Public Works / Finance Committee

Regular Meeting
~Minutes~

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Laurie M. Hopkins
City Clerk

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Monday, December 11, 2023	**4:00 PM**	**Council Chambers 206 E. Third St.**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.
PRESENT: Julia Parker, Drew Davis, Sandra Kelly
OTHERS: Council Member Art Bettge, Council Member Maureen Laflin
STAFF: Bill Belknap, Cody Riddle, Renee Tack, Bonnie Dennler, Mia Bautista, Taylor Riedner

REGULAR AGENDA

1. **Approval of Public Works/Finance Committee October 9, 2023 Minutes (ACTION ITEM) - Taylor Riedner**

The minutes were approved as presented.

2. **Disbursement Report November 2023 (ACTION ITEM) - Sarah Banks**

   Presentation of the Accounts Payable Report for the month ending November 2023.

   ACTION: Approve and authorize the use of digital signatures to sign the Disbursements Report for the month of November 2023.

Tack introduced the item by reflecting on major expenditures including payment 12 for the Booster Station Phase 2, South US 95 Water Sewer project, second and final payment on new fire engine, workers comp policy payment for the year, and the Palouse Mall water main replacement project. A new electric car was purchased for the Stormwater department and a Chevy pickup was purchased for the Police Department. There were 2 water main projects that were scheduled for summer of 2023. This included replacement of the asbestos concrete pipe behind the Palouse Mall and at significant risk of failure. The other was a transmission main project located on the south side of the Pullman Highway to improve transmission from well 10 to the city reservoir. The Committee authorized the use of digital signature, recommended approval and that it be placed on the Council consent agenda.

3. **Affordable Housing Grant Program Update Resolution (ACTION ITEM) - Cody Riddle**

   The Affordable Housing Grant Program, established in 2021, has proven to be overly restrictive or cumbersome to the development community. As a result, the program has been underutilized and not resulted in the needed construction of new, affordable homes. Staff is proposing an update to simplify the application requirements, with the goal of facilitating an increase in affordable home construction.

   PROPOSED ACTIONS: Recommend approval of the resolution modifying the requirements of the Affordable Housing Grant Program; or provide staff further direction.

Riddle reviewed the previously approved grant program and the $120,000 that was awarded to 6 new homes. One of these 6 has been completed since and 4 more are likely to be completed in the next construction year. One change proposed being made includes changing the affordability commitment language from perpetuity to 50 years. The second change is regarding the two original formulas for calculating affordability and converting it to one simple formula while the eligibility criteria will remain the same. As a reminder, funds need to be obligated by the end of 2024 and expended by the end of 2026.

Belknap asked to specify the 35% needs to refer to the buyer's income in Section 6.B of the Resolution. The Committee recommended approval and that it be placed on the Council consent agenda.

4. **2024 WHITCOM Emergency Dispatch Agreement (ACTION ITEM) - Bill Belknap**

   The City currently contracts with the WHITCOM joint dispatch center for E911 emergency and non-emergency dispatch services. The attached agreement would continue those services through the 2024 calendar year. The proposed fee for the dispatch services is $26,389 less than the 2023 agreement, with a total annual cost of $776,874. Staff has prepared the agreement for the Council's review and approval.

   PROPOSED ACTIONS: Recommend approval of the Emergency Dispatch Services Agreement, or provide staff further direction.

Belknap introduced the item by reflecting on the nearly 20-year history with Whitcom agreements. Staff is hopeful to move to a multi-year agreement in the near future. Additional clarification has been added for public records process, public fund restrictions, and other state requirements. Majority of public records requests are processed through the Moscow Police Department unless there is a specific recording captured by Whitcom. The Committee recommended approval and that it be placed on the Council consent agenda.

5. **Startouch Wireless Communications Facility Lease Agreement (ACTION ITEM) - Bill Belknap**

   Startouch Microwave Communications is requesting to install two (2) microwave antennas and associated cables on the City Rotary Park Water Tower. The proposed use of the equipment is to provide communication services to T-Mobile, which operates a cellular communications site at the location. Staff has prepared a wireless communications lease agreement to allow the installation of the two antennas in exchange for a lease fee of $3,600 per year which will increase by 3% annually. The agreement is being presented to the Council for the Council's review and approval.

   PROPOSED ACTIONS: Recommend approval of the wireless communications facility lease agreement, or provide staff further direction.

Belknap introduced the item as written above. Typical full-scale installations include up to 6 antennas and a higher lease agreement, however the scope of this project is much lower. Needing no further discussion, the Committee recommended approval and that it be placed on the Council consent agenda.

6. **Benefit Consulting Agreement (ACTION ITEM) - Bill Belknap**

   The City of Moscow has utilized the Murray Group, Inc. for a number of years to provide consulting. The City of Moscow has utilized the Murray Group, Inc for 18 years to provide benefit consulting services to the city. In September 2023, the City of Moscow sought out Statements of Qualifications (SOQs) from qualified consulting firms for Employee Benefits Consulting Services to assist the City of Moscow (City) in the management of its employee medical, dental, vision, and voluntary supplemental benefit programs to be effective January 1, 2024. The Murray Group was provided notice of termination in September to meet required notice period requirements in the event they were not selected as the successful firm. The City received a total of seven bids and brought 3 firms in for formal presentations. Through this open process, the review committee selected Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc as their finalist. A draft contract has been prepared and is currently under review by Gallagher and is included for the Committee's review. The final contract will be presented for approval at the Council's December 18th meeting.

   PROPOSED ACTIONS: Recommend approval of the draft Gallagher Benefit Services Consulting agreement, Broker of Record Letter, and Peak One Fee Schedule to include COBRA Administration; or provide further direction.

Belknap introduced the item as written above and reflected on the process a staff committee took to narrow the 7 responses down to 1 and compared the results to previous services provided by Murray Group. The goal is to have contracted services start on January 1st. There were no surprises or concerns by staff during this review. The Committee recommended approval and that it be placed on the Council regular agenda.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 4:27pm