

	CITY OF LANDER		
	CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING		
	Tuesday, March 26, 2024, at 6:00 PM		
	City Council Chambers, 240 Lincoln Street		
	MINUTES		

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: John Larsen, Dan Hahn, Josh Hahn, Julia Stuble, Melinda Cox, Missy White and Mayor Monte Richardson. STAFF PRESENT: Chief Peters, Assistant Mayor RaJean Strube Fossen, City Treasurer Charri Lara, City Clerk Rachelle Fontaine.

1. MAYOR AND COUNCIL UPDATES

Councilmember Larsen informed the Council that the rodeo is working hard to be ready for July. The state gymnastics meet was very impressive. The Fly-In will be on August 24, 2024. They have close to \$12,000 dedicated to the Fly-In with half of the amount coming from private individuals. They are hoping the city will donate \$2,000-\$3,000 in fuel.

Councilmember White echoed the thank you to city crews. She provided a Planning Commission update. There is a workshop tomorrow being offered by the Equality State Policy Center and Wyoming Tax Facts as a recap of the property tax-related bills in this season's session.

Councilmember D Hahn thanked the City crews again for fixing potholes and redoing them after weather deterioration.

Council President Cox provided an FCSD#1 update. A community resource meeting is scheduled on April 4, 2024, which is an opportunity for providers to discuss resources, barriers and work together as a collective effort. LEDA is still discussing a potential full-time or part-time employee. LEDA partners with Wyoming Outdoor Weekend which will be in May.

Councilmember Stuble provided an EE Task Force update. Kara Colovich will be transitioning away. Councilmember Stuble expressed her deep gratitude to Kara for her service. The task force identified a Smart Water grant that might help the golf course pumps.

Councilmember J Hahn commented that he spoke with a business owner on Wilson Drive and wondered if the alley could be graded out.

Mayor Richardson commented that the Lincoln Street Project bid is due this week. The is City working hard.

2. STAFF REPORTS

Chief Peters informed the Council that at the next meeting there will be a job description for a part-time records clerk. This position already exists and is in the budget, but due to increased activity and more paperwork and after approval of the description we intend to advertise the position and fill it. A Lander Detective is leaving to go to DCI. The internal process closed today for filling the detective position from within the department. We have advertised for a lateral (already certified) patrol officer and have had several applications. The increased officer presence has been dramatic. Activity in the department is up 122 percent. The department focused on Main Street to decrease crashes. Overall calls are down 12 percent, crashes are down 47 percent and shoplifting is down 47 percent as well. Discussion ensued concerning legislative changes in Delta 8 and 9.

City Treasurer Charri Lara reminded the Council that the budget Work Session will be on April 23, 2024. The bid specs for the street sweepers need to go through the EPA, but hopefully, we will get those specs back so they can go out for bid soon as well.

City Clerk Rachelle Fontaine is working with the police department in the hiring process, as well as advertising for seasonal summer positions. The low-income water utility discount renewal applications were sent out and are starting to be returned.

3. NEW BUSINESS (NON-ACTION ITEMS)

A. Karen Wetzel Environment Discussion

Janelle Hahn addressed the Council and cautioned against fearmongering in environmental discussions, advocating for a more scientific approach to climate policy. She referenced Dr. Wallace Manheimer's condemnation of net zero policies and criticized the climate industrial complex. Several examples of failed or problematic renewable energy initiatives were presented, including non-functional electric buses, disliked wind turbines, and unethical mining practices for solar and EV batteries.

Karen Wetzel addressed to Council concerning Wyoming's climate and scientific proof and evidence that there is no real climate change concern in Wyoming or the United States. She referenced a report by the CO2 Coalition, arguing against the existence of a climate crisis in Wyoming and the United States, and disputing the effectiveness and necessity of reducing CO2 emissions. She reported on the recent County Convention and the discussions held on the legal possibility of reorganizing Fremont County and removing Lander from Fremont County due to its environmental policies. The process and requirements for organizing new counties in Wyoming were outlined, including population and taxable property criteria. She invited the Council to attend a viewing of the 2024 Senate Ag hearing discussing the climate. She stated that the Council's failure to attend would result in a lack of trust to run the city. She stated that the Council is not following the will of the people and the Constitution of the United States in many instances, and they will find a way to have Council removed.

Kathi Avril expressed her frustration with green energy promotion as it has no science behind it. She criticized the City Council for promoting green energy without scientific backing, alleging that such policies could harm Lander's economy and betray the community's trust. She stated that some members of this City Council are derelict in their duty to perform due diligence in educating themselves so they can make informed decisions on matters that impact Lander. She discussed the goal of the Marxist climate and viral terrorists to destroy capitalism by destroying fossil fuels. She also discussed the Fremont County Republic Party's resolution to exclude Lander from Fremont County. She called for those City Councilmembers who are committed to dragging Lander into the green wasteland to do the right thing for the entire community and step down or commit to educating themselves about real climate science.

Mayor Richardson commented that the City's policies are aimed at addressing City building energy efficiencies and aging mechanical systems. The City spends \$16,000 on natural gas, \$15,000 on electricity, and \$36,000 on town and streetlights per month.

B. Tim Nichols FCAG MOU

Tim Nichols FCAG administrator addressed the Council and a discussion ensued concerning improving public support for economic development sales tax through fund reallocation. FCAG proposes redistributing 70% of funds to regain public confidence and support economic development, focusing on transportation and a more standardized distribution model. The recommendation includes a modified Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to define fund allocation guardrails and specific uses to restore public confidence. Councilmember White expressed frustration over county financial decisions and proposed a different allocation of funds, emphasizing support for ambulance services and less for businesses. Discussion on the process and requirements for modifying the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) related to ambulance service funding. It was clarified that any modification requires a majority agreement among the entities involved. The effective date and implementation of the modified MOU are contingent upon the passing of a sales tax in November. Concerns were raised about the county's alternative plans for funding ambulance services if the sales tax is not renewed. Inquiry about the timeline and process for considering substantive edits to the MOU, especially given that two municipalities have already approved the current language. Discussion ensued on the ideal timeline for the approval of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by FCAG to ensure voters are informed about the use of funds well in advance of the ballot. Councilmembers discussed the possibility of changing the percentages outlined in the MOU for fund distribution and the need for a formal discussion on these changes. This topic will be revisited at the April 9, 2024, City Council Meeting.

C. Discussion concerning suggested refinements of eligibility guidelines for LIFT applications.

Councilmember White led the discussion concerning the need for continued refinements in the award of the economic development tax funds, acknowledging the challenges and diverse opinions on supporting for-profit vs. non-profit businesses and city funding. Refinements to the eligibility criteria were discussed, including preventing applicants from applying for the same

project multiple times to encourage diversity in applications. Debate on how funds should be allocated, including for wages, equipment, and direct operations, with a focus on sustainable economic development. The importance of community engagement and feedback in the economic development process was discussed, including the potential for using funds for community projects. The need for sharing success stories ('Cinderella stories') to highlight the positive impact of funded projects on the community. Discussion was held on improving the follow-up and assessment process of funded projects to ensure they meet their objectives. There was a suggestion for a council liaison to attend pitch nights. The majority of Councilmembers indicated they were in favor of further refinement to this process, and the suggested refinements should move forward.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8: 21 PM.

The City of Lander

ATTEST:

By: _____
Monte Richardson,
City of Lander Mayor

Rachelle Fontaine, City Clerk

CITY OF LANDER MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a safe, stable, and responsive environment that promotes and supports a traditional yet progressive community resulting in a high quality of life.

VISION

Preserving the past, while embracing the future.

The City of Lander is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate. Qualified applicants are considered for positions without regard to race, religion, military status, sex, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or other characteristics protected by law.