

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SODA SPRINGS,  
CARIBOU COUNTY, IDAHO HELD MAY 15, 2024.**

**ROLL CALL SHOWED THE FOLLOWING PRESENT:**

Rod Worthington  
Paul Gritton  
Ryan Carpenter

**EXCUSED:** Austin W. Robinson, Mayor  
Mitchell J. Hart, Pres.

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Alan Skinner, City Engineer  
Andrea Haderlie, Clerk  
Scott Shaw, Police Chief  
Justin Hansen, Director  
Dan Squires, Director  
Thomas Smith, City Attorney

Doug Wood, Prosecuting Attorney  
CeJay Golightly, Sergeant  
Sherrie Gritton  
Brock Byram  
JoAnna Ashley  
Debbie Dumont

**1. Roll call & Additions to Agenda:**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 pm by Councilman Carpenter. Councilman Carpenter excused Mayor Robinson and Council President Hart. Director Hansen did the invocation. Councilman Carpenter led the pledge of allegiance. Councilman Carpenter noted that the council agreed to amend the agenda and tabled the Enders Community Survey discussion until the mayor and all council members were present.

**2. Review & Approval:**

Councilman Carpenter asked the council to review the minutes from our last meeting. Councilman Worthington commented that he would like to commend Clerk Haderlie that the minutes are thorough and appreciated, along with the details that are going into these. Councilman Worthington motioned that we accept the minutes as written. Councilman Gritton seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried. Councilman

Carpenter asked the council to review the accounts payable dated May 1-13, 2024. Councilman Gritton motioned to accept the accounts payable. Councilman Worthington seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried. Councilman Gritton questioned vendor number 1885 pump rebuild for Ledge Creek. Director Squires stated that it was budgeted and is set on a rotation schedule every five years to rebuild all pumps. Councilman Worthington questioned vendor 989 taser batteries replacement and how often they are replaced. Sergeant Golightly commented that they have a five-year contract, but the batteries are not covered. They ordered new tasers, and they came with a rechargeable dock. They are transitioning from batteries to rechargeable versus purchasing batteries every one to two years. Rechargeable must only be charged every 45 to 60 days to maintain them. Councilman Gritton questioned Chief Shaw about how speed-trailer would be reimbursed via grant. Chief Shaw stated yes, and it is on the agenda to discuss. Councilman Carpenter questioned vendor 11183 glass replacement for the Tally-ho building. Director Hansen mentioned that it looked like a rock had hit it and broken the window. Councilman Carpenter questioned vendor 10435—a charge for 42 cents. Clerk Haderlie stated it was an additional charge for the prepaid rooms for Caselle training her staff had attended. Councilman Gritton questioned the same vendor, General Enders, building supplies for \$674. Director Hansen stated it was a sump pump replacement; they took the spare from the Hydro plant to use at Enders and then

replaced them with additional spares at the Hydro plant and Enders.

**(SEE ATTACHED ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTER FOR DETAILS)**

**3. Citizen Input:**

Councilman Carpenter opened the floor for citizen input. Councilman Carpenter closed citizen input because there was no input from citizens.

**4. Appointments:**

There were no appointments.

**5. Unfinished business:**

Engineer Skinner mentioned meeting with Sunrise Engineering last Wednesday about the PVR study. They went out, took pictures of all locations, and are moving forward with prints and planning a presentation to the council on the 5th of June.

Update on Main Street: we've issued the notice of award. A+ Contractors is working on a schedule, the performance bond, and the payment bond. The project start date is the eighth of July.

He mentioned he is still working on that Ledger Creek grant; we're down the types of trees and spacing, as well as watering the trees. Councilman Carpenter asked if we were responsible for picking trees or if they had a list. Engineer Skinner said he thinks we like the trees we want if they match.

Councilman Gritton asked for an update on the crosswalk situation. Engineer Skinner stated that the new foreman had promised that it would be repainted within two weeks.

Engineer Skinner updated on Maverick. He provided pictures for the council to review the progress. He mentioned Liberty Dodge's progress, which they plan to finish in November.

Update on the fourplex construction: they're digging foundations and submitted three new building permit applications today, but they will switch them to slab on grade instead of basement.

Update on the Mullen shop is nearing completion. Update on the twin homes: they started the foundations for the following two twin homes and are moving forward.

**6. New Business:**

Chief Shaw said they applied for a speed-trailer grant through the National Highway Transportation Safety Department in February. They were awarded the grant stipulating that the city would pay for the speed trailer and reimburse the police department. It's going to help the police department out quite a bit. He mentioned that it doesn't take pictures or write citations. It is strictly for the person to observe their speed and correct it. It will also keep track of all the data so we can download and ping times for enforcement. The grant will reimburse that money back to the City, but it requires a 25% match. But what's nice about those grants is that they allow us to match by mileage, and they have already met that requirement for the grant. Councilman Gritton questioned if there were any other grants they had applied for. Chief Shaw mentioned they are applying for one of them right now, and it will be for our vests. DOJ grants, and the max we qualify for is \$3100.00 in October. Six vests need to be replaced by September or October. Sergeant Golightly stated that they apply for this grant every five years. It splits throughout the whole United States. Historically, we've been awarded anywhere from \$2400.00 to \$2,800.00. Councilman Gritton asked whether they have seatbelt grants. Chief Shaw mentioned they have seat belts, DUI, and aggressive driving grants. Sergeant Golightly stated they have been doing grants all year long and about \$13,000 in total so far. He mentioned the seatbelt grant starts May 20 to June 2; there's another one for the Fourth of July for impaired driving and aggressive driving in August and another for impaired driving for Labor Day weekend. Chief Shaw commented on the crossing walk grant; every time he walks the road, two or three people violate that, and we get many citations. Councilman Gritton asked how long it has been since the crosswalk grant. Chief Shaw stated a year. Councilman Gritton asked if the speed trial would increase or decrease citations. Chief Shaw commented that he is hoping to reduce that number. One of the issues we're faced with is that we've been short-handed with one officer out. We want to train the public

that the speed limit is 25 or 35 on most city streets.

Chief Shaw stated they would like to retire Cash; his last day will be May 24 because his certification will expire. He's been a great employee for the previous ten years. He works for food and tennis balls, has some health issues, and his eyesight has started to get a little bad. On average, departments he has talked to retire their dogs at 8 to 9 1/2 years. We want to see him live the rest of his life as a house dog. Councilman Gritton asked if Cash is a city-owned dog and, after his retirement, what becomes of him. Chief Shaw stated that Sergeant Golightly has agreed to home and keep him because he has been his handler and partner. Councilman Gritton asked if they needed something from the mayor and council to pass the city property ownership to him. Chief Shaw stated that he would. Councilman Carpenter asked if we were going to get another drug dog. Chief Shaw wants to wait a year or two because we need to review case law. Without going into detail, some rulings from judges render those dogs ineffective. Some court cases might have to go before the United States Supreme Court to be fully corrected. The Police Department pays the handler half an hour daily for dog maintenance; food is generally the cost. Councilman Carpenter clarified that our department hasn't had any rulings against our drug dog. Chief Shaw stated that judges elsewhere ruled against that. Councilman Gritton commented that, at least for the immediate future, our police department canine program is done. Chief Shaw stated yes. Councilman Gritton asked if there were other narcotics canines in the county. Chief Shaw noted that the county still has its dog. Sergeant Deputy Call runs Papi. Councilman Carpenter asked how much a drug dog would cost. Chief Shaw said we generally pay about \$10,000 for our last couple of drug dogs. Chief Bunderson's involvement with the company that we get them through, and he can offset some of the training costs associated with the handler. And when we get under, it's about two weeks of full training. He mentioned inflation, and we're looking at \$20,000.00. Councilman Carpenter suggested putting that in the new budget, and if we see a need, then it's in the budget; we can get the ball rolling a little sooner. He thinks that just the deterrent of the dog says something, and it's an invaluable resource not just for the drug dog but also for officer safety.

Sergeant Golightly stated he was interested in continuing. However, we have other officers coming up, and some are interested. Let them have a chance as well. Sergeant Golightly wanted to thank Chief Shaw and Chief Bunderson for allowing him to be a handler. And thank you to the City Council as well. It's been a great experience. We've had great community partners to work with in town, and many businesses let us train in their yards. We've had a lot of good community outreach, as mentioned with the young children and the high school deterrent; there is a kid named Cash who thinks the dogs are named after him. He wanted to thank the City Council for allowing him to do that. It's been a great ride, just rough numbers, over 350 pounds of marijuana, 25 pounds of meth, and a little over a pound of heroin, fentanyl, felony prescription drugs, LSD, MDMA, ecstasy, and cocaine; those are all things that he's taken out of this community. Councilman Gritton said thank you for your hard work and dedication to being a canine handler. He stated you're pointing towards your dog doing that, but that dog wouldn't have done those things if Cash didn't have you at the other end of the leash. Councilman Worthington asked if this could be published in our local paper about Cash's retirement.

Clerk Haderlie presented the projected budget calendar and what we need to get done for the budget this year. She emailed the council the quote for the State Insurance Fund in April. It's going down. Next year, the City will get a big break because big claims will fall off. Mark submitted renewal documents for ICRMP insurance. He has still not heard anything back from them, and as soon as he hears back, he will let Clerk Haderlie know. She presented the Council with a proposal for the cost of living raise for the employees of 2%, 3%, 3.5%, 4%, and 5%. Councilman Hart suggests a 3%. For Health Savings Account (HSA), currently, the city \$1,250 family / \$625 employee only – upfront, \$1 for \$1 match – up to \$1,250 family / \$625 employee only. Total available contribution from the city - \$2,500 family / \$1,250 employee only. Clerk Haderlie asked do you want to add or match more? Or do you want to keep it the same? Councilman Carpenter asked our department

heads. Do you utilize HSA? Director Skinner stated he has ever since it started. When he was working at Nu-West, it was set up to meet your deductible each year. It's in the neighborhood now. Suppose you take what the city puts in when you contribute. Councilman Carpenter asked what the deductible was. Director Skinner stated that the deductible was 500.00.

Director Squires stated he has used the HSA used it since day one and likes it. He hasn't had to use it. It also depends on what the insurance does if it stays the same. We can also keep the HSA contributions if the deductibles go down. To say one way or the other. He mentioned having one employee who does not take city insurance. The rest of them have the HSA. Councilman Carpenter asked if they felt like it was meeting their needs. Director Squires said he believed so.

Director Hansen suggested everyone in this room deals with daily the rising cost of health, medical procedures, whatever it is. Consider a choice to a city employee, rather than taking a 3% Cola. Could that 3% be going towards their deductibles? Have that go towards what they have to pay out of pocket? That might be more likely more valuable. He mentioned that he still has four young kids at home. And his insurance premiums are going up or more, coming out of his pocket for premiums and deductibles, which is a bigger deal to him than COLA. But that might be different for someone else. Because we jumped insurances from the year before, we had a max of \$3000.00; now, it is \$12000.00 for the family. Clerk Haderlie mentioned that two people have to meet it. Councilman Carpenter commented that we will have a meeting with Sam, and that'll be something we bring up. We will talk to him and get some different options for employees. Clerk Haderlie mentioned that a high deductible is hard on a family, and a high deductible on prescriptions is also challenging. Councilman Carpenter commented that our current prescription plan is messy and confusing, and we have to go to Grace to get prescriptions, which are cheaper without insurance. Director Squires stated back to the HSA that he always looked at it: Where would you find dollar-for-dollar matches on your money? There's no such thing as that. Clerk Haderlie mentioned that the copay plan has a \$500 deductible on prescriptions, which she doesn't think anybody realized until it was too late. Councilman Carpenter stated don't want to say we were sold a bill of goods; we have just explained some things that could have been more straightforward. And that's our fault for not doing the due diligence. Councilman Worthington asked if we could have the benefits meeting on a Friday. Clerk Haderlie stated yes. Councilman Worthington noted that he has previously negotiated different areas in that area. The difference is that he doesn't take that insurance, but he does understand some parts of the insurance part. He recommends that we have people there that are. Clerk Haderlie commented that she has ten years of billing health insurance and can provide input to the insurance company. Councilman Carpenter mentioned that all input is appreciated. Councilman Worthington mentioned it's very frustrating to him with insurance. It is the out-of-pocket and high deductibles, especially when you have four or five kids. That's the problem: we can do better. Councilman Carpenter said last year, just for all those in attendance, they estimated that cost per insurance would go up 12% to 16%. Our plan went up 26%, but that number was huge. We were in a scramble, but it was okay. What's available, pull it all together, and pick it. So we were trying to provide the employees with the maximum benefit and our citizenry with the least cost. It's a balancing act that we go through. We didn't know the questions at the time. Clerk Haderlie commented that it is hard to decipher what health insurance intends. Councilman Carpenter mentioned that's something that will do better as a city council. Because we all have a dog in the fight. Clerk Haderlie stated she doesn't have city insurance either. Having \$10,000 worth of medical bills is hard. Clerk Haderlie verified that the dental and vision are locked in for another year for premiums. Clerk Haderlie talked to Tyler, the health insurance broker, and he has been seeing between a 2% and 15% increase in health insurance costs.

Councilman Carpenter moved the discussion to utility rates. Clerk Haderlie stated the council would need to decide on increases for utilities at what percentage. Councilman Carpenter noted that historically, we've done 3% in the last two years. He asked Director Squires and Director Hansen if a three percent cover

would cover utility projects. Director Squires mentioned there's no lack of projects. Councilman Carpenter stated that's the balancing act to try to maintain, and three percent has worked. He noted that we need to do our best to lessen the hit that our customers will take. Director Hansen commented regarding rates on power; when we do our budget presentations, there will be some requests for some rather costly repairs to our substation, and we need to take that into account on power. We have some outdated equipment.

Director Hansen presented the Roads Scholar Payplan to the council for approval. There are few opportunities for further training in his department, streets, and power. Additional education or training is needed to benefit the city and the employees. As we invest in our employees, the value added to the town is to help our employees get more qualified and better pay. He proposed basing it on the same rates. There are only two L tacks, one for the local highway and the other for the regional road Technical Assistance Council. They have two programs: there's a Scholar Program, which is a level one, and a Road Master program, which is a level two, and you have for each one, they have the core classes to complete, then have a certain amount of electives that you have to take to get that program done. When the employee completes the training, give them an additional 1% Bonus and a 4% pay increase to their wage if they continue and do the Roadmaster 1% bonus amount of 5%. Some classes are still in person at different Pocatello or Idaho Falls locations. That's a 9% jump in wages between the two certifications. The Idaho Road Scholar Program allows local road professionals in our state to be recognized for completing training courses. The program curriculum is designed to provide participants with the fundamentals of safety, management, advanced technologies, and exposure to various other topics relevant to the transportation field. Through this program, the local agencies will also be allowed to develop the agency's greatest asset – its employees. It will also help out with grants. Councilman Carpenter mentioned it's a benefit to our city. Suppose you have guys patching a hole, knowing how to do things, and having some education about the new traffic control. Councilman Worthington motioned to accept the Road Scholar Payscale. Councilman Gritton seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

Councilman Gritton stated that during the regularly scheduled Council meeting on June 19, the Mayor and Council will attend the AIC annual training in Boise. We need to reschedule that meeting for June 18th. He motioned that we vacate the June 19 meeting and reschedule for June 18 at 5 pm Tuesday. Councilman Worthington seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

Councilman Gritton presented the Chamber of Commerce, which has officially begun accepting memberships. And it's come along quite nicely. Debbie Dumont, the Chamber President, commented that we have started accepting memberships. We've done a couple of workshops thus far and left them open to anybody in the community. We have another one scheduled tomorrow. They are using social media to market your business. It's accessible to everybody in the community. We have a website in the works and some brochures we'll get out once all the members are signed up. The chamber also has a Facebook page. She encourages everybody to follow that page for all the events and happenings the chambers do. Another thing is that the chamber will facilitate the Fourth of July vendor and craft in the Park. Flyers and signup forms here at City Hall. There's also some Main Street diner. She also researched the sales tax situation so that the city would avoid getting in trouble with sales tax. And so it's evident that whoever signs up, they're responsible for getting the temporary permit with the state and then collecting the sales tax, and in the packet that they pick up, there's a whole page that tells them what they need to do and how they need to go about doing it. Idaho State sales tax for events is a new process. The state has a new system now where if you're going to have that kind of event, you go on, you sign up for your event, and they give you an event ID number. Then anybody that's going to have something out there has to go in and put in that event ID, and then they tell them, this is the permit you need and how you collect sales tax; it's controlled more by the state, but my responsibility to make sure that people coming in and know it. She has put in the paperwork that you will only be allowed to set up if you have a permit.

Councilman Gritton questioned Engineer Skinner about the concerned citizen who contacted me about the crosswalks and was wondering, in the last meeting, about the flags to carry. Is it something you've been exploring with the state to see perspectives on that? Engineer Skinner will check into this and get back to the council with the answer from the Idaho Dept. of Transportation if it is an option for safety.

Engineer Skinner explained the Industrial Park lease with Kiewit when they approached the city about leasing a couple of lots in the industrial park lots 17 and 18; there's a contract for your review and approval. The red lines on that picture are the routes we would like to suggest that they stick to so that we only have some of the traffic next to residential areas. We have requested that they go up and exit the road next to Associated Towing. They asked for a lease through 2024 through 2026. Based on the end of their contract, there's some jargon above section two: they must give us notice if they want to extend the other two years for the full five years. Other than that, we go by the standard term and standard rates on all industrial park leases. Councilman Carpenter questioned if they said what they were going to be parking. Engineer Skinner stated it would be their employees, and they bus all employees out to the mine site and back to town every day and all shifts. Councilman Gritton questioned whether the use was defined in the lease contract. Engineer Skinner stated yes. Attorney Smith pointed out section three, which is the necessary upgrade to business parking and staging. Engineer Skinner stated that Kiewit would strip the top layer of topsoil and add gravel to the parking area, and they would do that at their own expense. Councilman Carpenter questioned our police department if they had any concerns. Chief Shaw stated they would monitor and remind them not to disturb the residential areas. Councilman Worthington motioned to move forward with the lease with Kiewit based on moving forward with the lease and having the mayor sign. Councilman Gritton seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

Councilman Gritton presented having a movie in the park. He thought that it would be a great benefit for our community to have a movie in the park. His objective is to make sure everyone knows about that. He has recruited Councilman Carpenter to help with the project. We want to do a movie in the park with proper licensing. He is going to do some more research on that. June 3, 2024, the first movie in the park. We can't definitively say what that movie will be because we could have legal problems if we needed proper licensing. He was surprised to learn that at least two times, entities in our county have been held accountable for displaying movies illegally. That got his attention, and he contacted a couple of business owners, Caribou Ford and Caribou Medical Center; both offered to help with licensing fees. He understands that each movie requires licensing fees, and there will be expenses if we do this two to four times this summer. If any other businesses would like to participate and might become aware of this project, he would like to hear from them—the expense of \$200 to \$400 per movie. Sergeant Golightly mentioned that last year, they did one in the park. The lights at the courthouse were too bright, and we had to get a hold of a county employee to come and turn them off.

#### **Citizen Input:**

JoAnna Ashley commented that in a prior city council meeting, we were told to start working on the survey; our work stopped because we were informed that somebody in a position didn't want to proceed. And that is why the work on it stopped. We want to clarify that council members here tonight are on board and in agreement with wanting to proceed with an Enders survey because we started the work. We had a meeting, and we went through it. Then, we were informed that the city was not backing the survey.

Councilman Carpenter mentioned he thinks the best way to handle this is to refer back to that meeting where you guys had volunteered to do the survey, and we're giving the go-ahead to proceed. Debbie Dumont mentioned a motion, but it was not carried out or backed by the other councilman. Because you were giving the wink and nod to present something to us, the council will discuss it with the gentleman who told you not to, so that will be a discussion that we will have internally. However, in the future, three of us will be very interested in seeing the survey for the Enders Hotel. All councilmen agreed they would like to move forward with the survey. Councilman Worthington commented on reaching out with that survey, with the

understanding that we would seek guidance from the citizens who have paid \$423,000.02 for the ownership transfer, operation, maintenance, repair, and upkeep of this building. He needs to find out if all of our citizens understand that. That's the amount of money spent, or if they want to continue paying it. He wants to see it decided by the public in that they say, Okay, we're willing to continue spending money on this building. Councilman Carpenter stated that we hope we get a definite answer and say we've done our due diligence; that's the biggest thing. And we have reached out.

Councilman Worthington mentioned that he was instructed not to share the word transparency for the sake of transparency. As taxpayers, please tell us it's about understanding where our tax dollars go. Because we're discussing today how we will raise rates, publicly letting them know for water, sewer, and all of our infrastructure, and maybe his frustration is coming from, and perhaps we have not shared the facts. Yes, we vote on that, but we are certainly taking input, and that's what we're here for. Councilman Carpenter stated, please proceed; we need your help because whether or not intrinsic bias, you know, our feelings will come out—the more eyes are on this survey, the more facts, options, and your input.

Councilman Gritton asked Director Squires about his crew working hard in his neighborhood and wondered if you're repairing leaks. Director Squires stated one more down there and about seven more throughout the city.

Brock Byram asked the Main Street project if they are starting from South to the North or if it is starting North and moving South. Councilman Carpenter stated South to North. Debbie Dumont mentioned that she had found several business owners who had spoken with other business owners on Main Street who needed to be made aware there would be any fee for that connection. And now that you have a definitive number of how much it will cost, you guys can have another meeting with the business owners to reaffirm that and ensure everybody knows. Councilman Carpenter commented that they will be getting a letter. Engineer Skinner stated and with the schedule. Debbie Dumont mentioned there's much credibility in having the contractor explain to the owners that it's much cheaper doing that now versus later. She thinks there's much credibility from the contractor versus the City Council. She would recommend having the contractor there because you'll get less resistance. Engineer Skinner will hold more meetings and send out letters with schedules, and they will check into text messages.

**6:51 PM** Councilman Worthington motioned to adjourn. Councilman Gritton seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL THIS 5TH DAY OF JUNE 2024.

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Austin W. Robinson, Mayor

ATTEST

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Andrea Haderlie, Clerk