

# Moscow City Council



Regular Meeting  
~Minutes~

Laurie M. Hopkins  
City Clerk

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208.883.7015

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Tuesday, January 20, 2026

7:00 PM

Council Chambers  
206 E. Third St.

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

PRESENT: Mayor Hailey Lewis, Bryce Blankenship, Drew Davis, Evan Holmes, Sandra Kelly, Sage McCetich, Scott Sumner

STAFF: Bill Belknap, Mia Bautista, Scott Bontrager, Luke Hadja, Alisa Anderson, Laurie M. Hopkins

## PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Lewis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

## CONSENT AGENDA

### 1. All Consent Items (ACTION ITEM)

#### A. Approval of Moscow City Council January 5, 2026 Minutes - Laurie M. Hopkins

#### B. Approval of Payment of Claims - Sarah Decker

#### C. Disbursement Report September 2025- Sarah Decker

Staff presented the September 2025 Accounts Payable Report to the Public Works / Finance Committee on October 13th, 2025. The Committee received the report and recommended approval of the disbursement report.

**ACTION:** Accept the Disbursements Report for the month of September 2025.

#### D. Disbursement Report December 2025 - Sarah Decker

Staff presented the December 2025 Accounts Payable Report to the Public Works / Finance Committee on January 12th, 2026. The Committee received the report and recommended approval of the disbursement report.

**ACTION:** Accept the Disbursements Report for the month of December 2025.

#### E. First Quarter Financial Report October 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025 for FY2026 - Sarah Decker

Staff presented the financial report for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2026 (October 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025) to the Public Works/Finance Committee on January 12th, 2026. The Committee received the financial report and recommended approval as presented.

**ACTION:** Approve the FY2026 First Quarter Financial Report.

#### F. Idaho Commission on the Arts Grant Application: Public Programs in the Arts - Megan Cherry

The Arts Department seeks approval to apply for an annual grant administered by the Idaho Commission on the Arts (ICA). The Public Programs in the Arts (PPA) grant program is intended to provide program support for arts organizations in Idaho. These funds will represent off-setting

revenue in the production of Palouse Plein Air. If the application is successful, funds are typically available at the end of the City of Moscow's FY26, and would be deferred for use in FY2027. This was reviewed by the Public Works/Finance Committee on January 12, 2026 and recommended for approval.

**ACTION:** Approve the Public Programs in the Arts (PPA) grant application for the current cycle. Kelly moved, Holmes seconded to approve the consent agenda. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

### **2. Mayors Appointments (ACTION ITEM)**

Mayor Lewis presented to the City Council for consideration the appointment of Drew Davis to the Moscow Urban Renewal Agency and Kristi Click to the Transportation Commission. Blankenship moved and Kelly seconded approval of the appointments. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

### **3. Public Comment (limit 15 minutes)**

John Slagboom (Moscow) spoke on the East City Park stage and provided some history. He feels public input has been limited and feels support for the design is skewed. Council members and arts. He said members of the public are worried about the cost increase. He respectfully requested to reopen discussions on next steps and options for the stage. Mayor Lewis responded that this project has been in the budget as a capital improvement. There were 20 meetings and engagement events. The bathroom was sited with the intent the stage would be connected. The governing body voted to move forward with the project.

Jonathan Honish (Moscow) commented he agreed with what John Slagboom said.

### **4. Appointment of Nichoel Baird Spencer as Community Development Director/Deputy City Administrator (ACTION ITEM) – Mayor Hailey Lewis**

Mayor Lewis is proposing the appointment of Nichoel Baird Spencer for City Council confirmation as the City's next Community Development Director/Deputy City Administrator. Spencer will succeed Cody Riddle, who retired from the City of Moscow on December 5, 2025. Spencer is currently the Director of Long-Range Planning and Projects for the City of Eagle, Idaho. Spencer has served Eagle for nearly 22 years in several community planning positions. Spencer was selected from a competitive pool of qualified candidates. If confirmed, Spencer's first day in the position will be February 16, 2026.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** Confirm Nichoel Baird Spencer as the City of Moscow Community Development Director/Deputy City Administrator, or take such other action deemed appropriate

Belknap provided the history of the open position of Deputy City Administrator and the interview process. Baird Spencer has a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's in regional planning.

Sumner felt there were three fantastic candidates and that says a lot about the community. Mayor Lewis is excited to have someone that has the experience with comprehensive plans and has kids at the University of Idaho.

McCetich moved, Kelly seconded, appointment of Nichoel Baird Spencer as Community Development Director/Deputy City Administrator. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

Spencer said she is very excited and thankful her husband was willing to uproot and move to Moscow. When looking into the position she heard all good things and that says volumes about the community and leadership. She is excited to work with the mayor and council and be part of the staff.

**5. 2026 Council Liaison Assignments (ACTION ITEM) - Drew Davis, Council President**

The Council held a Council Workshop on January 12, 20206, to discuss City Commission Council liaison assignments for the 2026 calendar year. The attached document includes the proposed Council liaison assignments for formal approval.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** Approve the proposed 2026 Commission Council liaison assignments, or take other action deemed appropriate.

Davis introduced the item as written above adding everyone is eager to begin working with the commission volunteers. Blankenship moved, Kelly seconded, to approve the council liaison commission assignments. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

**6. 2026 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant Applications (ACTION ITEM) - Alisa Anderson / Scott Bontrager**

Staff has identified two projects for potential candidates for grant applications to the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The first project includes roadway widening to accommodate vehicle travel lanes and bike lanes, and the installation of curb and gutter, and a shared-use path on Mountain View Road from White Avenue to State Highway 8. The second proposed project includes widening of an existing pedestrian pathway from Sixth to Fifth Street, as well as Sixth Street crossing safety improvements, and the installation of a sidewalk on Park Drive from Sixth Street to Seventh Street. This item was reviewed by the Public Works/Finance Committee on January 12, 2026, and recommended for approval.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** Authorize City staff to submit two 2026 Transportation Alternatives Program Grant Applications for \$500,000 with total project costs not to exceed \$750,000 for the Mountain View Road Improvement Project, and \$500,000 for the Sixth Street Pedestrian Improvement Project, or take other action deemed appropriate.

Anderson provided a history of the Transportation Alternatives Program which used to be focused on sidewalks and safe routes to school, then transitioned into a community choices program. Within the community choices program, Moscow was able to complete improvements on D Street at the middle school. The program transitioned again into what is called TAP. The Highway 8 and Styner Avenue underpass was constructed under this program. It is for non-motorized transportation such as paths or sidewalks, pedestrian crossing, signage and signalization, noncompliant sidewalks, and pedestrian pathways/underpasses.

Hadja provided details on the project which includes a multi-use path on the east side of Mountain View Road, between Troy Road to White Avenue. It will include a wall and widening the shoulder to fit a full arterial section which includes bike lanes in both directions. Also included is sidewalk from White Avenue to the Paradise Creek bridge. Design would take place in 2026 with construction in 2028, 2029, or 2030, which is selected during the application process. Idaho Transportation Department has plans for a signal at Highway 8 and Mountain View slated for 2028.

Anderson explained the 6<sup>th</sup> Street project is priority two and Mountain View is priority one. The grant guidance encourages submitting multiple projects so that if someone doesn't use the month or a project drops, a project can move up the list. Belknap said the full improvement of Mountain View Rd has been programmed in the Capital Improvement Plan and can cover the match.

Hadja described the widening of the pathway between 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, across from Park Drive. A rectangular rapid flashing beacon would be installed at the 6<sup>th</sup> Street crosswalk and would include bulb-outs, and sidewalk continuation along the east side of Park Drive to Triangle Park.

McCetich, Davis and Holmes showed their support for the grant application as this corridor is highly used by children and will help with traffic flow and safety with the multi-use of bikes and pedestrians.

McCetich moved to authorize City staff to submit two 2026 Transportation Alternatives Program Grant Applications for \$500,000 with total project costs not to exceed \$750,000 for the Mountain View Road Improvement Project, and \$500,000 for the Sixth Street Pedestrian Improvement Project. Blankenship seconded. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

**7. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) - Highway 95 Underpass Project Modification (ACTION ITEM) - Alisa Anderson / Scott Bontrager**

The City of Moscow and the Moscow Urban Renewal Agency (MURA) began planning a pedestrian and bicycle underpass at South Main Street/U.S. 95 in 2018 following the completion of a feasibility study completed by Alta Science and Engineering. In 2020, the City was awarded a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant to help fund the project. The project was designed to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety by bypassing a busy five-lane intersection near the University of Idaho. In 2020, the City was awarded a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant to help fund the project. The original plan included a 710-foot-long underpass, pathway connections, and removal of the old Highway 95 bridge, with most of the \$1.07 million cost covered by federal funding. State-level delays postponed design work until 2023, and extensive environmental reviews extended into 2025. Recently, updated hydraulic analyses revealed significant sediment buildup and changed hydraulic conditions in Paradise Creek. Due to the altered creek conditions, construction of the underpass has been deemed infeasible at this time. The granting agency recommended that the City consider modifying the project scope toward alternative above-ground pedestrian safety improvements at the same intersection. Engineering staff have identified other beneficial pedestrian improvements near the south couplet intersection, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has approved the proposed scope revisions. This revised approach would meet safety and connectivity goals while staying within the current project budget. This item was reviewed by the Public Works/Finance Committee on January 12, 2026, and recommended for approval.

**PROPOSED ACTIONS:** Authorize City staff to modify the scope of the project and complete the design utilizing remaining funds in the current State/Local agreement, or take other action deemed appropriate.

Bontrager introduced the item as written above. In addition to sediment around the bridge area, impacts would extend to College Street, and future flood events could bring additional sediment. The original project would require extensive permitting and ongoing maintenance. In coordination with LHTAC, ITD, IDWR, and City staff, a revised project scope was investigated. The revised project includes enhancements at the Sweet Avenue intersection, sidewalk improvements along US 95 between Sweet Avenue and the highway intersection, a new pedestrian crossing on the west side of the highway intersection, continuation of the sidewalk along the south side of Highway 8 from the highway intersection to Crites, and removal of the old Highway 95 bridge. The revised proposal fits within the original budget.

Blankenship expressed support for the reassessment and appreciation for a workable solution developed with project partners.

McCetich asked whether IDWR has long-term plans for this location. Belknap explained a flood hazard mitigation study completed several years ago examined the area upstream from the Troy Highway crossing

and did not identify a definitive solution, but did recommend proactive channel maintenance. IDWR and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will not initiate projects in this area. The University completed restoration work near College Street, and any new work could disrupt those efforts. Staff determined that addressing the channel within the grant timeframe was not feasible. Staff recommended identifying an alternative project with pedestrian benefits rather than abandoning the project, which would require repayment of design costs and could negatively impact relations with the granting agency. Belknap and Holmes noted that constructing an underpass independently would be prohibitively expensive and would require significant future coordination.

Davis reported that the PWF Committee discussed the item and reiterated that partner agencies have committed funding and resources. He stated that discontinuing the project would require the City to repay approximately \$200,000 in design costs. He expressed that the revised project improves safety and represents a positive outcome.

Sumner asked whether sediment accumulation could become catastrophic. Belknap explained that the State would expect the City to perform general channel and bridge maintenance, including debris removal during flood events. Sumner stated his support for connectivity and multimodal transportation.

Davis moved to authorize City staff to modify the scope of the project and complete the design utilizing remaining funds in the current State/Local agreement. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Unanimous. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

The project design will be completed by summer for bidding in the fall and construction next year.

## **REPORTS**

### **City Council**

*Farmers Market Commission* – Davis said the Commission is discussing policies. 50th anniversary of the FM art show on third floor of city hall.

*Moscow Volunteer Fire Department* – Davis said they discussed training.

*Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee* – Blankenship reported they had active discussions.

*Human Rights Commission* – McCetich reported the Commission discussed future social justice forums.

*Planning and Zoning Commission* – McCetich said the Commission discussed the Woodbury replat and PUD amendment. They also had a discussion on duplex building codes.

*Sustainable Environment Commission* – Holmes said the Commission discussed the Idaho NPDES permit that was approved by IDEQ. The new pumps at the WRRF are installed.

*Moscow Tree Commission* – Holmes said the Commission discussed tree choices and the pollinator area by Guy Wicks field.

*Fair and Affordable Housing Commission* – Holmes reported the Commission discussed developing strategies for tenants and landlords.

*Moscow Arts Commission* – Sumner said the Commission is working on requests for proposals and will begin receiving submittals on a couple projects that have already gone out.

Council members spoke on other meetings and events they attended.

**Mayor**

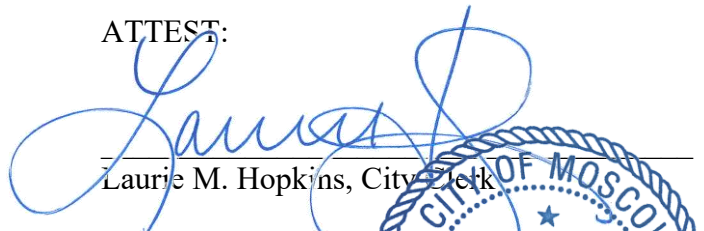
Mayor Lewis said she attended an AIC legislative meeting and SMART Transit.

**ADJOURN**

It was moved, seconded and mutually agreed upon to adjourn at 8:16 p.m.

  
Hailey Lewis, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Laurie M. Hopkins, City Clerk

