

**MINUTES OF THE
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Bonners Ferry City Hall
April 4, 2023
6:00 pm**

Mayor Dick Staples called the Council meeting of April 4, 2023, to order at 6:00 pm. He began the meeting with the pledge of allegiance.

Present for the meeting were: Council Members Brion Poston, Valerie Thompson, Ron Smith and Rick Alonzo.

Also present were City Administrator Lisa Ailport, Police Chief Brian Zimmerman and Clerk Treasurer Deby Garcia. City Attorney Andrakay Pluid attended via Zoom.

Members of the public present included: Gerry Higgs, David Sims, Emily Bonsant, Fay Almond, John Delaney, Kathy Walk and David Clark.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No members of the public chose to speak.

REPORTS

City Administrator, Lisa Ailport noted that there were two changes to the agenda. She first noted that the minutes under the consent agenda should be corrected from March 7, 2023, to March 21, 2023. Next under item 9 references the wrong ordinance number and should be Ordinance 606, not 607 as provided in the published agenda. She apologized for the clerical error.

Lisa also noted that in regard to the memo she sent out, they are working on filling the city openings. This causes challenges in wages. She challenged the council to work with staff over the coming months as they approach the budget workshop meetings. Wages are fresh on everyone's mind as the cost of inflation continues to rise almost daily.

Lastly, Lisa noted that the city is working through website updates as well as the annual sewer study amendments as well as other title 10 amendments. Dick asked if there were any questions for Lisa and none were presented.

Urban Renewal – Urban renewal stated that they have a meeting on April 17th so they will provide an update at the next meeting.

Ron Smith was not able to attend the last council meeting and he wanted it noted in the minutes that he supported the decision to make Deby Garcia the new Clerk/Treasurer.

Economic Development Director- David Sims commented about the port of entry at Porthill extending their hours from 7:00 am - 5:00 pm to 7:00 am - 7:00 pm. These new hours are in place for a three-month trial, and they will watch to see how the public responds to the new hours. The delegation is continuing to work to make it later than that. The Canadian side has gone back to 7:00 am - 11:00 pm on their side. The ports have stated that their decreased hours have been based on staffing issues and low demand.

Department of Commerce – David Sims stated that the Broadband Idaho Department of Commerce is releasing their capital project grant program application any day. It will have a tight turnaround for return of the applications. There are two providers in Boundary County who are planning on submitting applications. Requests for letters of support may be coming in. The application requires letters of support from local government agencies.

David also mentioned that he has been working with the Federal Highway Administration on the FLAP program costs. Based on conversation with the program leaders it sounds like the costs have doubled since application selection. Right now they are looking to see if there is grant funding available and then they will come back to the city. If things go well, they are talking about construction in 2025. Dick asked about when the project started. David responded that the first application was in 2017 and was approved in 2019.

David continued with some census data numbers on population growth throughout the county. He noted that Idaho had an overall growth rate from 2020 to 2022 of 5.15% but Boundary County had the highest growth rate in the state of 9.65%. From 2021-2022 we had the highest growth rate in the state as well a growth rate of 5.6%. Statewide, growth seems to have slowed down with a growth rate of only 1.8% from 2021-2022.

The last item that David covered was relating to the Moyie sewer project. It started out as a regional system that might include the city of Bonners Ferry, Moyie and the 3-Mile area. It eventually just became a Moyie project to fix their sewer system. That project has been on-going for at least five years. They are now finally going out to bid with construction starting this fall or next spring.

CONSENT AGENDA – {action item}

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Approval of Bills and Payroll
3. Approval of minutes from the March 21, 2023, meeting.

Val Thompson made a motion to approve the consent agenda along with the clerical fix of the minutes from March 7 to March 21.

Rick Alonzo seconded the motion.

Result:	Approve
Moved by:	Val Thompson
Seconded by	Rick Alonzo
Voted Yes	Brion Poston, Val Thompson, Rick Alonzo, Ron Smith
Voted No	
Absent	

NEW BUSINESS

4. **City-** Consider contract with Tyler Technologies for tutoring assistance on Enterprise Resource Planning software [attachment] {Action Item}

City Administrator, Lisa Ailport explained that Tyler Technologies is the collaborative software used for accounting, account billing and interface software used with the public. When the former clerk brought the proposal to council, she presented certain modules and left other modules out of the proposal. She was still using the Black Mountain software for the accounts receivable portion of accounting.

Lisa stated that because of this, incomes that have come in are not being documented in the current Tyler software. This realization came about when staff was looking for an invoice that should have been sent out in 2021 and they found it could not be located. The Black Mountain software could still possibly do the invoicing, but it is not integrating with the current Tyler software. Because of this, a lot of staff time was spent looking into the old software for information. Lisa stated that Tyler was asked to provide a quote to do the accounts receivable module. The proposal was presented to the council.

Tyler software also provided a quote to do Tyler tutoring. Lisa explained that when the transition took place from Black Mountain software to Tyler software, the former clerk completed the training and tutoring that was provided during the transition and no other employees received that training. Lisa shared that we are at the point where we are exhausting our monthly contract with Tyler Technologies to assist.

Currently, Lisa is requesting training for the office staff and consultants in the hopes of creating a team atmosphere and having redundancy built in. In order to do the training, the staff would need to reduce their time with the public in order to do training with Tyler. This training will be an additional cost of \$6,250.00 for 40 hours of training.

Mayor Staples explained there will be a yearly recurring fee of \$4,437.00 for the accounts receivable module and a one-time cost of \$1,990.00 for the project management set up fee.

Lisa explained that a proposal will be submitted to Tyler with our training needs and that the city consultant, Leonard Schulte, will also be invited to attend the training that will benefit him like bank reconciliations. Lisa and Mike Klaus will also attend the training.

Val Thompson made a motion to approve the accounts receivable module with Tyler Technologies with a total cost of \$6,427.00 including a monthly cost of \$4,437.00 and a one-time fee of \$1,990.00.

The motion was seconded by Brion Poston.

Result:	Approve
Moved by:	Val Thompson
Seconded by	Brion Poston
Voted Yes	Brion Poston, Val Thompson, Rick Alonzo, Ron Smith
Voted No	
Absent	

Val Thompson made a motion to approve the Tyler Technology training with a fee of \$6,250.00.

Brion Poston seconded the motion.

Result:	Approve
Moved by:	Val Thompson
Seconded by	Brion Poston
Voted Yes	Brion Poston, Val Thompson, Rick Alonzo, Ron Smith
Voted No	
Absent	

5. **City-** Consider Contract with Farmers Market for 2023 Season [attachment] {Action Item}.

City Administrator, Lisa Ailport stated that the city has been working with the farmer's market. The farmer's market is growing, which is a great thing for our community. It operates every Saturday from the end of April through the first of October. They are seeing an increase in vendor requests, so they are in need of more space.

Lisa presented a contract that included their expansion request for seven additional spaces. They were commandeering one of the ADA spaces, but they are also requesting the ADA staging space. The requested leased area is shown in the contract.

The second change would be the charge for service. The current charge is \$500.00 and was an assumed cost for an outlet that is used for entertainment. The cost also includes our staff putting up and taking down their banners at the beginning and end of the season because it requires the use of a bucket truck.

The farmer's market board has opted to go with a metered electrical service that their vendors can also use. They will pay the monthly base rate and kilowatt per hour rate.

Lisa proposed that with the economic benefit that the farmer's market provides the downtown area, the council remove the \$500.00 yearly fee and replace it with the metered electrical service. The city would continue to put up and take down the banners.

Mayor Staples asked if the city would be installing the meter. Lisa replied that the city will install the meter, but the farmer's market will pay the cost of approximately \$1500.00.

Lisa explained that a contract is still necessary because they will need to continue to submit yearly insurance information.

Ron Smith made a motion to sign the farmer's market contract expanding the space with seven more parking spaces and removing the yearly \$500.00 fee in exchange for a metered service.

The motion was seconded by Rick Alonzo.

Result:	Approve
Moved by:	Ron Smith
Seconded by	Rick Alonzo
Voted Yes	Brion Poston, Val Thompson, Rick Alonzo, Ron Smith
Voted No	
Absent	

6. **Water/Sewer-** Consider wages of Water and Sewer Department [attachment] {Action Item}.

City Administrator, Lisa Ailport explained that a lateral move within the city created a vacancy in the water/sewer department and that another water/sewer employee will be retiring around the first of May. This has created two positions in the water/sewer department. To attract good talent, the city needs to review their rates in these new hirings and in all departments across the board. Lisa presented an analysis that she has put together in preparing to advertise for these two positions.

Lisa presented the breakdown of water/sewers base rate and an explanation of the four categories where the employees can get raises based on the certifications required to operate our facilities. These certifications include water distribution, water treatment, sewer treatment and sewer collections. The city is required to have level two certifications in all areas except for sewer treatment which requires a level one.

Lisa explained that when looking at the median pay range for water and wastewater operators for the US bureau of statistics, in May of 2021, the median wage was \$25.12 across the country. From May of 2021 to today, the inflation rate has increased by 12%. To keep up with inflation, the mean pay would be closer to \$28.00 today.

Lisa recommended bringing the base wage up \$3.00 an hour to stay within the median wage range. She explained how just hiring the new employees at a higher rate devalues the current employees if their wages are not brought up as well. Lisa explained our need to bring in quality employees and how a competitive wage ties into that while also explaining her empathy for the current budget situation.

Lisa explained that an operator in training would have a starting range of \$19.00 to \$25.00 per hour based on their certification and experience at hiring time. The Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 certifications would come on at a higher rate based on their total certifications.

Brion Poston asked for clarification on whether these raises would affect the general fund. Lisa confirmed that these raises would not affect the general fund. Lisa explained that the water utility fund is receiving back to it \$120,000.00 of the funds that were being used in the general fund transfer.

Ron Smith expressed his concerns over all the departments being underpaid and how to address one department and not the others.

Rick Alonzo agreed with Ron Smith's concerns but stated that during his time with the city police, he explained to his co-workers how enterprise funds work differently than the general fund. He also shared his concerns about good employees being able to start at a fast-food restaurant for the same pay as a starting city employee.

Lisa explained her concerns on whether to advertise the two water department openings at the current beginning rate or at a higher approved rate and the quality of employees these rates will draw.

Val Thompson recommended that the council focus on the water department at this time since it has current hiring needs. She expressed the responsibility of our water/sewer employees to provide safe drinking water for our city residents.

Rick Alonzo stated that he thought the higher proposed rate would draw a better employee pool for the positions that need to be advertised.

Lisa explained that the level of water certifications required goes up based on population and on the complexity of the water system.

Brion Poston shared that the council should consider the fact that the city provided room for advancement where a fast-food job did not. He agreed that the starting wage needs to be raised but asked if it need to be a \$3.00 an hour raise.

Lisa explained how being competitive with wages keeps people from leaving our facility to go to work for another water or sewer system.

Mayor Staples questioned what the time frame is between certifications and John Delaney stated that it's two years. He also shared that he had just passed his Level 3 water treatment certification. He also explained that it takes about six years to get all certifications.

Mayor Staples confirmed that there are two positions in the water department that need to be advertised and asked Lisa for her recommendation on a hiring wage. Lisa recommended that an operator in training receive \$19.00-\$25.00 per hour, a Level 1 operator receive \$20.50-\$26.50 per hour and a Level 2 operator receive \$21.00-\$28.00 per hour and a Level 3 operator receive \$21.50-\$28.50 per hour.

Brion stated that he was in favor of the water department raises but still had concerns about the other departments. Lisa repeated her promise to meet with the council members individually over the next several months to hear their concerns and discuss each department.

Mayor Staples made a proposal to table this agenda item for further discussion.

Val Thompson shared her concern over giving the water/sewer department enough time to hire and train new employees if the discussion is tabled.

Brion expressed that the general fund needs to be in order before any other departments can be discussed and shared his belief that the vote for the water/sewer department should move forward.

Brian Zimmerman shared that as a general fund employee, he is fine with the council moving forward on raises for other departments.

Ron Smith shared his concerns that the street department and the police will feel forgotten but was previously assured by Lisa that the discussions would continue concerning all departments.

Val made a motion to increase the rate of the employees in the water and sewer department and to increase the rates of pay by \$3.00 per hour.

The motion was seconded by Ron Smith.

Result:	Approve
Moved by:	Val Thompson
Seconded by	Ron Smith
Voted Yes	Brion Poston, Val Thompson, Rick Alonzo,
Voted No	Ron Smith
Absent	

- 7. **Planning and Zoning-** Consider Resolution 2023-008 to amend the comprehensive plan pursuant to file ZC02-21 from Residential to Commercial. [attachment] {Action Item}.

City Administrator, Lisa Allport shared that the actions coming before council are made as the result of a previous file that already came before council for decision and that decision was to approve contingent upon an agreement being entered into with the applicants. Once they complete the terms, the zoning ordinance and resolution components will be completed. Resolution affects the comprehensive plan and ordinances affect the zoning map. In these two cases, there is a file that affects both. These will affect the current map.

Lisa assured the council the agreements entered with the applicants have been fulfilled. The first agreement is with the hospital, who is leasing some property from the owners of the Northside Bed and Breakfast that fronts on Highway 95. They want to put up a reader board sign. This is conditional zoning and something the city hasn't done before, but allowed within Idaho Code.

In order to make eligible to them the zoning district that they are seeking, the council must vote to change the comprehensive plan. The first vote will be the comprehensive plan resolution. Next will be the ordinance and the ordinance publication and the council needs to look at suspending the rules and adopting the ordinance if council seeks to impose the three reading rule.

Rick Alonzo moved to approve resolution 2023-008 to amend the comprehensive plan pursuant to file ZC02-21 from Residential to Commercial which is located within the city of Bonners Ferry, Idaho.

Ron Smith seconded the motion.

Result:	Approve
Moved by:	Rick Alonzo
Seconded by	Ron Smith
Voted Yes	Brion Poston, Val Thompson, Rick Alonzo, Ron Smith
Voted No	
Absent	

8. **Planning and Zoning-** Have first reading, by title only, for Ordinance #606 to amend the Official Zoning Map of the City of Bonners Ferry, Idaho to rezone lands from Residential A to Commercial for properties along Comanche street, adjacent to U.S. Highway 95 and 6497 Comanche Street. These properties are also associated with file ZC02-21. [attachment] {Action Item}.

Lisa Ailport reiterated that this is a request to pass the ordinance to amend the zoning map from Residential A to Commercial.

Rick Alonzo moved to have first reading, by title only, for Ordinance #606 to amend the Official Zoning Map of the City of Bonners Ferry, Idaho to rezone lands from Residential A to Commercial for properties along Comanche street, adjacent to U.S. Highway 95 and 6497 Comanche Street. These properties are also associated with file ZC02-21.

Val Thompson seconded the motion.

Result:	Approve
Moved by:	Rick Alonzo
Seconded by	Val Thompson
Voted Yes	Brion Poston, Val Thompson, Rick Alonzo, Ron Smith
Voted No	
Absent	

9. **Planning and Zoning-** Consider dispensing with the rules and adopting Ordinance #606 and authorizing the publication of the Ordinance summary to the Herald in compliance with I.C. 50-901 {Action Item}.

Val Thompson moved to dispense with the rules and adopt Ordinance #606 and authorizing the publication of the Ordinance summary to the Herald in compliance with I.C. 50-901.

Ron Smith seconded the motion.

Result:	Approve
Moved by:	Val Thompson
Seconded by	Ron Smith
Voted Yes	Brion Poston, Val Thompson, Rick Alonzo, Ron Smith
Voted No	
Absent	

10. **Planning and Zoning-** Consider Resolution 2023-009 to amend the comprehensive plan pursuant to file ZC03-22 from Residential to Commercial [attachment] {Action Item}.

City Administrator, Lisa Ailport explained that this property is off Augusta Street just north of Boundary Tractor. This was an application that came before Planning and Zoning and the council. The applicant had to complete the conditions of the zone change request before the request was brought forth.

Brion Poston moved to approve Resolution 2023-009 to amend the comprehensive plan pursuant to file ZC03-22 from Residential to Commercial.

Val Thompson seconded the motion.

Result:	Approve
Moved by:	Brion Poston
Seconded by	Val Thompson
Voted Yes	Brion Poston, Val Thompson, Rick Alonzo, Ron Smith
Voted No	
Absent	

11. **Planning and Zoning-** Have first reading, by title only, for Ordinance #607 to amend the Official Zoning Map of the City of Bonners Ferry, Idaho to rezone lands from Residential B to Commercial for properties along Augusta Street. These properties are also associated with file ZC03-22 [attachment] {Action Item}.

Val Thompson made a motion to have first reading, by title only, for Ordinance #607 to amend the Official Zoning Map of the City of Bonners Ferry, Idaho to rezone lands from Residential B to Commercial for properties along Augusta Street. These properties are also associated with file ZC03-22.

Rick Alonzo seconded the motion.

Result:	Approve
Moved by:	Val Thompson
Seconded by	Rick Alonzo
Voted Yes	Brion Poston, Val Thompson, Rick Alonzo, Ron Smith
Voted No	
Absent	

12. **Planning and Zoning-** Consider dispensing with the rules and adopting Ordinance #607 and authorizing the publication of the Ordinance summary to the Herald in compliance with I.C. 50-901 {Action Item}.

Val Thompson made a motion to Consider dispensing with the rules and adopting Ordinance #607 and authorizing the publication of the Ordinance summary to the Herald in compliance with I.C. 50-901.

Brion Poston seconded the motion.

Result:	Approve
Moved by:	Val Thompson
Seconded by	Brion Poston
Voted Yes	Brion Poston, Val Thompson, Rick Alonzo, Ron Smith
Voted No	
Absent	

13. **City-** Authorize expenditure for mailers and flyers for mailing local option tax information to voters {Action Item}.

City Administrator, Lisa Ailport explained that she has been working with David Sims to get some rough numbers together and a vendor willing to mail within the city limits informational materials that go through local option informational facts. The cost to do this will be approximately \$1,500.00. The plan is to get this information out to the public by the end of April so that the public has time to ask questions.

David Sims shared that the publication would be on a 6 x 9 cardstock postcard and Selkirk Press would be able to do the printing and the mailing.

Lisa gave credit to Fay Almond for putting together the informational material currently going out to the public.

Dave Sims shared that the mailer would be sent to residents within the city and not businesses or government agencies. This will include between 1100-1200 houses.

Rick Alonzo made a motion to approve the expenditure of up to \$1,500 dollars for sending a mailer out to city voters.

Ron Smith seconded the motion.

Result:	Approve
Moved by:	Rick Alonzo
Seconded by	Ron Smith
Voted Yes	Brion Poston, Val Thompson, Rick Alonzo, Ron Smith
Voted No	
Absent	

After conducting the business of the city, the Mayor noted the meeting was over. The time reflected was 7:13 pm.

I presided over this meeting and can confirm that the above minutes reflect the actual events as summarized and approved by the Council of the April 4th, 2023, meeting.

Chairman

Approval Date