

**COLFAX CITY COUNCIL**  
**July 1, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mayor Retzer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**ROLL CALL:**

Golden, McRae, Schaefer, Mackleit, Sevedge and Huntwork: Present. Guenthner: Absent.  
A motion was entered by Huntwork, seconded by Schaefer to excuse Guenthner. Roll Call: All Yes.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

A motion was entered by Schaefer, seconded by McRae to approve the minutes from the June 17, 2024 Council meeting. Roll Call: Mackleit, Sevedge, Huntwork, McRae and Shaefer: Yes. Golden: Abstained.

**GOOD OF THE CITY:**

The Colfax School District sent out a letter to inform students the Kiwanis's Club and Stuff the Bus project will be funding all school supplies for the elementary school and they hope to cover all for the high school as well. This is really important for many members of our community.

Fonk's building looks fantastic! Joel and Amy Warwick are working really hard to get opened back up.

CDA Incubator is coming along nicely.

**BILLS AND CLAIMS:**

A motion was entered by Schaefer, seconded by Mackleit to approve all bills and claims as presented. Roll Call: All Yes.

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**CLAIMS**

#9844-9870

\$382,233.24

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**PAYROLL**

9845-9852 & EFT

\$46,862.01

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**GRAND TOTAL: \$429,095.25**

**CITIZENS REQUEST:**

John Ward: 2002 North Palouse River Road (county resident)

Expressed concerns about the condition of the North Palouse River Road that runs in front of his house. He requested to be added to agenda to discuss resolution to the condition of the road.

Ward went on to say this road was annexed into the city and something needs to be done, Ward's wife and a couple of neighbors have had flat tires due to the condition of the road.

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**PUBLIC HEARING:**

**PRESENTATION/WORK STUDY:**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**Chicken Ordinance Discussion:**

Mathis asked the council to review the Chicken Ordinance. The chicken portion was previously removed from Ordinance 21-02 Animal Code. Mathis asked if the council was happy with language in the ordinance or if they want to send it back to the Planning Commission for some work.

Huntwork has concerns about what determines the coup being in compliance and how to go about enforcement.

Huntwork also stated there is a 20 ft setback, making most yards too small for chickens and chicken coups have to be covered but the runs don't specify they need to be covered.

Golden reiterated the setback issue and asked about the permitting process, annual vs. lifetime.

Mathis will send back to planning for review and asked the council if they think of anything else for planning to consider to email or call her.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Resolution 24-03- Accepting Attorney Findings:**

Mathis stated this resolution and letter is the attorney findings regarding the Solbrack's building a private drive over the city right of way. Mike Connoly was the attorney the city has been working with, he has since retired, Megan Clark took over and finished with the letter. Mathis pointed out the attorney's stated case law on how the City cannot legally grant the Solbrack's use of the right of way.

Golden stated the council initially became aware of this request in November, it was asked at that time the direction the council wanted to go. At that time the decision was that it would need to be a city street built to city code. Golden went on to say we are not trying to block development but there are other options to get up to that land. Golden stated he is frustrated that the city spent taxpayer money on an attorney when the Solbrack's could have gotten their answer back in November or December. The city decided to explore every avenue and they did that as a service for the Solbrack's. There is interest in trying to make it work and use that land equitably with neighbors as well. This resolution states that Ann Street cannot be used as a private drive, it would have to be developed as a city street to city standards.

Dennis Solbrack -510 W Moller Road- stated there are errors in the letter, it is not their request to make a private drive or make it 40 feet wide. Solbrack went over the timeline of the events

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leading up to this letter. Solbrack's attorney drafted a new agreement and have yet to receive anything back as a response from the city.

Mathis stated it doesn't matter the width of the drive; it has to be built to city road standards. The first agreement that was drafted was also found to not be legal, that was well communicated and keeps being brought back up, we can't continue with that. The Solbrack's have stated to the Mayor and Mathis they are not willing to build a city street to city standards. This letter is the response to the Solbrack's latest agreement request.

Discussion ensued regarding the building of a road to city standards, Colfax is not in the business of building city roads for new developments. We can't put that burden on the other taxpayers for developing a city street to a private residence. The council is voting on this resolution that does not allow a private drive to be built over Ann Street.

A motion was entered by Huntwork, seconded by Schaefer to approve Resolution 24-03 to accept our attorney's findings. Roll Call: All Yes

### **DEPARTMENT REPORTS:**

#### **Administration:**

##### Zoning:

Building and Community Development Shawn McSweeney informed the council an individual has contacted him about adding a restaurant to Colfax, the property is the old Cottage Gate on South Main and South Mill. The building is in residential currently abutting the business zone, this zoning was changed to residential after Cottage Gate closed its doors.

The consensus of the council is to have the planning commission review this request to change it back to business.

#### **Public Works:**

Public Works Director Matt Hammer reported Sierra Santa Fe from Ridgefield Washington is the company doing the OTTA Seal project and will wrapping up this week hopefully

Motley and Motley is moving along nicely, they hope to pave Morton and Tyler Streets July 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, then will move on to Sumner Street.

Hammer reported public works has about 800 of the new water meters installed, with about 300 left to go.

McRae asked about the dirty rock used for the OTTA Seal and also pointed out there are wash boards.

Hammer stated the dirty rock fills the cracks better, the typical chip seal is washed 3/8's rock. With that process you have to go before and fill all the cracks before you apply oil and rock. Otta

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Seal eliminates that extra step, with this process the oil goes down then is covered by the rock and fill in all the cracks. There are emulsifiers on the oil that will come up through the rock and bind with the rock and the dirty part.

The washboards will be taken care of when they come back to sweep up excess rocks.

Mackleit asked what could be done with the North Palouse River Road.

Hammer stated honestly what we need to fix it correctly is more money, it needs a lot of rock. Hammer stated they stopped using the bigger rock due to complaints, just in case that is the cause of some of the issues, and went back to 5/8 minus.

Hammer stated the OTTA Seal Street crews will come back in 2-3 weeks for sweeping. There will be notifications on social media and the website. Hammer went on to say there is a possibility of oil leak through that could cause puddling. If that happens the city crews will put sand on the oil spot. They may also need to water down streets for dust control as well.

Mathis reminded everyone that they can go to the city website [colfaxwa.org](http://colfaxwa.org) to sign up for alerts, then citizens can receive text and email alerts of all new happenings in Colfax.

Fire:

Firefighter John Lautenslager reported the new Brush 1 is here, this will take place of Utility 1. This will be used to respond to medical calls, it has better organization and also carries up to 300 gallons of water. The truck can be used on small brush fires, mop up from wildland fires and aid on call in the rural areas of the city limits. The truck should be ready in a couple of weeks for service.

Police:

Interim Police Chief Erica Warren spoke of the staffing woes of the police department. Officer Chase Kurtz will be leaving July 31<sup>st</sup>. Warren and Officer Perry Tate will cover shifts with the help of Whitman County Sheriff's Office. Retired Police Chief Bruce Blood is also filling shifts when he is not on vacation. Warren stated Retzer has been working hard at finding candidates to fill the vacant positions.

Retzer hates to see Kurtz go, he has been a great asset to our department, and wished him luck on his new endeavors.

Retzer stated he has been busy working with the WSP on the background investigation for one candidate for the open police positions, WSP is hoping to have that wrapped up next week. The candidate will then need to pass his psychological exam.

Retzer stated it is difficult hiring compared to 10 or 15 years ago. We will do the best we can and keep moving forward. During this process we will need to contract with the county for the time being to help fill shifts.

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Warren has been working closely with Hammer with all the road work going on in town. With a lot of door knocking they were able to keep the car towing to a very limited amount. Warren reminded the public to keep an eye out for the road work on their streets and to remove cars so the crews can complete their work.

Golden interjected we are taking an advantage of some great grant opportunities to improve the city streets.

Hammer appreciates all of the help from Warren with making sure streets are clear for the crews to get the job done.

**COMMITTEE/BOARD/COMISSION REPORTS:**

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT:**

**MAYORS REPORT:**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

Huntwork asked for a 5-minute executive session.

Retzer adjourned the meeting at 7:58 p.m.

Retzer reconvened the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor Retzer adjourned the meeting at 8:04 p.m.



Jim Retzer, Mayor

  
Lynda Kramlich, City Clerk