



Unapproved Draft Minutes

Regular City of Athol City Council Meeting
Held in the Council Room in City Hall

Tuesday, April 21, 2026
Council Meeting

Mayor Ruch called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

ROLL CALL: Present: Mayor Ruch; Councilwoman Devine; Councilman McDaniel; Councilwoman Porter; Councilwoman Kramer; City Clerk/Treasurer-Lori Yarbrough; Public Works-Pete Weigman; Nick Peterson, Attorney, and Rand Wichman, City Planner. Not Present: 0.

REPORTS:

TREASURY REPORT – Lori submitted the March 2026 report; Lori read the ending STCU Checking account balance on the report which was \$51,211.09; the ending Savings/Money Market account was \$92,359.55; and the ending LGIP account balance was \$1,780,308.61. The P1FCU Money Market was \$100,083.72 and the savings was \$63,176.13.

WATER REPORT- Lori submitted a written report. Lori shared the March usage was 2,599,737 gallons; coin haulers were 237,082 gallons. March billed utilities were \$25,376.00, overage \$630.00, and monies collected were \$26,636.88. Lori said she felt there were 49 accounts with late fees charged, and about 23 accounts that will get the 7-day shut off notice.

PLANNER REPORT – Rand submitted a written report and recapped: Area of Impact- the county has set a workshop date for June 11th; he is not as hopeful that it will be very productive as it will be with the other cities and they plan to also share their comprehensive plan updates at this same meeting; he would have liked it to be just our city with the county. Sign code amendments The March 19 workshop didn't have much to it as Council members Porter and Kramer will work on re-writing the next draft. Developments: We have received a new subdivision application for a 2-lot subdivision on 5960 E. Menser from Roberta Watson. No other updates on other development projects. Cemetery Boundary line Adjustment- Rand shared he has a plan for completing the boundary line adjustment between the cemetery property and the Tallents. He is working with the attorney to get a legal opinion on a few items but hopes to see some movement in the next month. Highway 54/Railroad Grade Separation – ITD, Idaho Forest Group, BNSF and UP all met again with stakeholders to continue to discuss funding opportunities for the project. BNSF appears to be serious about making a meaningful contribution to the required local matching funds. ITD is trying to find some money to assist but is having difficulty in light of recent budget cuts but will match with in-kind (staff -time) donations. UP and IFG do not appear to be willing to help fund the planning grant. IFG may oppose the whole project if they don't get their preferred alternative. The city will also be asked to make a contribution. Another meeting will be scheduled for next month.

ACTION ITEMS:

1) APPROVAL OF THE April 7th meeting minutes:

Motion by Kramer, that we approve the meeting minutes for the 7th without amendments.

***DISCUSSION** All in favor-any opposed. **Motion passed. ACTION ITEM**

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.

2) **APPROVAL OF BILLS AS SUBMITTED: Motion by Kramer that we approve paying the April/May bills as submitted without amendments.** *DISCUSSION- Lori briefly shared a few uncommon bills. All in favor-any opposed. **Motion passed. ACTION ITEM**

3) **DISCUSSION/APPROVAL of Resolution 2026-03 the Adoption of the Kootenai County All Hazard Mitigation Plan (AHMP):** Lori shared this is something the city is required to review every 5 years and renew their agreement; this would be the city's 3rd term in doing so. Because this plan is 2 volumes in size (one 211 pages & the other 306 pages), she only printed a couple of sections for the packets that pertained more to Athol and that's why she emailed the council with the link on Friday along with the agenda. **Motion by Porter, recommending to table this decision to give her more time to read and review the information.** *DISCUSSION Roll Call Vote: Devine-yes; McDaniel-yes; Kramer-yes; Porter-yes. **Motion passed. ACTION ITEM**

4) **DISCUSSION/APPROVAL to do Valve Maintenance:** Pete explained that general recommendations can range from 3 to 5 years and sometimes longer depending on the age and condition of the equipment. After a short discussion, Pete recommended that the council not sign a long-term maintenance agreement; he has a spreadsheet to track the equipment and do case-by-case recommendations when close to the 5-year cycle, similarly to how it's been previously handled. Then the following motion was made: **Motion by Devine, to approve to get the valve maintenance work done; not to exceed \$2,600.00.***DISCUSSION NOTE- Roll Call: McDaniel-yes; Kramer-yes; Porter-yes; Devine-yes; **Motion passed. ACTION ITEM**

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5) **Discussion on the Mountain View Cemetery regarding a Clean Up Effort:** Pete shared a PowerPoint with the council that explained the plan staff prepared to provide notice to the public, including early notice to citizens before removing non-compliance items in the cemetery, per Athol city code (Ord. 262, that was passed on 6-14-2005). It is apparent that in previous years the rules haven't been enforced in the cemetery; as it's apparent its declined. The goal is to enforce the ordinance in place. Pictures in the PowerPoint demonstrated the types of non-compliant items to be removed, as well as good visuals as to how these items can also affect the migrations of plots and headstones. Staff plans to post notices, including mailings, and in the fall remove all remaining non-compliant items.

Mayor Ruch – Opened this discussion item up for any Public Comments: 1) Marilyn Twete (county resident, Twete Rd.) ...wondered if the city would consider budgeting any city funds to support or allocate maintenance and improvements. She is all for a list of the rules or standards, so people know what is acceptable. She wants the city to make it more of a priority. 2) Reen Howard (county resident, Howard Rd.) Her husband has been up there for 19 years, and she feels the cemetery has gotten worse over the years and would like to see it be mowed more (at least 2x a year) and taken better care of; let people know when they buy the plots, and she thought there was water lines up there in the past and is concerned over fire hazards.

6) **Discussion of a possible Ordinance Amendment, requested by Councilwoman Porter (6-6-3)** Councilwoman Porter drafted up an amendment that she felt could fix some of the problems we have been discussing regarding the no parking in the right of way. Her proposal was to add in a definition of 'temporary' as a period of no longer than 3 consecutive days. Felt it might make it more legal for some people in the city to be more compliant. There was a discussion questioning how this would be enforced; Councilwoman said she had total faith in Pete and staff to come up with ways to make that happen, maybe note it in a little book. Pete – felt it's the gray area that is

just hard and that its really those who do have room in their driveways and still park in the road right of way. He also briefly reminded council that there is a section in the code that he could post signs in certain areas to allow for on-street parking, but there's not a lot of streets that can accommodate that. Lori- asked how the council feels about just going back to what the code read before 2023, that was allowing for on street parking except for snow events? They were a mixed response from council. Kramer asked what we are trying to prevent? Lori- shared that the first 2 years after this was passed there wasn't any enforcement, now we are enforcing it and its becoming a problem; there are some roads and homes in the city that just do not have the parking space available to them and this rule makes them automatically in violation and they may have been living there for years in some cases.

Mayor Ruch – Opened this discussion item up for any public comments: 1) Sara Lake (city resident, Davis Lane) would like to see the laws be stuck to for everyone, if you are going to have them. She feels they are black or white, not much gray. Thinks the amendment would help. Ken Connelly (city resident, AJ Homes) – appreciated Pete teaching us about the parking standards in the city.

BREAK: Because of an Executive Session the Mayor moved up the public comment time:

PUBLIC COMMENT: Ken Connelly- New to the city and has really appreciated the city and staff. There is a situation just outside of the city but near him on AJ Homes. They have established a racetrack illegally in the county. He has been working with his neighbor, Neil, who will talk next. **Neil Smith** – Wanted to give the council the update of what he's encountering with the neighbor behind him, that is not located inside the city but the racetrack that they are operating is ruining his peace. Neil also shared that packet with city hall if anyone wants to look at it. He then recapped the number of events occurring and what he included in his complaint packet to the county. *The City Attorney reminded the council not to respond or answer, this is his time to share, it's not an agenda item.*

- 7) **EXECUTIVE SESSION: Idaho Code 74-206(1)(b)** “to consider the evaluation, dismissal or disciplining of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent.” -Annual employee reviews. **ACTION ITEM**

MOTION by Devine, to go into executive session under Idaho Code 74-206(1)(b) “to consider the evaluation, dismissal or disciplining of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent.” **Roll Call:** Porter-yes; McDaniel-yes; Kramer-yes; Devine-yes. **Motion passed.** *NOTE: This is regarding a second discussion for the annual employee merit review for Lori Yarbrough.*

EXECUTIVE SESSION Began at 7:55pm and Ended at 8:22pm

ACTION ITEMS CONTINUED:

8) **DISCUSSION/APPROVAL of Annual/Merit Increases for City Employees, Lori Yarbrough.** **Motion by Devine, to approve the annual increase of 2%, adding to the last increases given at the April 7 council meeting for Lori Yarbrough; and is retroactive back to the pay period beginning March 1st, 2026.** *DISCUSSION- (this 2% will add to the last 3% from April 7th making it a total of 5% for this year's merit for Lori. *this is based upon the Mayors recommendation.* **Roll Call:** McDaniel-yes; Kramer-no; Devine-yes; Porter-no. Time vote, Mayor votes yes; **Motion passed.** **ACTION ITEM**

ANNOUNCEMENTS: City Council - none. / Mayor – none. / Staff – none.

ADJOURNMENT at 7:35pm

ATTEST:

Steven Ruch, Mayor

Lori Yarbrough, City Clerk/Treasurer

Approved at Council on