

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
PORTOLA CITY COUNCIL
35 THIRD AVENUE | PORTOLA, CA 96122
April 22, 2020 | 6:00 P.M.**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Councilmembers attended this meeting via teleconference as permitted by California Governor Newsom Executive Order N-29-20. Members of the public were able to join the meeting via Zoom live streaming. Mayor Oels called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Councilmembers Cooley, Morton, Peiler, Mayor Pro Tem Bill Powers, and Mayor Oels responded to the roll call. City Manager Lauren Knox, City Attorney Steve Gross, Finance Officer Susan Scarlett, Deputy City Clerk Tara Kindall, and Code Compliance Officer Kevin Sankey were also present.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Oels called for any public comment. There were no comments submitted in writing prior to the meeting and no one on the Zoom meeting platform engaged in making any comments via the chat platform.

4. CITY COMMUNICATIONS

A. City Council Communications/Committee Reports

Councilmember Morton reported that she participated in several Fire Ad Hoc Committee meetings where they continue to work on the contract with Eastern Plumas Rural Fire Protection District.

Councilmember Cooley reported that he also participated in the Fire Ad Hoc Committee meetings. He also participated in an Infrastructure Committee meetings.

Councilmember Peiler had nothing to report.

Mayor Pro Tem Powers reported that he participated in the Infrastructure Committee meeting. He also stated that he had been in communication with the Forest Supervisor concerning the possibility of re-opening the boat launches at Lake Davis and perhaps opening other recreational areas as well and being able to do so in a safe manner.

Mayor Oels reported that Leonard's is now requiring that all customer's wear a face mask before they are allowed to enter the store and he hopes that other businesses will follow suit.

B. Staff Communications/Fire Chief Report

Finance Officer Susan Scarlett informed Council that she has been taking part in a four part webinar series put on by the California State Municipal Finance Officers Association concerning the fiscal impacts of COVID-19.

C. City Manager Report

City Manager Lauren Knox reported that work on the abandoned vehicle abatement continues and we are working closely with the authority. Currently, CHP is looking at draft contracts and ordinances to suggest any additions and changes. Once the draft ordinances are ready they will be brought before Council. After that the ordinance has to go to the AVA Authority, then CHP, then the State Controller's Office. The Williams House is in need of several repairs. There are rotting wood logs on the exterior. The repair work will begin soon and some of the work will be done in house to keep costs down. The Wildfire Resilience Project is nearing completion. The Civic Spark Fellow is working on the documents that we will be able to distribute to the public about what residents can do to prepare for and what to do if we have a wildfire. The community outreach that was originally planned is not able to occur, but they are re-strategizing on how to get the documents out to residents. The City jointly hosted the food drive with the County and the Rotary to help with COVID-19. 400 items were received on April 9th and approximately the same amount on April 16th. [*Chief Frank joined the meeting at this time.*] We are looking to implement a new email system that will allow more functionality such as shared calendar capabilities. In light of COVID-19 the Pool remains closed, but the decision was made to go ahead with the normal yearly cleaning and maintenance until a decision is made on whether or not to open the pool for the season. Our local hazard mitigation plan was reviewed by FEMA with City Planner Karen Downs and City Manager Knox. There were no major issues just some minor clarification and formatting pieces. The County is also working on their hazard mitigation plan too and asked the City to join them in a meeting reviewing theirs as well.

Fire Chief Bob Frank then gave his report. Portola had 11 medical calls and two fire alarms. In regards to COVID-19, they are working with EMS and having weekly calls with the County, all the districts, OES, the sheriff's office and department of health. They are following all protocols on all of their calls. As of yesterday there are no active cases in Plumas County, only five pending tests.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR

Mayor Pro Tem Powers moved and Councilmember Cooley seconded a motion to approve the consent calendar as submitted:

A. Claims – Adopt Resolution No. 2426 authorizing payment of claims for the period of April 4, 2020 to April 17, 2020.

Accounts Payable:	\$ 179,724.61
Payroll:	<u>\$ 27,117.52</u>
Total:	\$ 206,842.13

Roll call vote, yes: Cooley, Morton, Peiler, Powers, and Oels. So carried.

Roll call vote, no: none.

6. ORDER OF BUSINESS

A. Public Comment – 2020/2021 Budget Preparation

There was no public comment. Finance Office Scarlett reported that she and City Manager Knox continue to work on the challenges with this upcoming budget. As she has promised to keep Council informed of what’s going on and any changes happening, she received an email today from CDTFA, the former Board of Equalization, which is now the sales tax arm of that agency and they are expecting a 5% reduction in sales tax this month. Unfortunately, State-wide other government entities are experiencing a 35-40% reduction in sales tax right now. In our case that would be about \$97,000. While we are in a good position because of the previous decisions by Council, she just wanted them to be aware of the trends that are being experienced right now and will continue to update Council with the latest information as it becomes available.

B. COVID-19

City Manager Knox updated Council that the Federal, State and Local governments are in the process of planning for the eventual reopening and recovery. She emphasized that this is only in the planning stages at this point and that Staff is meeting to discuss what that will look like for the City. At the last Regular and Special Session meetings Council had asked that two items be discussed at a future Regular Session meeting. Those two items were Utility Billing and the possible temporary lifting of the Burn Ban.

Utility Billing. In regards to Utility Billing, Staff had discussed with Council previously the need to have a proactive plan in place in how approach late fees and shut-offs. Right now we are currently not charging any late fees and are not processing shut-offs due to COVID-19. This process usually prompts many customers to make a payment on their account by receiving these notices, however, right now these notices are not being generated. This is causing a “snowball” effect with customers who are unable to make regular payments. Once they fall behind the balance on their account becomes quite high and there are concerns that when we are able to return to our normal billing cycle, the late fees assessed will be higher due to these higher balances. What Staff is doing right now is maintain the current status quo and allow for addition time in order to strategize how and when to go back to a normal billing cycle after COVID-19 and how best to re-implement the normal procedures of accessing penalties and doing shut-offs on the past due accounts. This will be somewhat different as the Water Shutoff Protection Act is now in place and requires a longer period of time before we are able to shut service off due to non-payment. Councilmember Cooley felt it is appropriate to continue through May with not charging

and late fees or processing shut-offs as people will hopefully be receiving some of the federal assistance or other benefits such as unemployment. Council concurred with Councilmember Cooley.

Burn Ban. City Manager Knox updated Council as they requested that the possible lifting of the burn ban be addressed at a later meeting. Since the last meeting Staff has met with Tom Valentino and Intermountain Disposal (IMD). IMD is working through several issues concerning the collection of green waste. There are hopes that the cogeneration plant in Loyalton will open again so there will be a place to take the green waste. Since the plant is closed, IMD is asking that the free waste collection during the month of May be postponed until a later month when there will be a plan in place. Relating to the open burn ban, Northern Sierra Air Quality District has provided some commentary that provides Council with the impacts of the potential air pollution that could be caused by allowing open burning to take place and how that would affect COVID-19. In the letter, that was forwarded to Council, they stated that they have received a grant that would allow the cost of collecting and disposing of green waste to be offset for City residents and also allow for bins to be provided and paid for through the grant. A lengthy discussion then ensued that included the following items: when the grant money would be available; further information concerning the bins from Julie Ruiz from Air Quality; information gathered by Councilmember Peiler suggesting additional options for locations to which green waste could be gathered and burned; recommendation from Chief Bob Frank to not lift the burn ban; concerns about the ash generated from a collective burn of green waste; more detail on the re-opening of the Loyalton cogeneration plant; Council consensus to not lift the burn ban at this time; clarity on moving the month of the green waste collection; giving the City Manager the discretion and authorize her to make a decision to change the date of the green waste collection on behalf of Council.

It was moved by Councilmember Cooley and seconded by Councilmember Peiler to give the City Manager the authority to enter into a temporary modification of the franchise agreement with IMD to change the date of the free month of green waste collection in 2020 if deemed necessary.

Roll call vote, yes: Cooley, Morton, Peiler, Powers, and Oels. So carried.

Roll call vote, no: none.

C. City Manager Compensation

City Attorney Steve Gross stated that the decision was made by Council to increase the City Manager's base compensation by \$7,500 per year after a favorable review of her performance. Council is only allowed to take action on the compensation of the City Manager in an open session. The increase would be effective as of the pay cycle of April 10th, however as that date has passed a one-time adjustment is needed to accommodate the time period.

Mayor Pro Tem Powers moved and Councilmember Peiler seconded a motion to increase the City Manager's compensation by \$7,500 retroactive to the pay cycle that ended April 10, 2020.

Roll call vote, yes: Cooley, Morton, Peiler, Powers, and Oels. So carried.

Roll call vote, no: none.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss Mayor Oels adjourned the meeting at 6:51 p.m.

Tara Kindall, CMC
Deputy City Clerk