

PUBLIC NOTICE

REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF WORLAND February 20, 2024

A regular meeting of the City Council of Worland, Wyoming met in the Council Chambers at Worland City Hall at 7:00 p.m. on February 20, 2024. Mayor Jim Gill presided and the Councilmembers in attendance were Kreg Lombard, Barbara Brookwell, William Worley, Rebecca George, Mike Neuffer, Pete Calderon, Adam Martinez and Wendy Fredricks (via telephone). Also present were City Attorney, Kent Richins; Director of Public Works, Nick Kruger; Airport Manager, Lynn Murdoch; Chief of Police, Gabe Elliott; City Engineer Representative Mike Donnell and Clerk/Treasurer, Tracy Glanz. Councilmember Kody DeMunbrun was absent and excused.

There were seventeen (17) visitors present for this meeting of the City Council.

Tami Young led the Council and Visitors in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Gill declared a quorum, with Councilmember DeMunbrun excused and asked for approval of the agenda.

Motion: to approve the agenda.
By: Councilmember Martinez.
Second by: Councilmember George.
Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

The minutes of the February 6, 2024 regular meeting stand approved as published.

Motion: to approve all vouchers and authorize payment for payroll, utility charges, refunds for City Services, recording fees, postage and other miscellaneous items, during the month of February, before normal City Council approval on the first Tuesday of March and approve the Consent Agenda with Council Work Session Minutes of February 12, 2024 and Payroll Voucher for the period February 9, 2024. PAYROLL 2/09/24 - \$68,457.13.
By: Councilmember Worley.
Second by: Councilmember Lombard.
Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Gill announced the Public Hearing to hear comments on the applications for the renewal of liquor licenses opening the public hearing at 7:02 p.m. The following applications were submitted:

RETAIL LIQUOR LICENSES

Goose's, Inc. d/b/a Goose's
Scheurman Hospitality Inc. d/b/a Comfort Inn
Amy Ward d/b/a Little Chief
Kickspike Inc. d/b/a Rendezvous Lounge
Worland Country Club d/b/a Green Hills Golf Club
Orion Hospitality LLC d/b/a Travelodge
Bailey Enterprises Inc. d/b/a Pit Stop #14
Warehouse, Inc. d/b/a The Warehouse
The Brass Plum Inc. d/b/a The Brass Plum
Big Horn Co-Operative Marketing Association d/b/a Big Horn Co-Op
SBY Plus, LLC d/b/a Blair's Market
Maverik, Inc. d/b/a Maverik, Inc. #166

LIMITED RETAIL LIQUOR LICENSES

BPOE Building Association d/b/a Elks Lodge No. 1908
Fraternal Order of Eagles #3096 d/b/a Fraternal Order of Eagles #3096
American Legion Post #44 d/b/a American Legion Post #44

RESTAURANT LIQUOR LICENSES

Pizza Hut of Worland, Inc. d/b/a Pizza Hut Worland
Ranchito Mexican Restaurant
Daniel Productions, LLC d/b/a The Other Store

BAR AND GRILL LICENSES

Stogie Joe's LLC d/b/a Stogie Joe's
Hurricane Lanes Limited Partnership d/b/a Hurricane Lanes & Buzzards Bar

MICROBREWERY LICENSES

Ten Sleep Brewing Co. d/b/a Ten Sleep Brewing Co., Inc.

Councilmember Neuffer requested clarification on where the Retail Liquor License for Orion Hospitality, LLC is being used. Clerk/Treasurer Glanz stated that it was transferred to the Travelodge from the old Rumors Building. There were no other comments; Mayor Gill closed the public hearing at 7:04 p.m.

Motion: to approve the applications for renewal of liquor licenses from April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025.
By: Councilmember Neuffer.
Second by: Councilmember Lombard.
Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Gill, with the assistance of City Engineer Representative Mike Donnell and Director of Public Works Nick Kruger, presented Certificates for Outstanding Professional Water and Wastewater Operators to Daniel Ketterling, Robert Koch and Joe Martinez. Governor Gordon recognized Operators across the State by Proclamation earlier this month. The work is highly technical and requires working with the EPA and DEQ. Dan Ketterling works at the sewer lagoon and has a Level 1 Wastewater Operator Certificate; Joe Martinez has a Level 1 Water and Wastewater Certificate and Rob Koch has a Level 1 Water and Wastewater, and Level 2 Water Distribution Certificate. Mayor Gill congratulated the employees for a job well done stating that these employees are the reason the city delivers good artesian water to its residents. "All of you are so deserving and we want you to know how much we appreciate you and the job you do!" The employees were given a round of applause.

Mayor Gill informed those present that the Worland City Council welcomes public input but if you are not listed on the agenda the Council requests that you limit comments to three (3) minutes or less per person and avoid duplication and comments off the subject. This section of the Agenda is reserved for comments from the General Public on matters relating to Worland Municipal Government. To be heard, please speak loudly, state your name and affiliation (if any). If you have handouts to present to the Council, please also provide a copy to the City Clerk/Treasurer. Mayor Gill noted that all comments regarding the proposed utility rate increase will be addressed under Conduct of Business.

Tami Young, Teresa Deniz, Jane Sanderson, Tim Young, Janet Franzen, Linda Buhler all addressed the Mayor and Council about the proposed utility rate increase asking why the city is proposing the increase, wanting transparency in the utility funds, asking how elderly people on a fixed income will pay for the increase, if an increase will happen annually, asking that the city

PUBLIC NOTICE

prioritize utility expenses above things like the golf course, asking what the city does with money left over at the end of the fiscal year, asking if this increase will last for another seven (7) years, asking if the city can get rid of non-essential things to cover the utility expenses and how the auditor came up with percentage of increase.

Mayor Gill reminded everyone that inflation is having an effect on the City of Worland as it is everyone else and turned the floor over to City Attorney Kent Richins to start discussion on the proposed Ordinance.

City Attorney Richins gave a brief background of the legislative responsibilities of the Mayor and Council. One of those legislative duties is to pass an annual budget that must be passed by the third Tuesday in June. The City is a non-profit organization and operates on a zero-based budget; meaning that the city keeps expenditures as low as possible and anticipates revenues. The Department Heads trim their budgets as much as they can. The city has an annual audit and our auditor recommended that the city raise utility rates by 5% per year or 15% this year. The city needs to be run as a business and while the governing body understands the senior citizen aspect and limited income, the city cannot run in the red. The responsibility of the Mayor and Council is to protect taxpayers' money and they are taxed with the responsibility to make sure all essential services are provided. Besides the maintenance and replacement of infrastructure, the city needs to consider employees, and pay a competitive wage. The revenue from the utility funds is derived from user fees and the city must increase rates to keep up with inflation and keep reserves where they need to be. In addition, the State will not provide grant funding unless our rate structure is where it needs to be.

Mayor Gill noted that a raise increase was brought to the Council during COVID, and the Council rejected that proposal, feeling it was not appropriate at that time. Mayor Gill also noted that he was concerned about the comparison that was made on the Facebook post.

Clerk/Treasurer Tracy Glanz stated that the numbers quoted in the post were not correct. The City of Laramie's total budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024 is \$197,768,000.00 and their population within the city is 31,659. This changes that per capita calculation quite a bit. Each municipality has different departments and different funds so comparing one municipality to another does not work and each fund is a separate budget and must be treated as such. Any money left over from the previous budget just rolls into the new budget, it is not spent just because it is there. The last utility rate increase to water was in 2017 and the last increase to sewer and sanitation was 2016. Any citizen can ask to see the detailed ledger for the City of Worland that lists line-item expenses per department, to see where money is being spent. State statute requires that all funds within the government entity remain independent of each other. State statutes also require that enterprise funds (water, sewer, sanitation) charge enough user fees to pay all expenses including personnel, materials, operations, maintenance and depreciation. The citizens of the City of Worland have enjoyed lower water, sewer and sanitation rates because the City has no debt and has good reserve strength, between 12 and 24 months. And with those reserves, the city has historically paid for capital improvements. Due to estimated inflation costs at 23.5% and aging infrastructure the enterprise funds cannot continue at the current rate structure. The rate increase proposed will increase the average monthly utility bill for three (3) services by approximately \$11.43. Clerk/Treasurer Glanz emphasized all funds are independent of each other and that three of the seven funds are not funded by the city, but by outside sources. Those funds include the Capital Projects Fund, Expendable Trust Fund and the Agency Fund. There is no guarantee that the city will not have to increase rates again within the next few years.

City Engineer Representative Mike Donnell stated that the city is always applying for grants for infrastructure projects and all funding agencies look at the city finances and rates to make sure that the rate structure supports the utility expenses. Grant funds will not be awarded if user fees are not sufficient to cover all expenses including depreciation.

Tami Young asked to hear from each Councilmember.

Councilmember Calderon opposed the proposed increase stating he is representing the people who elected him. "I have a concern about the Water, Sewer and Sanitation budgets and if the proposed increase passes, I would like to see a resolution passed to work on cutting expenses in certain areas to show that the government is doing their part. I do not see where our revenues are going to pay for what we are spending. Worland is a great place to live, and I do not want to see people leave our community if we have to raise rates."

Councilmember Lombard is for the proposed increase, adding that the city cannot continue to provide the same service with the current inflation rate. "The citizens deserve the service they want and expect from the city. The rates have to go up."

Councilmember George thanked all for attending and for their input and questions. "Please know that you can contact Councilmembers at any time; the contact information is on the city website. The Council is trying to put forth the effort to make sure we are making the right decisions. These utilities are a service and a service I am willing to pay for recognizing that this may affect citizens on a fixed income. Inflation has increased a lot, and the city must adapt to the increased costs. I appreciate your concerns and ask that you keep looking at the budget."

Councilmember Fredericks stated that the city pays the auditor to make sure everything is good. "I feel that as a Council, we would not be doing what is fiscally sound if we ignored the auditor's recommendations. We need to raise the rates to keep the utilities where they need to be."

Councilmember Neuffer thanked everyone for coming, not everyone shows their care. "After COVID hit, it is astronomical how prices have shot through the roof with pipe prices tripling. There is a shortage of everything including workforce and materials. If we start cutting budgets, we may not be able to replace a blower in a lift station or fix something that is not working. The city must raise rates eventually to keep up with everything."

Councilmember Martinez thanked everyone for showing up. "I work for Range and I am kind of leaning more toward Councilmember Calderon's point of view. But I look at the infrastructure; if the main water or sewer line breaks, we must be able to fix that, and the parts cost a lot of money. The maintenance of the water and sewer main lines are something that the public does not see. If the water main line was down for a week that could be catastrophic versus the internet being down for a week. As residents we must pay for it one way or another. This could be tough on a lot of people. If something happens, we have to have the materi-

PUBLIC NOTICE

als on hand to fix it and we must have the employees. The city employees are underpaid, and our crews are awesome."

Councilmember Worley reiterated "I do not want increases any more than anybody else but with the times we are in, all other utilities have increased their rates. With inflation and the cost of goods the city must do the same thing. I am a small business owner and raw materials have gone up. This is not about materials it is about providing a service, but part of that service is the materials to keep it going."

Councilmember Brookwell stated that the Council talked about this increase and what we could do, but we felt we needed to do it. "We are part of you and asked all Department Heads to watch their budgets. I would emphasize that we are the only city in Wyoming that is debt free and that we have not had to raise rates in years."

Director of Public Works Nick Kruger stated that he is personally responsible for the water, sewer and sanitation budgets; "all expenses go through me, and I approve them. My office is an open door, and I am more than willing to discuss any items you have a question on. After I was hired, I saw immediately where we could save money. As an example, we have changed how we repair or purchase dumpsters. We use local welders instead of buying them from a vendor back east. I find ways to cut expenses and I understand that the expenses I approve of come out of your pocket. Those expenses are under a lot of scrutiny; my staff gives me invoices and then the Clerk/Treasurer looks at them and then the Mayor and Council look at them. We have a lot of check and balances."

City Attorney Richins presented Ordinance #872 for first reading and noted that this Ordinance takes effect April 1, 2024:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF WORLAND, WASHAKIE COUNTY, WYOMING, INCREASING THE CITY OF WORLAND USER FEE WATER RATES BY AMENDING SECTION 23-37-4(A) OF THE WORLAND CITY CODE; INCREASING THE CITY OF WORLAND USER FEE SEWER RATES BY AMENDING SECTION 23-63(A) OF THE WORLAND CITY CODE; AND, INCREASING THE CITY OF WORLAND USER FEE SANITATION AND SPRAY RATES BY AMENDING SECTION 11-16 OF THE WORLAND CITY CODE; ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HEREWITH ARE HEREBY REPEALED.

Motion: to approve Ordinance #872 on 1st reading.

By: Councilmember Brookwell.

Second by: Councilmember Lombard.

Vote: Members voting AYE: Lombard, George, Neuffer, Gill, Martinez, Fredricks, Worley, Brookwell; Members voting NAY: Calderon; Members ABSTAINING: None; the motion passed by a vote of 8-1-0.

Clerk/Treasurer Glanz presented Resolution #2024-1:

A RESOLUTION ALLOWING FOR AN AMENDMENT TO THE BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF WORLAND, WASHAKIE COUNTY, WYOMING FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2023 TO JUNE 30, 2024.

BE IT RESOLVED that an amendment be made to the following line items for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024:

GENERAL FUND

10-58000-903	ARPA Funding - Police	\$ 24,000.00	DB
10-61000-903	ARPA Funding - Airport	\$ 24,000.00	CR

To increase ARPA funding expenditures in Police Department and decrease ARPA funding expenditures in Airport.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Governing Body of the City of Worland that the amendments to the budget through Resolution in accordance with Wyoming State Statute 6-4-113 be adopted as the Official Budget for the City of Worland for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

DATED this 20th day of February, 2024.

Motion: to pass, approve and adopt Resolution #2024-1.

By: Councilmember Neuffer.

Second by: Councilmember George.

Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

Airport Manager Lynn Murdoch reported that the last snowstorm turned to ice quickly forcing the closure of the airport for a day.

Chief of Police Gabe Elliott stated that the new police department vehicles are outfitted, and they are out on the street.

Director of Public Works Kruger informed the Council that the crew used a lot of sand to minimize ice issues with the last snowstorm. The south side of Big Horn Avenue will be scraped to remove the ice out of the gutters. The staff is gearing up for spring and summer projects; the NS Park irrigation project and park improvements projects that involve outside grants. The city will resurface this year with asphalt and asphalt overlay using the 1% general purpose tax. The Wy State Outdoor Coalition received money and we are in the running for a state grant to update Rotary Riverside Park.

City Engineer Representative Mike Donnell reported that the city received seven (7) proposals for the design of Washakie Avenue from 8th to 15th Street. Those proposals were sent out to the selection committee who will make a final selection by Monday, February 26 to complete the WYDOT process. Mayor Gill noted that he appreciated the County partnering with the City on this project.

City Attorney Richins informed the Council that the financing documents for Worland Logistics have been prepared and forwarded to Mr. Hellyer. The expected loan close date is March 1, 2024.

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Gill asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion: to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

By: Councilmember Lombard.

Second by: Councilmember Brookwell.

Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

James R. Gill, Mayor

ATTEST:
Tracy A. Glanz, Clerk/Treasurer

February 29, 2024