

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SODA SPRINGS, CARIBOU COUNTY, IDAHO HELD MARCH 6TH, 2024. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 5:00 PM BY MAYOR ROBINSON.

ROLL CALL SHOWED THE FOLLOWING PRESENT:

MITCHELL J. HART, PRES
RODNEY WORTHINGTON
PAUL GRITTON
RYAN CARPENTER
MAYOR ROBINSON

EXCUSED:

ALSO PRESENT:

Scott Shaw, Chief	Cejay Golightly
Gregg Haney	Dan Squires, Director
Alan Skinner, Engineer	Dean Stutzman
Hannah Beer, Clerk	Scott Flippence
Justin Hansen, Director	Dillion Liechty
Sherry Gritton	Tamra Hennesh
Terah Jones	O'Dell Christman
Ron Meyers	Dean Stutzman

The invocation was given by Ron Meyers. Mayor Austin Robinson led everyone in the 'Pledge of Allegiance'.

Review & Approval of Minutes & Accounts Payable:

The previous meeting minutes were presented for review. Councilmember Hart moved to accept the minutes of February 21st, 2024 as presented, and dispensed with in the reading. Councilmember Gritton seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried. Councilmember Worthington inquired about the \$35,066.54 check to M.R. & E Inc. Clerk Beer helped explain the contract with M.R. & E Inc to Councilmember Worthington. Mrs. Beer did recommend renegotiations of the contract because of all the work put forth by City employees with little compensation. Attorney Haney said the contract was made in 1981 and could be reviewed.

Councilmember Hart stated the benefit of continuing the current contract is that M.R. & E Inc. has to come to the City when the business wants to raise prices. Councilmember Carpenter inquired about the \$1300.00 payment to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and a ITECH payment for \$100.00. Director Squires spoke to the payment to DEQ, he said it was for a state regulated drinking water assessment. Clerk Beer informed Councilmember Carpenter that the ITECH payment reset was for his own phone. Councilmember Hart made a motion to approve the accounts payable dated February 20th- February 29th, 2024, and payroll dated February 1st- February 29th, seconded by Councilmember Carpenter.

(SEE ATTACHED PAYROLL & ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTERS FOR DETAIL)

Citizen Input:

Alana Burns addressed the Council about requesting a letter of support for a grant application through the Idaho Real-Estate Association. The grant is very general but funds need to be used to develop the community. Her original idea was to build shade covering for City Park, but the bid was \$95,000 and the grant is only for \$5,000. Mrs. Burns asked for suggestions from the Council about where the money should be spent, if awarded. The Council recommended she talk with Director Hansen about potential options. Laura Lind is also applying for a grant through the Idaho Wish Foundation for City Park. Councilmember Gritton suggested the grant money be used to develop the gun range. Mrs. Burns stated the association would probably not appreciate applying the money towards development of the local gun range. Engineer Skinner will be writing Mrs. Burns a letter of support for the park grant.

Ron Meyer- 260 West 2nd South

Mr. Meyer provided information about an emergency preparedness project he is working on with the Latter-Day Saints Church (LDS). Mr. Meyer is creating 5-to-15-minute videos regarding emergency response from the public. He would like to address a variety of different topics, anything from active shooters to gardening. He hopes to enlist the assistance of law enforcement to teach citizens how they should react in an emergency situation. Mayor Robinson stated he liked the idea a lot. Councilmember Hart gave an example of a power outage years ago in the County. The County was concerned about how to get the word out about a large power outage, so they used a church leader to communicate the information and people were informed within hours about the incident.

Scott Flippence- 164 South Main

Mr. Flippence spoke in regards to the Ender's building. He stated it sounds like the City is subsidizing the Ender's building and believes their utility is less than his. Mr. Flippence owns the Caribou Lodge and some apartments in town, and does not want to compete with the Ender's Hotel. Councilmember Worthington asked Mr. Flippence who pays for the sewer line when it breaks. Mr. Flippence responded and said he pays for repairs and thinks the City spends money flippantly. Councilmember Carpenter stated the Ender's building is a City owned asset and the City is not subsidizing the building. The tenant is paying \$3500 in rent which is utilities plus a 30% increase. Councilmember Hart said this similar situation happened in Lava Hot Springs. The State owned a motel and they leased out the motel for payment. Additionally, Councilmember Hart said after this year, the lease at the Ender's will double. Councilmember Worthington suggested he listens very carefully to his citizens and did not appreciate Mr. Flippence saying the Council spends money flippantly.

O'Dell Christman- 1141 Pioneer Drive

Mr. Christman appreciates the City trying to preserve the history of Soda Springs, he realizes this is a heavy weight for the City to carry. He supports the City's current actions on continuing ownership of the Ender's property. He also knows it is the City's responsibility to maintain the upkeep of the building, but a tenant helps offset the cost to the City.

Appointments:

Dean Stutzman with Business Phone Specialist gave a cost analysis to the City for them to switch from IDEACOM. He stated their phone system provides more features, 24/7 support, and is more affordable than IDEACOM. The contract would be lease to own and there would be zero dollars for start-up cost. After listening to Mr. Stutzman's proposal, the Council decided to let department staff look at the offer and then make a recommendation to the Council.

Austin E. Robinson asked the Council for a donation to the Distinguished Young Women Organization. All ticket sales and donations go straight to the participants. Councilmember Gritton asked if this donation would be paid at taxpayers' expense. Councilmember Hart replied and said the donation comes from power fees collected. Councilmember Hart made a motion to give \$550 to the Lions Club for the Distinguished Young Women Organization, seconded by Councilmember Worthington. All in favor, motion carried.

Unfinished Business:

Engineer Skinner said minor changes have been made to the project list. Mr. Skinner informed the Council that Maverik has its general contractor on site. Additionally, the PRV study is still being reviewed and snow plows have been built. Councilmember Gritton asked Director Squires if the lift station is on the project list. Director Squires said the lift station is not budgeted so it is on the project list.

Engineer Skinner shared a disadvantage community map. Mr. Skinner has met with the Forest Service and the Hispanic Foundation and was told these organizations will not release funds for anything construction that is not located in the disadvantaged communities. The City is limited on where money can be spent because certain locations are not categorized as disadvantaged. There is half a million dollars available if the City can show the money will be spent in a disadvantaged community.

The City received a draft agreement for Nutrien for the transfer of land from Nutrien to the City. Nutrien will assist over the next three years with the maintenance of the property and provide endowment money for upkeep. The City will possibly close on this deal by the end of March. The contract is for 600 acres with 200 of those acres under a conservation easement. Councilmember Worthington thanked both Engineer Skinner and Councilmember Hart for their hard work on this contract.

Attorney Haney received a copy of the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the Soda Springs School District and said it looks similar to the contract executed in 2022. However, Mr. Haney requested more time to review the document and to extend the contract date to May of 2025. The City will vote on this MOU at the next council meeting. Furthermore, Mr. Haney is also working on a Memoranda of Understanding with Caribou County. Attorney Haney suggested Chief Shaw, Doug Woods, and, the Sherriff get together and clarify some details regarding the contract before it is signed.

Mr. Haney stated junk notices will be mailed to community members to encourage spring cleaning. Letters will be sent asking residents and commercial businesses to clean up their property.

Mr. Skinner is working on getting the City's old transformer shipped to South Dakota. The company is ready but waiting for a break in the weather. However, oil and other materials will be shipped out earlier than the transformer. Engineer Skinner informed the Council about an application he submitted for water rights to the Soda Creek area. Ideally, the City will set up pumps behind the County shop to provide water to the cemetery. Previously, Nutrien did not apply for all the water rights in the area. So, once the change of ownership is completed, the City will apply for the last water right available.

Councilmember Hart discussed water conservation with the Council. With the change of season, he would like to develop a communication plan to encourage the community to be more diligent about water usages. Citizens do not need to water their lawns every day.

Councilmember Worthington revisited suggestions from last Council meeting about the Ender's building. One of those suggestions was to have the Greater Soda Springs Community Development Committee conduct a survey for the City in regards to the future of the Ender's Hotel. Councilmember Worthington wants financial numbers provided on this survey and to receive a response from the entire community. Councilmember Hart gave a different perspective on the Ender's. Over the course of 5 years, the City has spent \$28 per citizen to continue operation of the property. Councilmember Worthington made a motion for the City to conduct a survey that correlates the money spent on the Ender's and the future purpose of the building, seconded by Councilmember Gritton. Councilmember Gritton stated it is important to be better organized before the Council produces a survey for the community and therefore withdrew his second for the motion, the motion died.

New Business:

Councilmember Gritton wants to increase citizens participation, and believes having citizen input at the beginning and end of City Council meetings will help enhance communication. Councilmember Gritton made a motion to add a second citizen input, seconded by Councilmember Carpenter. All in favor, motion carried. Councilmember Gritton thanked everyone who showed up to the meeting.

Service missionaries with the Church of Latter-Day Saints reached out to the City looking for volunteer options. Clerk Beer said she inquired about this request with City insurance, and missionary volunteers would not be covered under the City's workman compensation plan; unless the City was willing to pay more money to change the current policy. Councilmember Hart said Attorney Haney will look into the request.

Councilmember Gritton said that Bayer is getting rid of some office furniture and wanted to get Council's permission to receive the donation. Councilmember Gritton said he is willing to pick up these items. Councilmember Gritton made a motion to accept Bayer's surplus office equipment, seconded by Councilmember Carpenter. All in favor, motion carried.

Executive Session:

Pursuant to Idaho code I.C. 74- 206 (1) (f) and I.C. 74-206 (1) (a) Councilmember Hart made a motion to move into executive session to discuss possible litigation and an employee situation, seconded by Councilmember Carpenter. Councilmember Hart made a motion to exit executive session, seconded by Councilmember Carpenter.

Councilmember Carpenter made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:08, seconded by Councilmember Worthington. All in favor, motion carried.

Austin W. Robinson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Andrea Haderlie, Clerk