

**JULY 6, 2020**

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LEWISTON, IDAHO, met in a Work Session on Monday, July 6, 2020, in a virtual setting. Mayor Collins called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

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**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor Collins; Mayor Pro Tem Schroeder; Councilor Blakey; Councilor Bradbury; Councilor Kelly; Councilor Miller

**COUNCIL MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Councilor Pernsteiner

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:** Alan Nygaard; Chris Davies; Budd Hurd; Jana Gómez; Laura Von Tersch; Travis Myklebust; Dan Marsh; Tim Barker; Carol Maurer; Neal Drury; Aimee Gordon; Brittne Purington; Aaron Butler;

**I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Collins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

*Provides an opportunity for citizens to address the Council on agenda items or other items they wish to bring to the attention of the Council. Citizens are encouraged to discuss operational issues in advance with the City Manager. In consideration of others wishing to speak, please limit your remarks to three minutes. **Due to the Governor's Stay Home Order, citizen comments can be provided by calling [208-746-3676](tel:208-746-3676) and leaving your message. Your comments will then be forwarded to the City Council.***

Public Information Officer Mauer shared a message submitted by Mark Zenner of Lewiston. He thanked Councilor Bradbury's work on the City's past expenditures and ideas on how to spend the taxpayers money in the future. Mr. Zenner feels that other Council members should spend more time scrutinizing the City budgets. He stated that he has spent time working on budgets for district commissions and knows that the allowed 3 percent increase in taxes does not have to be taken each year and said that he dislikes that forgone taxes can later be used.

**III. WORK SESSION ITEMS**

**A. COMMUNITY PROGRAM UPDATES**

**1. Beautiful Downtown Lewiston – Courtney Kramer**

Executive Director Kramer presented the Council with an overview of the activities performed by Beautiful Downtown Lewiston (BDL). She noted that one of the most important activities provided by BDL is economic revitalization leadership for downtown Lewiston. She stated that most of the work done by BDL this fiscal year has been focused on the downtown master plan and projects within that plan. Ms. Kramer said that the organization will be receiving a \$50,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts due to the success of the Artwalk and the Sound Downtown concert series. She continued explaining that BDL helps promote and market downtown Lewiston, organize family

friendly events and act as a liaison between the City and the private sector to coordinate mutually beneficial initiatives and resolve issues.

Ms. Kramer shared a pie chart showing BDL revenue and resources, as well as expenses. The total revenue is \$188,209 and total expenses are \$142,454 for FY'20.

2. Valley Vision – Scott Corbitt

President and CEO Corbitt provided an overview for the Council regarding how Valley Vision Economic Development can help the City rebound and recover economically. He shared how the business climate in the region has been affected by the pandemic and noted that the Rock the Rebound campaign is critical to get the local economy back on track. He stated collaboration and cooperation within the community is key to economic development.

Mr. Corbitt said that Valley Vision is proud to be a leader in the business accelerator program. He shared that the local region has the sixth highest concentration of graduates in the nation and being able to leverage that information helps with retention and expansion. He reported to Council that he has been asked to be a part of a workforce development project through the state. The Talent Pipeline Management Academy is a ready made formula developed by the US Chamber of Commerce that will be implemented in Idaho in 2021. He stated the group would serve as a tie between the local educational facilities and businesses.

Mr. Corbitt stated that the strength of Valley Vision is the board of directors and bringing the leaders of local organizations together to solve problems, listen, provide ideas and direction.

Councilor Bradbury requested a clip to be played from a work session presentation by Valley Vision in October 2019, where bringing businesses into the valley was discussed. Mr. Corbitt stated he could not speak for the previous president, but in his opinion it is critical to bring in new business and create more jobs to grow the local economy. Mr. Bradbury asked how Valley Vision decides who to promote when funding comes from both Nez Perce and Asotin Counties. Mr. Corbitt stated that business recruitment flows either through the State of Washington or the State of Idaho with the businesses knowing which state they desire to be in. He said that if the business is unsure where they would like to locate, being very transparent about the pros and cons in both areas is extremely important. Councilor Bradbury and Mr. Corbitt discussed paragraph four of the Valley Vision contract regarding funds given by the City of Lewiston.

Councilor Blakey stated the reason the City has contracts like the one with Valley Vision, is for services that the City of Lewiston does not or cannot provide. He asked if Valley Vision did not exist if the City would be able to fill all the voids that Valley Vision performs. Mr. Corbitt stated he feels the City has a high priority for economic development, but does not believe the City is in a position to do all they would want to do at this time.

3. Visit Lewis Clark Valley – Michelle Peters

- *Valley Boys and Girls Club unavailable for presentation*

President and CEO Peters gave a presentation to the Council regarding the services provided by Visit Lewis Clark Valley including assistance and support for convention bids, pre and post conference tours, visitor information, tourism product development and meet and greet experiences for cruise ship passengers. She provided a list of funding sources for the organization that included Asotin County, City of Clarkston, Idaho Travel Council Grant, City of Lewiston and private funds. She stated the City of Lewiston contributed \$15,000 in FY'19 and Visit Lewis Clark Valley requested the same amount for FY'20. She shared that all funding is used for marketing, with the exception of the visitor information centers. There are two centers located in the Valley, one at the Port of Clarkston and one at the Nez Perce County Historical Society.

Ms. Peters stated that the tourism direct travel spending for Asotin County was \$34.2 million and for Nez Perce County was \$95 million in 2019. She noted that tourism is the fastest way to bring new dollars into the community. She shared information regarding how tourism and the cruise line industry affects economic development in the community. Ms. Peters explained that Visit Lewis Clark Valley focuses on the wine, water and history within the valley and encouraged everyone to take a look at the online visitors guide.

Councilor Bradbury asked if the benefit of Visit Lewis Clark Valley to local merchants of the City of Lewiston are the tourists that visit the valley. Ms. Peters confirmed. Councilor Bradbury asked who the City representative was that serves on the board for the organization. Ms. Peters stated that Kathy Schroeder is the representative and the board meets once a month.

Councilor Blakey asked if Visit Lewis Clark Valley did not exist would the City of Lewiston be able to provide the same services that the visitor bureau provides. Ms. Peters stated that she feels the City would not be able to provide the same services as Visit Lewis Clark Valley for various reasons.

Mayor Collins asked how the organization receives confirmation on tracking through the digital ads and social media postings. Ms. Peters replied that those statistics are one of the hardest to track as a visitor bureau and the organization relies on the local businesses to help track those numbers.

**B. NEW WEBSITE LAUNCH: *Presentation/discussion on the launch of the City's new website (Maurer/Drury)***

Public Information Officer Mauer presented the new City website that launched July 1<sup>st</sup> to the Council. She noted that as part of the new design, the previous library site was able to be implemented into the same platform on the new website. She gave a tour of the website and its major functions. She noted that the navigation tool is organized for the user to quickly be able to find information they are looking for.

Information Technology Specialist Drury demonstrated how the agendas and minutes module functioned. Mayor Collins asked how far back information is stored when using the search tool. Mr. Drury explained that currently, information is available back to 2018. He stated that moving information to the new platform takes time and may need to be done on a case by case basis.

Mr. Drury stated that staff will continue to work through issues and add to the website as needed. Mrs. Mauer closed by stating the website is the face of the City for people looking to visit or those who need to search for specific items related to the City.

C. **BUDGET QUESTIONS:** *Answer any: questions the Council may have with regard to the budget information provided at previous work sessions (Nygaard/Marsh)*

City Manager Nygaard discussed the strategic plan budget for FY'21. He stated the overall proposed budget is about \$3 million. Administrative Services Director Marsh explained how the strategic plan budget lines up with each department, the additional line items added due to COVID-19 and the joint dispatch center.

Mayor Collins asked how the decision is made if there are certain budget items that change within the strategic plan. Mr. Marsh stated that timely requests from organizations requesting funding, pre-planning and communication helps when completing the budget process. Mr. Nygaard added the first work session in August should provide details and publications regarding the full budget and that OpenGov will have updated information for Council to review.

Councilor Bradbury asked how much the City Parks Department pays for water, wastewater and sanitation. Mr. Nygaard said he would research that information and provide it to the Council. Mr. Nygaard replied to a question from Councilor Bradbury stating that the new ordinance provides for any City department to have the ability to set a budget for what will be paid for water consumption. Councilor Bradbury asked if the Parks Department pays the same rate as City residents. Mr. Nygaard confirmed, but noted there is a cap on the total amount they have to pay per city code.

Finance Manager Gordon provided the Council a guided presentation of how to access and use OpenGov, the financial transparency website. She demonstrated multiple ways to navigate the reporting function of the website and explained that OpenGov allows people to see all the budget information in one place.

D. **CARES ACT REIMBURSEMENT:** *Discussion regarding the CARES Act Property Tax Relief proposal (Nygaard/Marsh)*

City Manager Nygaard brought forth information regarding the proposed property tax relief program from the State of Idaho Governor's office. He stated that a concern for the City would be the lost revenue due to a reduction in property taxes. He further explained that the reimbursement requests have to be from emergency personnel utilized during COVID-19. The deadline to submit a notice of participation to the state for the program is July 17th. Administrative Services Director Marsh said that the City does not meet the requirements defined for payroll relief. He explained that in order to qualify for the program, the City would have to take a zero percent increase in property taxes.

Councilor Kelly asked if the state gave a reason for the July 17th deadline. Mr. Nygaard explained that the date of July 17th is for the cities, counties and municipalities to submit letters of intent so the state can try and understand the magnitude of the requests that may be submitted.

Councilor Miller stated that with the information that has been provided, she does not feel that it would be a wise decision for the City to submit a letter of intent based on the amount of unknowns with the funding.

Mr. Marsh explained the City has two weeks to finish the budget numbers and submit notices of public hearings to the Lewiston Morning Tribune. He stated that there will be a smaller version of the Citizens Guide to the Budget in the paper at the end of July. This all leads up to the first reading and budget hearing on August 10th.

Councilor Blakey asked if the Valley Boys and Girls Club will have another opportunity to present since they were unable to make the meeting and he asked if the Civic Theater submitted a request for funding this year. Mr. Marsh stated that the Civic Theater did not request funding this year. Mr. Nygaard added that due to unforeseen circumstances, Mr. Evans with the Valley Boys and Girls Club was unable to attend and will be presenting at a later date.

#### **IV. UNFINISHED AND NEW BUSINESS**

##### **A. *CITY COUNCILOR COMMENTS***

Councilor Kelly stated that his family attended the Orchards Pool for the family swim and expressed that the experience was a great success. He said that all the employees were wearing masks and commended Parks and Recreation on the job being done.

Councilor Bradbury stated he was disappointed that there were no American flags hung up in downtown Lewiston for the Independence Day holiday. Parks and Recreation Director Barker stated that the Boy Scout organization is in charge of flag placement around the City. He added that they have chosen to place the flags at the park behind the welcome to Lewiston sign rather than on the city streets.

Councilor Blakey asked for an update on information previously requested regarding how the taxes are divided between the City and County residents. Mr. Nygaard stated that the topic would be placed on a future agenda for discussion.

##### **B. *CITY MANAGER COMMENTS***

City Manager Nygaard stated that there has been an increase in the number of positive COVID-19 cases throughout the state and Nez Perce County. He said that there is an order being drafted regarding face masks and he will continue to update the Council. Councilor Bradbury suggested that this topic be placed on a future agenda. Councilor Miller stated that Public Health and Nez Perce County also need to be involved in this decision.

There was a consensus of the Council to move forward with placing the face mask order on the agenda.

##### **C. *ADVISORY BOARD OR COMMISSION APPOINTMENT***

There were no appointments.

**D. PROPOSED WORK SESSION TOPICS**

No topics were presented.

**V. EXECUTIVE SESSION – Action Item**

- A. *Idaho Code 74-206(1)(b) – To consider the evaluation, dismissal or disciplining of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent, or public school student*
- B. *Idaho Code 74-206(1)(d) – To consider records that are exempt from disclosure as provided in Chapter 1, Title 74, Idaho Code*

At 5:04 p.m., Mayor Collins made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss Idaho Code 74-206(1)(b) and Idaho Code 74-206(1)(d). The motion was seconded by Councilor Blakey.

Councilor Bradbury objected to the executive sessions stating that both topics should be discussed publicly for the community to hear. He said the public has the right to know what is being discussed involving both issues.

Mayor Collins clarified with City Attorney Gómez that State Statute is being followed with regard to notification and the two topics scheduled for Executive Session. Ms. Gómez stated that state law requires the City to site statutory sub sections and nothing else.

ROLL CALL VOTE: VOTING AYE: Collins; Schroeder; Blakey; Kelly; Miller; Pernsteiner. VOTING NAY: Bradbury.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Lewiston City Council, Mayor Collins adjourned the July 6, 2020, Budget Work Session at 5:58 p.m.

The City of Lewiston is committed to providing access and reasonable accommodation in its services, programs, and activities and encourages qualified persons with disabilities to participate. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation or have questions about the physical access provided at this meeting, please contact City Clerk Kari Ravencroft at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting at (208) 746-3671 x 6203.