

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SODA SPRINGS, CARIBOU COUNTY, IDAHO HELD FEBRUARY 2ND, 2022.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 5:00PM BY COUNCIL PRESIDENT, MITCH HART.

ROLL CALL SHOWED THE FOLLOWING PRESENT:

MITCHELL J. HART, PRES.
RYAN CARPENTER
RODNEY WORTHINGTON
SCOTT K. GAMBLE

EXCUSED: AUSTIN W. ROBINSON, MAYOR

ALSO PRESENT:	Austin E. & Jacklyne Robinson	Alan Skinner, Engineer
	Travene Armstrong	Tausha Vorwaller, Clerk
	Becky Christensen	Gregg Haney, Attorney
	Alicia Straube	Celeste Billman
	Lane Harris	Chief Scott Shaw II
	Gimhana Somasiri	CeJay Golightly
	Laura Lind	Lizzie Beutler
	Caleb Lind	Jacob Beutler
	Cindy Truchot	

The invocation was given by Councilmember Gamble, Council President Hart then led everyone in the 'Pledge of Allegiance'.

The previous meeting minutes were presented for review. Councilmember Gamble moved to approve the minutes of January 19th, 2022 and dispense with the reading. Councilmember Worthington seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

The accounts payable and payroll were reviewed. Councilmember Gamble moved to approve the accounts payable dated January 18th through January 31st, 2022 and the payroll for the month of January 2022. Councilmember Carpenter seconded the motion and asked about a \$1900 expense to Cobblestone. Council President Hart explained it was to provide lodging due to a recent sewer backup that is being resolved through the City's insurance. The high cost was discussed and it was clarified it was not a standard practice. Councilmember Worthington asked about the payment to Rocky Mountain Boiler and the monthly maintenance costs. Attorney Haney explained the monthly fee includes instrumentation and chemicals and he thinks this is the final bill for repairs. A vote on the motion was called. All in favor, motion carried

(SEE ATTACHED PAYROLL & ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTERS FOR DETAIL)

Council President Hart presented information about a new broadband internet option available to electric utilities. Avista Edge is launching a program to provide high speed internet wirelessly through a device connected to the electric meter. The new program would be facilitated through the City's billing but the install and maintenance would be done by Avista Edge. The Council discussed the idea and the franchise agreement with

Direct Communications. Attorney Haney stated he believes the new agreement is nonexclusive. Council President Hart pointed out the fiber optics that have been run through town and how Direct Communications is trying to expand the hard wire to increase speeds to users. Avista will also use the fiber but user connections will be wireless. The Council agreed it was worth exploring. Councilmember Worthington also suggested it may be a good option for the new housing development going in at the front of the Finlayson Subdivision. Council President Hart will continue to pursue the option.

Austin E. Robinson, representing the Soda Springs Lions Club requested the City's support for the Distinguished Young Women's Program. He requested \$450 to help provide scholarships to the participants. He noted they currently have 13 girls signed up this year and the program will be held at the Gem Valley Performing Arts facility in Grace. Councilmember Gambles moved to approve to sponsor the DYW program for \$450. Councilmember Carpenter seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

Cindy Eggleston Truchot nominated Becky Rose Christensen as a Soda Springs Super Hero. She detailed the special friendship she has with Becky and commended her for always being there for her family and helping others. She noted she is the full-time care giver for her mother along with helping out several other people who are elderly or have difficulties. Mrs. Truchot shared that Becky always drops what she's doing to help people out and feels she deserves recognition. She is an asset to the community. Council President Hart was pleased to honor Becky Christensen as a Soda Springs Super Hero.

Lizzie Beutler, local 9th grade student and member of the Family Career & Leaders of America made a presentation to the City Council regarding recycling. She expressed her desire to start a recycling program in the community. She detailed the benefits of recycling and shared ideas on how to get it started. She provided statistics and research she has done talking to local recycling companies and the local garbage contractor. She suggested a community education program was needed in order for recycling to be successful and she would like to help provide that education. She discussed the need for bins to sort items and that are easy to unload and a truck that can haul large amounts to save on transportation costs. She understands it will take funding and there may be a grant available and is working with Head Librarian, Cindy Erickson to apply for the grant. Council President Hart asked Ms. Beutler to put together a list of next steps and a basic outline of the plan it would take to accomplish her proposal. The Council commended Ms. Beutler on a great presentation and thanked her for the outstanding research. It was mentioned the City owns two bins currently and one is located in the City yard and used to collect metal the other is at the County landfill. Council President Hart added people may want to help pay for recycling in order to feel good about improving the environment.

City Recreation Director, Celeste Billman gave a report to the City Council on the numerous recreation programs provided. She detailed the calendar of sports and participation numbers that show 1/3 of the participants come from outside the City limits and the soccer program is ½ outside City. She emphasized how amazing the School District is to communicate with and work with and how much she appreciates them. She also thanked

her Supervisor Justin Hansen for being awesome to work with and how helpful he and his crew is. Director Billman noted her biggest struggle is gym time with winter sports. She shared a plan to split the 1st and 2nd grade basketball up next year to help balance the gym time needed. She mentioned she also struggles with getting referees and umpires and works hard to keep enlisting younger people and training them up. Other small issues include the normal frustrations that sometimes happen when it comes to competitive sports and complaints about having to travel out of town. She explained due to low participant numbers in some of the programs the City partners with neighboring areas. For example, baseball and softball is played with the Preston League. She also mentioned a new activity she plans to include with the 4th of July Slam-n-Jam event which will be a bean bag bullseye (aka corn hole) tournament. The Council thanked her for providing this great information. Councilmember Gambles commended Director Billman on being one of the most organized people he has ever met and how phenomenal she has been during these times of the COVID pandemic and keeping things running. He reiterated what an outstanding job she does and receives no complaints. Councilmember Worthington asked what the Recreation Department's needs were. Director Billman stated aside from needing additional gym facilities she could really use a part-time helper which is hard to find because it is a nights and weekend job.

Water/Wastewater Supervisor, Dan Squires expressed his concerns and desire to fast track the bridge crane installation project at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). He pointed out the project had been in the budget for the last three years and he is growing concerned about the necessity of the bridge crane to replace the bearings that support the STM Aerotors. The preliminary engineering plans were discussed which include a two-ton hoist Engineer Skinner stated. Supervisor Squires shared information he acquired from the Westech service technician that advised him the hoist needed to be at least five tons. Council President Hart suggested getting the engineering done and getting estimates. The logistics of installing the crane in the WWTP was also discussed which will probably require the roof to be removed. Council President Hart suggested the designers didn't plan for maintenance. Councilmember Carpenter asked if this was a good time to look at another engineer. Engineer Skinner mentioned it takes time to get another engineer on board. Council President Hart added there are not a lot of options with the experience and suggested he could ask for a peer review favor from an engineer he works with. Councilmember Worthington shared how impressed he was by the amazing wastewater treatment plant operation after recently touring the facility. He noted there was definitely pride in planning and forethought for if something goes down there is a backup. There has also been pride in maintaining and it and it's important to have the tools needed to maintain it safely. Council President Hart assigned Engineer Skinner and Supervisor Squires to work hand in hand. The time frame will depend on availability of contractors and materials but the bidding process should be able to be completed in a month.

During the time for citizen input local resident and business owner, Brock Byram asked if there was a way to provide an email notification about upcoming meetings. Clerk Vorwaller mentioned she thought there was an option on the website to sign up for these types of notifications and she will check into it.

Attorney Haney recognized Direct Communications for a program they recently implemented of donating to the School District for each new hook up. The total donated in the last 12 months is \$13,400. He commended them on giving back to the community.

The Fire Department repairs were discussed. Engineer Skinner provided a copy of the proposal previously submitted to tear out, compact and reinstall the driveway. The ownership of the building is still in question. There is \$50,000 in the budget and another \$50,000 agreed to be paid by the City's liability insurance. Council President Hart asked Attorney Haney to contact the County's Attorney and explain the problem and see if the County wants to give us the building or help with the repairs. Chief Squires stressed the need to get the building repaired and made usable. Eventually the Department needs a bigger building to accommodate the equipment and a larger meeting area but need the current building fixed for now.

Councilmember Gambles excused himself from the meeting to attend another commitment.

The project list was again reviewed. Engineer Skinner provided some updates on the costs for the Hydro Plant switch gear and generator rewind which will total \$225,000 to \$250,000. He mentioned a few issues he and Director Hansen were working on and they hope to have it back up and running by spring runoff.

Councilmember Worthington touched on a few items related to the project list. He noted the hydro plant generation and City power usage numbers provided by the Clerk and asked for some understanding. Council President Hart explained how the generation from the hydro plants offset the City's own power usage and then also touched on how the City resells purchased power to the citizens for a profit. He pointed out how the City continues to benefit from the hydro plants even with the cost to refurbish them. He also noted the City is fortunate to have the power funds and the funds balance it provides.

Councilmember Worthington then expressed concerns about two City meters that were not working so the City didn't have accurate usage data and suggested they be replaced. City Director, Justin Hansen stated he was working on it. Director Hansen also gave an update on the snow plow trucks; based on quotes he attained, a brand-new unit will be \$125,000 to \$200,000 and the chassis are 18 months out to get. He has seen a few used for around \$65,000 and suggests trying to find some good used trucks from a large fleet that are well maintained. Councilmember Worthington suggested purchasing multiple trucks that are uniform in make, model, etc. to make it easier to maintain. Director Hansen agreed that would be his choice also if possible. Councilmember Hart agreed if we can find two available let's get them.

Councilmember Worthington commended the Police Department on the school resource program which has been a great success. He noted the comments he gets from parents who say it is nice to see the officers walking the halls. He asked Chief Shaw what the Police Departments needs were. Councilmember Hart pointed out they got new cars and new employees. Officer Golightly mentioned the recent grant will provide new computers, scanners and barcode readers but it's on back order for another three months. He also

mentioned they will start providing extra school resource time which may put salaries over budget.

An update and conversation was held regarding the Ender's building. Attorney Haney reported Idaho Fire and Flood had started on the remediation and restoration of the damage caused by the mold problem. It was discovered today that the subfloor will have to also be replaced under the damaged laminate in the ballroom area. Attorney Haney also reported the City's liability insurance carrier has denied the claim but the restoration company will discount the cost because of not dealing with an insurance company. The options of what next to do with the building was discussed. Council President Hart mentioned the building has a \$1,000 monthly carrying cost and he recently spoke to an interested party they may want to run the hotel and museum. Historic financial information and a draft lease was shared with them and they were going to submit their proposed business plan. Another option to consider would be to operate ourselves in some form and keep the museum open at least seasonally. The other option would be to sell/auction off the building and work out the details regarding the museum items. The transfer of the liquor license was also reviewed. Attorney Haney stated he has asked the prior lessee to transfer the license to the City which could possibly buy the City an additional 90 days before losing the license. The Council agreed the liquor license adds value to the building. Attorney Haney will follow up with the lessee. The Council agreed they wanted to try and make a decision on what to do with the building in the next three months.

Councilmember Carpenter moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:10pm, seconded by Councilmember Worthington. All in favor, motion carried.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL THIS 16TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2022.

Austin W. Robinson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Tausha Vorwaller, Clerk