

Moscow City Council



Regular Meeting ~Minutes~

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Laurie M. Hopkins
City Clerk

208.883.7015

Monday, June 2, 2025

7:00 PM

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

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

PRESENT: Bryce Blankenship, Drew Davis, Sandra Kelly, Hailey Lewis (7:02 pm), Julia Parker, Gina Taruscio

ABSENT: Mayor Art Bettge, Drew Davis

STAFF: Bill Belknap, Tyler Palmer, David Schott, Laurie M. Hopkins

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member Blankenship led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PROCLAMATION

National Pollinator Week

Mayor Bettge read the proclamation and presented it to David Schott.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. All Consent Items (ACTION ITEM)

A. Approval of Payment of Claims - Sarah Decker

B. Amendment to Moscow Rugby Block Party Alcohol Use Request in Entertainment District - Amanda Argona

Moscow Rugby is hosting an End-of-Season block party for its club on Saturday, May 31st, from 5 pm to 8 pm on Second Street between the alley and Washington Street. Moscow Rugby is working with one licensed alcohol provider for the block party. The event has been reviewed and approved by staff as of April 8, 2025. Following standard operating procedures for events with alcohol that are within the Entertainment District boundaries, Moscow Rugby is requesting a temporary suspension of the open container law by resolution. Per Moscow City Code, Section 10-1-12, a draft resolution was prepared for the Council's consideration. This was reviewed by the Public Works/Finance Committee on Monday, May 12, 2025 and approved by City Council on Monday, May 19, 2025. The applicant is seeking an amendment regarding the location of their licensed alcohol vendor to serve off-premise within the event footprint, rather than on-premise. An updated site map has been prepared to reflect this minor change for Council's consideration. This was reviewed by the Administrative Committee on Tuesday, May 27, 2025 and recommended for approval.

ACTION: Approve the amendment allowing for the licensed alcohol vendor to serve off-premise within the event footprint of Moscow Rugby End-of-Season block party for the duration of the event pursuant to a City catering permit.

C. Adoption of the State of Idaho Deferred Compensation Plan - Bonnie Dennler

The City of Moscow currently partners with Mission Square, previously ICMA-RC, to offer eligible employees the ability to participate in a 457 Deferred Compensation Plan. This retirement solution allows employees to make tax-deferred contributions through payroll deductions. The State of Idaho, in accordance with Idaho Code Section 59-513 permits the State of Idaho and any county, city or political subdivision of the state, working through its governing body, to contract with an employee to defer income to a 457 Deferred compensation plan through the State Deferred Compensation Plan, administered through Nationwide. The State of Idaho Deferred Compensation Plan offers employees lower administration fees as well as a one-time bonus for new enrollments, which is more financially beneficial to our employees. If adopted, the City would allow those currently enrolled in Mission Square's Deferred Compensation Plan to phase out contributions through payroll deduction over the next 12 months. New enrollments would only be offered through the State of Idaho Deferred Comp Plan. The resolution to adopt the State of Idaho deferred compensation plan is now before the Council for review and approval. This was reviewed by the Administrative Committee on May 27, 2025 and recommended for approval.

ACTION: Approve resolution to adopt the State of Idaho Deferred Compensation Plan.

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

REGULAR AGENDA

2. Public Comment (limit 15 minutes)

William J. (Moscow) spoke on the firebombs in Washington DC. Palouse DSA has been harassing him. Extremism is here. He feels something needs to be done.

3. Moscow Mountain Powell Project Trail Build Report – David Schott

Schott introduced Chris Chambers. Chambers explained that MAMBA is a volunteer organization with the mission to keep Moscow Mountain trail access available to the local community and make it a safe community for all trail users. They have had 400+ volunteer hours over the last two years building the 2+ miles of new trail. National Trails Day celebration is June 7th. They followed the How to Build Sweet Single Track from the International Mountain Bike Association Guidelines for trail building. Trail etiquette is a challenge and an on-going effort.

Virgina Yotter, coach, said they have grown to thirty registered students this year. They teach the teams about who yields to who, making sure they know the etiquette and have received great feedback this spring. They are a middle-high school expanding to 5th grade this year. They ride with the Washington student league.

4. Task Order NO. 09 Palouse Basin Alternate Water Supply Project (ACTION ITEM) - Tyler Palmer

The City of Moscow, in cooperation with the Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee (PBAC), has identified a surface water diversion from the Clearwater River as a high-potential future water supply option. This is based on previous planning efforts conducted by PBAC that explored multiple long-range future supply alternatives, and a preliminary examination of a Clearwater River option in 2019. The City is building upon those prior efforts and conducting a more in-depth evaluation of this option's feasibility. The City has selected HDR Engineering, INC to provide engineering and consulting services in support of this effort. In February 2025, the City entered an agreement with the Idaho Water Resource Board for \$182,500 in funding toward this project. On May 15, 2025, PBAC voted to authorize up to \$187,000 to complete the project (\$153,341 plus a 10% contingency). This project is anticipated to take 12

months to complete. This was reviewed by the Administrative Committee on Tuesday, May 27, 2025 and recommended for approval.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve Task Order NO. 09 Palouse Basin Alternate Water Supply Project. Palmer provided a recap and introduced the item as above. Grant funding has been obtained from Idaho Division of Idaho Resources for this initial design work which anticipates answers to critical questions and identify any potential major hurdles. HDR Engineering Inc. was selected for the study. The total project cost is \$335,841, \$182,500 from Idaho Water Resource Board and PBAC committed \$187,000. It has a 12-month timeline, but accuracy is more important than meeting the 12-month timeframe. The project includes water supply assessment, conceptual design development, regulatory permitting assessment, and stakeholder engagement. In answer to questions from Council, Palmer said this is the hard core discovery phase as there has been enough work done to know this is a worthwhile investment of these funds. Because the money is coming through the IWRB, it is an Idaho project, therefore Moscow is administering this. Public comment includes the stakeholder engagement group, the research colloquium, several presentations to elected bodies, and open houses.

Taruscio said she spent a lot of time on PBAC and is excited that aquifer recharge is part of this.

Lewis said the Lewiston Orchards Irrigation District (LOID) is also looking at water rights. Palmer said there is already municipal use as Lewiston has long drawn water from the Clearwater. They are in the process of building a new intake point on the river. Tyler said he, the Mayor, and Belknap met with the City of Lewiston representatives, IDWR, and IDEQ and talked about the projects and collaboration. The PBAC executive director and Tyler met with LOID several months ago. They are looking to pump water for irrigation so the water wouldn't need to be treated. There has been good communication between entities.

Kelly moved to approve Task Order 9. Blankenship seconded. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

5. City Business Office Summer Hours Pilot Proposal (ACTION ITEM) - Bill Belknap

The City provides a wide variety of services, including public safety, utility operations, parks maintenance, street maintenance, recreation programs and facilities, and many others. To deliver these services, the City's 165 full-time employees utilize a wide variety of work schedules and shifts to provide the necessary services. Current work shifts include 48-hour shifts for the Paramedic/Firefighter personnel, 12-hour shifts for Police patrol personnel, 10-hour shifts for many of the City's field operations in Parks, Streets, and utilities, as well as 8-hour shifts for many office personnel. Administration has been approached by several departments seeking to explore the possibility of conducting a pilot test of a seasonal summer 4/10 workday schedule for City business offices. Under the proposal, the City's business offices would be open from 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM Monday through Thursday and closed on Fridays for eight weeks, beginning on June 30th and ending on August 22nd. After allowing for a 30-minute lunch break, this would provide 10 working hours per day to fulfill the 40-hour work week. Staff will present the proposal for the Council's consideration and direction.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Review proposal and provide direction.

Belknap introduced the item, highlighting that initial feedback from public-facing departments has been positive. He emphasized the importance of exploring low- or no-cost initiatives that could improve employee recruitment and retention. The proposed schedule would extend service availability by an hour and a half beyond typical public hours, while also addressing the staffing challenges commonly experienced on Fridays due to vacations.

Taruscio expressed support for the proposal and underscored the need for clear communication with the public. Belknap noted that, with a June 30 start date, there would be sufficient time to inform the community through social media, building signage, and the water billing newsletter. He added that flexibility will be necessary to accommodate some employees with differing needs. At this stage, the proposed change is intended as a summer pilot, aligning with the academic calendar when community activity naturally slows. If successful, the City may consider implementing it again in future summers, beginning and ending with the school calendar. Belknap also mentioned that if the school district—which has discussed a four-day week like 70% of districts in the state—makes such a transition, the City could eventually evaluate a year-round model. For now, however, the focus remains on a summer pilot.

Blankenship expressed his support for the pilot and the proposed timeframe. He asked how success would be measured. Belknap responded that two-thirds of City staff are already working similar schedules and that a survey will be conducted at the end of the pilot period to evaluate its effectiveness and inform any future decisions.

Taruscio expressed concern about the impact of the proposed schedule changes during the summer construction season, when activity is at its peak. She emphasized the importance of ensuring the City continues to meet the needs of developers. In response, Belknap explained that most public works contractors are already operating on 4/10 schedules and that critical inspections would continue to be covered. He noted that employees could stagger schedules, with some working Fridays and taking Mondays off to maintain service levels.

Lewis also raised concerns about how the change might affect the construction season. Belknap shared that Fridays are generally the slowest day across all City offices and that there is a wide range of scheduling practices among different municipalities. Lewis acknowledged that, while the City serves the broader community, she appreciated that data supports the idea and noted it could help alleviate childcare challenges. She expressed interest in surveying employees and asked how community feedback would be gathered. Belknap responded that any complaints would be tracked and considered as part of the review process.

Lewis also inquired about on-call staff coverage. Belknap confirmed that both Information Systems and Police Department staff are always available on call.

Parker noted that both Deputy Directors have spoken with staff and are already receiving positive feedback. She expressed that, as a city, we often struggle to compensate employees as competitively as we would like, so any effort to enhance the City's workplace culture and environment is worth pursuing.

Belknap mentioned all recreation facilities run their own schedules. This would affect business offices in public works and services, human resources, information systems, administration, finance, legal, grants, community development and arts.

Kelly said she has often had to switch to four tens and has never been an issue. With so many online options, she really thinks it will be ok. She moved to authorize the pilot program during this 8-week period. Blankenship seconded. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

REPORTS

City Council

Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee – Lewis said they discussed the agreement approved by council this evening.

SMART Transit – Lewis reported they are extracting old tracking information. They will have updated ridership numbers soon.

Sustainable Environment Commission – Blankenship said the Commission discussed tabling at the Farmers Market and participating at Artwalk.

Human Rights Commission – Parker reported the Commission is working on the Juneteenth celebration and how to support human rights in the region. There will be a food drive in August.

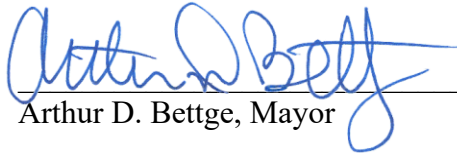
Clearwater Economic Development Association – Parker said the Dream It Do It conference was a success. The Idaho Youth Conservation Corp. is in full swing.

Mayor

No report.

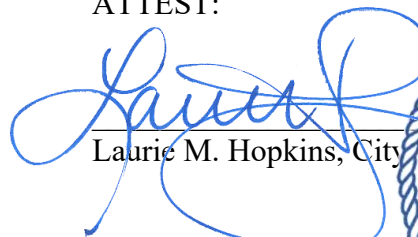
ADJOURN

It was mutually agreed upon to adjourn at 8:17 p.m.



Arthur D. Bettge, Mayor

ATTEST:



Laurie M. Hopkins, City Clerk

