

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS,
COLUMBUS, MONTANA HELD JULY 17, 2023, AT 7:00 P.M.**

COUNCIL PRESENT OFFICERS PRESENT	The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Mayor Webb Mandeville began the meeting with the pledge of allegiance. Council persons present were Rick White, Tim Mayo, Cole Waltner, Bob Fitzgerald, and Danen Johannes. Staff members present were Police Chief Gary Timm, City Attorney Ryan Addis, Public Works Director Scott Caton, and City Clerk-Treasurer Cherrie McAlexander.
SIDELINE IN PERSON	Marlo Pronovost, Tom Piper, Marilyn Short, Joe Morse, Randy and Nancy Baum, Doug Howard, Jess Wilson, Forrest Mandeville, Chad Grewell, Tim Hafla, Curt & Debbie Jacobs, Mike Lowry, Travis West with Engineering West
PUBLIC HEARING	<p>The Public Hearing for the Rate Increase for the Water and Sewer was opened by the mayor at 7 p.m. Jess Wilson stated that he did not agree with the city changing the water base gallons from 3,000 to 1,000 and does not feel that the change will help the elderly. Jess stated that the City built a new City Hall building for 1 million dollars and did not raise taxes or rates because the city planned and set aside funds for the build. Jess expressed to Council that the city did not do a very good job at planning for future projects for water and sewer. Jess doesn't feel that anything that anyone says tonight will change the minds of Council. He feels the increase is going to hurt a lot of residents. He wants the city to do a better job at planning for the future. He thinks the city will see lots of brown lawns in the summer. Debbie Jacobs expressed her concerns that lowering the gallons from 3,000 to 1,000 will not help the elderly. She's feels that the city will be double charging it residents. Marylin Short stated that she is on a fixed income, she is 76yrs old, she uses over 3,000 gallons a month. She can't have her water bill increase like all of her other utilities. She will not be able to survive and thinks that there a lot of other elderly people in her position. Doug Howard spoke of the current Ordinance that was in place for the current rates and had some confusion on when the new rates would take effect. He was wondering why the base rate is changing from 3,000 to 1,000 and then there was talk of 6,000 at the town hall meeting. Mayor stated that we have looked at several different options and after the town hall meetings input, we pivoted away from those options to look at only increasing the rates to complete projects that need to be done. City Attorney informed Doug that the city approved an ordinance that would shift the process to a resolution for rate changes instead of an ordinance. With a resolution the new rates would go into effect 10 days after the approved resolution. Tim Hafla asked if there was any one in the city that actually uses only 1,000 gallons per month? Travis with Engineering West stated that there was no one in the city that used only 1,000 gallons. Lowest water usage is around 1,500 gallons. Tim states with that information we are not helping anyone out by lowering the gallons to 1,000. Travis West discussed how the city came up with the current proposed increase and mentioned that at the town hall meeting there was discussion of water conservation, mention of not wanting to work towards target rates and helping out the elderly. All of the input was taken into consideration when the city decided on the current proposed rate increase. Tim Hafla feels the city is trying to slide in an increase. Marylin Short stated that her bill will go up 300% or 3 times as much. Debbie Jacobs stated that she has a small yard and is very particular about watering her lawn and still uses over 22,000 gallons of water in the summer in 1 month. She thinks there will be a lot of residents in town that will stop watering their lawns so be prepared to see lots of brown lawns. She stated that she does not agree with lowering the water base to 1,000. Jess Wilson had a question about the contingencies of over 1 million dollars that was listed on the Opinion of Probable Cost that was handed out at the meeting. It was explained to him that this is just an estimate of the possible cost these projects could cost the city and</p>

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	the contingencies are always in a document like this because there is no way to 100% predict what the actual cost will be. Mayor thanked the people who came and invited them to stay for the regular Council Meeting. Public Hearing closed at 7:27 p.m.
REGULAR MINUTES APPROVED	The mayor asked Council if they had reviewed the minutes of the July 3, 2023, regular meeting, and if there were any additions, deletions, or corrections. Cole Waltner, made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting as written, seconded by Tim Mayo, roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Bob Fitzgerald, Cole Waltner, Tim Mayo, Rick White, all yeas votes. Motion passed.
SHUT OFF LIST	The shut off list for the month of July 2023 was presented to Council. Rick White made a motion to approve the list as presented. Seconded by Cole Waltner; Roll call for vote, Rick White, Tim Mayo, Cole Waltner, Bob Fitzgerald, Danen Johannes, all yeas votes. Motion passed.
APPROVAL OF CLAIMS	The claims list for the 1 st half of July was presented to Council. Tim Mayo made a motion to approve the claims as presented. Seconded by Rick White; roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Bob Fitzgerald, Cole Waltner, Tim Mayo, Rick White, all yeas votes. Motion Passed.
PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS	Clerk-Treasurer asked Council if there were any questions/concerns for the following Preliminary Revenue Budget? Tim Mayo asked if there was any revenue in for the fuel up-charge for Mackenzie Disposal that was passed by resolution? Clerk responded that revenue is accounted for and is approved until the contract with Mackenzie Disposal expires which is June 2024.
FIRE DEPT.	Fire Chief was not present and did not provide a report.
POLICE	Police Chief was present, and provided a report. No questions from Council.
PUBLIC WORKS	The Public Works Director was present and provided a report. No questions from Council.
ATTORNEY	The City Attorney was present and provided a report. No questions from Council.
CITY JUDGE	The City Judge was not present and did not provide a report to Council.
CLERK-TREASURER	The Clerk-Treasurer was present and provided a report. No questions from Council.
PUBLIC COMMENT ON CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS:	Mayor stated that this was another time that anyone can comment on any items on the agenda. Bob Fitzgerald asked Travis West to explain how this increase will effect his bill if his bill was for 4,000 gallons. Travis explained the water and sewer increases on a bill of 4,000 gallons of water. Bob stated that his bill would increase around \$20.00 a month. Bob expressed that he did not feel that people understand how their bill is figured for sewer. Danen Johannes commented that if a person uses 3,000 per month that the new structure for the water would increase their bill \$9.66 per month. Danen stated that there is so many variables that affect so many things and Council really tried to think of the best way to look at all of these things and base a decision on that. Danen expressed that the city's residents have always been opposed to increasing taxes and water/sewer rates and that is why we are in the current situation. Jess Wilson said that when there was a rate increase in the past there should have been a portion of those fund set aside for future projects. Travis stated the reason why this entire rate increase came about is due to the city being denied the loan needed to complete

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	<p>the sewer railroad crossing project. Doug Howard strongly advised the city to look into a rural development loan that the city had been approved for in the past. City Attorney stated that our engineers and Bond Council have look at all options for loans and grants for the city for the current railroad crossing project and we are not eligible for any of them. The city's engineers or Bond Council never mentioned a rural development loan. Tim Hafla asked about using General Fund money to fund the sewer project? City Attorney explained that the city approved the resolution to loan the sewer fund 1 million dollars to help fund the project. Jess Wilson asked if the city still had capital accounts? Jess asked where the money went after the loans for building the new City Hall were paid off? Scott Caton said that a lot of those funds were used to build the new Public Works Building. Clerk-Treasurer explained that every year you budget for the expense of a loan. If the loan was paid off then the funds are no longer budgeted. She also explained the process of adding funds to capital accounts. Marylin Short stated that when she put a calculator to what her new bill would be based on her current water usage her bill would double. Tim Hafla asked if the commercial rates were based the same as residential? Travis West said yes.</p>
<p>COMMITTEE REPORTS-</p>	<p>No Committee Reports.</p>
<p>UNFINISHED BUSINESS</p>	<p>Approval of Resolution 838 – Resolution for the City of Columbus, MT to increase water and sewer rates. Tim Mayo asked if Council could table the vote to another meeting? City Attorney said once there was a motion then that could be an option. Bob stated that people are not satisfied with the 1,000 gallons and he gets the feeling that the people do not want this. He thanked everyone for being at the meeting and wished they would come to all the meetings. Bob said he has a hard time approving this resolution because the majority of the people here do not want this. Cole Waltner made a motion to approve Resolution 838, seconded by Tim Mayo. Bob restated that he cannot vote for this to be approved. He expressed that this 1,000-gallon option was not Travis West's idea it was Council's. Bob agrees that we need to raise the water rates and all these years we should have been putting money away for the future but we didn't. Bob thinks that the residents would be happy with 3,000 gallons. Roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Bob Fitzgerald, Cole Waltner, Tim Mayo, Rick White, all NO votes. Motion Failed.</p>
<p>NEW BUSINESS</p>	<p>Approval of School Resource Officer Agreement with the City of Columbus and Columbus School District No. 6. Cole Waltner made a motion to approve School Resource Officer Agreement, seconded by Rick White, no discussion, roll call for vote, Rick White, Tim Mayo, Cole Waltner, Bob Fitzgerald, Danen Johannes, all yea votes. Motion passed.</p> <p>Approval of termination of lease agreement between Advanced Cleaning Services of Montana and the City of Columbus for Block 9: lots 9 and 10 in Columbus, MT. Termination date of June 30, 2023. Tim Mayo made a motion to approve termination of lease agreement between Advanced Cleaning Services of Montana and the City of Columbus, seconded by Cole Waltner, no discussion, roll call for vote, Rick White, Tim Mayo, Cole Waltner, Bob Fitzgerald, Danen Johannes, all yea votes. Motion passed.</p> <p>Approval of Request for payment to Morrison Maierle for an amount of \$ \$94.31 for the City's portion of invoice from Morrison Maierle in the amount of \$6,287.40 for t-hangar design work at City/County Airport. Bob Fitzgerald made a motion to approve payment, seconded by Tim Mayo, no discussion, roll call for vote,</p>

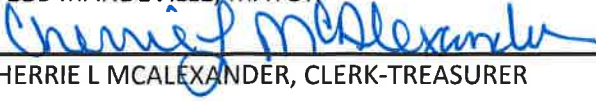
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	<p>Danen Johannes, Bob Fitzgerald, Cole Waltner, Tim Mayo, Rick White, all yea votes. Motion passed.</p> <p>Approval to create a Request for Proposal for the Airport Maintenance and Management. Cole Waltner made a motion to approve Request for Proposal for the Airport Maintenance and Management, seconded by Tim Mayo, no discussion, roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Bob Fitzgerald, Cole Waltner, Tim Mayo, Rick White, all yea votes. Motion passed.</p> <p>Approval of Task Order from Stillwater County Planning Office to update the City of Columbus Growth Policy. Tim Mayo made a motion to approve Task Order, seconded by Danen Johannes, Bob asked when the last time a Growth Policy was done for the City? City Attorney stated it was around 11 years ago. Scott stated that has been budgeted and is something that the city really needs done. Forrest Mandeville, the contract planner, stated that a few years ago the City County Planning Board sent over a similar request but there was no action taken. Tim Mayo asked if we had budgeted for it before? Mayor replied that it was budgeted for before but Council decided it was too expensive so the Clerk Treasurer was going to do it but it never got it done. Danen Johannes mentioned that the reason why the city needs one is it will open up options for the city to apply for grants. He feels that this is a benefit for the city to have. Roll call vote, Rick White, Tim Mayo, Cole Waltner, Bob Fitzgerald, Danen Johannes, all yea votes. Motion passed.</p> <p>Approval of Right of Entry and Use Agreement between the City of Columbus and Montana Rail Link. Bob Fitzgerald made a motion to approve the Right of Entry and Use Agreement. Seconded by Danen Johannes, no discussion, roll call vote, Danen Johannes, Bob Fitzgerald, Cole Waltner, Tim Mayo, Rick White, all yea votes. Motion passed.</p> <p>Approval of Release of Damage to Property between the City of Columbus and Joseph Terrel in the amount of \$449.00. Tim Mayo made a motion to approve the Release of Damage to Property. Seconded by Cole Waltner, no discussion, roll call vote, Rick White, Tim Mayo, Cole Waltner, Bob Fitzgerald, Danen Johannes, all yea votes. Motion passed.</p> <p>Approval for Mayor to sign the Airport Infrastructure Grant Project No. 3-30-0017-019-2023 and 3-30-0017-020-2023 for the Woltermann Memorial Airport. Bob Fitzgerald made a motion to approve for Mayor to sign the Airport Infrastructure Grant Project. Seconded by Cole Waltner, no discussion, roll call vote, Danen Johannes, Bob Fitzgerald, Cole Waltner, Tim Mayo, Rick White, all yea votes. Motion passed.</p>
COMMENTS NOT ON THE AGENDA	<p>Marilyn Short stated that after reading over the new Special Use Permit and the lack of help the Musicians Rendezvous will not take place this year. Tim Hafra wants to know when the city will repair all the holes on the street by Subway? Scott stated that Public Works will be over in that area in the morning.</p>
ADJOURNMENT	<p>Webb Mandeville requested a Motion to Adjourn. Tim Mayo made the motion to adjourn at 8:10 p.m. seconded by Danen Johannes, roll call all yea votes.</p>

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WEBB MANDEVILLE, MAYOR



CHERRIE L MCALEXANDER, CLERK-TREASURER