

CITY OF POCA TELLO, IDAHO
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
OCTOBER 8, 2020

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: Council President Heidi Adamson called the City Council ROLL CALL Work Session to order at 9:01 a.m. Other Council members present were Roger Bray, Rick Cheatum, Linda Leeuwrik, Claudia Ortega and Chris Stevens. Mayor Brian Blad arrived at 9:11 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: Sandra Shropshire, Library Board Chair, and Eric Sues, Staff LIBRARY BOARD Liaison, were present to discuss the Board's goals and projects, UPDATE as well as Council's polies and expectations.

Ms. Shropshire reviewed the following Key Points for the Board: 1) The Library is stewarding resources through resealing of the brick exterior and replacement of furnace; 2) The Library is active in the community through Idaho State Civic Symphony partnerships, annual book sale, collection of canned goods during November 2019 "Food for Fines" food drive for Idaho Foodbank; and online summer reading program. She shared 2019 statistics regarding Library usage.

Mr. Sues gave an overview of the safety and cleaning measures staff has taken to allow safe use of Library facilities. He stated that curbside pickup and limited front porch delivery options are available and workspaces have been reconfigured to allow for patron distancing. Mr. Sues added that patrons have been compliant with mask requirements. He stated that the Library will be closed on Election Day.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: Sunny Shaw, Housing Alliance and Community Partnerships HOUSING ALLIANCE AND COMMUNITY Executive Director, was present to discuss their goals and PARTNERSHIPS UPDATE projects, as well as Council's policies and expectations.

Ms. Shaw gave a brief history and overview of the organization and the properties overseen by Housing Alliance and Community Partnerships (HACP). The organization strives to "Cultivate affordable housing communities and partnerships that inspire self-reliance, growth and optimism." She reported that HACP properties include units for elderly/disabled, multi-family units and student housing. Open market apartments are available in various areas of the city to provide housing to families that cannot afford rent in the regular market.

Housing choice voucher program – 729 vouchers, open market through private landlords, 585 total vouchers leased, 423 on waiting list = 3 to 4 year waiting period
\$3,389,499 in Housing Assistance paid to landlords in Fiscal Year 2019
4 homeownership voucher holder
33 VASH vouchers serving homeless veterans

Future items were reviewed:
Seven additional mainstream vouchers have been added
Moving to Work Application
Application submitted for FYI vouchers
Purchase of carwash for additional office space and Workforce Development Center

In response to questions from Council, Ms. Shaw stated that additional revenue options are being explored, including property acquisition of foreclosed properties. This program, currently in place

in Nampa, allows counties to offer the purchase of foreclosure properties to the housing authority. The housing authority can make improvements to the property before selling it. The upgrades to the home also improve the neighborhood and return housing options to the market. This program is not in place in Pocatello, but is one option being looked into. Ms. Shaw stated that the Workforce Development Center will be a valuable mechanism to move individuals into the workforce. It has been estimated that the city will have a shortage of 8,000 to 10,000 skilled workers within the next 10 years. The Workforce Development Center will work in cooperation with Idaho State University to help people develop skills necessary to be a valuable part of the workforce.

Ms. Shaw answered questions from the Council related to housing properties, program eligibility and education opportunities. Ms. Shaw emphasized that Council can show their support for HACP through NAHRO advocacy programs and continued communication with Washington D.C. delegation members. She thanked Mayor Blad for his attendance at the national housing conference, as elected officials' presence is very beneficial.

Council thanked Ms. Shaw for her efforts and the valuable service housing Alliance and Community Partnerships provides to the city.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: Mark Cooper, Pocatello Arts Council Chair, was present to discuss the Committee's goals and projects, as well as Council's policies and expectations.

Mr. Cooper reviewed the following initiatives in 2020: 1) Development of a new Pocatello Arts Council website; 2) Revision of the Council's Mission, Vision and Values; 3) Revision of the grant process; and 4) partnership through Idaho State University on a grant writing course. Mr. Cooper added that many of the fundraising and networking events were delayed due to COVID-19. Council members are still working to hold the Empty Bowls fundraiser as an online auction and artist networking events will be planned when social distancing requirements will allow for safe gatherings. He stated that the Station Square Mural Project was a great success and plans are underway for expansion of the rotating outdoor gallery. Mr. Cooper gave an overview of the grants provided by the Pocatello Arts Council including the following: a grant to the Library for the Arts and Community Ticket Program; Washington Elementary School PTA Art Program; Pocatello Art Center Neon Sign Refurbishment; and Old Town Actor's Studio.

Mayor Blad called a recess at 10:49 a.m.

Mayor Blad reconvened the meeting at 10:59 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: Heather Buchanan, Human Resources Director and GBS representative, AJ Argyle, were in attendance to present medical insurance credit information from Blue Cross for four (4) months of Fiscal Year 2021. Ms. Buchanan explained the process used to calculate employees' monthly medical rates for

October, November and December 2020 and January 2021 and addressed how the credit will be applied. There was no Council action required for acceptance of the Blue Cross premium credit. Council was asked to give direction to staff regarding appropriation of the City's portion of the premium credit.

Ms. Buchanan explained that a credit was received from Blue Cross due to the City's lower loss ratio. She gave an overview of three proposed options regarding appropriation of the City's portion of the premium credit. Those options are: 1) **VENDOR CHANGE EXPENSES:** The City is in the process of changing over a vendor for the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This was an unexpected mid-year change and the new carrier may have higher costs. The unused medical funds could be utilized to pay for the possible increase. 2) **RESERVE POOL:** Budgeted amounts that are not expended due to the credit will remain in the medical budget line of each department and return to the fund reserve pool at the end of the fiscal year. Reserve funds cannot be expended without Council approval. 3) **OTHER OPTIONS:** If Council would like to see other options for the medical benefits money, Human Resources staff can bring those forward at a later work session.

Mr. Argyle stated that a credit of this type is not typical.

Ms. Buchanan added that there may be slight discrepancies between the September Blue Cross bill and the calculated October correction rate amount, due to addition of newly hired employees or eligibility selections. The small difference between the credit and premiums will be covered by each department that had an enrollment change. This cost can be easily absorbed by using funds in the medical benefits line that will not be expended due to the lower rate for four months.

A motion was made by Ms. Adamson, seconded by Ms. Leeuwrik, to accept the recommendation of staff and reserve the unused funds of the City's portion of the premium credit to pay for possible expenses which may be associated with a new EAP vendor. Upon roll call, those voting in favor were Adamson, Leeuwrik, Bray, Cheatum, Ortega and Stevens.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: Mayor Blad adjourned the meeting at 11:14 a.m.
ADJOURN

APPROVED:

BRIAN C. BLAD, MAYOR

ATTEST AND PREPARED BY:

KONNI R. KENDELL, DEPUTY CITY CLERK