

May 4, 2021

This regular meeting of the Jerome City Council was called to order by Mayor Davis at 5:30 p.m. While council chambers were open to the public, the meeting was also held by teleconference and the public was encouraged to continue with social distancing. The video conference was conducted via Zoom and was made available to all members of the public in a format that allowed all participants to hear the meeting, including all deliberations by members of the Council and other speakers addressing the council, whether in person or via virtual connection, and to comment if so desired, all of which was noted in the agenda, email, and notices at council chambers and on the city's website.

Present: Mayor David M. Davis, Councilman Robert Culver, Councilman Chris Barber, Councilman Brent "Oop" Johnson and Councilman Jason Peterson.

Also present were staff members: City Clerk Bernadette Coderniz, City Administrator Mike Williams, City Attorney Ted Larsen, City Engineer Tyson Carpenter, Building Official Dave Richey, Public Works Director Brian Ahrens, Wastewater Superintendent Gilbert Sanchez, IS Field Technician Andy Newbry, Finance Director Ross Hyatt, Library Director Linda Mecham, Planning and Zoning Manager Ida Clark, Human Resources Manager Esmeralda Chavez, Fire Chief Mike Harrison and Police Chief Dan Hall.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Davis led the audience in recitation of the pledge of allegiance.

INVOCATION:

An invocation was given by Pastor Kevin Ashley with the Life Church of the Magic Valley.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Those items contained in the consent calendar are as follows:

1. Approve the minutes of the April 20, 2021 regular meeting

Councilman Culver made the motion to approve the consent calendar as presented. Second to the motion was made by Councilman Barber. After consideration, the motion passed unanimously by the following vote: **AYES:** Councilman Peterson, Councilman Culver, Councilman Johnson and Councilman Barber. **NAYS:** None.

PROCLAMATION – NATIONAL POLICE WEEK:

The clerk read the proclamation in full is as follows:

**PROCLAMATION
NATIONAL POLICE WEEK**

TO RECOGNIZE NATIONAL POLICE WEEK 2021 AND TO HONOR THE SERVICE AND SACRIFICE OF THOSE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS KILLED OR DISABLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY WHILE PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES AND SAFEGUARDING OUR DEMOCRACY.

WHEREAS, law enforcement officers play a critical role in protecting our community; and

WHEREAS, the Congress and President of the United States have designated May 15th as Peace Officers Memorial Day, and the week in which it falls as Police Week; and

WHEREAS, since the first recorded death in 1791, more than 21,000 law enforcement officers in the United States have made the ultimate sacrifice and been killed in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, during Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week, we honor the men and women of law enforcement who have been killed or disabled in the course of serving our communities; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Police Department of the City of Jerome play an essential role in safeguarding the rights and freedoms of the citizens of the City of Jerome; and

WHEREAS, it is important that all citizens know and understand the problems, duties and responsibilities of their police department, and that members of our police department recognize their duty to serve the people by safeguarding life and property, by protecting them against violence or disorder, and by protecting the innocent against deception and the weak against oppression or intimidation; and

WHEREAS, the men and women of the City of Jerome Police Department provide a vital public service to the community;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mayor David M. Davis, call upon all citizens of the City of Jerome and upon all patriotic, civil, and educational organizations to observe the week of May 9 through 15, 2021, as Police Week in which all of our people may join in honoring police officers, past and present, who by their faithful and loyal devotion to their responsibilities have rendered a dedicated service to their communities and, in doing so, have established for themselves an enduring reputation for preserving the rights and security of all citizens.

I FURTHER call upon all citizens of the City of Jerome to observe Saturday, May 15, 2021, as Peace Officer's Memorial Day in honor of those peace officers who, through their courageous deeds, have lost their lives or have become disabled in the performance of duty.



PROCLAIMED THIS 4th DAY OF MAY, 2021

/s/ David M. Davis, Mayor

Council signified unanim

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EMBRACE LIFE RECOVERY CENTER EVENT AT ICCU PARK:

Ms. Coderniz stated Aurelia Thorne reached out on behalf of Embrace Life Recovery to discuss reserving Idaho Central Credit Union (ICCU) Park for a non-profit Mental Health Awareness Event. They will be providing information regarding mental health services available to the community, and the event will include food concessions, vendors and possibly music. The event will be “safe and sober” with no alcohol served during the event. Ms. Coderniz stated that

monies received from the event will go back into a future event, however it is unknown if the organization is non-profit. Mayor Davis expressed concern regarding the “non-profit” event, if food vendors will be paying to participate and what will happen to those funds. Ms. Thorne did not attend the meeting as discussed so at this time those questions remain unanswered. Mayor Davis also questioned the profit/non-profit status of the Embrace Life Recovery Center in order to waive the park use fees as per Jerome Municipal Code (JMC). Councilman Peterson questioned if the organization was registered as a 501(C)(3) non-profit and compared this event to others in which vendors participate and keep proceeds of their sales but the organization itself puts profits back into the event for next year. Mayor Davis stated that vendors at Joe Mama’s Car Show are charged a fee to be there and those proceeds are donated back to various organizations. Additionally, the Christmas in Jerome event is entirely free to the public. Councilman Barber added that there is a cost to the City when employees must clean up after park attendees. Upon inquiry by Councilman Johnson, Mayor Davis stated that Embrace Life Recovery is a mental health, addiction and treatment center located in Jerome. Councilman Peterson recommended that council approve the application with fees imposed and if the applicant wishes to still request a waiver of fees she can appear at the next council meeting. Mr. Larsen commented that Ms. Coderniz could be given authority to waive the fee if the applicant provides verification of non-profit status, and Ms. Coderniz noted that any verification provided by the applicant will be forwarded to counsel for review.

Councilman Peterson made the motion to approve application with City Clerk authorized to waive the fees if non-profit status is provided. Second to the motion was made by Councilman Johnson. After consideration, the motion passed unanimously by the following vote: **AYES:** Councilman Peterson, Councilman Johnson and Councilman Barber. **NAYS:** Councilman Culver.

Councilman Peterson commented that the JMC references a 501(C)(3) for the non-profit status and waiving of fees, and Mayor Davis noted that the information on the Secretary of State website did not indicate the organization’s status.

PRELIMINARY BUDGET PRIORITIES:

In line with budget priorities, Mr. Williams updated council on the recent property tax bill. A new bill was introduced with little time for comment similar to the bill that failed in the Senate but with amendments. The revisions are better but still not ideal for municipalities. Revisions include increasing the homeowner’s exemption by \$25,000 fixed; it is not as favorable as indexing the exemption to inflation, but this increase should provide some property tax relief to residential property owners. The Circuit Breaker is also increasing and will help those on a fixed income. The new bill will also cap new construction and annexations at 90% of value, and the property tax cap would be 8% which includes new construction and annexation. Mr. Williams spoke of the impact this could have on municipalities if this were to occur annually or with large developments. Urban Renewal districts would be able to capture 80% of the value of those districts upon closing (the previous bill proposed 50% and amended to 75%). The City of Jerome has four open Urban Renewal Agency (URA) districts, and Area 2 (SE Industrial Park with Idaho Milk Products, Scoular, etc.) has the ability to close out in two years. Closing the district allows the City to capture funds to maintain operations (i.e. streets) and ensure that the community would receive a lower tax rate and subsequently a lower property tax bill. Mr. Williams believes that the ability to capture 80% of the value will still allow for the City to

accomplish the goals listed above. Regarding forgone amounts, Mr. Williams stated that cities would be allowed to take up to 1% of the property tax budget to increase operations or take up to 3% of the property tax budget for a capital improvement project (i.e. police station). Also, the personal property tax exemption for businesses is \$100,000 and may be increased to \$250,000. The City's personal property tax revenue is approximately 25% of the total property tax budget and Mr. Williams is concerned that this figure will decrease over time. Mayor Davis commented on the transient property tax exemption pertaining to unregistered construction, mining and logging equipment which will have no impact on the City of Jerome but could affect smaller mining communities. Mr. Williams expects the bill to pass in both the House and Senate with the new adjustments, and he believes the adjustments are an improvement to the original bill. There was brief discussion on the property tax budget and potential assessment increases; inflation; future tax bills for commercial and residential properties; a possible moratorium on this bill in the future; the interim committee meeting over the summer; the closing of URA districts and community support and formation of districts; the impact an area has on the community; revenues needed to pay for services; the fear that the cap on what can be captured could be reduced lower than 80% in the future; and the overall uncertainty of the future. Mr. Williams expects this bill to pass and feels the response going forward should include the need for time to review any future changes. Mayor Davis expressed concern on a previous proposal regarding the phase-out of personal property tax over ten years. This could come up again in the future and would have a negative impact on the City's personal property tax revenues and ultimately the residential property owners.

Mr. Williams spoke of budget priorities and fiscal goals which tie into the City's strategic plan. He noted the biggest goal has been to save for a police station; the building was purchased and the Construction Manager/General Contractor award will be presented for approval on May 18th. Together with funds restricted for the purpose of the new police station, reserves above and beyond requirements in the general fund and unanticipated revenues received through the CARES Act, approximately \$3 million will be available for the construction of the facility. Moving into Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 he recommends that funds previously set aside towards the police station (\$479,000) should still be set aside again for additional costs. Mr. Williams spoke of another goal of setting funds aside for water rights. There is a restricted fund balance of approximately \$100,000 for this purpose, and staff will recommend that a study be done to examine the City's existing portfolio, project growth and determine the type of rights needed. A Comprehensive Plan rewrite will also be recommended as the existing plan is very outdated. Another goal of council has been to improve connectivity in the City, and the North Date project is expected to be completed this year; grant monies will be received this year for the design of the pathway on E. Main and funds will be awarded next year for the construction; Shepherd's Park will see new curb/gutter/sidewalk on 1st Avenue E and Buchanan. Upon inquiry by Councilman Barber regarding Candlelight Park, Mr. Williams stated there is an effort to expand recreation and parks in that area, and Candlelight Park will be incorporated into those efforts. Mr. Williams spoke of continuing to provide good compensation and benefits to City employees. Upon inquiry by Councilman Barber regarding police department staffing, Mr. Williams stated that a few positions are being filled by resignations and retirements. He also spoke of the rising cost of materials and how the City has not increased water/sewer rates for several years; slight adjustments to the rates may be necessary to maintain service levels and keep up with inflated costs. He stated that many services are provided through property taxes and was seeking council's input on priorities and expectations for FY2022.

Councilman Culver commented on the following: contingency fund for the new police station; water rights for now and planning for future water rights; water and wastewater infrastructure and streets; continue wage scale for employees; and, start looking into plans for city hall (remodel, additions, etc.).

Councilman Peterson inquired about the \$3 million saved for the police station, and Mr. Williams explained that this figure is expected at the end of this fiscal year. Councilman Peterson agrees with budgeting another \$479,000 for the police station. He concurred with Councilman Culver's priorities and addressed the future of a bike path behind the Stoney Ridge subdivision. He inquired about an easement for a bike path and what planning for it would entail. Mr. Williams stated that the developer is aware of the City's desire to have the bike path in that area. There may be negotiation opportunities for a development agreement if the developer chooses to expand the subdivision and comes to council for a plat approval. Additionally a partnership with the Jerome Recreation District would be beneficial.

Councilman Johnson agreed with priorities already addressed. He commented that expenses must be controlled, staff should plan for unanticipated expenses and to stick with the budget as much as possible as he expects costs to increase with continued growth within the City. He further stated that water rights are a concern and he agrees with continuing to set funds aside for the police station.

Councilman Barber also agreed with the priorities already mentioned. He further stated that staff should hold meetings with engineers, developers, surveyors, property owners, etc. quarterly or annually to discuss their needs as well as those of the City. With growth happening at an unpredictable rate it is imperative that we work together to serve one another. Priorities include water and sewer, water shares, and green space, and he believes those discussions could be beneficial to everyone involved. Mayor Davis spoke of the following priorities: complete capital projects in progress – the police station and 10th Ave water tank projects are going well; keep employee wages and benefits competitive for the ability to hire and keep quality employees – benefits are in the upper spectrum of being competitive while wages are ever changing; continue with green space improvements – tennis courts are progressing and other parks are in planning stages; connectivity, sidewalks and paths – if the school bond passes S. Lincoln will need a sidewalk path, and pursuing additional grants would be beneficial to the City; continue to promote improvements downtown –the Urban Renewal Agency (URA) participates in these improvements; water rights need to be addressed; and levy rates. Mayor Davis would like the levy rate to not exceed where it was before the governor's property tax relief program was initiated. He noted that when the Southeast Industrial area (URA Area 2) closes out the City should be in a good financial position for other projects or savings in the event of an economic downturn.

Councilman Barber also commented on potential water rate increases and Mr. Williams stated that with growth and new accounts, revenues have increased. Additionally, capital and operations allocations have been adjusted and staff will look for correlations between what has been spent annually and costs (not sustainable at the current rates). Mr. Williams expressed appreciation to the Mayor and Council for their feedback, and budget documents will be available for review in early July.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Mr. Williams thanked everyone who participated in Citywide Cleanup Day on May 1st. The event was sponsored by Councilman Barber and Keller Williams with lunch provided by

Renew and approximately fifty people were in attendance. He also spoke of the tumbleweeds on S. Lincoln and the effort to get them cleaned up despite resistance from property owners. Jerome County will be assisting with the clean up through their work detail program. He stated that addressing the property owners this fall will be a priority to get the properties cleaned up.

Mr. Williams stated that information regarding the Association of Idaho Cities Conference was sent out and anyone interested in attending should reach out to Ms. Coderniz. He also spoke of the agency agreement with the URA to develop the Central Elementary property, and that the Agency is close to signing a development agreement with Summit Creek Capital for a residential development (including green space). There will be several other agreements to be presented at the May 18th council meeting.

Chief Hall stated that the annual Magic Valley Law Enforcement Memorial Service will be held at the Twin Falls City Park on Saturday, May 15th at 11:00 a.m. This will be the 30th year of the Magic Valley service.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being nothing further to discuss, Mayor Davis adjourned this May 4, 2021 regular meeting of the Jerome City Council at 6:40. p.m.

By:

Mayor David M. Davis

Attest:

Bernadette Coderniz, City Clerk