

**MEADVILLE CITY COUNCIL**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**March 19, 2024**

<b>Call to Order</b>	The in-person meeting of City Council was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Mayor Kinder. Deputy Mayor McKnight and Councilmembers Gretchen Myers, Jim Roha and Autumn Vogel answered on the call of the roll. City staff present were Manager Maryann Menanno, City Solicitor Tim Wachter, Finance Director Tim Groves, City Planner Peter Grella, Community Development Director Renna Wrubleski, and Recording Secretary Darla Boca. Junior Councilmembers Tatum Gorney and Elias Ramsey sat as representatives for the evening. Junior Councilmembers Agatha Crowley and Daniel Servey were also in attendance.
<b>Public Comment on Agenda Items</b>	None.
<b>Notice of Executive Session Meeting</b>	Solicitor Wachter noted that there was an executive session held at 5:30pm, prior to the regular council meeting. The meeting was for legal and personnel reasons.
<b>Approve Minutes</b>	Deputy Mayor McKnight moved to approve minutes from the March 12, 2024, meeting. Councilmember Roha seconded.  The roll call was unanimous.
<b>Communication to Council</b>	None.
<b>Presentation</b>  Summer Parks Program	Mark McGinty and Rosanne Sommers presented on the Summer Parks Program.  Mr. McGinty spoke on the program from 2023 and how it served 96 children in our community, mainly through free play. The program will hold field trips in partnership with New Beginning’s Church and CATA. Children from Fairmont made up 90% of the total participants. Expecting higher numbers due to being close to Hillcrest. The staff will consist of MASH students and there is an application process for anyone interested. The staff will be in the park from 9:30 to 3:30 and the program will run from 10 to 3. Partners in the project are Meadville YMCA, Creating Landscapes, HOPE Meadville, Women’s Services, and the City of Meadville.  Looking to expand the program, just need fundraising to make that happen. We are holding a Walk-a-Thon to raise funds. That will kick off on March 23 <sup>rd</sup> at the Childre’s Garden on South Main and run through April 27 <sup>th</sup> .  Mr. McGinty asked for testimonials from City Park Alumni to share their stories about the park programs.  Mr. McGinty stressed that this is NOT a childcare facility, people can come and go as they please – they can participate for one day or any/all. Lunch and

	<p>a snack will be provided daily as well.</p> <p>CATA will assist in transporting participants to Shady Brook, as Huidekoper is under construction. They will look at what route will allow the most participation from all areas of the city.</p>
<p><b>Manager’s Report</b></p> <p>RTKR Update</p> <p>General City Updates</p>	<p>Ms. Menanno noted there have been 17 Right to Know Requests for 2024. Fees total \$1200.</p> <p>Ms. Menanno updated Council on Gary Johnson’s replacement. Justin Sciallio – from the 911 Center- was hired. He will begin on April 1<sup>st</sup>.</p>
<p><b>Old Business</b></p> <p>ABC Appointments – Beautification Committee</p> <p>Resolution – Authorizing Adoption of the City’s Housing Plan</p>	<p>The following applicants were presented for appointment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrie Morley</li> <li>• Tom Hall</li> <li>• Kelly Thakur</li> <li>• Claus Meiritz-Porthmann</li> </ul> <p>The following were presented for reappointment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kate Costanzo</li> <li>• Sarah Chapp</li> <li>• Sueann Kaster Mercier</li> <li>• Christina Moreschi</li> </ul> <p>Deputy Mayor McKnight motioned to approve all the appointments. Councilmember Myers seconded.</p> <p>Ms. Menanno noted that these are all currently slated as one-year terms. That work is still happening to make the terms staggered with the revised ordinance. Councilmember Vogel asked if the ordinance had been reviewed by the Committee. Mr. Grella added that the new ordinance has been reviewed by the current members of the committee and had just been waiting on filling the vacancies to finalize.</p> <p>The call of roll was unanimous.</p> <p>Deputy Mayor McKnight motioned to adopt the Plan. Councilmember Roha seconded.</p> <p>Ms. Menanno stated that this was ready for adoption after the review of Council at the March 12<sup>th</sup> Study Session. Councilmember Vogel asked if there were any last-minute changes. Both Mr. Grella and Ms. Wrubleski indicated that there were no changes.</p> <p>Councilmember Vogel wanted to underscore the section that showed housing vacancy in Meadville to both the state and National numbers – and</p>

	<p>that there is a large difference in what Meadville has to offer. Hopes that this plan will build on homeownership in Meadville. Councilmember Vogel continued that she was excited to have the plan in front of council, that there is a housing crisis in our city, and we need to move forward. Councilmember Vogel asked if there could be a strategy put in place to have a vacant home registry – something that those looking for housing could review – if that could be explored in the plan, perhaps by the Planning Commission. Mr. Grella indicated that the rental licensing applications would shed some light on those numbers. The US Census numbers have been used in the past.</p> <p>The roll call was unanimous.</p>
<p><b>New Business</b></p> <p>Discussion – Meadville Housing Authority Residential Council Elections</p>	<p>Ms. Menanno indicated that there is a requirement that the Housing Authority Elections must have a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to oversee them. She stated that the City or City Council could act as that 3<sup>rd</sup> party and wanted to know if Council had the appetite to be involved and oversee such.</p> <p>Councilmember Myers asked if this would be for the current elections at Holland Towers or for all 3 elections? Mayor Kinder asked if it had to be for all of them? Councilmember Vogel asked what it would look like to be involved. Solicitor Wachter reviewed the HUD regulations that govern elections for resident councils – monitoring compliance, overseeing election process, providing certification that all procedures are followed.</p> <p>Councilmember Roha believes that their solicitor was already working to obtain a 3<sup>rd</sup> party and shared his reluctance to take on that role from the city government standpoint. Solicitor Wachter indicated this wasn't a commitment at this time, rather just providing the Housing Authority with the possible option of City Council involvement.</p> <p>Councilmember Myers asked if this would just be certification, an on-going relationship or just for this election. Solicitor Wachter stated it depends on what they ask for.</p> <p>Councilmember Vogel stated that since this represents the residents that council should do what they can to assist in the process, if needed. We need to be willing to provide that support.</p> <p>Deputy Mayor McKnight asked what that would look like for the city. Solicitor Wachter indicated that a committee would serve in that role, collect data that followed, oversee the process. This would need a public meeting notice, as it would be a public meeting for this committee. Would need to commit to the workload that would come with the process.</p> <p>Councilmember Roha queried if an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party was used if the meetings were public. Solicitor Wachter answered that would not be necessary, if the party is not a government entity there is no need to follow the Sunshine Law.</p>

<p>Ordinance – First &amp; Second Reading – Amending Fire Retirement &amp; Pension Fund to Add Provisions Establishing a Retirement Window for Certain Long Serving Employees</p>	<p>After this discussion, the majority of Council were in favor of informing the Housing Authority that Council would assist if needed.</p> <p>Councilmember Roha motioned on approval of the first reading of the ordinance. Deputy Mayor McKnight seconded.</p> <p>Ms. Menanno stated that this ordinance to amend the CBA, would allow Fire Chief Wiley to retire within the set retirement window. Firefighter Jim Aldridge is also retiring this year as he has met age and time in position requirements.</p> <p>The call of roll was unanimous.</p> <p>Councilmember Roha motioned on approval of the second reading of the ordinance. Deputy Mayor McKnight seconded.</p> <p>No further discussion.</p> <p>The call of roll was unanimous.</p>
<p>Resolution – Authorize Signatures – License Agreement for Outdoor Seating – City of Meadville &amp; Chipper’s Pub</p>	<p>Deputy Mayor McKnight moved to authorize the signatures for the agreement between the City and Chipper’s Pub. Councilmember Myers seconded.</p> <p>Ms. Menanno indicated that this was similar to the agreement and insurance requirements for outdoor seating in Market Alley for Chipper’s Pub as in previous years.</p> <p>Councilmember Vogel stated that there was concern for open trash containers in Market Alley – that those bins appeared to belong to Margarita King. The RDA states that trash enclosures need to be used to hide the garbage. Need to ensure everyone is doing this so that people can enjoy eating or using the alley. If we can make that happen through an RDA façade loan or something.</p> <p>The roll call was unanimous.</p>
<p>Resolution – Authorizing Signatures on a Summer Parks Program Agreement – City of Meadville and Creating Landscapes</p>	<p>Deputy Mayor McKnight motioned to approve the resolution. Councilmember Roha seconded.</p> <p>Ms. Menanno stated that this year’s Summer Parks Program agreement is only between the City and Creating Landscapes and is the same as the previous years’ agreement. The program will be held at Shady Brook Park due to construction as Huidekoper. Mark McGinty gave his presentation earlier in the meeting to provide information on this year’s program version.</p>

	The roll call was unanimous.
<b>Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items</b>	None
<b>Councilmember Statements</b>	<p>Junior Councilmember Gorney: <i>Love seeing all the available outdoor opportunities that Meadville is providing. Hope to see more Meadville people coming outdoors this season.</i></p> <p>Junior Councilmember Ramsey: <i>Thanks to Mr. McGinty for the presentation on the Summer Parks Program.</i></p> <p>Councilmember Roha: <i>Public Service Announcement – PA Property Tax and Rent Rebate Program is open. If 55 or over or a widow or widower 50 or over and your income is under \$45,000, whether your rent or own, you may be eligible for the rebate. You can also exclude half of your social security income. The deadline is June 30<sup>th</sup>, but there are so many people that apply due to more people being eligible. The rent rebates are much higher than in the past, you would do well to apply as quickly as possible. If not sure where to get the form, Representative Rohe has them available at his office or Michelle Brooks’ office as well.</i></p> <p>Councilmember Myers: <i>Shout out to the WINS project. Susan Malone told me that this is a program in all of the elementary schools that provides weekend food for students. If you want to come and volunteer or donate, it would be great. They have been in existence since 2014 – and this is impressive as it is all through donations – no grants or other funding.</i></p> <p>Deputy Mayor McKnight: <i>Shout out and thanks to Mark McGinty for all that they are doing at the parks. Excited to go to Shady Brook. Excited that it is taking me back to my childhood when there were things for kids to do, places to go and have fun and feel safe. Glad to see him going forward with this!</i></p> <p>Councilmember Vogel: <i>This weekend was St Patrick’s Day in Meadville, and it was a lot of fun. There was a lot going on. Want to thank all the folks that work hard and have worked hard for over 30 years to make that possible – the Jack Curtin St Paddy’s Day parade committee, the Judith’s Jig crew, the folks at the UU that do the Blarney breakfast, MCA had an Irish band and some Irish dancers – there is a group of young people that have been taking Irish dance lessons – they were great. There was music all over, it was a really fun day and the last nice day before it got cold again. It was also the NWPA Maple Tour, which is the best weekend of the year – go next year if you can! So thanks to all that put programming together to make this weekend a lot of fun. This meeting was quick, but we did good things. Thanks to those that moved the housing action plan forward. We had our study session last week, there wasn’t a lot of conversation, but it is worth pointing out that it</i></p>

*is a big deal, it is a good plan. I encourage folks to go to the city's website and read it. There is not a lot of jargon and not super complicated. I'm grateful we could get to a place where there are these three goals that folks can come together around and give us a clear sense of where we want to go in terms of the housing work that we want to do in order to provide dignified housing, to have people make Meadville their home. Grateful to the staff for their hard work and for those that have served on the committee. Thanks to Mark and Roseann – it's great to see the parks program flourishing in the third year. I remember another time when it was not easy to get the parks program approved through the city and it was a struggle. It was a point of contention, but so many people wanted to see it back, so it's beautiful to see it have these community partners who are picking it up and doing a really good job and to offer this and grow it each year. Grateful that people are willing to step up and figure out a way to make it work for our city. And that we, as the city, can be good partners in that. It will kick off with the walk-a-thon, this Saturday at 9:30. Also this Saturday is a 2-part tour that highlights community wealth building efforts that are going on in Meadville. There will be a walking tour of the 5<sup>th</sup> Ward led by the 5<sup>th</sup> Ward HOPE Initiative Residents Council. It will start at Bethany 140 Wadsworth Ave at 11:30 and the Residents Council will lead folks through the 5<sup>th</sup> Ward and will end at Race Street. At 1:00, folks can do a self-guided tour of Cussewago Square, which is Rob's development. You can park at 233 Race Street if you are just going to that one. Both of them will get lots of steps in, lots of walking – if you're on a team. Both are really great examples of the HOPE Initiative, of our social economy being built and Cussewago Square being built by local entrepreneurs being in it and our local economy being strengthened. Excited to be able to help make that happen.*

**Mayor Kinder:**

*Want to thank Mark as well. Did have a question as to why they would need access to the water main, they have a whole creek there. That's where I grew up. If you need water main water, I suppose. It's going to be awesome; I grew up in those parks. I learned how to do my first friendship bracelet and key chains. It's a great thing to have to, for our kids to go run free and be barefoot and get some free lunch. It's a wonderful thing, it's the way a childhood should be. I also take advantage of all the free breakfasts and everything that is in town. There are so many ways that you can get free meals, especially on the weekends – through the FCCA and the UU, they have soup in the afternoon and breakfast in the morning. Those are ways that our town is being supported by people who care about them. The other thing is, what I've noticed is we have people working on a housing plan and we have people working on a WalkWorks and walking through your town is the best way to get to know it. We have a really cool spot; it is full of really great people, and we live in a cool spot. The beautiful thing is that the people that are working on these things are people who walk and love this town. They are not being directed to do it, but they love it, and they live walking, they live in the homes here. The fact is we want to make sure that everyone has a home here and is dignified and has the opportunity to buy, rent and make Meadville home. It's a really cool thing to be in a town that loves each other and cares about other people being housed. I'm super happy to be a part of it.*

<b>Adjournment</b>	With no further business to come before Council, Deputy Mayor McKnight moved to adjourn. Councilmember Roha seconded, and the roll call was unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.
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Maryann Menanno, Interim City Clerk

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Jaime Kinder, Mayor