent also explained the questions from the last time he was before Council regarding the benefits of the Buhl airport and referenced the annual report that was sent to Council members. He noted the Buhl airport is no slouch and a huge asset for the city. Neil also added the airport currently has a new hangar

being built for approximately \$160,000 and another one coming. He also discussed the Ag business through the three Ag Leases which have four times the business it used to be, and those planes are causing more damage to the runway because of their size. There was a discussion about the leases at the airport and a possible increase to the ag leases; the hangar leases were increased a few years ago which are in line with other airports. Michael noted \$80,000 is more than the total increase in property tax revenue.

Kent stated he would be back before Council again in this process. After these applications are submitted and if FAA awards the grants those would come back for Council consideration on acceptance, a contract with JUB for construction engineering, and a contract with Western Construction. Amanda questioned if it is doable for the city to loan the money. Autumn stated the loan would come out of the general fund balance which she noted is healthy but Council needs to keep in mind of other projects. She noted she didn't know how much or how many years it would take to pay back until she runs numbers. It was noted the last few years the airport fund balance had grown with the help of the three CARES grants, which are almost complete. Kent added the application is due in the next week to 10 days and added he would continue to look for matching funding to help cover the shortfall. Marla stated she was in favor of moving forward tonight in submitting the applications and noted it is a lot of money to leave on the table. Marla moved to approve the application submittal. Kelly seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. There was a roll call vote. Kelly voted yes, Marla voted yes, Michael voted yes, and Amanda voted yes. The motion passed.

Review and Consideration of Non-Interest-Bearing Checking Account for Right-of-Way Deposits: Kelly moved to approve opening a non-interest-bearing checking account. Both Amanda and Michael seconded the motion. Autumn stated this account was needed to hold the deposits for the right-of-way deposits as outlined the ordinance. There was no discussion. There was a roll call vote. Marla voted yes, Michael voted yes, Amanda voted yes, and Kelly voted yes. The motion passed.

Budget Discussion – Secondary Review of Admin, Planning & Zoning, Code Services, Police, Parks & Rec, Police Forfeiture, Streets, Library, Airport, Contingency, Water, Sanitation, Wastewater, Utility Grants & General Fund Information requested by Council: Karen began with a discussion about questions and confusion that had come from the “Piece of the Pie” discussion on June 24, 2024. She noted based on completing the minutes and comments made she had pulled the “Piece of the Pie” information from Autumn’s treasurer report. She also presented two worksheets, the first showing a 0% increase to wages which showed the full \$166,666 of available revenue. The second showed it will a 3% increase, which would leave \$124,000 to fund the proposed additional staff in the three departments. She stated at the meeting on June 24th those calculations worked for adding the positions and the 3% wage increase, but in the next step on July 8th with budget level 1 worksheets and more specific numbers on detailed operating & maintenance needs all three positions were not doable. The one left in the budget at this level was the code services position and then the 3% increases. Michael noted that it is hard with every meeting and increases should be growing naturally and noted this does clarify the process. Karen

added that with working through the budget process and the information that was reviewed for the bond ratio her and Autumn would like to review the budget process in October. She asked Council members to make note of the parts of the process that are beneficial and we will discuss to plan for next year. Amanda asked Autumn to clarify the three positions that were presented in “Piece of the Pie”. Autumn stated it was a full-time position in parks, a full-time position in code, and a 19.5 hour per week in the library. Michael stated the only one left in the budget worksheets is the full-time code; Autumn confirmed that information.

Autumn noted she did get the L2 that morning but those will be reviewed and calculated for the Special Meeting on July 29th, that night will be the last night to make changes before final review at the Special Meeting on August 5th.

Autumn began the going over the fund balance numbers that Michael had requested. She explained this is a hard comparison as there is a difference between budgeted and actual expenditures and revenues. She stated the spreadsheet shows the unexpended in the budget amount with salaries and operating & maintenance. But she also noted the difference between the total of budget unexpended and the increase or decrease in the general fund balance and it really depends on what happens in the fiscal year. Karen noted it is hard to define it done because certain revenues are not budgeted to pay certain expenses it is a total over all budget. Michael added he was looking to see if excess funds that should go to positions, but he could only see fluctuations and couldn't find money for creation of positions. Autumn agreed as she tried to find a trend. Karen added the only way to compare is if everything stayed exactly the same from year to year, which isn't possible. Mayor McClain asked if there were any other questions. Amanda asked about the parenthesis; Autumn stated that would be that department went over budget and use FYE 2019 in Admin as an example. The salaries were \$830.46 over budget but the operating & maintenance was \$14,386.02 under budget so the department as a whole was under budget. Mayor McClain asked if the helpful sheets could be included in the budget book. Amanda added she would like the ratio calculation sheet added.

Admin: Autumn noted there was no change. Amanda questioned if the fire alarm and security were two separate costs. Autumn said yes there is \$40,000 for the fire alarm and \$40,000 for security. Amanda also questioned if it was still the same fire alarm company. Karen stated it was, they have completed the inspections and have a few things to fix but updates are needed as parts are becoming obsolete.

Planning & Zoning: Autumn stated there was no change.

Code Services: Autumn stated there was no change.

Police: Autumn stated there was no change.

Parks & Rec: Autumn stated the \$20,000 for the pickle ball court was moved from a fund balance draw down to the grants line item.

Police Forfeiture: Autumn state there was no change.

Streets: Autumn stated there was no change.

Library: Autumn noted the Foundation contribution was decreased a few years ago to \$24,000, but the last and this year it was up to \$32,000. Jeff Gabardi told her to plan on the \$32,000 going forward. Autumn stated with this change the library no longer needs the \$6,000 from the general fund.

Airport: Autumn noted the AIP grant had been closed so it was removed.

Contingency: Autumn stated there was no change.

Water: Autumn updated Nathan's position and included the possibility of three licenses for the new employee.

Sanitation: Autumn stated there was no change.

Wastewater: Autumn stated there was no change.

Utility Grants: Autumn stated there was no change.

Michael moved to approve the level 2 budget sheets as presented. Kelly seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. There was a roll call vote. Marla voted yes, Michael voted yes, Amanda voted yes, and Kelly voted yes. The motion passed.

Consideration of Special Meeting on July 29, 2024: Michael moved to approve the special meeting on July 29th. Marla seconded the motion. Autumn noted the agenda would include the rate resolution based on decision at this meeting and another round of budget worksheets with the L2 numbers. The library will have a contribution increase based on L2 final amount and the remaining will be put in the admin contingency line item. Karen noted there was the special meeting already approved for August 5th for final budget approval. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and 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.

MEETING ADJOURNED – Michael moved that the meeting be adjourned; Kelly seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All vote aye. The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Karen Drown, City Clerk