

Moscow City Council



Regular Meeting ~Minutes~

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Laurie M. Hopkins
City Clerk

208.883.7015

Tuesday, February 18, 2025

7:00 PM

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

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

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

STAFF: Bill Belknap, Mia Bautista, Cody Riddle, Tyler Palmer, Laurie M. Hopkins

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member Taruscio led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. All Consent Items (ACTION ITEM)

A. Approval of Moscow City Council February 3, 2025 Minutes - Laurie M. Hopkins

B. Approval of Payment of Claims - Sarah Decker

C. Disbursement Report January 2025 - Sarah Decker

Staff presented the January 2025 Accounts Payable Report to the Public Works / Finance Committee on February 10th, 2025. The Committee received the report and recommended approval of the disbursement report.

ACTION: Accept the Disbursements Report for the month of January 2025.

D. Idaho Airport Aid Program Grant Agreement - Alisa Anderson

The Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport applied for a grant from the Idaho Transportation Department - Division of Aeronautics, Idaho Airport Aid Program to assist with General Aviation airport development. The grant request has been awarded for \$7,500 with a required project completion date of June 30, 2027. The attached Resolution authorizes the acceptance of the award in accordance with all Federal, State, and Local regulations and the execution of the Grant Agreement by the Mayor. This was reviewed by the Public Works/Finance Committee on February 10, 2025, and recommended for approval.

ACTION: Approval to authorize acceptance of the Idaho Airport Aid grant award of \$7,500 from the Idaho Transportation Department - Division of Aeronautics and approve the corresponding Resolution.

E. Resolution Authorizing City Attorney to Submit a claim on behalf of the City of Moscow for the Chevrolet Bolt Battery Litigation Settlement - Mia Bautista

A class action suit was filed against General Motors for defective batteries in model year 2017 through 2022 Chevrolet Bolt vehicles. A settlement agreement has been reached between General Motors, LG Electronics and representatives of eligible vehicle owners. The City purchased two

Chevrolet Bolt vehicles in 2020 which are eligible under the settlement agreement. If the City does not submit a claim for a settlement payment, it will not be entitled to receive funds under the terms of the settlement agreement. Staff has prepared a resolution authorizing the City Attorney to submit a claim and sign any documents or agreements related to the settlement claim on behalf of the City. This was reviewed by the Public Works/Finance Committee on February 10, 2025, and recommended for approval.

ACTION: Approve of the Resolution Authorizing City Attorney to Submit a claim on behalf of the City of Moscow for the Chevrolet Bolt Battery Litigation Settlement.

F. Proposed Lot Line Adjustment at 1638 and 1662 Christopher Lane and 815 Pheasant Run Road - Aimee Hennrich

The applicants, Edward and Mandi Coulter, are requesting a lot line adjustment between three properties located at 1638 and 1662 Christopher Lane, and 815 Pheasant Run Road. The proposed lot line adjustment would increase 1638 Christopher Lane from 1.04 to 1.05 acres, decrease 1662 Christopher Lane from 1.13 to 1.07 acres, and increase 815 Pheasant Run Road from 1.47 to 1.53 acres. The applicant is requesting the lot line adjustment to accommodate an existing fence and an access easement created between owners. The subject properties are located within the Suburban Residential (SR) Zoning District. Within the SR Zoning District the minimum lot size is 1 acre and the minimum lot width is 100 feet. All of the proposed lots meet all zoning code requirements and all existing structures meet setback requirements. This item was reviewed by the Public Works/Finance Committee on February 10, 2025, and recommended for approval.

ACTION: Approve the lot line adjustment request with no conditions.

Kelly moved and Parker seconded to approve the consent agenda as presented. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

REGULAR AGENDA

2. Mayors Appointments (ACTION ITEM)

Mayor Bettge presented to the City Council for consideration the appointment of Benjamin Coons to the Tree Commission. Taruscio moved and Parker seconded approval of the appointment. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

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

None offered.

4. Regional Water Sustainability Funding Contract With Idaho Water Resource Board (ACTION ITEM) - Tyler Palmer

In July 2021, the IWRB adopted an initial Regional Water Sustainability Priority List (List) to help guide the IWRB's spending for large, regional water sustainability projects from ARPA funds, state general funds, or other applicable sources. In January 2022, the IWRB also adopted a threshold criteria for a project to be included on the List, which included that it must help achieve water supply sustainability on a regional, basin-wide, or statewide basis. Through this process, the City of Moscow was granted \$182,500 to be used to study the feasibility of a Clearwater River diversion as an alternate water supply to supplement the declining Palouse Basin Aquifer. The City of Moscow will manage the project with support from the Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee (PBAC). It is possible that additional funds for the project will be allocated by PBAC to complete the full scope of the study. This was reviewed by the Public Works/Finance Committee on February 10, 2025 and recommended for approval.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve the Regional Water Sustainability Funding Contract With Idaho Water Resource Board as presented, or take other action deemed appropriate.

Palmer introduced the item as written above and provided a history of the Palouse Basin aquifer. The rate of decline has varied and most recently declining has decreased, most likely due to conservation. Moscow has the lowest per capita water use in Idaho. The project is to answer key questions to understand if the Clearwater River diversion is feasible to go into design. The four major project components are water supply assessment, conceptual design development, regulatory permitting assessment and stakeholder engagement. Palmer detailed each component. While Palmer doesn't think direct use together with recharge would be a preferred option, it could be possible to do so. Environmental studies will analyze any possible effect on salmon. There is broad collaboration for this project and robust outreach to Nez Perce tribe and others. Research funds have been earmarked by PBAC to support this project. The City funds are in the Water Fund and the IWRB will reimburse the City for spending. The research needs to be in place to support whatever initiative is moved forward as this is significant funds. This isn't general research to understand the aquifer, it is moving toward a specific project. A successful outcome of this project is the application for a water right. Future steps are selecting a consultant; negotiating a scope; then returning to Council for approval of the contract. Staff anticipates monthly update meetings with the consultant; quarterly written reports; and a final report. Staff can bring a report to Council as frequently as requested.

Taruscio moved to approve the Regional Water Sustainability Funding Contract with IWRB as presented. Lewis seconded. Blankenship asked if there are other places that pump water up from a river 2500 feet below. Tyler replied this is new for the Palouse but not at all new and happens frequently. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

5. Consideration of Mayor and City Council Salary Adjustment Ordinance (ACTION ITEM) - Bill Belknap

Idaho Code § 50-203 requires compensation for a mayor and council to be fixed by ordinance. Moscow City Code Title 1, Chapter 8, Sec. 8-1, states "*The salary for elective officers shall be fixed by ordinance. Salary adjustments for such elective officers shall be made every two (2) years from the date of the previous adjustment in accordance and in proportion with adjustments in the Consumer Price Index, Series I.D. CUUR0000SA0 All Urban Consumers, U.S. All items, 1982-84=100. The statistics utilized shall be the figures for the annual percent change for each calendar year within the subject two (2) year period, as published by the United States Department of Labor in January of each year. Such adjustments must be specifically approved by ordinance at least six (6) months prior to the effective date of such adjustments.*" The reported CPI values were 4.1% and 2.9% for 2023 and 2024 respectively. Proposed increases to monthly salaries would be effective January 1, 2026, and are as follows: Mayor from \$2,396.96 per month to \$2,567.60 per month, and Council from \$831.03 per month to \$890.19 per month. Staff have prepared an ordinance to effectuate the adjustments in accordance with City Code. This was reviewed by the Public Works/Finance Committee on February 10, 2025, and recommended for approval.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve the Ordinance under suspension of the rules requiring three complete and separate readings and that it be read by title and published by summary; or consider the Ordinance on first reading and that it be read by title; or reject the Ordinance; or take such other action deemed appropriate.

Belknap introduced the item as written above.

Lewis is torn on this issue even though it is a miniscule adjustment. This can signal to the constituents that Council is fiscally mindful. It shouldn't be about the money but Lewis acknowledges the compensation helps. Compensation could be an incentive for others to run for office. Parker clarified her discussion with Lewis in that it was regarding the cost of being on Council or being mayor. You have less time to work, or

require childcare, etc. She feels compensation is important in order to get a diversity of people to run for elected positions.

Taruscio said this was her first time in her tenure on council she doesn't feel guilty about the increase. Not everyone can afford to do this, being away from family and job. She acknowledged all the council members work hard for this.

Blankenship said this is part of the roll of a council member and should be compensated for the work they do. The council members are here for the community, not the money.

Parker moved to approve the Ordinance under suspension of the rules requiring three complete and separate readings and that it be read by title and published by summary. Kelly seconded. Davis agrees with all the comments. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Five (5). Nays: One (Lewis). Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

Mayor Bettge read Ordinance 2025-01 by title:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MOSCOW, IDAHO, A MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF THE STATE OF IDAHO; PROVIDING FOR THE AMENDMENT OF MOSCOW CITY CODE TITLE 1, CHAPTER 8; PROVIDING FOR THE PRESCRIBED INCREASE IN THE SALARIES OF CITY ELECTIVE OFFICERS AND SAID SALARIES EFFECTIVE UPON JANUARY 1, 2026; PROVIDING THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ORDINANCE BE DEEMED SEVERABLE; AND PROVIDING FOR THIS ORDINANCE TO BE IN FULL FORCE AND EFFECT FROM THE DATE OF ITS PASSAGE, APPROVAL, AND PUBLICATION ACCORDING TO LAW.

6. Set FY2026 Budget Hearing Date (ACTION ITEM) - Bill Belknap

Per Idaho Code 63-802(A) the City is required to notify Latah County of the public hearing date for the City's annual budget no later than April 30 each year. Staff is requesting that the Council officially set the date for the FY2026 Budget hearing for August 4, 2025, so the Notification of Budget Hearing form can be completed and returned to the Latah County Auditor's Office as required.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Set August 4, 2025, as the public hearing date for the City of Moscow FY2026 budget, or take other action deemed appropriate.

Having no questions, Kelly moved, Blankenship seconded to set August 4, 2025, as the public hearing date for the City of Moscow FY2026 budget. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

REPORTS

City Council

Fair and Affordable Housing Commission – Parker said the Commission discussed their upcoming schedule of events. March 15 is the wellness fair. They have future plans to review barriers in housing.

Human Rights Commission – Parker said the Commission discussed upcoming events including co-sponsoring the film 13 Steps about Edwin Moses.

Farmers Market Commission – Davis said the Commission is reviewing bylaws.

Moscow Urban Renewal Agency – Davis said the Agency recapped the joint meeting with Council; will be discussing next steps for public engagement for the 6th and Jackson property at their next meeting.

Moscow Volunteer Fire Department – Kelly said the Department is progressing in the search for EMT's.

Moscow Tree Commission – Taruscio said the Commission is working on an article for the city newsletter; discussing where to have the 2025 Arbor Day celebration; setting budget request for FY2026.

Moscow Arts Commission – Blankenship said they are forming a panel to review sculpture entries. Vinyl

wrap submittals will open soon.

Sustainable Environment Commission – Blankenship said the Commission had staff from the recycling center present on e-recycling.

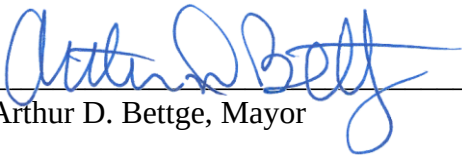
Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee – Lewis said they interviewed the second consultant for the alternate water supply feasibility study. They will discuss again at their next meeting.

Mayor

Bettge said he took part in the weekly legislative committee; attended the MLK essay awards; the State of the City presentation is tomorrow.

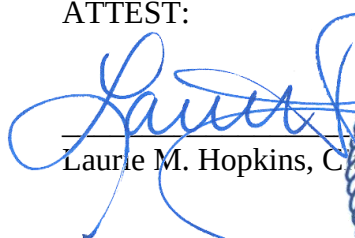
ADJOURN

It was mutually agreed upon to adjourn at 7:56 p.m.



Arthur D. Bettge, Mayor

ATTEST:



Laurie M. Hopkins, City Clerk

