MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SODA SPRINGS, CARIBOU COUNTY, IDAHO HELD NOVEMBER 17TH, 2021.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 5:00PM BY AUSTIN W. ROBINSON, MAYOR.

ROLL CALL SHOWED THE FOLLOWING PRESENT:

AUSTIN W. ROBINSON, MAYOR
MITCHELL J. HART, PRES.
JON D. GOODE
ROBERT M. LAU
SCOTT K. GAMBLES

EXCUSED:

ALSO PRESENT:

Bryce Somsen
JoAnna Ashley
Ryan Carpenter
Rod Worthington
Austin & Jackie Robinson
Brock & Paige Byram
Barry Oates

Alan Skinner, Engineer
Tausha Vorwaller, Clerk
Gregg Haney, Attorney

Chief Scott Shaw II
CeJay Golightly

The invocation was given by Bryce Somsen, Mayor Robinson then led everyone in the 'Pledge of Allegiance'.

The previous meeting minutes were presented for review. Councilmember Goode stated he had reviewed and noted no changes. He then moved to approve the minutes of November 3rd, 2021 in their current draft form and dispense with the reading. Councilmember Lau seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

The accounts payable were reviewed. Councilmember Goode moved to approve the accounts payable dated November 1st through November 15th, 2021, seconded by Councilmember Gambles. There were no questions regarding the bills. All in favor, motion carried.

(SEE ATTACHED ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER FOR DETAIL)

The project list was reviewed. Engineer Skinner reported the delineators and signage had been installed on 3rd West Street to address the Soda Sip egress safety concerns. He shared photos and Director Hansens initial observations of how the traffic was reacting to the new flow. The 46kV transmission line upgrade project was discussed. Engineer Skinner presented a letter received from Rocky Mountain Power's area supervisor stating he thinks the City needs approval from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) in order to move forward with the transmission line upgrade. Engineer Skinner mentioned he doesn't understand why we would need this because we are not adding capacity. He spoke with BPA representatives and the transmission group who agreed and will be meeting internally to discuss. Due to scheduling the work will not be able to get done this year. An additional cost for the repairs/upgrade to the #4 hydro plant was explained by Engineer Skinner. The red board, which is directly behind the windings is flaking off and will need to be replaced.

This will require removal of the windings even though they are okay. He reminded everyone the components are 62 years old. This will increase the cost by an estimated $40,000 for an estimated total of $125,000. Councilmember Hart took the opportunity to address some proposed legislation spurred by increased property values and taxes that may limit the City's ability to build up fund balances. He pointed out how this is the perfect example of why City's should be able to save for a rainy day. The City has been responsible with City funds, saving for these types of repairs and can now pay cash and not have to borrow or bond to cover the cost. Councilmember Goode added a reminder to our residents of the break on property tax costs last year due to the COVID funds received but this year's taxes will be back up to normal but there was not a big increase.

JoAnna Ashley of 120 East 3rd South addressed the Mayor and Council as a resident of the City. She wanted to point out the need to have a plan in place and take steps as a City to be eligible for infrastructure upgrade and expansion funding that may become available. She noted she understood it will be up to the City to apply for those funds and there are always stipulations that come with grant funds. Mrs. Ashley mentioned attending a recent visit by Speaker of the House Bedke who confirmed the infrastructure funding bill that just passed. His advice to local governments on how to be eligible for the funds was to make sure your house was in order. Mrs. Ashley pointed out her knowledge of grant funds for water projects requiring the installation of water meters and used Grace as an example who recently installed meters as part of a water upgrade project. She requested the City consider adopting an ordinance that would require water meters be installed for all new developments. She suggested now was the time with new housing developments in the works including the 36-home development already approved. She feels this is the type of proactive step that needs to be taken to show the City is being responsible in order to be eligible for the funds. Starting to install meters and track usage will help the City create a baseline on how to establish a fee structure that will not affect the City's current revenue. Councilmember Hart responded to Mrs. Ashley stating the point was well taken. He shared that in anticipation of the funds that may become available the City has been preparing several infrastructure projects to be shovel ready and he believes the City's house is in order. He expressed concerns about heading down the meter path and being forced to install meters through the whole town due to an unfunded mandate. His preference would be to proceed cautiously and stay in control of the situation. Councilmember Hart also mentioned the City is working on the water pressure issues throughout the City and may be able to meter zones to evaluate where and why excessive water is being used.
Mrs. Ashley posed the question to the Council asking if they are willing to look at phasing in meters with all new connections, providing the meters with the cost offset by the connection fee. Councilmember Hart agreed we need to conserve resources but want to be in control and not mandated and a suggestion can become a consent order using Formation Spring as an example. He thanked Mrs. Ashley for her homework. Councilmember Lau agreed with Councilmember Hart that if we start metering a portion of town, we may be forced to meter everyone. He stated it makes sense to start with new construction and everywhere else you pay for water but it has to be done consistently and it may be a risk of having to come up with millions to meter everyone. Mrs. Ashley thanked the Council for their time.

Mr. Barry Oates, Park Ridge Subdivision developer, addressed the Mayor and Council requesting an abatement to the water and sewer connection fees for the new subdivision. He thanked the City Council for approving the subdivision and is trying to move forward as soon as possible with construction but is having trouble finding contractors. He pointed out the high cost of installing all the utility infrastructure during this inflationary time. He asked for an abatement of the upfront connection fees for the lots he develops, which it is his intention to build out each home on the 18 twin home lots. If he retails the lot, the City could collect the connection fee from the individual developer/home owner. He detailed the requested abatement; no water connection fees for phase one or phase two which includes 18 twin home lots (36 doors), he would pay sewer connection fees for phase one on a per trench cut bases versus the per unit charge for the six twin home lots (12 doors), and no sewer connection fees for the 12 twin home lots (24 doors) of phase two. For the phase one sewer connections he proposed a three-foot (3') trench with two sewer service lines connected to the main. Water/Wastewater Supervisor Dan Squires expressed his concern about tapping the mainline with two connections that close together and it compromising the integrity of the concrete mainline. He suggested at least four feet (4') between connections. Mr. Oates understood the valid concern and will try to find another way that will not degrade the existing mainline. The Council thanked Supervisor Squires for his input. Mayor Robinson stated he didn't think Mr. Oates request was unreasonable. Councilmember Hart asked what the effect of the abatement will have on the City revenue. Engineer Skinner estimated it would be a loss of $63,000. Councilmember Lau pointed out the increased property tax revenue would offset that loss. Councilmember Goode pointed out you can't consider the property tax revenue which is General Fund and the lost revenue will be to the enterprise funds. Councilmember Hart noted he didn't have huge heartburn with the request as long as everyone else all agreed. Councilmember Lau moved to approve granting the abatement as requested by Mr. Oates for the Park Ridge Subdivision contingent on working with the Water/Wastewater Supervisor and Engineer Skinner on best practices. Councilmember Hart seconded the motion. Councilmember Goode asked how and who will keep track of which units will be charged the connection fees if retailed by Mr. Oates. Mr. Oates stated it is not part of his business model to retail the lots. Councilmember Goode noted his concern that if he did end up selling the lots without building on them it would put the burden on the City to keep track. Mr. Oates suggested it could be tracked and determined by who applies for the building permit. A vote on the motion was called. All in favor, motion carried. Mr. Oates thanked the Council for their consideration. The Mayor and Council thanked Mr. Oates for investing in the community.

During citizen input, Ryan Carpenter, Councilmember-Elect thanked the City for allowing him and Councilmember-Elect, Rod Worthington to attend the six-hour Association of Idaho Cities (AIC) training stating it was very worthwhile. They noted and briefly discussed the legislative conversation regarding fund balances and the concern over the shift of property taxes from residential to commercial. Councilmember Goode pointed out the exceptional resource AIC is. During citizen input local business owner Brock Byram suggested citizen input be at the end of the meeting.

Mayor Robinson also shared some old news articles he was privileged enough to get to look at out of a scrap book dating from 1914 to 1954 showing the original cost of the City's hydro plant installation. The original plant was built new for $125,000 and has not been updated since it was built. He also shared some historical costs for the schools; the Hooper Elementary was built for $350,000 and a bond of $3 million built the grade school, vocational shop and the Wayan school in the 1950's. The Mayor noted at today's inflation the cost would be $31 million.

Engineer Skinner reported he has got comments back from several staff on the pressure reducing valve (PRV) project and the Main Street project. Forsgren is working on the design and prints for the 4th South project and has sent five letters of interest to the Local Highway Technical Assistance Council (LHTAC) for grants. Councilmember Hart asked to consider installing meters at the point of the new PRV's to evaluate usage in different zones of the City.

Councilmember Goode presented a draft letter of support from the Mayor and Council for the Husky 1/North Dry Ridge phosphate mine. The Council reviewed. Councilmember Hart moved to approve authorizing all to sign the letter of support as drafted. Councilmember Lau seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried. Councilmember Gambles also encouraged everyone to go to the Itafos-Conda website and support the new mine by submitting a letter which is really simple.

The Clerk presented the updated fee schedule resolution which incorporates the two minor changes approved by the Council the prior meeting. The changes included decreasing the cost of copies to 10 cents and removing the water connect/disconnect fee during business hours. Councilmember Lau moved to approve Resolution 2021-6 updating the fee schedule effective December 1, 2021. Councilmember Goode seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

Engineer Skinner briefly reported on attending the citizen advisory committee meeting regarding the update to the County's comprehensive plan. He noted everyone should have got a flyer requesting them to participate in the survey he printed and shared. County Planning & Zoning Clerk, JoAnna Ashley added there will be another survey in the Spring and they will also be gathering input at the County fair. She thanked the City for participating in the citizen advisory committee.

Councilmember Lau reported he is working on the revised storage container/accessory building ordinance with Engineer Skinner and Attorney Haney.

The official canvassed election results from the November 2nd, 2021 City election were received from the Caribou County Clerk and Commissioners. The Council reviewed the results. Councilmember Goode moved to approve and accept the official canvassed election results as received. Councilmember Lau seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried. The Council, County Commissioner and staff in attendance discussed the population discrepancy in the four precincts which the County is working on addressing.

(See attached copy of election results – original on file)

Mayor Robinson presented a letter of interest from resident and local educator, Jennifer Collins to join the Greater Soda Springs Community Development Committee (GSSCDC). Councilmember Hart also mentioned he had a couple of recommendations for committee appointments he would like to first discuss with the Mayor before presenting the names. The Mayor recommended the appointment of Jennifer Collins. Councilmember Lau moved to approve the appointment of Jennifer Collins to the GSSCDC, seconded by Councilmember Goode. All in favor, motion carried.

Councilmember Hart mentioned a few items to wrap up prior to the first meeting of the new year some of which Councilmember Lau already touched on.

Councilmember Lau moved to approve entering into executive session pursuant to I.C. 74-206(1)(f) to communicate with legal counsel regarding probable litigation. Councilmember Goode seconded the motion. A roll call showed the following vote:

Those voting aye:	Mitch Hart	Those voting nay:	none
	Scott Gambles		
	Robert Lau	Absent:	none
	Jon Goode		

Motion Carried.

Councilmember Goode moved to exit executive session, seconded by Councilmember Hart. All in favor, motion carried.

Councilmember Goode moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:45m, seconded by Councilmember Gambles. All in favor, motion carried.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL THIS 1ST DAY OF DECEMBER, 2021.

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Austin W. Robinson, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Tausha Vorwaller, Clerk