Public Works / Finance Committee

Regular Meeting
~Minutes~

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Laurie M. Hopkins
City Clerk

208.883.7015

Monday May 22, 2023	**4:00 PM**	**Council Chambers 206 E. Third St.**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00p.m.
PRESENT: Sandra Kelly, Julia Parker
OTHERS: Mayor Art Bettge
STAFF: Bill Belknap, Aimee Hennrich, Tim Davis, Mia Bautista, Taylor Riedner

REGULAR AGENDA

1. **Approval of Public Works/Finance Committee May 8, 2023 Minutes (ACTION ITEM) - Taylor Riedner**

The minutes were approved as presented.

2. **Public Meeting: Proposed Lot Division located directly south of Highway 8 at the terminus of Harrison Street (ACTION ITEM) – Aimee Hennrich**

   The applicants, Tim and Laurie Chamberlain, are requesting a lot division to create two lots of approximately 21,440 sf and 22,500 sf in size from an existing parcel of 43,940 sf in size. The subject property is located directly south of Highway 8 at the terminus of Harrison Street, and the intention of the lot division is to create one additional lot. Both of the proposed lots are currently vacant, and have most recently been used for RV storage and garden shed sales. The subject property is located within the Motor Business (MB) Zoning District which has no minimum lot size or lot width requirements. However, all lots must abut a public street right of way for a minimum of 40 feet. Both of the proposed lots meet this requirement. Property owners within 600 feet of the property have been notified of the proposed division and a sign was posted seven (7) days prior to the public meeting date.

   PROPOSED ACTIONS: Recommend approval of the lot division request with no conditions; or recommend approval of the lot division request with conditions; or recommend denial of the lot division request; or provide staff further direction.

Hennrich introduced the item as written above and reviewed the subject property south of Highway 8. Both proposed lots are currently vacant and primarily used for RV and other vehicle parking. Needing no further discussion and with no public comment provided, the Committee recommended approval and that it be placed on the Council consent agenda.

3. **Latah County and Cities Disposal Agreements (ACTION ITEM)- Tim Davis**

   Existing Disposal Agreements between the City of Moscow and Latah County, Cities of Bovill, Deary, Juliaetta, Kendrick, Genesee, Potlatch, and Troy are due to expire on September 30, 2023. The City of Moscow has managed and operated a solid waste, recycling processing and disposal system and has offered to provide these services to these municipalities since 1993, when the MSW landfill closed and waste began being shipped to Columbia Ridge Landfill, in Arlington, Oregon and currently Finley Buttes Landfill, in Boardman, Oregon. Latah County and the other cities above, wish to continue these services with the City of Moscow. The new disposal agreements are very similar to the existing agreements, with the exception of the fuel cost relief granted to Finley Buttes Partnership in 2022, for transport and disposal of MSW. The City of Moscow conducted a Sanitation Rate Study in 2021 to determine costs of solid waste processing and disposal services and necessary annual adjustments.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve Disposal Agreements with Latah County, cities of Bovill, Deary, Juliaetta, Kendrick, Genesee, Potlatch, and Troy or give staff further direction.

Davis introduced the item by reflecting on previous years' agreements since 1983. All municipalities have agreed and expressed interest in continuing the partnership with no issues or concerns. With no discussion needed, the Committee recommended approval and that it be placed on the Council consent agenda.

4. Health Insurance Program Amendment Proposal (ACTION ITEM) - Bill Belknap

The City of Moscow provides three different health insurance plans for employees to choose from, including the base Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) plan with a $1,500 individual $3,000 family deductible, a $300/$600 deductible PPO plan where the employee is required to pay the premium cost over the base plan cost, as well as a High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) with a Health Savings Account (HSA). For many years, the City has paid 50% of the health insurance premiums for dependents that are covered under the City’s health insurance program. The City funds 100% of the employee’s premium and 50% of their dependent’s premium. Recently it has become clear that the City’s cost of health insurance for dependents is significantly higher than many of our neighboring entities. The cost of dependent care under the City of Moscow’s benefits program is over three times as expensive when compared to the average of CDA, Post Falls, Lewiston, and Pullman. On average, an employee with the City of Moscow will pay $575 more per month, or $6,900 more per year, than the average of the comparison cities. Staff is recommending increasing the dependent premium coverage from 50% to 55% for the upcoming plan year beginning in August of this year. If the City increased dependent care coverage to 55%, City employees with dependents would see an average savings of $12.38 per month, or a maximum savings of $23.31 per month for a full family compared to their current insurance premiums. Staff would further recommend committing to reducing this disparity as funding allows, in an incremental manner over the next five years, to bring the City into parity within our labor market and peers.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Recommend approval to increase dependent care to 55% for the upcoming 2024 health insurance plan year; or provide staff further direction.

Belknap introduced the item by providing background on City employees' benefits and the survey conducted to compare Moscow to surrounding cities and entities. A history and forecast of insurance rate increases, and a comparison of 39 other public agencies was shared. City Council recently identified the “inability to recruit sufficient staff to perform essential functions” as one of the most significant challenges facing the community. City employee-dependent health insurance cost is over three times as expensive when compared to the average of Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls, Lewiston, and Pullman. Depending upon the employee's total household income, this may not meet the affordability test of 9.12% and they may qualify for health care exchange savings.

Approximately 40% of City employees have dependents on their plans. The long-term goal is for the City to shift to 80% dependent coverage to be more competitive with surrounding Cities. This shift over time would cost the City approximately $300,000 per year. Staff is seeking commitment from Council to increase dependent coverage over time as finances allow.

Parker requested that staff review the CHIP program and the eligibility for lower income employees to enroll in it. A household size of 3 people has a monthly income cut off of $4,000

Committee recommended approval and that it be placed on the Council regular agenda.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

Minutes Approved On
June 12, 2023
Taylor Riedner
(Clerk Signature)