

October 13, 2020

**CITY OF GUNNISON COUNCIL  
REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES**

5:30 P.M.

The City Council Regular Session was called to order at 5:35 p.m. on Tuesday, October 13, 2020, remotely and in Council Chambers located at 201 W. Virginia Avenue in Gunnison, Colorado, by Mayor Jim Gelwicks. Mayor Pro Tem Jim Miles, Councilor Mallory Logan, Councilor Boe Freeburn, Councilor Diego Plata, City Manager Russ Forrest, and City Clerk Erica Boucher were physically present in Council Chambers. Gunnison County Chamber of Commerce Director Celeste Helminski was in Chambers. Attending the Regular Session meeting remotely were City Attorney Kathy Fogo, Western Liaison Hannah White, and the following City staff: Finance Director Ben Cowan, Public Works Director David Gardner, Streets and Alleys Superintendent Jason Kibler, Electric Superintendent Will Dowis, Police Chief Keith Robinson, Parks and Recreation Interim Director Dan Vollendorf, Community Development Director Anton Sinkewich, and Senior Coordinator Elizabeth Gillis. A handful of residents and the press attended remotely. There was a Council quorum.

**Citizen Input:** Mayor Gelwicks called for citizen comments from members of the audience in Council Chambers and those attending remotely. Gunnison County Chamber of Commerce Director Celeste Helminski spoke to Council. Director Helminski shared a summary of the Chamber's successful summer and thanked Council for their support. She also thanked the Chamber of Commerce staff for all of their work this year. She presented Council with the Chamber's 2020 Special Recognition Award for the City of Gunnison's COVID-19 Business Relief Grants. Photos were taken.

**Action Items:**

**Consent Agenda: Approval of the September 22, 2020, Regular Session meeting minutes; and Authorization for the Police Department to apply for a \$105,000 grant through DOLA's Peace Officer Mental Health Support Grant Program.** Councilor Logan moved and Councilor Miles seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Roll call, yes: Freeburn, Miles, Gelwicks, Logan, and Plata. So carried.

Roll call, no: None.

**Appoint Senior Center Advisory Committee Member.** Applicant Ellen Harriman attended the meeting online; however, due to technical difficulties, Council and Ellen Harriman could not hear each other. She was unable to call into the meeting. After a few failed attempts to connect with Ellen Harriman, Council proceeded to a motion to appoint her to the SCAC. Council has worked with Mrs. Harriman in the past and supported her appointment to the Committee.

Councilor Logan moved and Councilor Freeburn seconded the motion to appoint City resident Ellen Harriman to the Senior Center Advisory Committee, effective immediately.

Roll call, yes: Miles, Gelwicks, Logan, Plata, and Freeburn. So carried.

Roll call, no: None

**Agreements for Purchase of and Reimbursement of As-Available Solar Energy.** Public Works Director Gardner stated that these agreements refer to the solar installation at the Gunnison County Blackstock Building. For this operation, the County preferred to contract directly with the City; therefore, the City arranged a separate contract with MEAN. The contracts outlined that when the Blackstock Building generates more power than it is using, the City buys back the power at the voided cost rate of \$.29 per kW and then MEAN reimburses the City for that expense. Attorneys at the County, City, and MEAN have all reviewed and agreed to the agreements. The County's intention with the solar installation at the Blackstock Building is to use the amount it generates, but anything over 25kW will be purchased by the City and then MEAN will reimburse the City. Gunnison County now has four solar arrays. One at the Courthouse for 100kW, one at the Detention Center for 95 kW, one at Public Works for 33kW, and one at the Blackstock Building for 33kW. The future solar installation at the Gunnison County Airport is a separate City project in conjunction with a DOLA grant.

Staff clarified for Council that a facility generating the solar energy for purchase by MEAN must be a "qualified facility" as regulated by federal law. Article 6 of the agreement with MEAN discussed the need for a special contract if energy generation is more than 100kW. Production of

over 100kW is considered to be a major generator and would slightly lower the voided cost rate. It was confirmed that while the two, two-way agreements are not typical; these are solid and valid. Councilor Logan moved and Councilor Plata seconded the motion to authorize the City Manager to enter into a contractual agreement with Gunnison County as it relates to excess energy generated by Gunnison County's solar project.

Roll call, yes: Gelwicks, Logan, Plata, Freeburn, and Miles. So carried.

Roll call, no: None.

Councilor Logan moved and Councilor Miles seconded the motion to authorize the City Manager to enter into a contractual agreement with MEAN as it relates to excess energy generated by Gunnison County's solar project.

Roll call, yes: Logan, Plata, Freeburn, Miles, and Gelwicks. So carried.

Roll call, no: None.

**Funding Authorization for Tree Removal.** Public Works Director Gardner explained to Council that the City has an annual contract with the Colorado State Forest Service to complete a tree inventory. The State arborist evaluates trees and identifies which ones need to be removed because they are an imminent threat or are deteriorating, or have a need to be maintained. This year, the arborist recommended 20-30 trees in the City right-of-ways for removal because of deteriorating status. Staff reached out to multiple local tree-cutter contractors who all quoted a price of \$1,500 to \$2,000 per tree removal. The exact cost of removal of each tree depends on the tree's type and location. Staff asked to use \$50,000 from Council's Strategic Fund to remove the 20-30 damaged trees. After this initial removal of 20-30 trees, Public Works would budget in \$10,000 annually for regular tree maintenance. Additionally, the September snowstorm revealed the need for tree and vegetation removal in the City Electrical right-of-ways. This work would be paid for out of Electric funds and requires a licensed electrician because of the work being done near power lines. It would cost \$28,000 for one week's worth of work. Electric Superintendent Will Dowis wants track how much vegetation can be removed within a week and then include an annual budget allocation for this work in the future.

Public Works will be communicating directly with homeowners who have deteriorating trees near their home, but in the City right-of-way. The tree-cutter contractors will do some communication with homeowners as well. Street and Alleys Superintendent Jason Kibler contacted the four professional and insured contractors in town for price quotes and availability. The work will be divided amongst them. The trees will be removed to ground-level to eliminate any threat. A tree stump will remain. A brief discussion occurred about the need to better educate or communicate with the public about the best kinds of trees to plant for safety and longevity. Also, a revision to or enforcement of the current Tree Ordinance needs to occur.

Councilor Freeburn moved and Councilor Logan seconded the motion to authorize the expenditure of an amount not to exceed \$50,000 from Council's Strategic Fund to remove 20-30 deteriorating trees as recommended by the Colorado State Forest Service's tree inventory.

At the request of Council, Finance Director Cowan told Council that they have \$370,780 remaining in their Strategic Fund after the \$50,000 expenditure for tree removal and, assuming the City gets reimbursed, \$206,000 from the CARES Act for the Business Relief grant.

Roll call, yes: Plata, Freeburn, Miles, Gelwicks, and Logan. So carried.

Roll call, no: None.

Councilor Freeburn and Councilor Miles seconded the motion to authorize the expenditure of an amount not to exceed \$28,000 from the Electric Department funds for tree and vegetation in the City electric right-of-way.

Roll call, yes: Freeburn, Miles, Gelwicks, Logan, and Plata. So carried.

Roll call, no: None.

**2020 Parks & Recreation and Public Works Capital Projects.** City Manager Forrest reminded Council of the discussion they had with staff during the May 26, 2020 Regular Session, about 2020 Capital Improvement Projects (CIP). A few Public Works and Parks & Rec projects were put on hold during that meeting for later consideration. The money for the projects is budgeted and still available. Parks & Rec Interim Director Dan Vollendorf shared with Council that the department would like to proceed with finishing the sidewalk project on the northeast corner of the ice rink so the sidewalk would be connected it to the southeast corner of the ice rink. The cost is around

\$5,000 as the Parks and Rec crew will do the prep work. The department would also like to purchase new gutters and grates for the lap pool. They have not been replaced since the pool first opened. Lastly, they requested authorization to purchase a utility vehicle. All of these expenses are currently in the budget.

Public Works requested authorization to proceed with the purchase of an engineering plotter. The department is holding off on buying the scanner at this time. The plotter, with a government discount and trade-in credit, will cost \$4,544. Public Works also requested approval to replace the heaters in the Blue Barn for \$15,000. The Blue Barn houses much of the department's snow removal and heavy equipment. It is important to keep the equipment warm during the winter months for longevity of the equipment. If any money is left over after the purchase of the heaters, the department would use the funding for basic maintenance for the Blue Barn.

Councilor Plata moved and Councilor Miles seconded the motion for Public Works and Parks and Rec to proceed with CIP purchases as described in the memo and a part of the 2020 budget.

Roll call, yes: Miles, Gelwicks, Logan, Plata, and Freeburn. So carried.

Roll call, no: None.

**2021 Staff Proposed Budget.** Finance Director Cowan gave an overview of the proposed 2021 budget and presented a power point. He provided Council with a draft of the 2021 budget earlier in the day as statutorily required. The budget must be adopted by December 15, 2020. Director Cowan focused his presentation and discussion on six items. They were: 1) 2021 Budget Summary, 2) Economic Update, 3) General Fund Reserves/Strategic Plan Implementation Fund, 4) Revenue Assumptions, 5) Wage Analysis, and 6) Future Budget Work Session. He noted that the draft budget Council received does not include capital projects, special requests, enhancements, or new staffing requests. Mr. Cowan gave a quick overview of what is happening with the economy nationwide. Some businesses are recovering faster than other businesses. Gunnison is fairing ok because it does not strictly have a tourism-based economy. The timing and emergence of a vaccine will also impact the economy. Oil and gas production also has an impact on western slopes economies. Director Cowan discussed Gunnison County's unemployment rates and the turnover rates for the City of Gunnison. He concluded that the City is a fairly competitive employer within the region overall. At this time, staff is proposing no market rate increases, no merit or cost of living increases for staff. This recommendation was made in an effort to maintain current levels of City employment. Staff will receive a 1.1% increase of \$954 to help off-set the increased health insurance costs. Health insurance costs increased 14% this year. A discussion occurred about ensuring that City of Gunnison salaries are competitive, job-for-job, across the western slope. Staff mentioned that they will review compensation for staff depending on finances around July 1, 2021.

Next, he summarized the key revenue changes. Sales tax is projected to be 5% down for the remainder of the year. The City is currently 3.88% down overall in sales tax and the department is predicting a 2% increase from the 3.88% down for 2021. Property tax is 1.63% up. Electric rates will not change for 2021, but Water and Refuse rates will increase 5% and Sewer rates will increase 17% for the third and final year. These suggested rate increases are necessary to support infrastructure projects and maintenance. Finance Director Cowan reviewed the grants that City has to support a few personnel positions and operational services. He reviewed what industries make up the City's sales tax and revenues. He shared the Sales Tax Revenue history with Council.

Next, Finance Director Cowan spoke about Council's Strategic Plan Implementation Reserve. Provided the City is reimbursed \$206,129 from the CARES Act for the Business Relief grants and including approved expense of \$50,000 for tree removal, Council will have \$370,780 in their Reserves Fund. There is the possibility that the City won't be reimbursed the entire \$206, 219 due to regulations in the CARES Act. There is no certain date as to when the County will receive the reimbursement. If the money is not reimbursed this year, it will be removed from Council's Strategic Reserves in 2021. Strategic Funds that do not get spent this year will be returned to the fund balance and then appropriated in 2021.

The General Fund was the next topic of discussion. For tonight's discussion, the Finance department loaded nearly 10 million dollars worth of expenditures into the proposed 2021 budget. The City must hold a minimum reserve of 33% of expenditures in the budget, with a maximum allowance up to 40%. With the staff's creation of tight departmental budgets for 2021, Finance believes that the City can meet its 33% reserves and have \$466,431 available for appropriations and special requests for the General Fund. Finance Director Cowan gave an overview of how

departments develop their annual budgets and make enhancement requests. New expenditures are granted based on priorities. The first priority is given to “life-safety” issues followed by Council’s strategic priorities. No new full-time staffing requests were made for 2021. Finance Director gave a brief overview of staffing special requests. Requests are coming from Parks and Recreation and Public Works. He briefly highlighted Capital Improvement Project requests.

Lastly, Council and staff discussed the upcoming budget schedule. Department Heads and Supervisors will meet on October 30 to discuss their budgets and special requests. The budget public hearing and first reading of the budget ordinance will occur on Tuesday, November 10. Council agreed to meet on Thursday, November 12, all-day, to hold a budget work session. There will be time to amend the budget between the first reading on November 10 and second reading on December 8. Finance Director Cowan is available to answer Council’s questions.

**Council went into recess at 7:40 p.m. and returned from break at 7:51p.m.**

**Approval to Amend D.1 of the Strategic Plan.** City Manager Forrest introduced this topic. He presented Council with two alternatives to the original Result D.1. in the Strategic Plan. The original result was, “By December 31, 2021, average speed on City streets will be less than 5 miles per hour over the posted speed limit and progress moving towards this result will be demonstrated by April 21, 2021.”

Council determined at the October 13, 2020 Regular Session that they wanted to address excessive speeding on residential streets more so than those driving a 3-5 miles per hour over the speed. The original result was not reflective of Council’s intention. Two alternatives put forth were:

Alternative A: Result D.1 By December 31, 2021, vehicles exceeding the speed limit will be reduced as compared to the 2020 speed study with the following targets:

<b>Metric</b>	<b>2020 Baseline</b>	<b>December 31, 2021 Desired Result</b>
Average number of vehicles exceeding the 25 mph speed limit	33.4 mph	30 mph
% of speeding vehicles exceeding the speed limit by more than 10 mph	5.2%	3%
Average speed of vehicles exceeding the speed limit by more than 10 mph	43.4 mph	38 mph

Alternative B: Result D.1: By December 31, 2021, vehicles exceeding the speed limit will be reduced as compared to the 2020 speed study, with the following targets:

<b>Metric</b>	<b>2020 Baseline</b>	<b>December 31, 2021 Desired Result</b>
Average number of vehicles exceeding the 25 mph speed limit	40%	20%
% of speeding vehicles exceeding the speed limit by more than 10 mph	5.2%	3%
Average speed of vehicles exceeding the speed limit by more than 10 mph	43.4 mph	38 mph

Discussion occurred about how the two alternatives were developed and the methodology behind them. The biggest difference between the two options was the 2020 Baseline and Desired Result of the Average number of vehicles exceeding the 25 mph speed limit was in Alternative A which showed change in mph; whereas in Alternative B, the change is shown as a percentage. Council

mentioned the importance of education and communication in reducing the number of excessive speeders on residential streets. Council leaned towards Alternative B. They also stated that continued police presence downtown is important for this result as well as the new speed limit signs on residential streets, flashing signs on the highways, and issuing citations and warnings. Reducing the number of speeding drivers going excessive speeds is an important life-safety issue. It was noted that time must be allowed for the community to adapt to new rules and for behavior to change.

Councilor Plata moved and Councilor Logan the motion to adopt Alternative B to amend Result D.1 of the Strategic Plan with the corrected date of December 31, 2021.

Roll call, yes: Gelwicks, Logan, Plata, Freeburn, and Miles. So carried.

Roll call, no: None.


**COVID-19 Update.** There were not many new developments or cases regarding COVID-19 since the last meeting; however, staff and councilmembers shared a few updates from the previous two weeks. They were:

1. The ski resorts are preparing for the up-coming season.
2. RTA is reviewing and discussing possible changes to bus capacity if the number of COVID-19 cases change.
3. Gunnison County Disaster Relief is providing up to 150 ventilation systems for businesses through an easy application process.
4. Restaurants and lodging are brainstorming and considering multiple options for maintaining business through the winter, including a stay-cation package.
5. Gunnison and Crested Butte had a greater percentage of people using the free flu shot clinic this year.

**Parks and Recreation Semi-Annual Report.** Interim Parks and Rec Director Dan Vollendorf discussed the many changes in staffing and programming that the Parks and Recreation department experienced because of COVID-19. The work Senior Coordinator Elizabeth Gillis did with the senior meals programs and Ginny Baylor's work on the Resiliency Project were a few highlights mentioned. The live music cruises were also a success and fall programming is off to a good start. Council thanked Interim Director Vollendorf for the great work that he and his staff have accomplished throughout the year.

**Council and staff gave brief reports.**

With no further business for the Regular Session, Mayor Gelwicks adjourned the Regular Session meeting at 9:10 p.m.

  
 Mayor

Attest:

  
 City Clerk