



**Approved Minutes**

## **Regular City of Athol City Council Meeting**

Held in the Council Room in City Hall

**Tuesday, August 19, 2025**

**6:00pm Regular Council Meeting**

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**Mayor Ruch called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and did roll call.**

**ROLL CALL:** Present: Mayor Ruch; Councilwoman Kramer; Councilwoman Porter; Councilman McDaniel; Councilwoman Devine; Attorney, Zach Jones; City Clerk-Lori Yarbrough; Public Works-Pete Weigman and Rand Wichman, City Planner.

### **REPORTS:**

**TREASURY REPORT** – Lori submitted the July 2025 report; Lori read the ending STCU Checking account balance on the report was \$85,417.17; the ending Savings/Money Market account was \$82,084.67; and the ending LGIP account balance was \$1,590,499.34. The P1FCU Money Market is \$137,541.06 and the savings were \$49,031.07.

**WATER REPORT-** Lori submitted a written report. Pete added he has noticed a very high usage for the first week of august, but he will be watching and looking around the system as he is working with Idaho Rural Water to begin pinging the water meters and putting them into the diamond maps software. Lori shared the July usage was 12,137,130 million gallons; coin haulers were 732,700 gallons. July billed utilities were \$23,454.00, overage of \$7,196.00 and collected was \$35,104.97. Lori said there might be about 48 accounts that will receive a late fee this month and maybe 7 or 8 accounts for possible shut off.

**PLANNER REPORT** – Rand submitted a written report and recapped: the Area of Impact Map, amendments were made and sent off to the county, nothing more heard regarding their process. Area of Impact Projects – A few inconsequential that staff commented on and one that the city has commented on before that is back on the agenda for council consideration tonight. Code amendments - the sign code draft is done and is still waiting for a workshop date to be set. Miscellaneous amendments were approved last month and that led to the request for additional setbacks in the residential zone, a copy of that amendment is attached with today's report. The council didn't have any additional comments on the amendments so staff will begin the next steps for passing the amendments. Development Projects – The application for Colton Acres First Addition has been determined to be complete, this is for the preliminary subdivision application. There are several items that will need to be clarified on the application before it gets sent to agencies and the city engineer for review and comment. The Conditional Use Permit for Mr. Nettleton was approved last month and that permit has been issued. Lastly, Rand met with a prospective buyer of a couple commercial properties in town who has significant plans for business here in town. The uses will require conditional use permits, which he expects to see in the coming months.

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

*NOTE: The City will make reasonable accommodations for anyone attending this meeting who require special assistance for hearing, physical or other impairments. Please contact the City Clerk at (208) 683-2101 at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting date and time.*

1) APPROVAL OF July 1, 2025, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES:

Motion by Devine that we approve the last regular meeting minutes for the 5<sup>th</sup>, without amendments. \*NO DISCUSSION NEEDED. All in favor-none opposed. Motion passed. ACTION ITEM

2) APPROVAL OF THE August 13<sup>th</sup> Budget Workshop MEETING MINUTES:

Motion by Devine, that we approve the August 13<sup>th</sup> workshop minutes, with the minor 2 corrections (day and swap names). \*DISCUSSION \* All in favor-any opposed. Motion passed. ACTION ITEM

3) APPROVAL OF BILLS AS SUBMITTED: Motion by Kramer that we approve paying the

August/September bills as submitted with/without amendments. \*DISCUSSION-All in favor-any opposed. Motion passed. ACTION ITEM

4) DISCUSSION/APPROVAL to Select the lowest qualified bid for the City Park Restroom as recommended by Great West Engineers letter. \*DISCUSSION Great West Engineer, Kasey Ketterling, was present and shared with the council a total of 4 bids were received that went through the normal public bidding process; he briefly identified the costs associated to Base Bid #1 and Base Bid #2 and pointing out that the apparent low bid is Stewart Construction and the city could potentially do either base bid #1 or #2 based upon the bid amounts and the budget. He further reminded them that the difference is having 1 stall for each restroom side male/female or having 2 on each side. Councilman McDaniel also shared that the test hole was dug today, and the soil type is A2b which is great and thinks the city should do the 4-stall unit. After a short conversation and a few questions from the council the following motion was made: Kramer made a motion to approve the selection of base bid #2 and award to lowest bidder Stewart Construction and direct mayor to sign appropriate contract documents. Roll Call VOTE: McDaniel-yes; Kramer -yes; Porter-yes; Devine-yes. Motion passed. ACTION ITEM

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

FY2026 Annual Budget Appropriation Ordinance #449 The Mayor opened the public hearing at 6:33pm stating this is to make any public comment on the adoption of ORDINANCE #449 the Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Budget Appropriation. He then asked if there was anyone wanting to come forward, now is your time, hearing none he asked once more, still none and then closed the public hearing at 6:34pm.

5) DISCUSSION/APPROVAL of the FY2026 Annual Budget Appropriation Ordinance. Motion by Devine to place proposed ORDINANCE #449 the FY2026 the Annual Budget Appropriation, on its first and only reading by title only while under suspension of the rules. \*DISCUSSION- Roll Call: Kramer-yes; Porter-yes; Devine-yes; McDaniel-yes. Motion passed. ACTION ITEM

**Mayor then reads the proposed ordinance by title: ORD #449 - AN ORDINANCE ENTITLED THE ANNUAL APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2025, APPROPRIATING THE SUM OF \$ 1,425,522.00 TO DEFRAY THE EXPENSES AND LIABILITIES OF THE CITY OF ATHOL FOR SAID FISCAL YEAR, AUTHORIZING A LEVY OF A SUFFICIENT TAX UPON THE TAXABLE PROPERTY, DIRECTING THE CITY CLERK TO FILE CERTIFIED COPIES OF THIS ORDINANCE WITH THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND IDAHO SECRETARY OF STATE AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

The mayor then offered council time for deliberations. Councilwoman Porter shared she didn't want to see the \$4.00 increase and was looking primarily at what the percentage increase from 2020 to now in the residential water bills happen this year, she would prefer we wait a few more years and or consider going only to \$2.00 more a month. Councilman McDaniel shared and reminded her they were still \$1.00 less than what the citizens agreed to in 2018, when they approved the water project bond with a 64% approval rate. It really hurt the city to keep it at \$13.50 for so many years and not make the updates needed to keep up with the costs. And that with the addition of replacing the Bennett well pump this year unexpectedly we have next to no reserves now if something were to come up. Lori also reminded the council of the preferred way in budgeting is the city really

should be counting on variable income to come base costs in the budget, as it has been doing for years. McDaniel said he would much rather move the amount up more now and not have to deal with moving it up smaller amounts every year, it's been 3.5 years since we last changed it and a lot of costs have gone up in the past few years. Councilwoman Kramer added that \$2.00 just doesn't do much for the budget and she too would also prefer to raise it less often, but it needs to be enough to make a difference in the budget. Councilman McDaniel recapped that these increases are greater for those outside of the city using the city water commercial bulk and residential water haulers. With this increase they each pay \$10.00 per 1,000 gallons of water. The city commercial accounts will now be paying \$5.00 for 1,000 gallons of water, a \$0.50 increase per 1,000 and that Athol city residential will only be seeing a \$0.33 increase per 1,000 gallons resulting in \$4.83 per 1,000 gallons and feels that is fair. Lori also reminded the council, they will still need to hold a public hearing on the fee increases and rates in the next month or so and that also gives the public the opportunity to comment before the council makes a final decision, today just accounts for it in the budget. Councilwoman Porter also wanted to bring up a couple of question from the line item of the city clerk and the rate it was being increased; Lori will double check the numbers listed, but she shared she hadn't changed them since the first budget workshop and that Lisa had calculated the salary amounts. She also reminded the council that the council can make changes between line items during the budget year as needed, that that is not something staff can do administratively. Further, the amount is a place holder and no matter the amount it does not authorize that increase of a raise, which is done by the full council with the Mayors recommendation each March. There was no further discussion, and the following motion was made:

**6) MOTION by Devine, to approve the passing of ORDINANCE #449 while under the suspension of the reading of the rules, the FY2026 Annual Budget Appropriation as presented and directing the clerk to publish by summary only incorporating the title as to the body of the summary and authorize the Mayor's signature on the 2025 L-2 Property Tax Levy documents.** \*DISCUSSION Roll Call Vote: Porter-yes; Devine-yes; McDaniel-yes; Kramer-yes. **Motion Passed. ACTION ITEM**

**7) DISCUSSION/APPROVAL the Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Regular Meeting Dates. Motion by Devine to accept the new Fiscal Year Regular Meeting Dates as presented and direct the clerk to post for the year.** \*DISCUSSION No holiday or any changes are recommended. Roll Call: Devine-yes; McDaniel-yes; Kramer-yes; Porter-yes. **Motion passed. ACTION ITEM**

**8) DISCUSSION/DECISION regarding Kootenai County Heiberger Storage a Conditional Use Permit, submitted by McArthur Engineering.** This is a request for a CUP in the county for a combined mini-storage and outdoor storage facility on 8.1 acres north of the City of Athol. Its purposed use totals 397 outdoor storage and 84 indoor units of varying sizes. Rand spoke briefly, sharing that he has provided a memo to the council and the applicant is available for questions and would like to speak briefly; then the council should deliberate and make a motion of the council's wishes for directions to staff. Scott McAurthur, McArthur Engineering- this project is a phased storage project. He briefly discusses parking spaces, road access from N Old Hwy 54 and N Old Old Hwy 95 and their willingness to add a stop sign on Lorraine Street and a portion of a paved approach to 1<sup>st</sup> street. Lakes Highway District has given a condition of approval for their project. The city council had several various questions and staff also asked about the city resident/property on the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> and Lorraine and his concern over the road coming through his property. The applicant responded with a few answers and ultimately the city council had a number of little things they thought they should include in their response to the county. While they didn't want to delay the applicant any longer, the council felt they needed to sum up their concerns and response, staff offered to sum up the conversation they just had and bring it back for the council to decide what exactly they want their county response to say; then the following motion was made: **Motion by McDaniel to table this item for another month and direct the staff to research the list of recommendations for the council to then decide what to include in their response to the county with the CUP in the county for Heiberger Storage and bring it back to the council before submitting it.**

**\*DISCUSSION Roll Call:** McDaniel-yes; Kramer-yes; Porter-yes; Devine-yes. **Motion passed. ACTION ITEM**

The city attorney and Mayor decided to allow for public comments next, since the meeting has gone on longer than expected; so, anyone wishing to speak can do so before the executive session.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Jen Noel, Stop Smart Cities, introduced herself and wanted to share she has set up a zoom meeting for August 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm with the New York attorney regarding cell tower law she hopes to see the council join in.

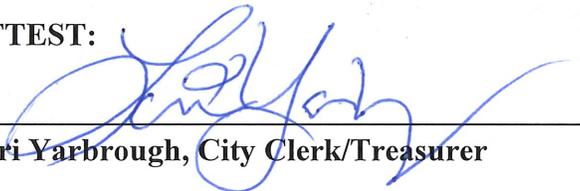
**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Idaho Code 74-206(1)(f) “to Discuss litigation with the City Attorney **MOTION by Devine, to go into executive session under Idaho Code 74-206(1)(f)** “to Discuss litigation with the City Attorney.” **\*DISCUSSION Roll Call:** Kramer-yes; Porter-yes; Devine-yes; McDaniel-yes. **Motion passed. ACTION ITEM**

EXECUTIVE SESSION Began at 8:10pm and ended at 9:06pm

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Council -none. / Mayor – none. / Staff – Lori /Pete – none.

Adjourned the meeting at 9:07pm

ATTEST:

  
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Lori Yarbrough, City Clerk/Treasurer

  
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Steven Ruch, Mayor

Approved at Council on

9/2/2025