

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SODA SPRINGS, CARIBOU COUNTY, IDAHO HELD MARCH 23RD, 2022.

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

ROLL CALL SHOWED THE FOLLOWING PRESENT:           AUSTIN W. ROBINSON, MAYOR  
MITCH HART, PRES. via telephone  
RYAN CARPENTER  
RODNEY WORTHINGTON  
SCOTT K. GAMBLES

EXCUSED:

ALSO PRESENT:     Mark Steele                                     Alan Skinner, Engineer  
                          Paul Gritton                                     Tausha Vorwaller, Clerk  
                          Aubrey Holsten                                     Gregg Haney, Attorney  
                          Brandon Holsten  
                          Brock & Paige Byram                                     Justin Hansen  
                          Robyn Thomas                                     Dan Squires  
                          Steve & Nekelle Smith                                     Chief Scott Shaw II  
                          Tony Salvi                                     CeJay Golightly  
                          Celeste Billman

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

The Mayor noted everyone was in attendance and Councilmember Hart by video conference.

The previous meeting minutes were presented for review. Councilmember Gambles moved to accept the minutes of March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 and dispense with the reading. Councilmember Carpenter seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried. Councilmember Worthington noted the delivery of the LED light bulbs courtesy of the City and thanked Engineer Skinner for his work on it.

The accounts payable were reviewed. Councilmember Hart moved to approve the accounts payable for March 1<sup>st</sup> through March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022, seconded by Councilmember Worthington. Councilmember Gambles asked about the ICRMP payment for the City's liability insurance. The Clerk clarified payments were made twice a year. A vote on the motion was called. All in favor, motion carried.

(SEE ATTACHED ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER FOR DETAIL)

Paul Gritton, local resident and business owner reported on a group establishing a means of emergency communications in case of no power or cell service. The group consisting of members of the local amateur radio club along with Ron Meyers and Eric Hobson got the idea from a similar project in Wyoming. They are calling it the 208 project which will use channel 20 tone 8 on the GPS radios owned by many residents or available for \$30 to \$50. The group hopes to educate the community of the pre-planned communication option in

case on an emergency and are working to include Grace and Bancroft. They are also considering trying to attain funds and approvals to install a repeater on Soda Point. Mr. Gritton clarified this is not a replacement for 911 and would only be used if all other methods of communication failed. Police Chief Shaw and Fire Chief Squires supported the project and Mayor Robinson stated he was thrilled about it. Mr. Gritton asked if the City could help get the word out about this new organized method of communication in case of a disaster. Councilmember Hart suggested the group also work with the LDS church on coordination. Councilmember Worthington thanked Mr. Gritton for making the presentation.

Aubrey Holsten thanked the Mayor and Council for letting her speak to them on behalf of the Caribou County Rodeo Team. She asked if the City would help sponsor the team explaining funds contributed are used for things like coats and scholarships. The Mayor supported sponsoring the Rodeo Team for at least the same amount as last year which was \$250. Councilmember Hart moved to sponsor the Caribou County Rodeo team for \$250, seconded by Councilmember Worthington. All in favor, motion carried. Councilmember Carpenter thanked Miss Holsten for being willing to stand up and speak to the Council and for being involved.

Engineer Skinner reported the LED light bulbs were delivered to 1566 accounts. Each account holder will receive a 4-pack of light bulbs. The cost from Bits Ltd. was \$26,000. Councilmember Hart mentioned the Post Office was a little surprised and very busy the day they arrived.

Tony Salvi, new owner of MR&E, the City's garbage contractor, along with his daughter and son-in-law, Steve & Nekelle Smith presented a request to increase garbage rates due to the increasing costs of equipment and transportation. The proposed increase includes a 10% increase to residential rates and a new method for calculating commercial rates based on the number of pick-ups per week. The new commercial calculation will result in varying increases so they are not proposing an additional percentage increase to the current commercial rates. Councilmember Hart noted the last increase was in 2019. Mrs. Smith mentioned they plan to review the rates yearly going forward but, if possible, would like this increase to be effective April 1<sup>st</sup>. The Clerk explained a public hearing will be required because the increase is more than 5%. Councilmember Hart moved to approve the requested garbage rates of a 10% residential increase and the new commercial calculation based on the number of pick-ups per week. Councilmember Gambles seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried. The clerk will schedule the public hearing and prepare the rate resolution.

Attorney Haney reported meeting with the Caribou County Commissioners regarding the fire station ownership. He stated another meeting to discuss it was set for Monday, March 28th at 10:45am and he will hopefully have a response or answer.

Engineer Skinner stated there is no real update on the bridge crane project. He stated the engineers are working on it and he should have design prints by next meeting.

Recreation Director, Celeste Billman presented a proposal to construct a new baseball diamond quad on the south end of Kelly Park to be used specifically for t-ball and coach pitch. She detailed the baseball and softball programs provided by the City and the overlapping schedules for games and practices that warrant the development of these new diamonds. Director Billman mentioned the High School also uses this area for cross country track events and she discussed this proposed facility with SSHS Coach, Jeff Horsley. Mr. Horsley would prefer the City not interfere with their use and instead only put in three new diamonds. Director Billman stated she considered his concerns and has adjusted the quad further to the east which she feels will address Mr. Horsley's concern and allow the track events to still be able to utilize the area. The new diamonds will have grass infield, fences, backstops, player benches and spectator bleachers. The Council viewed pictures of the area and layout of the diamonds. Preliminary cost quotes were reviewed and it was mentioned the local fence contractor has some fence stored the City paid for several years ago that was never installed. City Director Hansen added they continue to work on the irrigation system at Kelly Park but this new facility will not require any changes. Director Billman explained the area was used for soccer for a couple of years but it didn't work well at that location. The budget was reviewed. The Recreation budget has \$20,000 budgeted which is about half of what is needed. Clerk Vorwaller recommended the additional funds come from the Parks budget. Director Hansen stated all the work will be done in house except the fence and concrete. The Council supported the construction of the quad with funding being found. Director Billman then asked if it was okay to proceed with removing the south diamond back stop, bases and bleachers in City Park which are no longer used and will help provide more room for the soccer and flag football fields. Councilmember Carpenter supported the idea and stated Director Billman should be telling the Council what is needed and what she is doing instead of asking. He expressed his opinion that she was hired to do a job and is doing a great job. Councilmember Gambles agreed Director Billman does an excellent job.

Director Billman then also asked the Mayor and Council's opinion about upgrading the tennis court and converting half to pickle ball courts. She mentioned it would need a lot of work not just to the surface but also the posts and net cranks need replaced. The Council discussed how much use the courts get and that a past estimate to resurface was over \$100,000. Robyn Thomas of Grace, Idaho offered her opinion based on information from the Southeast Idaho Council of Governments (SEICOG) that the City is going to see more retirees move in and with this new demographic there may be more use, especially of pickle ball courts. Councilmember Hart asked if pickle ball was just a passing fad like the disc golf course. He added the Council has been wrestling with the tennis court issue for a while and maybe it's time to just take them out. Councilmember Worthington agreed they are an eyesore and not being used and suggested moving forward with pulling them out and utilizing that space. He also suggested considering a new vision for pickle ball possibly at City Park.

During citizen input Mayor Robinson mentioned with the rising gas prices it is a good opportunity to support local merchants and businesses who care about our local schools, groups and civic clubs. Councilmember Carpenter added he is thankful for the professional directors the City has that care about the jobs they are doing for the citizens.

City Director Hansen presented a proposal and options to upgrade the playground equipment at Kelly Park. He expressed his appreciation for the Council's support of projects they are trying to move forward on and stressed the importance of coming together and respecting each other. He proceeded with showing options for new playground equipment which up to \$94,000 was budgeted. He noted the City has a lot of parks and it is a sense of pride to the community. Most of the equipment has been there a long time and needs updating mostly due to safety concerns. He presented an option to join a nationwide purchasing co-op available to government agencies in order to get best prices on equipment and not have to do formal bidding. Attorney Haney has reviewed the program. Director Hansen explained the City crew would do site preparations prior to the equipment installation and then also do the finishing work of putting in sand or wood chips. It would be a minimum of 10 to 12 weeks after finalizing the order to get the equipment. The Council asked Director Hansen to check on the equipment warranties and come back with specifics on the site preparation. In the mean time they authorized him to proceed with joining the purchasing co-op.

Councilmember Hart presented a breakdown of the Enders Building revenue and expenses since the City received the building. The City has expended almost \$170,000 on operation, maintenance and repairs and it currently costs \$2500 a month to maintain. He also offered a hypothetical timeline to auction off the building and the steps it would take if the Council made that decision which would take basically 90 days. The Council discussed at length whether to update the appraisal of the building. Councilmember Hart requested if the building was not put up for auction right away that it at least be made available to the public and tourists through the summer. Attorney Haney reported the restoration company was supposed to be finished this week and he will do a walk thru on Monday. Councilmember Worthington requested a tour of the building on Friday. The Council discussed and considered leasing options. Councilmember Hart mentioned recent inquiries fell through because no one really wants to lease without guarantee that the building will not be auctioned off out from under them. He also explained covering costs was hard with the past lease and the City being a landlord was difficult. Mayor Robinson shared an idea; he knows the building has cost a lot of money but he's been hearing some would like a recreation center and maybe the Enders could be the foundation of that and use the property to the back to construct a steel building with basketball courts and bleachers and a path from the Enders to the new building. Another idea would be to allow someone to come in and sell concessions. The Mayor also suggested asking the Historical Society to man the museum for a small donation. Councilmember Hart summarized all the questions and options and asked if there should be a public work meeting to share ideas. The Mayor pointed out the original lease of the building was by design the recommendation of a community committee. Councilmember Worthington expressed his strong desire to move forward with the appraisal update and schedule a public meeting as soon as possible. The Council agreed and scheduled a public meeting for April 14<sup>th</sup> from 6 to 8pm.

Engineer Skinner reviewed a couple items on the project list. He shared estimated costs to upgrade the utilities and sidewalks on Main Street. The water, sewer and asphalt would roughly cost \$820,000. All the sidewalk, curb and gutter would cost an additional \$860,000. Some very preliminary plans and elevations of the street were reviewed and the

water flow/ice issue briefly discussed. The 46kV transmission line project was again reviewed. Engineer Skinner presented a quote from Wasatch Electric, the City's substation maintenance contractor, to run the new line for \$213,000 which is considerably less than the original quote from Rocky Mountain Power. Wasatch's bid does not include costs associated with rock or restoration of landscape. Engineer Skinner recommended pursuing a company out of Idaho Falls that drills holes through rock and also a separate contractor to do the landscape work. Wasatch agreed to complete the project by August. The project will require a city-wide outage for approximately six hours. Water/Wastewater Supervisor, Dan Squires informed the Council the water tank pumps cannot be down that long or the City will be without of water. The Council and Staff discussed other options and agreed to rent a large generator to keep the water tank full during the power outage. Supervisor Squires will look into finding a generator suitable. The Council agreed to proceed with the project.

The Council reviewed the information on the new service truck found by Water/Wastewater Supervisor Squires. Councilmember Worthington moved to approve the final purchase of the truck for \$38,368 seconded by Councilmember Carpenter. All in favor, motion carried.

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

Those voting aye:	Mitch Hart	Those voting nay:	none
	Scott Gambles		
	Ryan Carpenter	Absent:	none
	Rod Worthington		

Motion Carried.

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

Councilmember Hart moved to approve the installation of meter and manhole at an estimated cost of \$17,000. Councilmember Carpenter seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

Councilmember Gambles moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:20pm, seconded by Councilmember Worthington. All in favor, motion carried.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL THIS 6<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF APRIL, 2022.

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Austin W. Robinson, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Tausha Vorwaller, Clerk