

Public Works / Finance Committee



Regular Meeting
~Minutes~

Laurie M. Hopkins
City Clerk

www.ci.moscow.id.us

208.883.7015

Monday, July 14, 2025

4:00 PM

Council Chambers
206 E. Third St.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Bryce Blankenship, Sandra Kelly, Gina Taruscio

ABSENT: Hailey Lewis, Julia Parker

OTHERS: Mayor Art Bettge, Drew Davis

STAFF: Bill Belknap, Mia Bautista, Tyler Palmer, Scott Bontrager, Luke Hajda, David Schott, Sarah Decker, Laurie M. Hopkins

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Approval of Public Works/Finance Committee June 9, 2025 Minutes (ACTION ITEM) - Laurie M. Hopkins

The minutes were approved as presented.

2. Disbursement Report June 2025 (ACTION ITEM) - Sarah Decker

Presentation of the Accounts Payable Report for the month ending June 2025.

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

Decker presented the disbursement report and provided details on the major expenses including payroll, water rate study, city shop project, meter purchases and slurry seal project. The Committee accepted the report and that it be placed on the Council consent agenda.

3. Third Quarter Financial Report April 1, 2025 to June 30, 2025 for FY2025 (ACTION ITEM) - Sarah Decker

Presentation of the third quarter financial report for Fiscal Year 2025 (April 1, 2025 to June 30, 2025).

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Recommend approval of the FY2025 Third Quarter Financial Report, or provide staff with further direction.

Decker presented the third quarter report which should be trending approximately at 75%. Capital looks lower as it is project season and the majority of capital funds are in fund balance. Transfers are small and operations are larger because the internal service charges were moved from transfers to charges for service. Water and Sewer funds are larger due to the DEQ loan and higher GFC charges from the SE Moscow Sewer District respectively. The Committee recommended approval and that it be placed on the Council consent agenda.

4. Lola Clyde Park Development Grant Award Agreement (ACTION ITEM) - Alisa Anderson / Luke Hajda

In January 2023, staff submitted a grant application to the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) under the Land and Water Conservation Program requesting assistance with the continued development of Lola Clyde Park. The proposed project includes frontage improvements, accessible paths/sidewalks, parking, lighting, and an internal pathway around the lower perimeter of the park

property. In May 2023, staff were invited to present the request to the Land and Water Conservation Evaluation Committee in Boise. Shortly after, staff received notification that the request was approved to be submitted to the National Park Service (NPS) for approval of a grant request. On June 25, 2025, staff received the attached Letter of Award and State and Local Project Agreement from IDPR. The details of the funding and project elements are shown in Attachment F of the Agreement. The City will provide \$170,000 of in-kind match, including surveying, engineering/design, and construction inspection, in addition to \$414,000 in cash for a total match of \$584,000 (50% match requirement) with a grant award of \$584,000 for construction with total project costs of \$1,168,000. It is anticipated that engineering staff will complete the design of the project and advertise it for bidding in 2026, with construction anticipated for possibly as soon as next summer.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Recommend approval to accept the grant award and authorize execution of the required documents, including the State and Local Agreement for the Land and Water Conservation Fund from the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation or provide staff further direction.

Anderson provided a background on the project which began with the purchase of the property in 1996. The playground exceeds accessibility requirements and is intended for users of all ages and abilities. Hajda said the surface has been surveyed. What they are trying to figure out is meeting the present day needs of the park and align it with the master plan. The frontage improvements are adding impervious pavement which requires treatment of water. Once that is figured out, Staff can look at the future bathroom location, Anderson provided a breakdown of costs. Start date was July 1, 2025 with completion in 2028. Rodeo Drive will meet all standards for a collector road and the parking will be within the park. The hope is to have the parking at a little angle so that water can be captured and disperse it into Paradise Creek. Landscaping is included for the frontage on Public Avenue. The Land and Water Conservation Program requires this property to be a park in perpetuity.

Blankenship inquired on the challenge of the American purchasing requirement. Anderson said many lights are purchased under that requirement and for this project there are only three lights so shouldn't be a problem. As this is a preliminary design, the next step is for Engineering to design the project. Anderson said the funds are available in 2026 with construction in 2027.

The Committee recommended approval and that it be placed on the Council consent agenda.

5. Street Banner Policy Update (ACTION ITEM)- Tyler Palmer

The City of Moscow has long maintained a program for the placement of banners in the downtown area for the display of government banners as well as public notification of special events. The program, administered by the Streets Department, has been updated several times over many years, with a formalized policy adopted by the City Council in 2013. Since the adoption of the 2013 policy, the location and use of light pole banners within the City has changed such that it requires an update. The revised policy provides the policy purpose, permitted uses, banner standards, application process and fees, and prioritization criteria to address when multiple requests are received for the same period of time. The policy establishes that the use of light pole banners and over-the-street banners are restricted for governmental use and is not intended to establish or be utilized as a public forum.

PROPOSED ACTIONS: Recommend approval of the updated Street Banner Policy and associated Resolution, or provide staff with further direction.

Palmer introduced the item, noting the proposed updates to the City's banner policy. Under the previous policy, the City Administrator could approve banner applications for City-sponsored events. The updated policy shifts this authority to the City Council and better defines terms such as "City event," and "City-sponsored event." City events are those organized and executed by the City. City-sponsored events are hosted by other entities, like Rendezvous, but receive formal support from the City, now subject to Council approval. Banner space will no longer be available on a first-come, first-served basis for nonprofits and

community groups unless the Council sponsors the event. The application review responsibility moves from the City Administrator to the Public Works Director or designee. Any fee waiver requests must go before the Council. The term “sponsored event” was not defined in the previous 2013 policy; it now refers to those the Council determines serve a governmental purpose and merit use of the limited public speech space. The University of Idaho has fixed banner locations and would operate under a separate agreement. Specific UI events like Homecoming, Jazz Fest, and Commencement are called out in the policy.

The Council requested an example of the process. Cal Ripken baseball would make an application which is not a city event or other governmental event. The item would go before the City Council for approval. If the City Council approves the banner application, the sponsorship would be the endorsement and the advertising of the event in the government limited speech space. Belknap explained that the City must maintain content neutrality and avoid creating an open public forum. The policy is designed to restrict banner use to governmental speech—City events, or those the City formally sponsors. This ensures legal defensibility and allows flexibility for Council to approve longstanding events like Rendezvous or Artwalk, provided they align with City goals and values. The City does have the legal ability to restrict speech for governmental purposes and governmental uses. The city sponsored option creates an opportunity for those events the council feel has community benefit and purpose. This creates an opportunity for the council to sponsor and to allow that advertisement in these spaces. The Council would need to find that there is a nexus and governmental purpose to allow it to be displayed under the governmental use umbrella.

Blankenship felt the committee was getting caught up with the word sponsored and suggested the word endorsed. Taruscio feels it is complicated for the public. If the updates are based on case law, then she feels there needs to be clarity on that legal basis. Belknap explained the policy restricts the banner to governmental speech so that it is not a public forum. Staff anticipated there would be a desire for historical events like Rendezvous which would need an opportunity for council to review on a case-by-case basis to determine whether Council wanted to put it under their governmental speech umbrella. It is to try to create control of the utilizations of those spaces within a governmental purpose but give flexibility on a case-by-case basis. The alternative is to say nothing other than city speech, city events, city messages.

Kelly is concerned about the potential of a lawsuit should the Council deny an application. Taruscio felt they need more review time and wanted it placed on the regular agenda for the full council to discuss. She felt the sponsorship is hard to understand, almost an endorsement and approval, rather than a sponsorship. Palmer said staff can wordsmith the policy.

Blankenship felt it is important to draw a closer connection with regards to the relationship with the University of Idaho and why there is a specific section for them in this proposal for those events. Belknap said University events are all governmental speech thus falls under the governmental event category, not a city sponsored event. The non-profits fall out of the category. He further explained the term governmental speech does not open the door to any government institution or entity. It is only City speech, not a public forum. If it was a public forum, equal opportunity for everyone would need to be required. If it isn't a public forum, which is the distinction with these updates, then it can be controlled for governmental purposes and governmental speech.

Kelly asked how Rendezvous fits into governmental speech. Belknap said the city would need to have a roll in it or they chose to sponsor it. The city already supports the event financially by waiving fees. Sponsorship can be other things of value. Advertising on the banner would be the item of value that the Council would be providing.

Kelly raised concerns about potential legal challenges if applications are denied, urging input from Legal. Belknap explained that the City could create objective criteria to guide decisions but retaining discretion inherently carries risk.

The proposed policy update was prompted by an increase in banner locations, recent legal developments, and applications that blurred the line between event promotion and general advertising. The intent is to clarify allowable use while preserving government control over its communication channels.

The Committee asked that this item be forward to the full council.

ADJOURN

The meeting closed at 4:50 p.m.