

MINUTES OF A CONTINUED MEETING OF THE  
COEUR D'ALENE CITY COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM  
ON JUNE 8, 2020 AT 12:00 NOON

The City Council of the City of Coeur d'Alene met in continued session in the Library Community Room held at 12:00 NOON on June 8, 2020, there being present upon roll call a quorum.

Steve Widmyer, Mayor

Woody McEvers       ) Members of Council Present  
Dan Gookin           )  
Dan English          )  
Kiki Miller           )  
Amy Evans            )  
Christie Wood        )

**STAFF PRESENT:** Troy Tymesen, City Administrator; Mike Gridley, City Attorney; Randy Adams, Deputy City Attorney; Renata McLeod, Municipal Services Director/City Clerk; Ted Lantzy, Building Official; Vonnie Jensen, Comptroller; Kenny Gabriel, Fire Chief; Melissa Tosi, Human Resource Director; Bette Ammon, Library Director; Bill Greenwood, Parks & Recreation Director; Hilary Anderson, Community Planning Director; Lee White, Police Chief; Tim Martin, Streets & Engineering Director; Mike Anderson, Wastewater Superintendent; Kyle Marine, Assistant Water Superintendent; Lee Brainard, Police Captain; Sean Phillips, Municipal Services; Brandon Jank, Municipal Services; Chris Bosley, City Engineer; Sean Holm, Senior Planner; Mike Becker, Capital Program Manager; Tom Greif, Deputy Fire Chief; Katie Hirst, Executive Assistant; Amy Ferguson, Executive Assistant; Juanita Knight, Senior Legal Assistant.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Widmyer called the meeting to order and noted that the purpose of the meeting was to kick-off the budget meetings for the year. He encouraged the Council to ask questions.

**BUDGET OVERVIEW:**

City Administrator Troy Tymesen commented that the meeting was strategic and ties into the financial plan. He noted that the Finance Department and Comptroller Vonnie Jensen have done a great job preparing the Preliminary Budget, and that it is council's opportunity to look at the year head, and then a few more years down the road. Council is not scheduled to get back together until July where most of the changes will tie into revenues. They are still working on medical insurance. The Council's discussion at these meetings will help them firm up the financial plan, with the goal of having a balanced plan the first meeting in September.

Councilmember Wood asked about revenues. Mr. Tymesen responded that revenues are always a "crystal ball" look.

Councilmember Gookin asked about an email that Council received this morning from Governor Little's office regarding property tax relief. Mayor Widmyer said that plan is that city and county governments will submit their public safety budgets for a potential relief for property taxpayers. The commitment on the part of the government agencies is that they will not take a property tax increase and there will be funding coming back to the City to supplement public safety. There will be a line item on the property tax bills with the credit. The Mayor confirmed that the property tax credit would be for just one year.

#### **DEPARTMENT HEAD PRESENTATIONS:**

**Administration:** Mr. Tymesen said that one of their big and ongoing benefits is the City's medical benefit trust. He noted that they don't have the exact numbers yet, but his goal is to be no more than a 2.5% increase annually. The City spends about \$5M on medical insurance, so keeping costs down is important. Mr. Tymesen said that the trust is performing well, and they are proposing a 1.8% increase for this next full fiscal year. Normally, that would be a great number, but they want it less than that and are negotiating. The other goals are to carry out the goals that Council has. As the Lake Urban Renewal District closes down, they will look at the income stream, projects to be done, and fund balances to be restored.

Mr. Tymesen said that they would like to bring a two-year budget forward so they can make sure that their capital for certain areas isn't too high in the next year and there aren't any big roadblocks. Councilmember Gookin asked if other cities do that. Mr. Tymesen said that they do, and noted that the hard part is that the second year can be quite change-worthy depending on what revenues have done.

Councilmember Wood said that she would like to see the Council have a workshop where they can be part of the discussion on what they would like to have happen with the Lake District funds and how it can impact the three-to-five-year plan. She commented that if the City recovers all of those funds, she would like to plan for IT, vehicle replacement, acquisitions, and possibly look at some commitment for relief for property tax in the future as well. Mr. Tymesen said that the Preliminary Financial Plan has capital replacement for all departments for five years. Councilmember Miller agreed with Councilmember Wood's request for a workshop.

Councilmember McEvers asked when the URD will close. Mr. Tymesen said that it closes in 2021, and the City will see funding in 2022.

Councilmember McEvers asked about the difference between a COLA and a Merit Increase. Mr. Tymesen said that a COLA is a cost-of-living allowance and is a contracted dollar amount in the contracts with the employee groups. A Merit Increase is based on performance. Merits increases end when an employee is maxed out in their pay grade.

Councilmember Wood said that, overall, she sees some trimming in certain areas, and noted that it looks like most of the departments have taken a trim to training, but she didn't notice a trim for training from the Administration department. She commented that, from her perspective, she thinks that professional development is incredibly important and she would want to restore those funds and look at increasing proportionately as needed as they move forward in the future. She

further commented that she thinks there are ways to be more efficient with training, such as working with the college, bringing in experts and sharing some of that cost with other cities.

Councilmember McEvers said that training is time away from work and in some areas it means the City is paying overtime to have the position covered. When things get lean, he looks to training as taking a year or two off. He further commented that the training budgets have blown up over the years, and that he is not against training, but is concerned about the economics and thinks that training should be the most flexible thing. Mr. Tymesen said that the Human Resources Department has a great program they have been working on, which provides electronic training across the board.

Councilmember English said that he strongly agrees that in the long term, training is not something that you want to go backwards on. Mayor Widmyer said that the lack of training can lead to not staying up-to-date and doing the best job, and that he thinks the City needs to be wise in regard to training.

**Finance:** Comptroller Vonnie Jensen reviewed the mission and functions of the Finance Department. She noted that they have interactions with the majority of City citizens and all of the departments. They have two goals for this upcoming year – to upgrade the financial software, and implementation of utility payments for customers. The Springbrook software upgrade will be completed in July. Once the upgrade is completed, they will pick up with the credit card company to implement recurring payments. The goal will be to provide the service at very little cost.

Ms. Jensen said that the proposed budget for Finance includes merit increases and a 2.5% COLA. Due to the turnover of one position, the expenses came in lower than anticipated last year, and Ms. Jensen anticipates the health insurance increase being less than \$1,500 for the department.

Ms. Jensen reviewed the proposed budget increases and noted that the total increase to the Finance Department budget is \$21,250.

Councilmember Wood commented that she appreciates the Council being provided with a packet and wanted everyone to understand that it is not a critique when she asks questions. She asked Ms. Jensen about the interfund transfer study. Ms. Jensen responded that the interfund transfer study was done to get the costs for departments that do things for enterprise fund departments. The consultant came in and reviewed the costs and determined how much each of the funds should contribute to the general fund.

Ms. Jensen explained that they have to get through the upgrade to the software before they can work on the recurring payments, and she doesn't anticipate it being complete until the next fiscal year as it has taken longer than anticipated. She confirmed that it will be a budget item next fiscal year.

Councilmember Miller asked if the recurring payments function would result in any savings in staff time. Ms. Jensen said not at first, but hopefully as they get it finalized it will be better, but

it depends on how many people sign up for it. She further commented that she doesn't know if there will be a cost, but the cost will be very minimal. 2.5% would be charged up front to the customer. Ms. Jensen noted that, right now, it is about \$10-\$11,000 to absorb credit card fees for online utility payments.

Ms. Jensen explained that the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) has a very good list of policies and procedures that she would like to set up and have approved by the Council. She noted that the City has some policies, but there are a few that definitely need to get done, including a grants policy.

**Municipal Services:** Municipal Services Director Renata McLeod said that the Municipal Services Department houses a lot of services for the benefit of all of the departments, including customer service, business licensing, and IT. They are proposing a little bit of staff reorganization this year. There was one retirement and they would like to take that position and rework it to a Deputy Network IT position. They would also like to bring in a Division Head so they can get more management resources over IT, which would bring the internal database administrator person up one pay grade. Another goal is the Five-Year Plan for IT.

Ms. McLeod said that they have a very small IT staff, who are monitoring over 600 computers and laptops. They have moved most of the permitting and licensing for businesses online, but still have some improvements to be made.

Ms. McLeod discussed the proposed budget increases and noted that in about two weeks they should have some information from the State in regard to preauthorizing COVID funds. If they can get some of those funds approved, they can delete them from the budget. She also noted that they have a few staffing cost savings this year, so whatever they can purchase from this year's budget they will remove it from next year's request. They did install another 1 Gigabyte internet line, which increased the monthly cost but has sped up the system greatly. They are hoping for reimbursement from COVID funds for that.

Councilmember Gookin asked if they could wait a year on the new Network Specialist position. Ms. McLeod responded that they can wait a year, but this year they have funding from the GIS position they are not filling and it would be a bigger expense the following year. They found with COVID that if their Network Administrator gets sick, they have no network backup. This was a low-cost fix to a pretty big issue they see in IT.

Councilmember Gookin asked what is the current policy in regard to replacing computers. Ms. McLeod said that the current policy is to replace them as they break. She noted that some hard drives are pretty old, and some have "gremlins." Replacement of the hard drives at \$750 each is a pretty low cost. They are trying to create some sort of maintenance schedule and are hoping to get as many upgrades as they can this fiscal year. Ms. McLeod confirmed that they have no written replacement policy.

Councilmember Gookin asked how many copier contracts the City has. Ms. McLeod said that there could be different contracts for different buildings, but City Hall has just one.

Councilmember Gookin confirmed that Wastewater, Water, FD, and PD have their own copier

contracts. He commented that he thinks the City could look into saving some money by having one copier contract for the whole city. Councilmember English said that, in the County, there were doing exactly that – centralizing copier contracts – and by maximizing they received better contract pricing and it was more efficient. Councilmember Gookin said that he thinks it is something that the City can look into.

Councilmember Gookin asked about Jobs Plus and asked what the City is getting for its \$25,000 contribution. Mayor Widmyer said that it is a program that they have had for a long time and suggested having Gynni Gilliam come and speak to the effectiveness of the program at a future Council meeting. He further noted that Mr. Tymesen attends all of the Jobs Plus meetings.

Councilmember McEvers asked about replacement of city phones and the upgrade of the camera and asked if that would be a trade-off for the network solutions. Ms. McLeod said that they don't have a replacement policy for phones either, but as they are looking at moving the phone service to an internet-based service provider, there will be some phones that will no longer work. They will have to look at how many phones absolutely have to be replaced to be functional, and can slow the project down as needed. In regard to the camera equipment, Ms. McLeod said that right now they have about six cameras that they think are not functioning correctly and they are trying to diagnose the issues. If the repairs are low cost, they will fix them this year. They do need some maintenance money for next year, or they can come back with an emergency request.

Councilmember Wood commented that she really likes seeing the five-year plan for IT and thinks it is critical city-wide. She would also like to see the requested position filled, and commented that she would be supportive of finishing the five-year plan. She further noted that she thinks the IT division will be critical in council's workshop when they talk about the URD funds.

Councilmember Miller asked about the Dues and Subscriptions line item and asked to consider if they need to do it just because they've always done it in regard to CDA 2030, Panhandle Area Council, Jobs Plus, and the Downtown Association. She said that she wants the partnerships to exist but it might be time to look at all of them.

Councilmember Miller said that during COVID they have learned a lot, and she asked Ms. McLeod if they have had discussions with IT regarding things that might provide savings to departments. Ms. McLeod said that they have learned a lot of lessons, made good improvements, and found a lot of weaknesses in systems. There are some services that they can replace and a Five-Year Plan will enable them to go through and look at each device, including more security for the network. They will be looking at software companies and will come back when they figure out the right methodology moving forward. Ms. McLeod commented that it is not cheap to have an outside agency locking down the networks. She also noted that they will be implementing a new tape backup system. If the State will reimburse them on Zoom and Splashtop purchases, it is about \$18,000.

**Human Resources:** Human Resources Director Melissa Tosi said that the HR Department has three full-time employees. Many of the HR goals can be accomplished without extra budget with the staffing that they have. In regard to City-wide training, they are currently using

ThinkZoom. It is the first year they are using the web-based e-learning software, which has hundreds of different tracks that employees can be part of. Currently, Ms. Tosi said that she has \$8,500 set aside for the City-wide training. In the past they have utilized it by bringing some professional speakers in on different topics, etc., but what would end up happening is she would get a group of individuals that could make it for the training. The training was great, but it was expensive to bring somebody in so it wasn't ideal. They weren't really reaching City-wide staff, so they decided to go with ThinkZoom training. Ms. Tosi said that last year she was able to pay for the training in last year's budget and able to pay for the rest of it through the current year's budget. The cost is \$53 per employee per year. Coming into this next fiscal year, they won't have enough to fund the entire amount. Ms. Tosi noted that Wastewater and Water were very helpful in paying for their employees out of the Enterprise Fund. This year they have been able to utilize it by having some training during the Executive Team meetings, and different departments have utilized some of the training in their own staff meetings. They have the ability to assign training to specific persons, departments, or supervisors. They can also upload policy information and get it out to everyone. Ms. Tosi noted that when they had ICRMP mandatory training, they were able to create a Powerpoint and put it through ThinkZoom. They have a couple featured topics every month.

Ms. Tosi said that, looking forward, they are trying to enhance their onboarding process. They have an orientation process that they do with all new employees, but are bringing them together. They would like to be able to send employees a couple of training videos when they are hired and do more online. They should be able to do some additional compliance training.

Councilmember Evans asked if the training is utilized by public safety as well. Ms. Tosi said that public safety already has a lot of training that they already do, but they can work with them.

Councilmember Gookin said that he is not a fan of ThinkZoom, and asked what the compliance rate is of employees using it. Ms. Tosi said that she can check on that, but all the employees used it when they required it. They have the ability to see what employees are taking optional trainings.

Councilmember Gookin asked about sick leave repurchase. Ms. Tosi said that when employees reach a certain number of hours of accrued sick leave, they have a couple of options. In October, they can either choose to bank their hours moving forward if their contract allows, or they can choose to get paid a third of the hours that they are over, at their hourly rate. She noted that 720 hours is the threshold, and once the employee gets to 720 in that fiscal year, whatever they are over at that point they have to choose an option. Then it brings them back down to 720 at the beginning of the fiscal year. The only way an employee gets paid for their sick leave is at the end of the year for the sick leave repurchase, or if they retire. Sick leave has to be an approved absence. There are also employees that have banked their sick leave so that when they retire they might have 1,000 hours on the books.

Councilmember Gookin asked if vacation time is "use it or lose it?" Ms. Tosi said that at the end of the fiscal year, based on the employee group, they have to utilize the hours that they are over by January 15<sup>th</sup> or they will lose what they were told to use. Councilmember Gookin asked if there has been a study done to determine if having other people cover shifts and paying overtime

is more expensive than having the City pay them for their vacation time rather than having the absence covered. He asked if there has been a study done and if it is contractual. Ms. Tosi confirmed that it was contractual.

Councilmember McEvers asked about alcohol and drug testing. Ms. Tosi said that they have certain safety sensitive positions and new hires that require a CDL license, etc. Testing is based on a percentage that they test every month. They have to pay a little bit more depending on shifts, but it doesn't fluctuate too much.

Councilmember Wood said that she would like to strongly encourage Police and Fire to do a study on what the cost is for filing vacation and to work with HR and come back to the Council. If there is a huge savings there and everyone thinks it is a good way to go, they should be doing that.

Ms. Tosi said that this year will be an interesting year to look at vacation overages because there are a lot of employees that had plans that were canceled by COVID. She would anticipate that the vacation balances will be higher than usual.

Councilmember Wood said that she would like to see tangible goals for HR, as in how could they really look three to five years down the road to make employment at the City even more attractive. They might want to look at a way to do a childcare center which is not on site, but is something that employees would pay for, with employees of the City. She suggested that they could offer something like the NIC Childcare Center, only open to City employees. She would love to see some collaboration with departments that have open positions to help with the screening of the applications. Ms. Tosi said that their recruitment tracking software, NEOGov has opened up their ability to accept online applications. They use the program and have hiring managers set up in every department so when they get applications online, the software program shoots them directly to the hiring manager that is able to go through them as well.

Councilmember Miller asked if there is an ongoing look at mutually beneficial early retirements with different departments. Ms. Tosi said they look at it every few years and the last time they did an incentive it ended in 2017. They pulled the numbers a month or so ago and looked at different departments, but when you do retirement incentives too often, employees tend to wait to retire, wanting an incentive or a payout as they leave. She commented that she did a spreadsheet and at this point there isn't enough significant savings to justify offering it, knowing that many of the departments would potentially refill the position.

Councilmember Miller asked about the Cityfit and risk programs, and if the vendor gives the City a study to say what the success rate is and how it affects premiums, risk, etc. Ms. Tosi responded no, and said that they don't have enough funds to really do a substantial wellness plan. The City covers flu shots, and they do a walking program and a few programs throughout the year. She commented that it is important that staff look at some of the high exposures and things that are critical to staff independence, and look at how they tailor the benefits trust to the employees and their dependents. She further noted that the Cityfit budget went from \$4,000 to \$3,000, and covers the general cost of some of the wellness programs they do. She also noted that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is very well-utilized.

Councilmember Wood said that she thinks the employee retirement depends on how it is structure and commented that there seems to be a lot of room for bartering. She suggested that they could hold positions open for six months to a year, and doesn't think that it is off the table. There may also be positions that are not refilled, and the City would see some cost savings.

Mayor Widmyer asked if there was a limit to how much a person can put in their VEBA. Ms. Tosi said that it is completely employer-funded and there is no limit, but an employee can't contribute on their own.

Councilmember McEvers commented that it seems like when the City has done buyouts, there were a lot of maxed-out department heads who retired, and part of that is they would lose some corporate knowledge and historical perspective. Ms. Tosi responded that they have had people that aren't maxed out leave, and when you offer it up you are always going to get people who are planning to leave anyway. It can also create positive movement in the department.

**Legal:** Mike Gridley, City Attorney, reviewed the department's mission. He noted that folks that work in the department do a great job being as cost-effective as possible. Part of the credit goes to IT, who have done a great job supporting them. They would like to look at leveling the Chief Deputy Attorneys from pay grade 18 to pay grade 19. That would give them 12% more headroom that they could grow into. Mr. Gridley noted that he was not asking for it this budget cycle, but they would be available to get a merit increase next year and they would budget for that.

Mr. Gridley said that as the City grows, they will need more people. They are not asking for more people this year, but as time goes on and the City grows, there are going to be more requests for services. The Prosecution Office is part of the law enforcement team, but are often overlooked. They support the Police on all misdemeanor offenses in the city of Coeur d'Alene. One of the priorities for their department is domestic violence, and there is a lot of dealing with victims and witnesses. The magistrate courts are going to add two more judges so they can handle more volume, so the Prosecution Office will have to run a little faster to keep up with that. Under their court system they have treatment courts, and they support staffing those courts but it does require time and effort. Ms. Gridley said that there was no specific request in this budget but looking forward as they grow, they will probably need more bodies.

Councilmember McEvers asked about District Court traffic fines. Mr. Gridley said they have declined but it is not that they are handling less. He commented that he thinks the courts have decided who gets what share of the fines/court costs.

Councilmember Wood suggested that the Council may want to ask the Civil team look at reviewing the City ordinances next year. She suggested putting together a team, and noted that bringing the changes forward on a continual basis educates the Council. Mr. Gridley said that it is something that they can work on and that a lot of it can be driven by departments. He noted that it is a big project.

Councilmember Wood commented on Legal's goal of enhancing legal guidance to law enforcement regarding ever-changing laws and noted that some of the things that she did when she worked for the Police Department is they would have Wes Somerton come in and speak with a small group to form that relationship, and also provide education about changing City laws. Another thing that she used to do is invite Mr. Somerton to the community block watch meetings. Mr. Somerton gave back a tremendous amount of correct, accurate information and people were able to take that back to their neighborhoods. Councilmember Wood commented that she thought it was valuable and would like to see that coordination and community education happening again.

Councilmember Wood said that she would have loved to have the cell phone numbers of the prosecuting attorneys and asked if that is happening. Mr. Gridley said that, if not, they can certainly make that happen.

Councilmember Miller suggested that the pay grades should be leveled through the rate study, and at what other department heads are making. Mr. Gridley commented that the folks are licensed attorneys and have a lot of responsibility for what they do.

Councilmember Miller asked if they still have a Volunteer Victims Advocate program and how it affects hours. Mr. Gridley said that they have a part-time volunteer person who works in Criminal. She does a good job contacting victims and witnesses. Their thinking is that maybe as they have retirements or other savings, that it would probably be their first "ask" to bring on a full-time paid legal assistant to do more of that.

**Planning:** Hilary Anderson, Community Planning Director, said that the Planning Department has seven members, and the department is small and nimble. She discussed the services they provide under two pillars – long range planning and visioning, and day-to-day operations. She discussed their strategic goals. One goal is to continue priority projects such as Envision CDA and Historic Planning & Preservation, infill and missing middle housing, and continuing collaboration on special projects and economic development. Another objective is to support business leaders. Another goal is community development and livability, and how to maximize funds and City resources.

Their three-year goals include zoning code updates, East Sherman zoning code, the health corridor, and a focus on livability and preserving the quality of life.

In regard to the Planning budget, Ms. Anderson said that they shaved some costs on travel/training and official representation. They were also able to have their professional services budget go down quite a bit.

Councilmember Wood asked Ms. Anderson to come back and provide education on council in regard to CDA 2030, including what the City is getting from the partnership. She also noted that with the amount of projects going on, she would like to see the official representation reduction be put back into the budget.

Councilmember Miller said that the City made a huge investment with their direction on the healthcare corridor and noted that it is the fastest growing demographic of people moving into town. She noted that Planning gets spread pretty thin and that if more of the focus moved the Planning Department's attention to those items under the health care program versus spending too much time with ongoing projects with East Sherman and other places that already have momentum on their own.

Councilmember Gookin commented that one of his concerns is that the Council overextends Planning. He noted that the Comp Plan is top priority, and does want to go back to East Sherman and at some point, would want for a presentation to Council on infill and middle housing. He wants Council to be able to weigh in.

Councilmember McEvers said that he would like Planning to look at CDA 2030 and see if it is worth the money and what the City gets.

In regard to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, Ms. Anderson said that they have tried to reorganize how they present information to show how dollar amounts align with the different funding areas for the block grants.

The council took a break at 1:43 p.m., and reconvened at 1:50 p.m.

**Building Maintenance:** Bill Greenwood, Parks & Recreation Director, said that Building Maintenance is one of the five Parks divisions, and there is not much change in the budget. He noted that there is a chiller at the Police Department and rather than trying to budget for replacement, they spent some money to get it repaired. It may or may not go out. He noted that the building is an older building so they keep sinking money into it and upgrading.

There is no additional capital this year in all five divisions and they have been creative in some savings. They have had all divisions push all capital purchase out for another fiscal year.

**Police:** Police Chief Lee White said that the majority of the differences in the budget are contract costs, and there are some positions they have included in the budget proposal. They are asking for two sergeants for the reason that over the past six years they have added a host of positions, largely through grants, but have not added a single supervisor in over 20 positions that the department has added over the last ten years. They don't have an adequate amount of supervision on the streets some days. Last year they used 1,684 hours of overtime just for staffing for sergeants who were out due to injuries, vacations, and illnesses.

They have also requested a code enforcement officer. In addition, they have only one person working evidence right now and are asking for the part-time position to be upgraded to a full-time position.

Chief White said that they are requesting a total of three police cars – one for a canine vehicle, and the other two are for spares. The normal replacement schedule is between five and seven vehicles a year, and this year they are only asking for three vehicles. He noted that \$50,000 of the request is offset by a donation they received from a church a number of years ago that was to

go specifically for the canine program. Chief White noted that K-9 “Peko” is long overdue to retire and they need to get a new dog. A patrol dog costs \$15,000 and you have to get a vehicle to go along with it. The \$50,000 would offset the cost of the vehicle and the dog.

Councilmember McEvers asked about SWAT equipment in the budget. Chief White noted that the biggest increase is that two members do not have bullet proof vests. SWAT vests are significantly different and must stop rifle rounds and provide more protect. The cost is \$8-9,000 each and they are only good for five years pursuant to industry standards.

Councilmember McEvers asked about training and asked why the PD is sending people so far pretty consistently. Chief White responded that, right now, they have 117 members and spend \$90,000 a year for training in that they have a number of certifications that have to be renewed every year, including taser certifications, child forensic interview training, computer forensic training, firearms certifications, and drug recognition training. Most of the training is just for maintaining certifications. Chief White noted that the PD has done a number of things to reduce costs. Last year they brought in training on search & seizure, which was cost effective. He also commented that there is not a lot of locally-offered training, but they will send people out for training and then have them come back and train other officers.

Councilmember Wood commended the PD on their efforts to keep the peace the last couple of weeks. She said that she agrees that public safety is the number one priority and, as far as needing two sergeants goes, she understands the need for that. Lack of supervision and accountability is like asking to write a big check.

Councilmember Wood said that, in regard to code enforcement, that part of her job description was going out into the neighborhoods. She commented that if you tend to little things, you won't get big things, and that in a city of this size, one code enforcement officer is not sustainable. She encouraged Council to invest back into the code enforcement program and noted that there are a lot of issues in the City and one person cannot get to all of them. When you deal with the small issues, you won't have big issues.

Councilmember Wood said that, in regard to the canine unit, it is an obvious expense that they City has to take care of, along with the vehicle that goes with it. She also commented that, in regard to the evidence tech, the technician does much more than just preserve evidence – they try to go out to the crime scene. She encouraged the Council to remember the public safety priority they set in previous years and if they have to talk about a tax increase this year, that they do a small tax increase with 100% going to public safety – police and fire. She also commented that the City needs to have a strategic plan for vehicle replacement.

Councilmember Wood said that the crime reduction overall by the PD is incredibly impressive. She asked Chief White what he was going to do to work with the community to reduce the fear of crime. Chief White said that it is subjective, but they get feedback from the crime prevention specialist and victim advocate. The raw numbers show that Coeur d'Alene is far safer per capita than in the last 50 years. He noted that you can show people numbers all day long but all that it takes is a provocative incident to make people not feel safe. They try to have a continual

dialogue with the community and community leaders. It is difficult to quantify and most of it is how people feel when they are walking the streets.

Councilmember Wood asked if they were still doing “Coffee with the Chief.” Chief White said that they still plan those on a pretty regular basis.

Councilmember Miller asked about the \$10,000 in the budget for the East Sherman substation, and commented that she thought the substation was closed. Chief White said they were planning on a Station 2 somewhere, and there was some impact fee money going toward the Third Street garage, which was killed due to high bids. They are still looking for a Station 2 someplace, but it won't be on East Sherman.

Councilmember Miller asked if the drug task force had been phased out. Chief White said that it has shifted gears. They had a drug task force in the early 2000's and it went to the North Idaho Violent Crimes Task Force. Now it is a joint task force with ISP, KC, etc. There was never any funding since he has been with the City for the drug task force, but they occasionally put money into it.

Councilmember asked about Fuels and Lubes in the budget being up by \$20,000, while everyone else's budget was down. Chief White said that “EIA” predicts that fuel prices will average \$2.33 a gallon next year and that is how they came up with the number. Streets & Engineering Director Tim Martin said that the City will have to go out and bid a new contract this summer.

Chief White said that the PD will blow the overtime budget out of the water like they do every year. Over the past three days last week along, they spent \$80,000 on overtime. He noted that they can't really predict what will come up but the majority of their overtime is for minimum staffing coverage.

Councilmember Miller asked if the PD had any plans based on recent events in the last few weeks, and if the department has had discussions on things that may be upcoming in the next six months to a year. Chief White said that he has no idea of what the future holds, and noted that the 4<sup>th</sup> of July event this year will be staffed significantly different than last year. The Car d' Lane event will also be significantly different than it was last year. The conversation they have been having is that they are adequately staffed during the winter months, but they are nowhere near adequately staffed during the summer months.

Councilmember McEvers commented that Council does not receive a report on code enforcement and it would be interesting to see what code enforcement does. Chief White said they can absolutely provide that to Council.

Councilmember McEvers asked about the request for two sergeants and asked if it creates a hole for two people to take their spots. Chief White said they are asking for two new positions, so they would have two existing people promoted to sergeant, and then would hire two additional officers. They have a current sergeant's list, so filling the positions wouldn't take too much time at all.

Councilmember McEvers asked about the PD's philosophy on traffic stops and whether it is a priority. Chief White said that they have three tenets – engineering (working with Streets to determine if there are engineering fixes), enforcement, and education. How they handle a traffic stop is based on the behavior they saw and if the person is doing it repetitively, or if their behavior is so egregious, they need a ticket the first time out. He noted that traffic tickets have gone down over the last several years.

Councilmember McEvers asked about assignment pay. Chief White said that in their contract there are certain dollar amounts associated with certain positions. Councilmember McEvers asked about walkabouts and if they were still in the picture. Chief White responded that during their summertime their School Resource Officers fulfill that function.

Governor Brad Little and Senator Pro Tem Brent Hill and staff members briefly joined the meeting and were introduced. Governor Little said that they were bringing forward a program to produce some nice property tax relief. Under any scenario, it is going to be a good thing for all of Idaho and will take a lot of pressure off of property taxes. He commented that “we are all in this together,” and said that he didn't know what was going to happen on the Corona virus, but if the people of Idaho continued their good behavior, the State will be better off than anywhere else.

**Fire:** Fire Chief Kenny Gabriel said that the Fire Department prides themselves on being an all hazard fire department. The beauty of the job is you “don't know what you don't know.” Four months ago they had no idea they would be dealing with a pandemic. He further commented that he looks at the budget like it is his own. They try hard to scrutinize every dime that they spend, and noted that they are not coming to the Council with wants, but needs. What they learned through the pandemic is there was a hole when it came to infection control. They are proud of their partnerships with the EMS system, NIC, and surrounding departments. He noted that they have needed an EMS position for quite some time and it is their number one priority and the biggest part of what they do. It would be a new position – an EMS officer for the Fire Department but also an infection control officer for the entire city. Chief Gabriel commented that Scott Dietrich has been doing an amazing job and has the knowledge and background to help the City get through the pandemic. Firefighter Dietrich is going around talking to department heads already regarding COVID response. The department prides itself on customer service – internally and externally, and they want to move their front office position to full-time. They also need to send another one of their firefighters to paramedic school. They will be promoting an engineer or two this year, and a paramedic may test out of their position.

Chief Gabriel said that their most important goal is planning, planning, planning. They would like to plan where the next fire station will go, and will also start planning for the next G.O. bond, with council approval.

Councilmember Wood said that she appreciated the work of the Fire Department this week, and supports the EMS position. She also noted that the goals and accomplishments of the Fire Department were impressive.

Councilmember Wood asked about the requested \$8,000 for flooring. Chief Gabriel said that they are trying to get rid of carpet in the fire stations because different infectious diseases can

stay in the carpet. They will try to get the money through the CARES act, or have talked to Mr. Tymesen about maybe doing one a year for three years. He noted that it is part of the “healthy in, healthy out” concept that is being done throughout the country.

**Streets & Engineering:** Streets & Engineering Director Tim Martin said that the department is 35 people strong. One of their goals is to continue to cross-train on street ratings, inspections, public vacations and development review. Other goals including street inspection rating, and finishing the design and construction of the second lane eastbound on Kathleen between 95 and Government Way, and continuing to use and strengthen the used equipment line, which has been very successful for their department.

Mr. Martin commented that their three-year vision is probably a 20-year vision, which includes mobility planning (bicycles, pedestrians, sidewalk, vehicle) and chip seal. Funding has always been a challenge and Mr. Martin commented that they need to put more funding into chip seal and overlay. Another goal is to evaluate fleet services and make improvements, including hiring a full-time in-depth coordinator who manages the Fire Department fleet. Mr. Martin noted that the Fleet is increasing and they don’t have room in the shop as they can only put six vehicles in the shop at a time. They are managing 1,500 assets with five people, and Mr. Martin said that it is worthy of a conversation looking long term.

In regard to the signal grads on Northwest Boulevard, Mr. Martin said that the company is highlighting this area for future sales all over the county so they are going to want to make it work. The City has pulled the fiber and wire, and final install starts tonight and will go through Wednesday. They should have it up and running by Thursday if all goes well.

They are working to coordinate corridors. The strategic three-year vision is a campus plan out at the Street shop, covered storage and shelter.

Councilmember McEvers asked if they have ever looked into contracting out maintenance on particular pieces of equipment. Mr. Martin said that in their leases, it calls for service and they provide space for the vendors to come in and maintain the vehicles. On this last go around, they put in the contract that the vendor is only going to provide the filters and oils and the City is going to do the work. Councilmember asked about cars and fire trucks. Mr. Martin said that their fleet supervisor is incredible, and that Chiefs White and Gabriel would probably say they would rather have the City do service than to take the vehicles somewhere else.

Councilmember McEvers asked Mr. Martin if they have ever run the economics of what the City pays outside firms to do design work, and was it ever done in-house? Mr. Martin said that to his knowledge, he doesn’t think that there has ever been design work done in house, but other cities do it.

Councilmember Gookin commented that the City increased its funding for public transportation (Citylink and KMPO) last year and what is the City’s return on investment. Mayor Widmyer said that they don’t have any numbers, but it is certainly something they can look at and ask for.

Councilmember Wood said that there is a theme she keeps hearing from department heads, and that is long range plans. She suggested looking at a coordinator to work with the departments to pull a plan together and that she thinks it is worth the small investment to have someone coordinate with the departments and help them. She also commended Mr. Martin and the Streets & Engineering Department for the help that they provide to other departments.

Councilmember Mill said that curing the COVID pandemic, a lot of people were working from home. She asked Mr. Martin if they were able to relieve some of the tension in the Streets parking lot by doing some ongoing working-at-home programs. Mr. Martin said that it helped, but they also started taking on part-time help. They are continuing to have some staff working from home because the back room is too tight of a space.

Councilmember Miller asked about the coordinator mechanic position. Mr. Martin confirmed that the person would coordinate and actually do the work on the Fire fleet.

Councilmember Miller asked about sweeping expenses. Mr. Martin said that over the last two or three years the Drainage Utility is paying for the initial sweep every spring and then in the fall the last sweep of the year. In conversation with Kim Harrington and Mr. Tymesen, one of their biggest permit pieces is the sweeping so they are looking at now potentially having the Drainage Utility cover not only the spring and the fall, but also to pay for all the sweeping which is in the hard pipe system (everything south of I-90) to keep it out of the lake.

**Drainage Utility:** City Engineer Chris Bosley said that there are not too many changes to the budget this year. They have a full-time employee that they are moving over to the Drainage Utility, and a smaller equipment purchase. They are building up some capital which they want to use on some projects. One of their goals is a stormwater discharge reduction program. They also have a couple of projects that they are teaming up with ITD on. They also want to address inadequate draining areas, and currently have two agreements in progress with some private property owners to utilize some unused areas of their property to build a swale that would handle the overflow of stormwater.

Their last goal is discharge permit compliance. The Department of Environment Quality (DEQ) will be taking over their MS4 permit next year from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and so they are hoping to up their game a little bit to make sure that contractors understand the rules so the City can reduce the amount of pollutants going into the lake and river.

Mr. Bosley said that they are working on a potential pilot project on Ramsey for lower maintenance, and if that works, they can work up and down the boulevard on Ramsey Road, which will reduce water usage and the amount of mowing.

Councilmember Gookin stated that he views the Drainage Utility as the City's "rich uncle," which leads him to believe that perhaps the Drainage Utility is overcharging the ratepayers. He would favor looking at the utility to make sure that the City is not overcharging and get it in line with what it should be. Mr. Martin responded that in the five-year capital plan there are two big projects coming up for which the utility has to have some dollars set aside. They have a very large output on Kathleen Avenue in which they will be removing swale on the east side in front

of Home Depot. They have to find a place to put the stormwater, and will create a project underneath the sidewalk. In addition, Ms. Harrington has ideas to bring forward a big project on East Sherman where they will take some stormwater off the outfall site and create a big swale near where the tree public art is. Ms. Harrington wants to look at the 11<sup>th</sup> Street outfall that drops into Sanders Beach. Mr. Martin said that the utility can show every dollar that the utility has ever spent because they are accountable for all of the hours and supplies and have been very diligent. He further noted that it takes a few years to get money ahead to do some of those projects. Councilmember Gookin asked to be provided with details on the office supplies budget.

Councilmember Wood asked if the city of Coeur d'Alene was comparable to other cities with its fees. Mr. Bosley said that the City is the only city in the State with a drainage utility. If it isn't paid as a user fee, it is going to be paid in taxes, because the job has to be done.

**Parks & Recreation:** Parks & Recreation Director Bill Greenwood said that this year's budget is about Atlas. The City has a \$6M investment in the park and they are going to be asking for one lead worker. They have been able to find \$55,000 in savings from their budget to help offset that cost. Mr. Greenwood said that Parks manages some things that are non-park areas. Some years ago, they started subcontracting those out with some savings that they had in their seasonal budget. The new position would offset some of the workload for the people at Ramsey Park, and they can go back and do the non-park areas. They are also requesting a 5% increase in operating costs, with a larger increase in the cost of "chips." There is no capital replacement budgeted in any of their divisions. Mr. Greenwood commented that Mr. Wolf in Streets saved them money by finding the bucket truck, which saved them about \$40,000, and he has done the same thing for them on some trucks. With the money they are saving on equipment purchases, they are beginning to outfit Atlas already.

Councilmember Miller asked about a parks master plan. Mr. Greenwood said that it is currently being reviewed and will go to the Parks & Recreation Commission first, hopefully within the next month, and then on to Council.

Councilmember Miller asked if the parks master plan includes an audit on what services in the Recreation Department which are maybe being duplicated elsewhere in the community. Mr. Greenwood said yes, but they are also looking at new things, and last year started a "Strider" program.

Councilmember Wood said that it is quite impressive that the extra personnel in Atlas was whittled down to one, and she thinks that the City is going to have to find the funds. Mr. Greenwood credited Jeff Erickson for the work that he has done.

Councilmember Wood asked what the department would do if a mower breaks. Mr. Greenwood said they would get creative, and buy parts if they can. If they can't repair or replace, they just get by without it. They have to move things and personnel around to cover the gap.

**Building:** Building Official Ted Lantzy reviewed the departments mission statement and said that a lot of their goals over the years have been primarily enforcement, but they are trying to

change the image of the department and focus more on training. He noted that a lot of their builders, developers and designers don't attend a lot of code trainings so they are continually trying to expand on their personal education and training. Mr. Lantzy said they have partnered with the North Idaho Code Enforcers to bring in local training, which has saved them quite a bit of money, and actually dropped the training budget by about a third. He further commented that due to COVID, they are not sure how they are going to make it work this year, so a lot of the money in the budget is for training online.

They are currently looking at creating an online permit access for residential customers and want to keep it simple. They are also looking at improvements to the website and need to make information more easily found. Mr. Lantzy noted that it is a code adoption year and they are looking at adopting the 2018 International Building Codes in January 1, 2021. They have some outdated codes and the City is currently operating on the 1994 code for abatement of dangerous buildings.

Mr. Lantzy said that he keeps getting approached by people wanting affordable housing. There is a plan to move forward with tiny homes.

Mr. Lantzy said that permits are still steady. He confirmed that revenues come from building and inspection permits, along with mechanical inspections.

Councilmember McEvers asked how the video inspections worked out. Mr. Lantzy said that it was kind of hit and miss, and that it works for some things.

Councilmember Gookin said that permits are supposed to pay for services and if there is extra money coming in they have to be cautious. He asked if Mr. Lantzy was comfortable with charging so much for permits. Mr. Lantzy said that the permit fees were probably one of the lowest in the area.

**Library:** Library Director Bette Ammon said that the budget proposal this year is pretty flat, with no new expenditures. They are keeping the materials budget at the same level as last year. The only new proposal is a new position for the branch public library at the Nexus school that will be completed in September. The facility will have an outside entrance and restroom facility, but they need personnel to staff it. Ms. Ammon said that it does not reflect a big change in their personnel budget because they will have retirement savings, and other projected retirement as well.

Councilmember McEvers asked if it was the City's job to provide library services to everyone, and questioned having libraries at schools. Ms. Ammon said that it would be a shared facility where the school library would be in operation during the day, and the public library would be in operation when the school library is not open. Councilmember McEvers asked about IT, music, etc. Ms. Ammon said that the school provides the computers, the heat, lights, restroom, etc. The program at Lake City High School has been a model for other potential partnerships across the State. It is a savings for the City and a benefit for the school district. She further noted that a library is a cultural entity and provides a community gathering place, as well as humanities and literacy.

Councilmember Miller explained that the satellite library program has been a model program and will save the City exponential amount of money in the future and allows citizens of all ages to use the library when they might not normally get to use it. She asked if the library does an audit on the measurable reach of some of their programs, and whether they are duplicating services. Ms. Ammon said that they are doing that all the time. They look at how far their programs go, how many people attend, and what people are asking them to do.

Mayor Widmyer asked about the Library Foundation. Ms. Ammon said that they make the cultural events available and use their funding to make the building and services better.

**Water:** Assistant Water Superintendent Kyle Marine discussed the 2021 goals, including continuing to move forward with projects such as the well on Huetter Road. They will also be running a transmission line along the Prairie Trail. They have selected a consultant for the Huetter well building and hope to bring the agreement to the Council soon. Welch Comer is in the design phase for next year's project on the transmission line to move water to the downtown area. The Atlas well will be rehabilitated in 2021, and they will continue to work on the water infrastructure replacement program. They are also continuing their quest for acquisition of property for two future storage facilities. In addition, they are working with a developer on Blackwell Island to acquire an easement and lot for a future booster station.

Mr. Marine explained that once they exceed 50,000 people in Coeur d'Alene, according to the Census, it will become a Class Four city. As a result, they will have requirements to stay within compliance.

Future goals include the acquisition of additional water rights to keep up with the City's growth, including the NE storage facility construction and the Orchards well.

Councilmember McEvers asked if the rate studies have covered these projects and Mr. Marine responded that it did, and it is also included in their comp plan. They do the comp plan every 10 years to make sure they are staying on top of future projects. The life span of the rate study is 5 years, and Mr. Marine said that the next turn around they will do a rate study and a comp plan update.

Councilmember McEvers asked about the impact of going to a Class Four. Mr. Marine said that they are required by the State to take a certain amount of samples every year, and that will go up, including more reports, stricter rules, and a higher license category. Time, materials and manpower would be involved.

Councilmember McEvers asked about conservation. Mr. Marine said that water conservation is always on their minds and they are trying to figure out ideas to work with it. He commented that Mr. Pickel is involved on a couple of committees regarding education, and is working with the Parks Department regarding timers. As water conservation grows in different parts of the country, they have very strict rules. Mr. Marine noted that the City is fortunate to be on the aquifer. They have a certain amount of money set aside for water conservation and are always looking for different ideas.

**Wastewater:** Wastewater Superintendent Mike Anderson said that the utility is anticipating reduced revenue this year. They will be bringing over about \$3.3M from their cash balance this year to help pay for projects. The biggest ticket items are replacement of a belt press from 1990 with a centrifuge, which was planned for this year but they are not getting it done until next year. They have almost \$2M in projects anticipated for this year that will be rolling over into next year.

The other important items is the collection systems master plan, which they will begin next year. They are waiting to incorporate information from the Envision CDA comp plan and plan to wrap up the plan master plan in fiscal year 2022.

Councilmember McEvers asked about the operations building. Mr. Anderson said it is a two-year project. The building was built in 1972 and housed building, admin, collection operators, etc. The building is in need of replacement and currently the plant operators are the only ones who occupy the building. They get a design done this year and are working on finalizing it. The total cost is \$2.2M - \$1.1M next year, and \$1.1M the year after. The operations building will have a garage, but will also have computer bank, and offices for staff.

Councilmember McEvers asked about the master plan coming before the rate study. Mr. Anderson said that they did their rate study a couple of years ago and they do them every five years. The master plan was last updated in 2013.

Councilmember Miller asked about the septic tank abatement program and if there was a way to coordinate with Streets and potential savings for homeowners. Mr. Anderson said that he thought that would be possible and would anticipate that it could save money for the homeowner, and would definitely save money in general. Councilmember Miller asked if there is a way to coordinate the plan. Mr. Anderson said that it could be done if known far enough in advance.

Councilmember Gookin asked about the street light utility, and said that he thinks it would be better if rate payers paid the full cost rather than having property tax payers supplement from the General Fund when the utility is short.

Councilmember Wood asked about the sanitation budget and whether fees match expenditures. Mr. Tymesen said that the fund was in the red when he started with the City. It is variable based on a contract and there is no guarantee on the haulers. Councilmember Gookin commented that when the City renegotiated the contract, they didn't adjust the rates to account for the new lower contract cost. Mr. Tymesen said that there is an annual escalator in the contract, and the recycling portion of the contract is up for renewal now.

#### **COUNCIL PRIORITY DISCUSSION:**

Mayor Widmyer said that Governor Little's CARES Act is not a huge game changer as far as the City budget goes, but it is a huge game changer for property tax payers. The amount is \$2.5M, but to get that money, the City would have to take a 0% property tax increase. It would probably

be about \$100,000 to the General Fund, and \$2.5M to the property tax payers. It would probably result in a 12 to 14% decrease off of the City of Coeur d'Alene line item on the property tax bill.

Councilmember Wood said that Mr. Tymesen will bring forward exact figures for a 1%, 1.5%, 2%, etc. increase, and offset those figures with the assessment so that Council can see. She further noted that if Council she would like to see any increases dedicated to public safety.

Mayor Widmyer said there are a lot of things in the budget that still need to be gone through, and there are a lot of things that won't be in the final draft. Mr. Tymesen noted that 84% of the budget is people and benefits, and they are starting out with a \$1.3M deficit.

Troy reviewed the current budget situation and anticipated revenue, and noted that a big decrease is highway user tax.

Councilmember Miller asked about a communications coordinator position. Ms. Tosi will provide information to Councilmember Miller. Councilmember Evans said that this is also her number one priority this year.

Councilmember Wood suggested one additional budget workshop. Councilmember Gookin agreed. Mr. Tymesen said that the next workshop is scheduled for July 8<sup>th</sup>.

Councilmember McEvers said that he would like to see the return of the General Services/Public Works meetings, and would also like to see the Council attending Executive Team meetings again, and Council liaisons to departments. Mayor Widmyer commented that the feedback on Council's involvement in Executive Team meetings is that discussion wasn't as open with a councilperson there. The other feedback was that if a councilmember is a liaison a certain department, they would lobby for that department. Councilmember Wood said that she would like to continue the conversation.

The council was requested to email their thoughts to be brought forward at the next budget workshop on July 8<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Widmyer asked the Council to review the minutes from the workshop and be prepared for the meeting on July 8<sup>th</sup>.

**ADJOURN:** Motion by Gookin, seconded by McEvers, that there being no other business, this meeting be adjourned. **Motion carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

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Steve Widmyer, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Amy C. Ferguson  
Deputy City Clerk