

Moscow City Council



Regular Meeting ~Minutes~

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Laurie M. Hopkins
City Clerk

208.883.7015

Monday, July 7, 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, David Schott, Amanda Argona, Anthony Dahlinger, Laurie M. Hopkins

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Vice President Davis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. All Consent Items (ACTION ITEM)

A. Approval of Moscow City Council June 16, 2025 Minutes - Laurie M. Hopkins

B. Approval of Payment of Claims - Sarah Decker

C. Firehouse Subs Grant Application - Alisa Anderson / Brian Nickerson

The Moscow Volunteer Fire Department (MVFD) is requesting approval to submit a grant application to the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation (Foundation). This Foundation assists first responders and public safety organizations by providing lifesaving equipment and needed resources to help them be better prepared to save lives in the communities they serve. The funding request includes: 1) Ram Tool Package - Used for forcible entry and extrication; 2) Variable Speed Battery Power Blower - Used in several ways to include mop-up operations after a fire, creating a firebreak and as part of positive pressure ventilation (PPV) systems. The MVFD is requesting to submit a grant request in an amount not to exceed \$20,000. This item was reviewed by the Administrative Committee on June 23, 2025 and recommended for approval.

ACTION: Recommend approval for the MVFD to submit a grant application to Firehouse Subs Foundation for equipment in an amount not to exceed \$20,000.

D. Consideration of the Latah County Library District Lease Agreement – David Schott

The City of Moscow and the Latah County Library District wish to continue their longstanding lease arrangement for the property located at 110 South Jefferson Street, used exclusively for library operations. The proposed lease agreement has a ten-year term, extending from October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2035. This was reviewed by the Administrative Committee on June 23, 2025 and recommended for approval.

ACTION: Approve the proposed lease agreement between the City of Moscow and the Latah County Library District for a ten-year term beginning on October 1, 2025.

E. Consideration of the 1912 Center Third Floor Development Concept - David Schott

Heart of the Arts, Inc. (HAI), managers of the 1912 Center for the greater Moscow community, are pleased to present a proposed conceptual schematic for the development of the third floor of the 1912 Center, located at 412 E. Third Street in Moscow. The third floor will offer four new spaces for the community to use in complimentary ways to the spaces that are currently available in the community and those that are already at the 1912 Center. This was reviewed by the Administrative Committee on June 23, 2025 and recommended for approval.

ACTION: Approve the conceptual schematic for the development of the third floor of the 1912 Center.

F. MoscAuto Festival Alcohol Use Request in Entertainment District - Amanda Argona

Kick Elite Boosters LLC is hosting MoscAuto Festival on Sunday, July 13 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm on Main Street between 3rd and 6th Streets, and portions of 4th and 5th Streets. This event, which is stylized as a classic car and motorcycle show, is a new event to the Entertainment District, with the applicant intending for the event to be hosted annually. The applicant is anticipating up to three licensed beer and/or wine vendors, two food trucks, and a variety of automobiles and vehicles. Live music is scheduled to be a part of the festivities in the form of a band or DJ. This event has been reviewed and approved as of March 10, 2025. Following standard operating procedures for events with alcohol that are within the Entertainment District boundaries, MoscAuto Festival is requesting a temporary suspension of the open container law by resolution. Per Moscow City Code, Section 10-1-12; a draft resolution has been prepared for Council's consideration. This was reviewed by the Administrative Committee on June 23, 2025 and recommended for approval.

ACTION: Approve the resolution allowing for the temporary suspension of the open container law within the event footprint of MoscAuto Festival for the duration of the event.

G. Rendezvous in the Park Alcohol Use Request in East City Park - Amanda Argona

Rendezvous in Moscow, Inc. is hosting its annual music and arts festival, Rendezvous in the Park, on July 17-19, 2025, in East City Park. The festival features live, family-friendly concerts in the evenings, a two-day arts festival for children during the mornings, food vendors, and one licensed beer/wine vendor. Following standard operating procedures for events with alcohol within a City Park, Rendezvous in Moscow, Inc. is requesting the allowance of attendees to possess and consume alcoholic beverages within the event footprint during the hours of 4:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. during the aforementioned dates. Per Moscow City Code, Section 5-13-4, a draft resolution has been prepared by the Community Events Division and reviewed by the Legal Department for the Council's consideration. This was reviewed by the Administrative Committee on June 23, 2025 and recommended for approval.

ACTION: Approve the resolution allowing for the possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages in East City Park within the event footprint of Rendezvous in the Park during the listed times and dates of the event.

Lewis requested Item E be removed from the consent agenda. She moved to approve the consent agenda minus Item E. Taruscio seconded. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

Lewis stated that she pulled the item off the consent agenda due to community interest and a desire for additional clarity on the project details. Jenny Kostroff provided an overview of the third-floor design plans, which include a ballroom, culinary lab, studio, and sky lounge. The project is being fully funded by the Heart of the Arts, Inc. (HAI), which operates and maintains the 1912 Center. HAI will lead all fundraising efforts. The project will begin with infrastructure improvements for the third floor. Following that, each space will be constructed on an “à la carte” basis—as funding is secured for individual rooms,

construction will proceed accordingly.

Kelly moved and Lewis seconded to approve the conceptual schematic for the development of the third floor of the 1912 Center. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

REGULAR AGENDA

2. Public Comment (limit 15 minutes)

Kent Salisbury (Moscow) said he has spent some time recently cleaning the downtown area which he has had many compliments. He found more graffiti and also believes the name of a new restaurant downtown is inappropriate.

Tym Park (Moscow) said even though parking on the south side of the drop off on Almon Street was taken away, it is still scary to use. He would gladly pay a fee to drop off yard waste elsewhere. He also mentioned his issue with wheeled vehicles on the sidewalks. The City should address the issue and provide rules and/or guidance. Another concern he has are young kids riding electronic scooters.

3. Citizen Commission Report - Human Rights Commission – Anthony Dahlinger / Erin Agidius

Erin Agidius provided a list of commission members. Partnerships and activities over the last year included Inland Oasis Palouse Pride March, Native American Heritage Month, and a “United Against Hate” forum. Upcoming events will include the great Moscow food drive, Palouse Pride march, Inclusive Community month and a student community dinner.

4. Latah County Jail Memorandum of Agreement (ACTION ITEM) - Bill Belknap

On June 10th, the Board of Latah County Commissioners and the Latah County Sheriff’s Office announced their decision to close the Latah County Jail and transition to operating a temporary holding facility by September 30 of this year. Latah County entered into an agreement with Nez Perce County to provide inmate housing, and the City will now be responsible for transporting the nearly 250 individuals whom the Moscow Police Department arrests each year to the Nez Perce County Detention Center. The closure of the Latah County Jail and the resulting requirement to transport arrestees to Lewiston will place significant financial and personnel stress upon the Moscow Police Department at a time when it is struggling with staffing, as are many law enforcement agencies across the nation. Additionally, long transport places both officers and arrestees at greater risk of vehicle accidents, medical emergencies, and increased transport costs, in addition to decreased coverage within the City during the transport and return. To attempt to reduce the impact on the City, City Staff have worked with the County to develop a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) under which the Latah County Sheriff’s office has agreed to accept, process, and transport arrestees during the hours of operation of their court holding facility and on special event weekends in the City where arrests may be more frequent. The proposed MOA was approved by the Board of Latah County Commissioners on June 10th and is now before the Council for consideration and approval.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Approve the proposed Memorandum of Agreement with Latah County, or take other action deemed appropriate.

Belknap introduced the item as summarized above. The county will have the court holding facility open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The facility will be available for MPD to book and process arrestees, with transport provided if necessary. Exceptions apply for combative individuals, who MPD will transport directly. For some special event weekends, such as home football games, the County would staff the holding facility and would be open until 2:00 a.m. During regular hours, if an arrestee needs to remain in custody, the Sheriff’s Office will transport them to the Nez Perce County Jail, provided

they arrive before closing. It is Belknap's supposition that only using the jail as a holding center will reduce the population and use a smaller portion of the jail, which would reduce operational burden. A previous City inspection identified four life safety issues: 1) Missing sprinkler heads in three sallyport cells; 2) an aging fire alarm system lacking replacement parts, insufficient camera coverage, and a need for three SCBAs for evacuation. These issues are either addressable or non-urgent. The State has jail standards but has not necessarily adopted court holding facility standards. Belknap emphasized that while the facility may need minor repairs, it would require less maintenance than a full jail. The County will not provide return transport to Moscow. If Nez Perce County Jail is at capacity, Latah County has contracted with Whitman County for overflow housing, a common practice between jurisdictions.

Blankenship expressed frustration, echoed by Kelly, at the situation the City is now in. Kelly is worried about the strain on the police department, which is understaffed. In anticipation of this shift, Dahlinger said the department created an on-call schedule for transport to Lewiston. The Fleet Division also installed bars in the patrol vehicles for the safety of arrestees as well as officers during a longer transport.

Davis asked specifics on the agreement and the added cost to the City. Belknap estimated the on-call program would cost approximately \$125,000. He also stressed the County has no legal obligation to assist, but is doing so voluntarily to help alleviate some of the burden.

Lewis criticized the situation as unjust to all involved—arrestees, City residents, County staff, and officers. She attributed the issue to the County's lack of planning and said she couldn't support the agreement in principle, even if it's necessary. She is very frustrated that their lack of planning could potentially derail any bond the school district or city may need to run in the future.

Blankenship agreed but acknowledged that given the circumstances, entering into the MOU was the City's only viable option. He raised concerns about the termination clause.

Kelly reiterated her frustration but said the City has no better alternative. She supports the agreement as a small but needed measure to assist officers.

Davis reiterated concerns about the lack of County collaboration and public engagement. He stressed the need for a shared commitment to public safety and thanked Chief Dahlinger and MPD. With the County mentioning a local option tax, he doesn't feel that is an option for a new jail.

Taruscio believes government is the most effective and most responsive closest to the people. She expressed disappointment in the erosion of long-standing partnerships, which she believes have made the community strong. She supported the MOU as a temporary solution but said the lack of communication represented a collapse in cooperative governance. She sympathized with the added burden on police.

Kelly moved to approve the proposed MOA with Latah County. Parker seconded. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Five (5). Nays: One (Lewis). Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

REPORTS

City Council

Historic Preservation Commission – Davis said the Commission is working on nominations for the annual Orchid awards.

Planning and Zoning Commission – Blankenship reported they had a public hearing for additional units within the Woodbury Subdivision.

Parks and Recreation Commission – Lewis said the commission is busy as usual.

SMART Transit – Lewis said the organization had their annual ITD inspection. The ridership data has

transitioned to the new system.

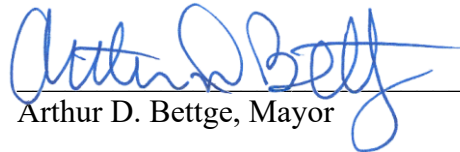
Council members spoke on other meetings and events they attended.

Mayor

Mayor Bettge said the Airport Board initiated an air service enhancement committee to lobby airlines.

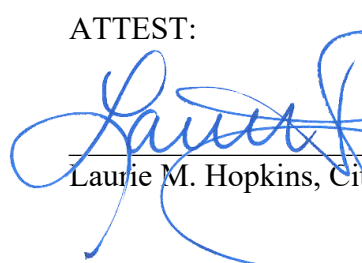
ADJOURN

It was moved, seconded and mutually agreed upon to adjourn at 8:25 p.m.



Arthur D. Bettge, Mayor

ATTEST:



Laurie M. Hopkins, City Clerk

