

**CITY OF BELGRADE  
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
January 3, 2023 (Tuesday)  
7:00 PM**

This meeting was open to the public and attended in person.

Mayor Russell C. Nelson called the meeting to order. Council Members in attendance were Martha Sellers, Mike Meis, Kristine Menicucci, Jim Doyle and Renae Mattimoe.

City staff in attendance were City Manager Neil Cardwell, City Attorney Rick Ramler, City Clerk Susan Caldwell, Executive Assistant Dana Jambor, Finance Director Charity Wilson, Police Chief Dustin Lensing, Community Development Director Jason Karp, City Engineer Tom Eastwood, Public Works Director Steve Klotz, HR Director Becky Wilbert.

Others in attendance were Vivian Crouse, Judy Doyle, Kent Marsalis, Michael Marsalis, Matt Ekstrom.

**ACTION: Council Member Meis moved to excuse Council Member Simon. Council Member Doyle seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried unanimously.**

#### **PUBLIC FORUM**

Mayor Nelson called three times for public comment. There being none, public forum was closed.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

-Consider Approval of Draft Council Minutes: 12/19/2022

**ACTION: Council Member Menicucci moved to approve the consent agenda items as submitted. Council Member Sellers seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried unanimously.**

#### **DISCUSSION AGENDA**

##### **Discuss and Consider Improvements Agreement for West Post Phase 1**

Community Development Director Karp reviewed the Improvements Agreement for West Post Phase 1 and noted the financial guarantee required in the amount of \$3,670,263 which represented 125% of the estimated cost of improvements good through 2025. This was related to infrastructure, sidewalks and paving that would come in as weather permitted. Phase 1 included nine (9) commercial lots along Alaska Frontage Road.

Matt Ekstrom, engineer representing the applicant, noted that some work had already been done and more would take place as weather permitted.

City Manager Cardwell noted that as the City continued to annex and approve plats, he would continue to update Council on the level of available sewer capacity, including recommendations as to how the City may allocate said capacity.

Mayor Nelson called for public comment. There was none.

**ACTION: Council Member Sellers moved to approve the Improvements Agreement for West Post Major Subdivision Phase 1 to be accompanied by a Letter of Credit acceptable to the City in the amount of \$3,670,263 and complying with the terms of the Improvements Agreement. Council Member Mattimoe seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried unanimously.**

### **Discuss and Consider Final Plat Approval for West Post Phase 1**

Community Development Director Karp noted that with the approval of the Improvements Agreement, Council could now consider approval of the Final Plat for West Post Phase 1.

Mayor Nelson called for public comment. There was none.

**ACTION: Council Member Sellers moved to approve and grant Final Plat for the West Post Major Subdivision Phase 1 subject to the transmittal of the signed Improvements Agreement and Letter of Credit that is acceptable to the City, and finding that all conditions of preliminary plat approval had been met and the subdivision complied with the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act and the Belgrade City Code. Council Member Doyle seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried unanimously.**

### **Discuss and Consider Re-Appointment of Park & Recreation Board Member**

Mayor Nelson noted that the Park Board had recommended re-appointment of Vivian Crouse to continue serving on the Park and Recreation Board for another two year term.

Mayor Nelson called for public comment. There was none.

**ACTION: Council Member Mattimoe moved to approve re-appointment of Vivian Crouse to serve on the Belgrade Park and Recreation Board for a two-year term. Council Member Menicucci seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried unanimously.**

## **REPORTS**

Mayor Nelson had nothing to report.

City Attorney Ramler had nothing to report.

City Manager Cardwell referred to the information flyer included in the Council packet regarding Snow Removal in Belgrade. He noted that this flyer would be included with utility bills

this month. He commended Public Works staff in dealing with the challenges and hard work involved with snow management.

Cardwell reported a concern about keeping areas around fire hydrants clear and accessible. He noted that this was not specifically addressed in the City Code. Some were cleared by adjacent property owners, but most were maintained by City staff. Cardwell wanted to have a clear definition in the Code. Discussion followed about essential services and how the need was currently addressed.

Cardwell noted that he had asked Public Works Director Klotz to gather some comparative data on how Belgrade falls alongside other large cities in Montana in terms of equipment and staff for snow removal. Our goal was to clear snow from all City streets within 48 hours. The water/sewer operators would often be pulled to assist the street crew during periods of high demand. Cardwell noted other municipalities such as Billings or Bozeman were using a goal of 7 days, and that did not include all streets, as a comparison.

Public Works Director Klotz discussed removal of snow around hydrants. He felt it might be quite a burden on homeowners to move snow, particularly when it might rain soon after and become solidified. He noted that the backhoe was out every day working on clearing areas around hydrants. Another area of concern was removing snow around postal cluster boxes.

Discussion followed about staffing and equipment needs. Klotz noted that water/sewer staff were accomplishing their normal duties and then would assist in plowing as overtime and paid accordingly. Cardwell noted ongoing review of staff and equipment to achieve shorter time frames. He would also work with the City Attorney to bring back language to clarify who would be responsible for hydrant accessibility.

Cardwell reported on progress toward formation of the Parks and Trails District. Dorsey Whitney group had provided draft ballot language and an Interlocal Agreement with Gallatin County. The County Attorney had reviewed these items and should be placed on their agenda very soon. Cardwell's goal was to bring it back to Council so it could appear on the May 2023 special ballot.

Cardwell reported plans to advertise a Request for Qualifications for architectural services related to the proposed aquatics center. He noted that having an architect on board would give us a local presence and enable us to show the community what they would potentially receive if the measure was approved by voters. Having an architect on board before a bond was passed would also enable forward movement as part of the pre-bond services.

Cardwell noted that he had been appointed to serve on the board for Montana League of Cities and Towns (MLCT). This would involve regular participation over the next 90 days related to several legislative concerns. He would pass more information to Council as it came along.

He noted plans to discuss specific issues of interest to Belgrade with MLCT Director Kelly Lynch. He suggested scheduling a special meeting of Council so they could discuss and adopt 5 to 10 legislative priorities that could be brought forward as a statement along with a letter from staff.

HR Director Becky Wilbert reported on efforts to update the employee handbook to provide more consistency and usefulness. She noted there would be a separate handbook to include a compilation of policies and procedures. She had also proposed improvements to the vacation policy. The goal was to have the new policy in effect by July 1, 2023. The new employee handbook draft was being reviewed by City Manager Cardwell.

Cardwell commented that we currently followed the suggested guidelines of Montana Code Annotated (MCA). If the proposed changes were approved, we would be the first city that went above and beyond what MCA had set out. He noted that the proposed changes would also need to be reviewed by Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority (MMIA) for liability purposes.

## **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

Council Member Sellers thanked Public Works staff, Police and Fire personnel for their efforts during recent weather events.

Council Member Meis reported on the Planning Coordination Committee (PCC) meeting scheduled for Tuesday at 3:30p.m. at the Courthouse in Bozeman. He noted the need for volunteers to take down Christmas lights at the Senior Center this coming Saturday at around 10:00 a.m. along with others from the Belgrade Community Coalition. Cardwell asked if there was an estimate related to recent wind damage that had affected the displays so the City might be able to assist. Meis said he would find out.

Council Member Menicucci appreciated efforts of public works and police as they dealt with weather conditions and traffic.

Council Member Doyle and Mattimoe had nothing to report.

## **ADJOURN**

Council Member Doyle moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

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Russell C. Nelson, Mayor

Attest:

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Susan Caldwell, City Clerk