

## APPROVED MINUTES

The City Council held Council Meeting #1646 on Monday, February 5, 2024, in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

### **Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Mayor Peggy Williams.

The Pledge of Allegiance was completed, prayer was by Jeff O'Connell, and roll call commenced. Present were Mayor Williams, Councilors Gary Beach, Melissa Berke, Ian Smith, Kristin Smith, Hugh Taylor, Brian Zimmerman, Administrator Sam Sikes, Clerk/Treasurer Leann Monigold, and (via Zoom) City Attorney Dean Chisholm.

Mayor Williams welcomed all those present.

### **Approve City Council minutes for meeting #1645 dated January 16, 2024:**

Councilor Zimmerman **MADE A MOTION** to approve City Council minutes for meeting #1645 dated January 16, 2024, Councilor Berke **SECONDED**.

DC Orr, 1117 Nevada Ave., commented on Councilor Taylor's corrections to meeting #1645 minutes to include his questions. Mr. Orr commented that those corrections should have been voted on.

Councilors Beach, Berke, I. Smith, K. Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

### **MOTION PASSED.**

**Announcements:** Mayor Williams announced the next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>. City Hall will be closed on President's Day. The concerns about Flower Creek and weather conditions have rectified itself, both are being monitored.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Administrator:** Administrator Sikes reported the Sewer Department hired Phil Sloan to fill the open position. Sloan has a vast array of experiences, including previously being certified in water. The main circulator pumps are having some mechanical issues dealing with main shaft sheer pins that are no longer made. Leroy Thom was able to fabricate some, they are being installed. When the power went out, the generator at the golf course lift station came on but had some battery issues and ran for a couple of days. An electrician took care of the issue.

## Water Department

The Water Department hired Garret Davis to fill the open position at the treatment plant. Davis has a lot of experience in different areas and will be an asset to the city. The city received applications from highly qualified people for both positions.

One of the main pumps that fill our 500k storage tank is burned out. A new pump has been ordered as a replacement; the old one will be repaired to keep on hand for emergencies. There are four of the same pumps in operation. The replacement of the pump will come from the asset replacement fund.

The last couple weeks Mr. Sikes has been working with Rural Water and the Mayor to complete a rate analysis on the water and sewer rates to ensure that the water and sewer departments are self-sustaining, keeping the systems adequately maintained, and that the city is charging in a manner that is fair and just. The water/sewer committee, in the next 10 days, will receive a presentation on the findings and recommendations moving forward. The next steps are, the committee will make their recommendation, the council votes on it. There are public hearings, and then the rates are either adopted or changed as per the council.

The SLIPA minutes are approved as of tonight, so Mr. Sikes can move ahead in the next couple of weeks to get that SLIPA grant completed and pushed out for pre-approval through the state. The application is due March 30. The city will get the proper engineering done, that cost will be recoverable through the grant itself.

The city put out for bids for the instrument and control panel at the sewer plant, to completely replace the electronic portion. The bidding has been advertised and bids are due February 14 at 2pm.

**Streets:** Streets Supervisor Justin Williams reported there have been a lot of frozen meters and replacements along with some frozen water lines. If people have had this problem, they should look at the quality of insulation or lack thereof and make necessary updates.

There have been more seasonal ordinance violations than the crew has time to deal with. 28 of them on the first plow, and roughly two thirds the following plow. 3 vehicles towed due to neglect/abandonment. Numerous city residents are shoveling, snow blowing and plowing snow from their property into city streets, they were reminded of city ordinance. Mr. Williams spoke with a couple of contractors that do snow removal for businesses in the city and educated them as well on the ordinance that pertains to placing snow into city streets.

The city crew has been busy with jetting due to the extreme cold, patching potholes and performing maintenance on one of the loaders and one end dump.

Mr. Williams wanted to mention last month and missed it in his report. The city crew did an amazing job this last year not only with all the work they performed, but they did it all with zero injuries and reportable along with zero equipment and property damage, they are very proud of that.

The water leak survey wrapped up on January 24th. The gentlemen had 96 hours total into the survey which was broken down into two phases. First phase was the survey itself which consisted of sounding of appurtenances recording all leak anomalies. The second phase consisted of narrowing down all anomalies that were detected during the initial survey. The leaks discovered are 15 mains, 1 valve, 4 hydrants, 1 service line, 2 service connections, for a total of 23 pinpointed leaks. These figures are conservative regarding the leaks discovered, there are most likely more out there. The loss is estimated at 343 gallons per minute leaking, totaling 494,280 gallons per day, 14,828,400 gallons per month, totaling 180,412,000 gallons yearly. All this info he was able to gather by pipe type, pipe size, pressure, installation, leak type and size. There is a plan moving forward, this spring crews will focus on leaks located in grass areas, areas behind curb and areas in rock/gravel then begin working into areas in the right of ways. The plan is to perform and complete it by August of 2025. This could change if the decision is made to farm some of this work out, still working through what this would look like with the City Administrator.

**Police:** Chief Ercanbrack reported last month was a busy month with high profile cases, including a pursuit and two issues down on Amtrak. Unfortunately, we did find out, the police vehicle damaged in pursuit was totaled with a twisted frame. Will be working with the insurance company to move forward to replace the vehicle. Last month, there were 220 calls, all handled by local police officers without having to rely on the sheriff's office to cover those calls. Chief Ercanbrack is excited to be able to take that load off the Sheriff's Office, as well as be a force that is here to help our community. Looking forward that the Police Commission being filled out today so they can move forward as well to remedy the problem that we have.

**Ordinance:** Councilor K. Smith announced the Ordinance Committee met on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January, there is a recommendation on tonight's agenda. Also, started discussing chapter 14.28, which is entitled "Auto Trailers" and will be going over changes that may need to be made.

**Water/Sewer:** Councilor Zimmerman announced a meeting will be scheduled once some more information is received from Administrator Sikes and Rural Water.

**Zoning:** Councilor Smith announced the Zoning Commission met on January 29<sup>th</sup> and voted to send the final changes to residential districts back to Council. They will be recommending a definition for commercial vehicles, recommending a way for addressing front yard storage, changed the sign size, and a few other things that came up during public comment. Will be coming back to Council for the public hearing process.

The Planning Board also met on the 29<sup>th</sup> and reviewed a draft of changes to the city's subdivision regulations, which haven't been updated. Several statutory changes have occurred, the City's contract planner Jeremy Fadness with WWC went through the regs and made all those changes which were helpful to stay current with state law. Moving forward, the Planning Board will hold the Public Hearing in a couple of months. Also, started to review the land use map, which would be an addendum to our growth policy. As we get more and more annexation requests from developers wanting to come into the city, we need to have a map with some recommended land uses.

**Finance:** Clerk Treasurer Monigold reported all W2s and 1099s have been mailed out and reported to the IRS and State. With the help of Administrator Sikes and Justin Williams, we have been going over the insurance for our property and liabilities, to make sure everything's where we need it to be, as far as replacement value with the rising costs and make sure all our insurance property schedules are up to date, adding and removing anything as necessary. Have just begun gathering preliminary numbers together to start getting the budget going, that time of year again.

**Wildlife:** Councilor Taylor announced receiving an email from our local biologist that the Turkey Plan has cleared their legal department, but now there have been some changes that we may not even need a plan, there are other options out there. The Committee needs to read and review everything they've sent us back.

**Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items:**

DC Orr, 1117 Nevada Ave., commented on parliamentary procedures and believes Council violated his constitutional rights by interrupting and denying him more time.

**Old Business: None.**

**New Business:**

**Approve street closure and noise ordinance variance August 16, 17, 2024 for Igniters Car Show:**

Gary Rantala and Kevin Peck requested a street closure and noise ordinance variance on behalf of the Igniters Car Show, describing the dates, time, and changes to the route for the Friday night cruise.

Councilor Zimmerman **MADE A MOTION** to approve street closure and noise ordinance variance August 16, 17, 2024 for Igniters Car Show, Councilor Berke **SECONDED**.

Councilors Beach, Berke, I. Smith, K. Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

**Approve Ordinance #2010, an ordinance to amend Title 10, Chapter 52, Section 35-General Parking Regulations-First Reading:**

Councilor Smith explained the memo submitted to council that came from the Ordinance Committee at the request of the City Administrator and the Chief of Police to allow other city staff, primarily the Street Supervisor, to issue parking tickets, especially helpful in the winter months, allowing tickets to be written and cars taken care of without taking police officers away from their other duties.

Mayor Williams read the first reading of Ordinance #2010.

Councilor Zimmerman **MADE A MOTION** to approve Ordinance #2010, Councilor Berke **SECONDED**.

Councilor I. Smith commented that letting other authorized members of the City issue ordinance violations is heading in the right direction.

DC Orr, 1117 Nevada Ave., inquired who were the members of the Committee. The council responded, Mr. Zimmerman, Ms. Berke, and Ms. Smith.

Councilors Beach, Berke, I. Smith, K. Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

**Approve Mark Andreasen to Planning Board/Zoning board for 3-year term expiring 3-25:**

Mayor Williams explained the Planning Board and Zoning Board were 3-year terms and the appointments have gotten a little out of wack. Current members of the board were asked if they would like to continue their terms, if so to give a letter of interest. Mr. Andreasen submitted his letter, to bring his term back in line, it will be ending in 2025.

Councilor Smith **MADE A MOTION** to approve Mark Andreasen to Planning Board/Zoning board for 3-year term expiring 3-25, Councilor Zimmerman **SECONDED**.

Councilor K. Smith commented Mark is a fantastic addition to the board and really helps in discussions, he is savvy with GIS and maps.

Councilor Taylor inquired why there was not an application because he was under the understanding there were no letters of interest anymore.

Mayor Williams explained the appointments are for the current members and would ask for a letter of interest to remain on the boards. Two vacancies remain and will be requesting applications. One must be a city resident, and one must be within the planning board boundaries. That ad will be going out this week.

DC Orr, 1117 Nevada Ave, disagreed with the same people being on the committees for a lengthy time.

Councilors Beach, Berke, I. Smith, K. Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

**Approve Brad Nelson Police Commission for term expiring April 30, 2024:**

Mayor Williams explained the appointment is to fill the vacancy on the Police Commission previously held by Mr. Bebee with a term ending April 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Nelson's term would end April 30<sup>th</sup> and would be looking for someone to fill a three-year term following that.

Councilor Smith **MADE A MOTION** to approve Brad Nelson Police Commission for term expiring April 30, 2024, Councilor Berke **SECONDED**.

DC Orr, 1117 Nevada Ave., commented the Police Commission vacancy should have been filled in a timelier manner after Mr. Bebee's resignation.

Councilors Beach, Berke, I. Smith, K. Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

**Approve Kristin Smith Health Board representative for 3-year term expiring 2-27:**

Mayor Williams had announced previously that Amy Fantozzi wanted to move over to the County position which would leave the city position vacant. Mayor Williams had said she would prefer to have a member of the Council appointed to actually represent the city. Ms. Smith applied. Mayor Williams is requesting the Council to approve that appointment.

Councilor Zimmerman **MADE A MOTION** to approve Kristin Smith for the Board of Health, Councilor Berke **SECONDED**.

**Councilor Beach ABSTAINED.**

DC Orr, 1117 Nevada Ave., commented it was proper that Mr. Beach abstained and disapproved of the lack of attendance and accountability to the Council meetings from previous representatives of the board, hoping this would work out better.

Mayor Williams stated that is why she would prefer a member of the Council on the Board.

Councilor K. Smith wanted to make sure everyone was aware; the Health Board meets quarterly.

Councilors Berke, I. Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

**Approve TD&H Engineering contract for First and Montana lift station updated project budget and construction cost estimate. (\$14,000 to be paid from CIP):**

Mayor Williams explained TD&H would be updating the project budget, construction costs, and applying for some grants to get back into the grant cycle for construction projects. The lift station was identified several years ago in the PER and is the last remaining big project identified at that point. It is a safety hazard and an efficiency problem because of the way it functions and needs to be updated. TD&H fee of \$14,000 will be paid out of this Capital Improvement Plan

Councilor Zimmerman **MADE A MOTION** to approve TD&H Engineering contract, Councilor Berke **SECONDED**.

Councilors Beach, Berke, I. Smith, K. Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

**Approve Resolution # 2026 Local Government Review:**

Mayor Williams read Resolution #2026 and explained we had put out a lot of information coming out of the Montana Local Government Center, the laws, timeline, and items that govern and apply to what the commission will be studying. For the Resolution there are two items the council can make the decision on. First, three members are standard in the state, so we did insert three members, the County, is going to be looking at five, but in webinar training last week, they said the vast majority have three. Second, we use the recommended \$30,000 budget, feeling that was very close to what we estimated we might be spending. And it is a levy above our standard mill levy for our operations of the city. There is the MCA that gives us the authority to have that outside of our operational levies.

Councilor K. Smith commented, this is an awesome way to review what you do on a regular basis as government, not a lot of states get to do that.

Mayor Williams stated Montana is unique and the last government study was 2004 because it was voted down in 2014. Dan Clark said that was standard across the state, very few Study Commissions were approved in 2014. It is not known if it was just lack of education or if people have done it a few times and grew tired of it. This year, they're making a big push to educate people to get out there and look at what needs to happen.

Councilor Zimmerman **MADE A MOTION** to approve Resolution # 2026, Councilor K. Smith **SECONDED**.

Councilors Beach, Berke, I. Smith, K. Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

Mayor Williams stated the Resolution will be submitted to the Elections Administrator so she can get it on the June 4<sup>th</sup> ballot. The election is estimated to cost just slightly under \$8,000 covering the polling place, printing, and mailing.

**Libby Lofts LLC request for Community Development Funds:**

Tracy McNew, on behalf of Libby Lofts LLC., presented a PowerPoint giving the background of Libby Lofts and requesting a \$138,000 grant from the Community Development Fund. The grant funding would cover 75%, Libby Lofts would provide the other 25% (\$46,000) of the funding bringing the total to \$184,000 that is needed for the exterior repairs before the project could move forward and seek traditional financing for the major design engineering and construction. The exterior repairs would be to demolish and rebuild the unstable wall and replace the trusses caved in on the roof. Libby Lofts will apply for a Montana Historic Preservation grant of \$500,000 to replace the historic windows and cover the rest of Phase One exterior repairs.

Phase Two would be the interior retrofitting, design, and engineering. Libby Lofts will add a community meeting space with restrooms, twenty-six apartment units of varying sizes, and 10% (three apartments) would be subsidized for teacher housing.

Mrs. McNew described the different slides being shown in the presentation and explained in length the multiple repairs that would need to be done for the project. Libby Lofts plans to start part one of Phase One in April and have it completed by fall of 2024. Part two of Phase One would be started if the Montana Historic Preservation grant funding is awarded, that would be fall of 2025. Phase Two would be the interior and will be funded by bank financing and tax credits from the developers themselves. Total estimated budget cost will be \$4,889,000.

Brad Nelson asked if the community space was going to be open to the public or just the residents and if the estimated \$1500 tax revenue to the city is the current tax or when the project is finished. Mrs. McNew responded community space would be a public space like the Ponderosa Room or First Montana Bank community room and would be free but would have to be scheduled in advance. The taxes are the current taxes.

Councilor K. Smith inquired if they have engaged with an architect for the interior. Mr. McNew responded they have been working with Jackola out of Whitefish who also did the Venture and buildings throughout Northwest Montana. Jackola will also be engineering the trellis as well as the interior.

Councilor Beach addressed the Council stating he had mentioned looking at the Community Development Fund about 6 months ago, but unfortunately it was not discussed. Now, two requests stand before them and has concerns about the future of the funds if they are used to support private companies to grow their business. Historically, the city government has shown the community it does not have a good track record of the use of those funds. States that politicians should not oversee deciding which companies will receive public support and suggested, moving forward, look at alternative ways to maintain the fund and



distribute monies to the community. If possible, propose the funds are banked and use the yearly interest to offer grants to the community through local organizations that will have established criteria and avenues to do so, ensuring the city is fiscally responsible and not squandering the remaining fund. If Council chooses a long-term commitment, we will have a chance to see the funds spent in our community in perpetuity. The funds will begin disappearing if sizable amounts are used to fund one or two projects.

Council Beach asked Libby Lofts several questions. 1.) When the former partner passed away, was there insurance received to contribute to the completion of the original project? If so, how were those monies spent? 2.) Were there insurance funds received from the collapse of the roof? If so, how were those monies spent? 3.) Are there any outstanding investors from the previous Libby Lofts project and how are they involved in this part? 4.) If monies are not received from the city tonight, how will you proceed and do you have any contingency funds for a cost overrun for the roof and wall repair, or will you come back to us and ask for more money at that point?

Mr. McNew answered the questions. 1.) When Eric Berry died, he had insurance, \$250,000 that paid almost everyone back to his understanding. 2.) When the roof collapsed, there was no insurance. Currently, there is insurance on the building. 3.) No, Libby Lofts will not come back to that knock on the city's door. The 138,000 shows the community buys into the project and shows the historical grant the community buys into it. If the costs overrun, the developers will pick that up. If the city wants \$138,000 back at the end of it, we're giving it back to you or if the city wanted to loan it to us. Libby Lofts just wants more than a letter from the city, we want some skin in the game for the city as well showing it supports what was offered. The city matching funds of \$138,000 would also help score higher when applying for the other grant. 4.) If the funds don't come from the city, honestly then approach KRDC, but they don't have an executive director. If that doesn't work, go to Glacier Bank, it will get done, regardless. The city buy-in of \$138,000 is going to help with the teacher subsidized housing, Community Park, Community Room.

Councilor Zimmerman gave thanks for what they are doing and asked if the City is not able fund the 75%, they are looking for, is there still some kind of buy in that would work for everybody and still helps with the grant application?

Mrs. McNew said any amount of dollars would be helpful and the grant application requirements ask for good community buy in.

Councilor Taylor commented, people in the community he has talked to, were not buying into the project. If the Council were to grant this money it would be the six Council members granting the money as the elected representatives of the community. Having received more phone calls and emails about the topic than any other topic, people do not support this project. Commending Libby Lofts for what they've done and are trying to do is an excellent and ambitious project.

Councilor Smith commented, knowing the current Council is concerned, because the funds are only remnants of \$8 million the City received 20 years ago. The governing body has tried to preserve it and has worked to rebuild it. The council has read the community policies, and the remaining funds are precious. Many other communities have arms of local government who do this successfully, regularly. For example, Missoula Redevelopment Agency, being discussed in Council in the past, adopted a tax increment financing District, which takes the tax increment earned every year on properties, and puts it back into that district and it does go to private businesses, there is an application process. The belief is the public and the private make it better for all the public. The Supreme Court has established that the government can take private property for public benefit. Councilor Smith believes historic assets are public infrastructure and Libby doesn't have very many still existing, a lot have burned down over the years, so investing in historic buildings is an appropriate public investment. Suggesting the policy needs some work to effectively execute projects like this. Councilor Smith expressed her enthusiasm to see this project completed, knowing some of the community may disagree giving the project money, but finds it hard to believe people are not excited to have that old building restored. Knowing some people would say tear it down, but a beautiful piece of Libby's history would be gone forever and there are already so many other pieces of Libby's history gone. Councilor Smith expressed excitement for Libby Lofts taking on such a big project but suggests there needs to be further discussion before a decision is made.

Councilor Zimmerman commented, after speaking with several Council members over the last couple of weeks, suggests the policy be reviewed and restructured to ensure it is aligned with the community's needs and interests and the fund does have an annual interest allowing for a revolving of funds for community support and projects.

John Mamoya, a commercial real estate professional, expressed his support for a historic project in the downtown district. He emphasized the catalytic value of the project, citing the potential for economic value, utility fees, tax revenues, and property value increases. Challenging all parties involved to put past bitterness behind them and move forward, expressing his excitement for the restoration of the historic building.

Chris Desorse, 811 California Ave, spoke with a council member about the \$1.5 million left in the Community Development Fund and believes the City should hold onto this money and focus on generating interest to help the community. He appreciates the restoration of the beautiful buildings but believes the city should focus on using the interest rather than use the capital.

Brad Nelson, 1122 Dakota Avenue, expresses admiration for McNew's project to restore a historic building and provide more housing. However, he suggests the council seriously consider before offering the public money to a private asset, it could potentially increase tax revenue and be considered an investment for the city, but it is still the public's money.

Kevin Peck, 806 West 9<sup>th</sup> a commercial building owner, commented that he and Gary were the objectors in the school board meeting when it had decided to sell the building for the first time to Mr. Curry. He emphasized it is an eyesore and a hazard and has concerns about safety and believes the public money should be used to invest with quasi-private things it allows the city to grow. He suggests that it would be beneficial to finish the journey for economic growth.

Gary Huntsberger, 384 East Commerce Way, commented he was the one who initially had plans to tear down the building in 2000. The school board decided they were not going to fix the building or put any more money into it. When the original \$11 million Conrad Burns had given to the city the funding to tear the building down was denied and the demolition was never done. A group had purchased the building and nothing was done, then the roof caved in. Mr. Huntsberger emphasized the community did not build that money, it was given to us to dispose of, however we wished, supporting the fact that the Council has created an Economic Development plan with the money that was left. Questioning, what will they do with it if they don't do anything?

Jennifer Nelson, 1026 Washington, expressed her excitement about the proposed Libby Lofts building, commenting, after the tragic loss of Mr. Berry, the remaining developers had the building for nine years before the roof caved in and nothing was done. She believes the city should be fiscally responsible to the people and aware of the business structure and structural integrity of the project before awarding a grant.

DC Orr, 1117 Nevada Ave., commented, being involved when the \$8 million was first handed to the city suggesting the city should really check the community's buy-in and consider putting the money in an interest-bearing account for the long term. Mr. Orr does not believe the McNew family has the trust of the community and suggests the city research any lawsuits.

Councilor K. Smith commented if the council wanted to discuss more about granting them money. It would only be a commitment at this point, if they don't get the grant from the state, nothing comes out of the city. Suggesting, if they do get the grant prior to executing funds the City should formulate a more rigorous document in terms of performance for a grant, Council has a lot more questions now than they did twenty years ago, and any grant has performance standards at the state level and federal level, if those standards fail you are responsible to pay those back and don't just get to walk away.

Councilor I. Smith commented, he is not in favor of the current plan, suggesting it be postponed and to discuss it would be a better approach.

Councilor Zimmerman agreed the decision should be postponed and do a policy update.

Councilor Zimmerman **MADE A MOTION** to postpone this request at this time, Councilor Berke **SECONDED**.

Councilors Beach, Berke, I. Smith, K. Smith, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**. Councilor Taylor voted **AGAINST**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

(Recess 8:40 – 8:48)

Councilor Ian Smith had to excuse himself from the remainder of the meeting.

**Historic Hotel Libby, update, support letter request:**

Mayor Williams explained Historical Hotel Libby is doing a project update and requesting a letter of support. A few years ago, Council voted to give the project with a letter of support, that letter has been updated with the correct project value for this request.

Gail burger, 302 California Avenue, Historic Hotel Libby received its historic status in 2012. The letter is wonderful because when you have an old building it opens certain grants and other things. Historic Hotel Libby is also Friends of Historic Hotel Libby, which is a 501c3 that was granted in 2016. Its only mission is to rehabilitate, restore, preserve, and protect Hotel Libby. It has a board of five, she does not sit on the board and hasn't for years but is the Project Director for Friends of Hotel Libby. There is a new roof, and that project was a \$217,000 project, 80% of that came from Montana Historic Preservation Grant MHPG). Friends of Historical Libby did a 20% match, raised over \$43,000 through fundraising, some other grants, and a lot of hard work. There was some basement beam and header work on that project also.

Historical Hotel Libby is again applying for the MHPG due February 29. It awards in 15 months after its due date. If awarded, will be looking to receive it in May of 2025. The project is the exterior rehabilitation of the hotel and comes in over \$750,000. Applying for MHPG for \$500,000 and requires a 20% match of \$100,000, that is built in with DEQ.

This spring DEQ is doing \$129,000 minimum work on removing the pink siding and some linoleum, put back up the front portico, do the windows, and paint it the original Pearl Gray from the 1930s. The restoration point is 1930 so everything will look like it did in the 1930s. There is a full PAR in the works and is being covered by DEQ. Also, will be applying for the Brownfield Grant that will be \$244,998 and will collaborate with Kansas City University, they advise on our project with their historical division, they have committed \$5,000 a year for the life of our project, bringing a total of \$750,000. When the project is finished the entire hotel, even over 22 hotel rooms, will be historically restored to the

1930's. Everything is phased out, right down to the kind of soap going in the rooms. Furniture is starting to be purchased and things are moving forward. Part of the MHPG is the environmental review, there are certain standards, and the hotel has all those, so the hotel project is considered exempt. The Historic Hotel Libby has had multiple testing done for the different phases, the document is 175 pages long and available by email if anyone would like it.

Councilor K. Smith **MADE A MOTION** to approve the letter of support for Historic Hotel Libby, Councilor Taylor **SECONDED**.

Councilor K. Smith commented she is excited it is getting closer.

Ms. Burger wanted to mention the total project is \$2.3 million, after the planned project it will be over halfway done.

Carla Darrar, 137 Norman Avenue, commented, the hotel was designed as the first show hotel in the area and was billed as the finest hotel from Spokane to the Dakotas and described the history of the hotel. Ms. Darrar encourages everyone to get on board and read more about the hotel and get involved in what Gail and her board do for the community as well as the hotel.

Councilors Beach, Berke, K. Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

**Historic Hotel Libby, Community Development Fund request:**

Gail burger, 302 California Avenue, in November, Historic Friends of Historic Hotel Libby, approached the City by sending in a request letter for the Community Development Fund. During the roof project, the hotel incurred, separate from our project, \$18,000 in additional roof expenses. The roofers did a wonderful job, but one of the problems discovered and were told it would have to be billed out separately was the entire eaves along the front on California Street had become detached and needed to be replaced. The company finished the additional repairs, incurring extra expense. Half was already paid, then approached the Community Development Fund and asking for a little help, requesting \$9,000 to finish it off. During the project, \$60,000 was put into the community in 11 weeks. And \$13,000 of that was Airbnbs, with all the crews here. Needing a little help and after reading the guidelines for the Community Development Fund, for the infrastructure, improving downtown, inside city limits, and enhancing the tourist opportunities for recreational tourists. Even with our doors closed, last year during the roof project, there were over 5000 people that came to see the hotel and take pictures. They have a little clicker to help keep track of people. The tourists come to photograph the building and even ghost hunt, which is popular. A group from Idaho College in Pocatello is coming with their research team this year for a paranormal investigation. The Historic Hotel enhances the tourism, the infrastructure, going to be open for tourists, and handle lodging. A significant number of requests have

been received, even though the website was taken down, the many phone calls and emails that are received, the hotel could have been full in the last seven years.

Councilor K. Smith inquired about the projected timeline. Ms. Burger replied if everything keeps going as scheduled the hotel can be open in 2030. Councilor K. Smith asked if it was their 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. Ms. Burger said it was 125 years old now. For quite some time progress was not witnessed because the work was on the inside for the wiring and plumbing until the roof became a priority and the inside had to be put on hold. Now with the roof done and the exterior getting finished, complete focus can be on the inside and getting the rooms open.

Councilor Zimmerman commended Ms. Burger for everything she has been doing over the years with her efforts and progress.

Councilor Zimmerman **MADE A MOTION** to postpone until they get the clarity of what they are going to on the policy before making any decisions, Councilor K. Smith **SECONDED**.

DC Orr, 1117 Nevada Ave, commented they were both great projects. The Historic Hotel project has already poured significant money into the community GPU, with \$60,000 spent last summer, circulating through the local economy seven times is about \$420,000 into Libby's economy before Ms. Burger requested money. The project has been popular in the community, and he anticipates it will be successful.

Councilors Beach, Berke, K. Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

**Approve all claims received to date:**

Councilor Zimmerman **MADE A MOTION** to approve all claims received to date, Councilor Berke **SECONDED**.

Councilors Beach, Berke, K. Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

**Approve all business licenses received to date:**

Ace Home Center, C&M Auto Care & Snow Removal, Chris Sommer, Classic Auto Body, Designs by Debbie LLC dba Cagey Quilter, Dirty Rooster, Dragons Den, Jennifer Shaw Home keeping Service, Northland Hearing Center, Inc. dba Rocky Mountain Hearing Aid, and Summit Fire & Security LLC.

Councilor Zimmerman **MADE A MOTION** to approve all business licenses received to date, Councilor Berke **SECONDED**.

Councilors Beach, Berke, K. Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

**General Comments from the Council:**

Mayor Williams announced Mr. Shindeldecker has agreed to take a council photo before the next meeting and asked everyone to show up about 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. The photo will be used to update the website.

Councilor K. Smith suggested scheduling a special meeting to discuss the Community Development Fund Policy prior to the meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> considering the state's deadline.

The council discussed what day to schedule a special meeting and agreed upon February 13<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

Councilor K. Smith suggested having a professional attend the meeting to give guidance, Mayor Williams stated Tina Oliphant is willing to come.

**Adjournment:**

Councilor Smith **MADE A MOTION** to adjourn, Councilor Zimmerman **SECONDED**.

Councilors Beach, Berke, K. Smith, Taylor, and Zimmerman voted **FOR**.

**MOTION PASSED.**

Mayor Williams adjourned the meeting at 9:12 PM.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Peggy Williams

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk/Treasurer Leann Monigold