

## Regular City of Athol City Council Meeting

Held in the Council Room in City Hall

Tuesday, May 5, 2026

6:00pm Regular Council Meeting

Mayor Ruch called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M.

**ROLL CALL:** Present: Mayor Ruch; Councilwoman Devine; Councilwoman Kramer; Councilman McDaniel; Councilwoman Porter; City Clerk/Treasurer-Lori Yarbrough; Deputy Clerk-Amanda Clark, and Public Works-Pete Weigman; Nick Peterson, Attorney. Not Present: Rand Wichman, City Planner.

### REPORTS:

**PUBLIC WORKS** – Pete submitted his written report and shared that he official passed his water test, he is officially licensed, and Bob is again the actual backup. He also shared that the crack seal coating work on Meadow street has been completed; this cost \$5,000 but was paid for by the pipeline company. Lastly, he shared it has been 30 days since the property on Hill street was abated; he will continue to work with the attorney on that matter. He noted that there is a new/another violation at the same property that he and the attorney will be addressing.

### ACTION ITEMS:

1) **APPROVAL OF THE April 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting Minutes:** Motion by McDaniel, that we approve of the meeting minutes for April 21<sup>st</sup>, with one noted amendment. \*DISCUSSION \* Porter wanted 6.3 amended to add after enforced “enforcement provided further down in the code.” All in favor-none opposed. Motion passed. **ACTION ITEM**

2) **APPROVAL OF BILLS AS SUBMITTED:** Motion by Kramer, that we approve paying the April/May bills as submitted without amendments. \*DISCUSSION- Lori pointed out the random or annual payments on the list. All in favor-none opposed. Motion passed. **ACTION ITEM**

3) **DISCUSSION/APPROVAL to Purchase Additional 2” Water Meters:** Pete shared that he had previously came to council and communicated the cost to replace the Super 1 meter to radio and the decision was to wait on the replacement. He has since found an alternative solution that won’t cost nearly as much and, further, we have contacted Super 1 proposing to split the cost. The replacement is important for reading year-round, but also the safety aspect as Pete must climb down into the vault to read the current meter where there are potential harmful gases leaking. He’s asking for approval to purchase this upgraded meter for Super 1 if they agree to split the costs with the city. The other 2-inch meters he’s asking to buy should be the last of the larger meters. There was a short discussion and then the following motion was made: Motion by Kramer, to approve the purchase of additional 2” water meters as requested; not to exceed \$2,500.00.

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

### DISCUSSION:

4) Athol Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> Graders, Mrs. Cain & Mrs. Payne class presented an overview of their Passion Project for this year. They came and worked in the park, cleaned up pine needles, trash and painted a fire hydrant on Bennett and 2<sup>nd</sup> street. They noted that if there are any other projects they can help with, they are happy to help.

*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.*

5) **DEQ Drinking Water Program Changes:** Pete shared that there are several updates coming from DEQ. They now require more types of testing which will cost the city more, and they are taking comments on proposed fee increases that pays for the Drinking Water Program. This is a program that he uses a lot and finds it very valuable. He shared his draft recommendations that he would like to submit to DEQ regarding the drinking water program fee increases and was open to whether the council had any additional comments to add. There was no motion or formal action taken.

**ACTION ITEMS CONTINUED:**

6) **DISCUSSION/APPROVAL of the Storage and Handling of Critical Materials Ordinance #452 and the MOU with Panhandle Health District (PHD):** Jenny Gray from PHD introduced herself and Josie Brown. She then gave a quick presentation; it covered the history of the prior rule that was in place that they lost, and what the loss of that rule means. PHD is coming to Athol, to ask for an agreement and draft ordinance. Nothing new, just trying to implement what they lost to protect the aquifer and our drinking water. Staff recommended approving this ordinance and MOU; the Council then had a short discussion and then the following motion was made: **Motion by Kramer, to place proposed ORDINANCE #452 the Storage and Handling of Critical Materials, on its first and only reading by title only while under suspension of the rules.** \*DISCUSSION- Roll Call: McDaniel-yes; Kramer-yes; Devine-yes; Porter-yes. **Motion passed.**

**Mayor then read the proposed ordinance by title: ORD #452 - STORAGE AND HANDLING OF CRITICAL MATERIALS; AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ATHOL, KOOTENAI COUNTY, IDAHO, A MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF THE STATE OF IDAHO, ADDING A NEW ORDINANCE DESIGNATED AS PRAIRIE AQUIFER ORDINANCE, TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE CITY OF ATHOL; ESTABLISHING A PURPOSE, ASSOCIATED DEFINITIONS, PERFORMANCE STANDARDS, PROVIDING RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR A VARIANCE, AND PROVISIONS REGARDING VIOLATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT; RELATING TO REGULATION OF STORAGE AND HANDLING OF CRITICAL MATERIALS AT FIXED FACILITIES; PROVIDING A COMMERCIAL/ INDUSTRIAL APPLICATION PROCESS FOR THE STORAGE AND HANDLING OF CRITICAL MATERIALS, PROVIDING FOR REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATES, PROVIDING AUTHORITY FOR ENFORCEMENT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR NON-WAIVER OF ACTIONS REGARDING VIOLATIONS OCCURRING WHILE PRIOR ORDINANCES WERE IN EFFECT; AND PROVIDING FOR PUBLICATION OF A SUMMARY OF THIS ORDINANCE AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

**Motion by Kramer to approve the passing of Ordinance #452 while under the suspension of the rules and to direct the clerk to publish by summary only incorporating the title as to the body of the summary and authorizing the Mayors signature on the MOU with PHD as presented.** \*DISCUSSION – Roll Call: Kramer-yes; Devine-yes; Porter-no; McDaniel-yes. **Motion Passed. ACTION ITEM**

7) **DISCUSSION/APPROVAL for Christ Fit Gym: Owner, Robbie Walden, to discuss possible permissions for the use of the City park for his free gym during the summer.** Mr. Walden introduced himself and gave a brief history of who is and where he was from. He shared he recently opened a gym in Hayden using the same plan he is proposing to do here. He feels it was a success and would like Athol to be his next location. He explained his ability to accommodate up to 40 people in the classes and that he can accommodate many different levels and all types of people. He stated the classes are free, but he does accept donations. He wishes to start classes 3 times a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday), but he is open to where the classes could be set up; he hopes to utilize the park, grassy areas, or even the parking lot. His long-term goal would be to build enough clients and secure a building or permanent location in Athol to open a gym. After a few additional questions from the council the following motion was made: **Motion by Devine to approve the use of park space and direct staff to work out an agreement reflecting the terms and**

**conditions.** \* **DISCUSSION** Key points to be included in the agreement were not to exceed 6 months, it would be free, he must provide proof of insurance and anything else the staff felt necessary. **Roll Call:** Devine-yes; Porter-yes; McDaniel-yes; Kramer-yes. **Motion passed.** **ACTION ITEM**

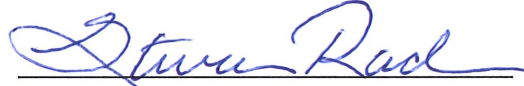
**8) DISCUSSION/APPROVAL for Matching Funds by the City towards an At Grade Railroad Crossing Elimination Planning Grant at Hwy 54:** Lori shared the balances in the Equity Funds and line items in the current budget where she thought they could pull funds from and recommended to the council a range of \$10,000 - \$25,000. She encouraged the council to participate in this process as she feels it is going to have a big impact on the city and thinks the city should be a part of the process and discussions especially as alternatives are being evaluated. This planning grant will ultimately allow for some thought into various approaches to eliminate the at grade crossing for the BNSF, and possibly the UP tracks; this planning grant will also provide for opportunities to share with the local community and get feedback and comments before a preferred alternative is selected. – **Motion by Porter, to direct staff to share back to the Hwy 54 At Group, that the city is willing to put \$10,000 towards the matching funds of a Planning Grant for the Hwy 54 Crossing Elimination.** \* **DISCUSSION** Lori reminded the council the City will have 2 fiscal years before this amount needs to be paid out. **Roll Call:** Porter-yes; McDaniel-yes; Kramer-yes; Devine-yes. **Motion passed.** **ACTION ITEM**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS: City Council: Councilwoman Kramer** – wanted to share how unhappy she was with not being able to respond back to citizens’ comments at the last meeting. / **Mayor-** Commented he’s having a hard time with how to direct staff when it comes to code enforcement, particularly the no parking in the road right of way. He shared that if council can’t come to a solution sometime soon he is considering putting something in the city newsletter to ask the residents to give some input. There was a very brief discussion, with no clear resolution made. / **Staff** – Lori shared we have begun getting \$75 a month (at least) for the last 3-4 months for restitution from Sally Hansen.

**ADJOURNMENT at 8:23pm**

**ATTEST:**

  
Lori Yarbrough, City Clerk/Treasurer

  
Steven Ruch, Mayor

Approved at Council on May 19, 2026

