

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS,
COLUMBUS, MONTANA HELD JUNE 17, 2024, 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. The council persons present were Rick White, Dennis Holten, Tim Mayo, Bob Fitzgerald and Danen Johannes (via Zoom). Staff members present were Fire Chief Rich Cowger, Police Chief Aaron Uecker, Public Works Directors Scott Caton and Peyton Brookshire, City Attorney Ryan Addis, and Clerk-Treasurer Cherrie McAlexander.
SIDELINE IN PERSON	Charlie Denison
PUBLIC HEARING	NONE
REGULAR MINUTES APPROVED	The mayor asked Council if they had reviewed the minutes of the June 3, 2024, regular meeting, and if there were any additions, deletions, or corrections. Tim Mayo made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting, seconded by Rick White; roll call for vote, Bob Fitzgerald, Tim Mayo, Rick White, and Danen Johannes, all yea votes. Dennis Holten abstained from the vote. Motion passed.
SHUT OFF LIST	The shut-off list for the month of June 2024 was presented to the Council. Dennis Holten made a motion to approve the list as presented, seconded by Tim Mayo; roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Bob Fitzgerald, Tim Mayo, Dennis Holten and Rick White, all yea votes. Motion passed.
APPROVAL OF CLAIMS	The claims list for the 1 st half of June was presented to the Council. Rick White made a motion to approve the claims as presented, seconded by Bob Fitzgerald; roll call for vote, Bob Fitzgerald, Tim Mayo, Dennis Holten, Rick White, and Danen Johannes all yea votes. Motion passed.
PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS	Clerk/Treasurer presented Expenditure Budgets for Review: Legislative, City Court, Administration, Planning, Law Enforcement, Fire Dept, Zoning, Airport, Animal Control, Facilities and Street Lights. Dennis asked why the budget for Dues & Subscriptions under General Fund Administration went from \$500.00 to \$2,000.00. Cherrie responded that the figures he was referring to were for Postage not Dues & Subscriptions. The account for Postage is increasing because in the past postage was being put in the Supply account and moving forward those expenses will be put into Postage for better tracking. The Supply account budget decreased by \$5,000 to reflect this change. Danen asked about the Parks account and why there was a 158% increase for Salaries and Wages. Cherrie responded that we are not reviewing that account tonight and it was on the agenda for the next meeting, she will explain the question at that time.
FIRE DEPT. POLICE PUBLIC WORKS	The Fire Chief was present and provided a report. No questions from Council. The Police Chief was present and provided a report. Rick White asked if all patrol vehicles were up and running. Aaron responded yes. The Public Works Directors were present and provided a report. Mayor introduced Peyton Brookshire. Tim Mayo asked what was going on with the pickups for their department. Scott responded nothing but we need a few more and have a few that could be retired. Dennis Holten asked if the Council needs to approve items 4 and 5 in the report. Peyton stated that he was unsure of the process and added the items to the report because it was already budgeted for.

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<p>ATTORNEY</p> <p>CITY JUDGE</p> <p>CLERK-TREASURER</p>	<p>The mayor explained the process of approving and that these items will be placed on July 1st agenda for approval.</p> <p>The City Attorney was present and provided a report. No questions from Council.</p> <p>The City Judge was not present and did not provide a report.</p> <p>The Clerk-Treasurer was present and provided a report. Dennis stated that the Solid Waste Fund is struggling. Tim asked if we raised those rates last year. Cherrie responded that there was a 5-year rate increase of 5% that started back in 2019 and ends in 2024. Cherrie also stated that without an increase the fund will be in the red within the next 18 months, so there needs to be some conversations on how to move forward. Tim asked how quickly we should get this taken care of. Cherrie responded probably quickly. There was some discussion on having a committee review the numbers. It was decided to have Cherrie present the numbers to the council at the next meeting for review and discussion. Rick White stated that the common citizen doesn't understand the huge cost of solid waste services.</p>
<p>PUBLIC COMMENT ON CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS:</p>	<p>NONE</p>
<p>COMMITTEE REPORTS-</p>	<p>NONE</p>
<p>UNFINISHED BUSINESS</p>	<p>NONE</p>
<p>NEW BUSINESS</p>	<p>Approval of changes to the Personnel Policy – per MMIA for Employment Practices Endorsement Policy. Ryan gave a brief explanation of the changes that were required for the policy. Bob Fitzgerald made the motion to approve the policy, seconded by Dennis Holten; roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Rick White, Dennis Holten, Tim Mayo, and Bob Fitzgerald all yea votes. Motion passed.</p> <p>Approval of Public Works Construction Agreement between the City of Columbus and Hard Rock Excavating for 4th Avenue Storm Drain Project. Dennis asked if this was a project that was part of the HB355 grant. Scott replied yes. Dennis Holten made a motion to approve the agreement, seconded by Tim Mayo; roll call for vote, Bob Fitzgerald, Tim Mayo, Dennis Holten, Rick White, and Danen Johannes all yea votes. Motion passed.</p> <p>Approval of Resolution 854-2024 – A resolution establishing wages and salaries for the city employees for fiscal year 2024/25. Tim Mayo made the motion to waive the reading of the resolution, seconded by Bob Fitzgerald; roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Rick White, Dennis Holten, Tim Mayo, and Bob Fitzgerald all yea votes. Motion passed. Tim Mayo made the motion to approve the resolution, seconded by Rick White. Dennis asked if this resolution had been done in the past. Cherrie responded that we did this resolution last year. Dennis mentioned that the police officer wages are a part of this resolution and asked</p>

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if those wages were part of the CBA. Dennis asked if they needed to be a part of this resolution. Ryan stated yes, this resolution is new to the city, but is required. There is a long-standing MCA that requires the City Council to determine by resolution or ordinance the compensation of city employees. Dennis asked if we could discuss a department individually and if they could be separated out into several resolutions. Ryan stated that it is supposed to be one resolution. Dennis stated that he has been a part of public works for 45 years and that there are some good things and bad things in the resolution, and it would be hard for him to support this resolution entirely. Dennis stated that he didn't think we need a public works foreman for \$37.68 per hour. Dennis asked if Scott was staying or if he was done in August. Scott replied, I guess. Dennis asked if we think we need a public works foreman after Scott leaves. The mayor replied we might. Dennis asked if Kevin was coming back. Scott stated he was planning on coming back in July. Cherrie explained that the foreman position is only budgeted until Scott Leaves in August. The resolution has nothing to do with the budget. This resolution is to state the wage for each position that is currently working at the city and what that position will be paid for the next budget nothing more. Dennis stated that he really wants to be part of a big discussion if we need another guy at public works and we certainly don't need to start at the top and hire a foreman. Dennis stated that he understands that Peyton might need more help moving forward but maybe just seasonal. Peyton stated that he will not go out and find another foreman if more help is needed. Dennis thanked Peyton for his comment. Bob stated that it made him very nervous last week when he saw the increase in pay for the police officers. Bob asked if the 16% to 23% pay increase was due to their experience, or is it some type of grid system. The mayor responded that their raises were part of a matrix in the CBA. Bob asked why they were a part of the resolution, if they had to be and if their wages had to be approved every year. Ryan responded yes. Tim Mayo asked if this resolution is something that we hadn't been doing ever. Cherrie responded yes. Tim asked if this was something Cherrie learned at the conference. Cherrie said yes. Last year was the first year that the city had done the resolution. Dennis stated it just makes things tough when he sees something like Cherrie's \$6.00 hour increase. He just doesn't get it. He stated that it must have been the mayor's request since you are the head of her. He mentioned the \$.93 raise for the animal control and the water guy \$2.00 hour raise. Dennis stated that it is tuff for him to say yes to this resolution. Dennis asked if I don't like or agree with what I do just say no. The mayor stated yes you can say no. Ryan stated you can modify the resolution. Dennis asked how long to modify. He doesn't want to sit here all night. Can we take out things? Dennis stated he needs more justification. The mayor explained that there was a process, and we didn't just spit ball things. Dennis explained that he keeps going back to how he did it. A public works guy would come in and say this is what I want for my employees and council would approve it that night. It wasn't all this stuff together. Danen stated that he went back to 2016 and reviewed past police salary budgets and the increases were anywhere from \$12,000 to the highest of \$24,000 a year. This year's increase is over \$72,000.00 why in the past 10 years there has never been an increase like this, until this year. The mayor stated that it was the CBA that determined the wages, they wanted a 16% increase and we negotiated and agreed on an 8% increase. Danen stated that

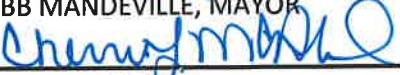
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the lowest increase in pay for the officers is 14% increase over last year, patrol officer with a K9 is receiving a 14% increase, another full-time officer is receiving a 18% increase, SRO is receiving a 23% increase, Chief of Police a 21% increase. Cherrie explained that the 8% was for a step one police officer. None of our officers are at step one, each year of service the % increase goes up depending where they are on the pay matrix. Cherrie also explained the other change in the CBA is that all Holiday Credits will be paid out at the end of the year. This created a \$43,000 hit to the budget but moving forward it will create better management of this expenditure. With that said it still leaves an increase of \$30,000 for police salaries. Dennis stated that moving forward in the CBA matrix the raises will be \$.92 or \$.95 for the next 2 years. Dennis didn't realize what they were making before because that is not in the CBA. I didn't know that until just now. Dennis stated since we already passed the CBA not a lot we can do about it. Dennis asked how much other than council saying they are not going to pass it what other options does council have. You guys had some committee but then you just bring this back to us after the negotiation. So, we do not have any input in the negotiations. The mayor stated that the CBA was contingent on councils' approval. Bob asked if we don't approve this resolution what is the next step, obviously the police department is already set. Bob asked if the resolution included the police last year. Cherrie responded yes. Cherrie explained that before last year all the council got was a list of wages, they reviewed the list and then approved the wages when they approved the final budget. Bob asked if every year we will be doing this resolution. Cherrie replied yes. Bob stated he sees no reason to vote it down. We have already okayed it. Dennis commented only on the police department. Bob stated yes. I know only the police department and Scott is only going to be here another month, unless he changes his mind. Bob asked Scott if he would change his mind. Dennis commented for that price I would. Bob says I'm ok with it. Dennis asked the mayor about Cherrie's \$6.00 raise \$27.00 to \$33.00. I just want to know why. Is that to get her up with other department heads? Cherrie responded that she asked for that much actually demanded it. She explained that she reviewed the history for the wages for the Public Works Director, Chief of Police and the Clerk/Treasurer. All three department heads made within \$2.00 per hour of each other for over 30 years. When Ron retired the city hired a new Clerk/Treasurer and she was severely underpaid. They paid her \$10.00 less than the other department heads. I did my research and I deserve this raise, probably more. Several council members stated that was a big jump and Cherrie agreed. Dennis stated that is why we needed a discussion to understand. Aaron stated that he can't speak for exactly what the clerk does but there are lot of things that get overlooked that we do. For example there are 4 or 5 guys at the sheriff's office that do what I alone must do for the city, and I can only assume that Cherrie is the same. Cherrie does all the HR for the city too. It would cost a hell of a lot more money to hire someone else to do just HR or something else. She does it all. I have nothing to say about what she gets paid, but I know every time I go to her office she is working on 18 different things. The mayor stated that he wished the council could have watched the learning curve that this lady had to go through. Dennis stated that he doesn't know that. Bob stated that Cherrie does a fine job. Tim agreed that she does a great job. Bob stated he is good now that he understands. Dennis said that he just needed explanations. The mayor stated

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	<p>that you have every right to them. Dennis stated that is what his people voted him in here for. Bob told Dennis good job. Rick White stated that explanations do help. Dennis agreed that getting Cherrie up to what other department heads are earning makes sense. roll call for vote, Bob Fitzgerald, Tim Mayo, Dennis Holten, Rick White, and Danen Johannes all yea votes. Motion passed.</p> <p>Approval of Notice of Bid Award to Mystic Mountain in the amount of \$337,312.44 for the 2nd Street North Storm Water Project. Bob Fitzgerald made a motion to approve, seconded by Dennis Holten; roll call for vote, Danen Johannes, Rick White, Dennis Holten, Tim Mayo all yea votes. Motion passed.</p> <p>Approval of Payment Request – Total share owed by the City is \$11,698.50 (5%). Morrison Maierle payment application number 6 for t-hangar construction administration \$3,896.49. Dick Anderson payment application number 5 for construction \$230,064.72. Denis made a motion to approve the payment request, seconded by Rick White; roll call for vote, Bob Fitzgerald, Tim Mayo, Dennis Holten, Rick White, and Danen Johannes all yea votes. Motion passed.</p>
COMMENTS NOT ON THE AGENDA	<p>Bob asked about the sign project. Tim said he just spoke to Scott about it. Bob asked if it was going off. Tim replied yes, should start next week. Rick asked about a fire hydrant that people are parking in front of and if there was anything that could be done. The hydrant is located across for Terry Nystul's home. Dennis stated that there is no curb there. Scott said maybe put a sing up. Rick stated that he is not even sure if it is a problem. Rich mentioned that there was a city ordinance on this.</p>
ADJOURNMENT	<p>Webb Mandeville requested a Motion to Adjourn. Rick White made the motion to adjourn at 7:47 p.m. seconded by Dennis Holten, roll call all yea votes.</p>


WEBB MANDEVILLE, MAYOR


CHERRIE L MCALEXANDER, CLERK-TREASURER

