

Moscow City Council



Regular Meeting ~Minutes~

Laurie M. Hopkins
City Clerk

www.ci.moscow.id.us

208.883.7015

**Monday
June 5, 2023**

7:00 PM

**Council Chambers
206 E. Third St.**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Art Bettge, Drew Davis, Sandra Kelly, Maureen Laflin, Hailey Lewis, Julia Parker, Gina Taruscio

STAFF: Bill Belknap, Mia Bautista, Cody Riddle, Evan Timar, Tasia North, Anthony Henricks, Laurie M. Hopkins

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice President Taruscio led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. All Consent Items (ACTION ITEM)

A. Approval of Moscow City Council May 15, 2023 Minutes - Laurie M. Hopkins

B. Latah County and Cities Disposal Agreements - 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 the costs of solid waste processing and disposal services and necessary annual adjustments.

ACTION: Approve Disposal Agreements with Latah County, Bovill, Deary, Juliaetta, Kendrick, Genesee, Potlatch, and Troy.

C. Proposed Lot Division Located Directly South of Highway 8 at the Terminus of Harrison Street – 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. This was reviewed and recommended for approval by the Public Works and Finance Committee on May 22, 2023.

ACTION: Approve the lot division request with no conditions.

Laflin moved to remove Item 1B from the consent agenda and approve the consent agenda without Item 1B. Lewis seconded. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

Belknap explained the City contracts with Latah Sanitation for the operation of the transfer station and Finely Buttes for the haul and disposal and both contracts are subject to escalation based on Consumer Price Indexes that saw increases of 8.46% and 6.4% respectively. The 2021 rate study recommended 1.5% annual rate increases to tipping fees, however after the CPI-based contract adjustments, that rate increase will not be adequate to cover the increased costs. Staff consulted with the rate study consultants to assess the impact of the CPI increases and required rate adjustments. The consultant concluded that annual tipping fee adjustments should be increased by 1% to 2.5%. If the city continues at the 1.5% annual rate increase, in 2024 the City can expect a loss of \$101,000 and close to \$140,000 by the end of the 5 year term. Staff recommends to amend the agreements to 2.5%. The net flow will still have a little deficit but it reduces over the 5 year term. With this increase, the City would be breaking even and not subsidizing the small cities.

Two sections of the agreements with Latah County and the cities would need to be amended: Section XI.B to specify the 2.5% annual fee escalation and to modify Exhibit A to reflect those increases. Recycling is not included in this fee amendment.

Tim Davis, Sanitation Manager, reached out to Latah County and the cities. All of them are setting their budgets so are able to include the increase. adjusting tipping fees only.

Laflin moved to approve the proposed disposal agreements with Latah County, Bovill, Deary, Juliaetta, Kendrick, Genesee, Potlatch, and Troy with the amendment to Section XI.B to increase the annual fee escalation from 1.5% to 2.5% and to amend Exhibit A to reflect the amended annual increases. Taruscio seconded. Roll Call Vote: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

REGULAR AGENDA

2. Staff Recognition

Evan Timar, Public Utility Manager, is recognizing the hard work the water operators put into their jobs. The operators dedicate thousands of hours to the field and four have passed their state examinations. They are the ones that allow the City to meet the strict regulations. Tesia North, advanced from apprentice to journeyman; Dan Taff, advanced from journeyman to senior; Jeff Black, advanced from apprentice to journeyman; Anthony Henricks, advanced from apprentice to journeyman.

3. Mayors Appointments (ACTION ITEM)

Mayor Bettge presented to the City Council for consideration the appointment of Jeff Pilcher to the Parks & Recreation Commission; Steven Mills to the Transportation Commission and Gail Martin to the Moscow Arts Commission. Kelly moved and Laflin seconded approval of the appointment. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

Jeff Pilcher said he is a long-time resident and graduate of the University of Idaho. He has been involved with recreation for years and now has the time to volunteer and give back to the community.

4. Public Comment and Mayor's Response Period (limit 15 minutes)

None offered.

5. Citizen Commission Report - Transportation Commission – Cody Riddle / Scott Sumner

Riddle introduced Scott Sumner, Chair of the Transportation Commission. Sumner detailed the purpose and duties of the commission and listed the commission members. The Commission worked on the shared mobility program, personal delivery devices, downtown streetscape study, sidewalk program the streets ordinance and updated the bike facility plan. Three developments were also reviewed this past year. The review of the sidewalk program will continue and questions for the citizen survey will be drafted.

6. Health Insurance Renewal and 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). The City recently received the renewal rates from Regence Blue Cross of Idaho for the upcoming plan year that will begin in August of 2023 and end in July of 2024. The City's health insurance premiums will increase by an average rate of 8.8% and will range from 12.2% for the \$300 PPO plan to 4.2% for the HDHP HSA plan. The City also offers two dental plans, including Regence Expressions and Willamette Dental. There is no requested increase for the Regence Expressions plan and a 5.9% increase to the Willamette Dental plan. Since 1992, 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 of Moscow employee 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. 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 current insurance premium costs. This was reviewed by the Public Works/Finance Committee on May 22, 2023 and forwarded to the full Council for discussion.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve the health, dental, and vision rate renewals and increase dependent care to 55% for the upcoming 2024 health insurance plan year; or take other action deemed appropriate.

Belknap introduced the item as written above. The history of premium increases has on average been around 5%. The plan year is August to July and deductible is calendar year. The plan year was moved to earlier in the year so renewal rates could be incorporated into the budget. Loss ratio is the percentage of payout of claims versus receipt of premium and the City is at 97.5% as of December. Regence prefers the loss ratio to be in the low 80% range. Willamette Dental was seeking a 10.2% but agreed to a 2-year phase-in. Annual increases for the \$300 deductible plan would amount to \$1,220; \$370 for the \$1,500 plan; and \$174 for the HSA. The City subscribes to the NW Data Exchange, a compensation and benefit database. A survey of 39 public agencies showed the average employee cost of \$380 where Moscow employee cost is \$817. Other information presented included total monthly premium, employer cost, and deductible. The City also conducted a comparison of benefits with Coeur d'Alene, Lewiston, Post Falls and Pullman was provided. The cost to the employee for full family coverage in Moscow is over \$800 compared to \$170 for Coeur d'Alene; \$300 for Lewiston; \$165 for Post Falls; and \$327 for Pullman. Moscow is paying 50% of dependent coverage where the the other cities are covering a larger portion of the employee dependent premiums. Moscow's 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 and on average, an employee with a full family is paying \$575 more per month or \$6,906.75 per year for health insurance compared to the four surrounding cities. Nearly 30% of the City's full-time permanent workforce earn less than \$25 per hour and their insurance cost for a full family would represent over 13%

of their gross income. Depending upon the employee's total household income, this may not meet the affordability test (9.12%) and they may qualify for Health care exchange savings. If the City was to shift to 80% dependent coverage which would put Moscow on par with the surrounding cities would cost the City over \$300,000 per year. The city is not in a position to implement that percentage. Staff is recommending that Moscow shift to 55% dependent coverage for FY2024, with a commitment to increase dependent coverage over time as financial resources allow. With 55% coverage, City employees with dependents would see an average savings of \$43.15 per month, or a maximum savings of \$81.68 per month for a full family when compared to maintaining the current 50% coverage. While it isn't a huge savings it will help offset insurance premium increases. The City not go out for bids for renewal as it was not recommended because of the loss ratio.

Parker appreciated the 100% coverage of employee premium but asked if there was any consideration of having employees pay for part which could result in families not paying as much. Lewis agreed that it may make a difference if employees are paying a little amount. Belknap said 40% of employees have dependents on their plan. Davis asked if an increase of percentage for coverage based on years of service model could be looked at. Belknap said too many assumptions would need to be made and he has not seen a model of that type in any of the cities. The complexity of a variable deductible coverage would also be very difficult to budget. Taruscio said she hears what everyone is saying. It is a giant balance and there is a way to compensate the employees. She supports the move to 55% even though she wants it to be more. She feels the Council should have a goal to increase each year. Belknap said staff would like to monitor the state of the nation and increase incrementally if the City can afford to. The University of Idaho self-fund and can structure their plans. Self-funding is not an option with the City's loss ratio.

Taruscio moved to approve the health, dental, and vision rate renewals and increase dependent care to 55% for the upcoming 2024 health insurance plan year. Kelly seconded. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Five (5). Nays: One (Lewis). Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

Lewis said she agrees Moscow needs to be competitive, but she has too many questions to vote for it.

REPORTS

City Council

Planning and Zoning Commission – Taruscio reported the Commission heard a public hearing for where the new highway will be.

Sustainable Environment Commission – Laflin said the dates for tabling at the Farmers Market has been set and they will distribute seeds. They also discussed pesticides pros and cons; supporting grant proposals; and solar projects through the HS env club.

Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee – Kelly said the Committee held a reception for the Executive Director candidates.

1912 Development Committee – Kelly said the Committee is still raising money for the third floor renovations.

Moscow Urban Renewal Agency – Kelly said the subcommittee of the MURA discussed the two submittals for the Sixth and Jackson properties.

Clearwater Economic Development Committee – Parker reported the Dream It Do It conference took place where there were 48 employers and training programs with 500 students in attendance.

SMART Transit – Lewis said they are working on rebranding and advertising.

Human Rights Commission – Lewis said they are working on their fall programs.

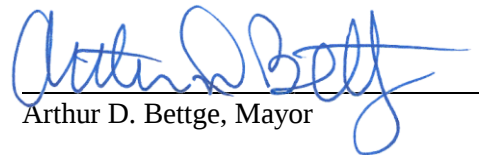
Mayor

The Mayor said he attended the Chamber legislative lunch; a ceremony for habitat for humanity where the key to a home was transferred to the new owners; the last piece of steel was placed on the airport terminal.

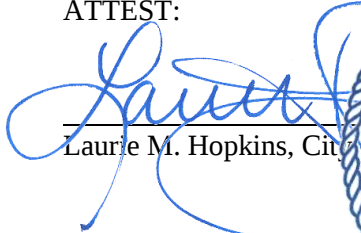
Belknap stated the July 3 Council meeting doesn't have a quorum and will be cancelled.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION PER IDAHO CODE 74-206 (1)(F) - THE MEETING WILL NOT RECONVENE.

Taruscio moved, Kelly seconded to adjourn to executive session per Idaho Code 74-206 (1)(f) and () at 8:20 p.m. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.


Arthur D. Bettge, Mayor

ATTEST:


Laurie M. Hopkins, City Clerk



**CITY OF MOSCOW
MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL EXECUTIVE SESSION
June 5, 2023**

Present: Mayor Bettge, Drew Davis, Sandra Kelly, Maureen Laflin, Hailey Lewis, Julia Parker,
Gina Taruscio

Also Present: Bill Belknap, City Supervisor; Mia Bautista, City Attorney,

The executive session was called to order at 8:24 p.m.

Item discussed pursuant to I.C. 74-206(1)(F)

The executive session was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.