

**CITY OF LANDER
WORK SESSION MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
240 LINCOLN STREET
LANDER, WY 82520
May 24, 2022**

**THE CITY OF LANDER IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
EMPLOYER**

Governing Body Present: Mayor Monte Richardson, Council Members John Larsen, Chris Hulme, Julia Stuble, Missy White, Dan Hahn

Governing Body Absent: Melinda Cox

City Staff Present: City Clerk Tami Hitsheew, City Treasurer Charri Lara, Public Works Director Lance Hopkin, Assistant Mayor RaJean Strube Fossen, Police Chief Scott Peters

1. Staff & Council Updates

Mayor Richardson started out by saying this is a work session meeting and not a voting meeting. We will not be talking about the flood mitigation tonight but there is a sign-up sheet if you would like to be put on the list to receive information via email.

Adam Phillips – Mention he would be sending out a memorandum to the council on information about executive sessions on how they work and what they are used for. Also, it will explain what personal privilege section was intended for.

Charri Lara - Lift committee had their pitch night last week. They are doing the scoring right now. This has been set up in stacker, so it is much easier to review and score. Meet again tomorrow night to come up with recommendation for funding. It will be on the June 14 council meeting

RaJean Strube Fossen – Gave grant updates. Going to apply for an energy audit of city hall, community center and the water treatment plant through the Wyoming Energy Authority Grant. Then we will apply for a \$25,000 grant for making our treatment plant more efficient. It is due May 31st. We received a Wyoming Business Council place making grant for \$10,000 and the cycling club is asking for additional \$25,000. If awarded that will go towards upgrades to the dirt bike park

Lance Hopkin – Wanted to give an updated on the rodeo grounds and they are booked every weekend in June and July and some dates in August.

Scott Peters - We were awarded the domestic violence advocate grant. This position will be fully funded for another 2 years. It will run through July of 2024.

Chris Hulme – Updates from the golf course board. They appreciate that Lance has been involved in the water project. Still looking at which way to go with golf carts. Looking at the idea if they can stretch them out for a few more years. Looking at all the new ideas coming to them. The new golf pro is figuring out how it all works. Has some new ideas. The board is still sorting out some grants. Flooring installation is happening. Trying to renovate some of the spaces in the clubhouse. Was nice to see a gathering of folks on main street that are supporting community members.

Missy White - Planning/board of adjustment met last week. They continue to do great work. They had concerns about contractors being able to use the waste containers. Had a great idea about maybe have the contractors have a different kind of permitting system. Attended a flood mitigation meeting on Monday with Council Members Larsen and Cox. Answers some of their concerns from community members. There will be a Lander Water Master Plan Meeting at the community Center on June 1st.

Julia Stuble – Wanting to mention the Main Street Association meeting that will happen May 25 and 26th at the community center. It will be informational sessions to learn what Main Street Associations can do and see if there is a need to form an association in Lander. Also mentioned that Lander Rotary Club will be hosting their district conference at the community center June 9 - 11th.

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Dan Hahn – Wanted to mention about the elementary shooting that happened today in Texas. How horrible that was. You just don't know where or when this will happen.

Mayor Richardson – Mentioned they have had conversations with WYDOT about the gravel on the streets. WYDOT will have the contractors come back in June to fix that. Kevin Johnson from the parks have reached out to the state forestry service to see what can be done with the pathway next to where the fire was. Talked about the rumors about tearing city park apart piece by piece. We are keeping the park intact. Once we get more information back about the flood mitigation, we will get it out to the public and have a town hall meeting. We did have some information go out of the last executive meeting and he will make sure it does not happen again. If it happens again, he will pursue it. Adam Phillips will be sending the out a memo about this.

2. Review Amended job descriptions for Deputy Clerk/Treasurer and Airport/Fire Hall Manager

Charri Lara explained what changes we made to the Deputy Clerk/Treasurer job description and the reason for this position. Mayor Richardson discussed the changes made on the Airport/Fire Hall Manager position.

3. Review Amended salary structure

Charri Lara explained historically we have never changed the starting and ending salary based on what was given as a COLA. The minimum and maximum have changed to reflect the COLA, so we are staying up with the current market and what the current job value is. Dan Hahn asked if we could change the way we gave raises. For example, everyone making over \$60,000 plus get 2 - 3% and the lower wages would get a bigger % raise. Charri said she looks at other cities that are comparable size to us to make sure the job descriptions are getting paid close to what the market it. Basing it off the job descriptions and the work experience. The other issue with your methodology would be if we only raised the bottom salaries, why would police officers every want to become a supervisor if they do not get compensated for it. Talked about certifications for Lever 3 water operators and CDL licenses, and how valuable they are. Maintenance workers are the ones that get hurt the worse. Dan asked what the poverty level is now. RaJean said the median income is \$55,000. Lance talked about being house poor There is an interesting study that we could share. Mayor said we offer the chances for the employees to take the test and move up the ladder to make more. We try to adjust them when we see a lower wage. Charri mentioned she filled in for the water clerk and said the house sales are crazy right now. We had thirteen house sales in one week. Julia Stuble asked about police officer's salaries. Are we looking at raising that starting salary? Chief Peters feels no police officer that is certified and have one year of experience should start under \$50,000. If we get below that, we run a risk of losing our young guys The cost of putting them through the academy is between \$13,000 to \$20,000. If we do not get competitive it will cost more money to train the new person. I have twelve officers working part time jobs and nine of them are doing it to make a living. Talked about an applicant in the last cycle from Casper who was very qualified but said that would have gone in the whole if he were to take a job in Lander because of the housing market. How do we get competitive wages without breaking the bank? If we do not try to get ahead of it now, before we realize 5 years from now, we will have a police force that will be living in Pavilion, Hudson, or Riverton. I would rather have them living here to where they have a vested interest in this community. Julia Stuble shares your concerns. It is troubling to her to hear we have that many officers working part time jobs to survive. What would we need to do to get the officers pay at a competitive rate? Chief said if we set the minimum starting wage to \$50,000 would help. We need a step system, so the police officers know where they are going and know what the future is. Mayor Richardson said we cannot just look at one department we would have to look across the board and adjust all departments. Lance said what

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has really hurt us over the past is salaries get locked and then we get out of whack. When we look for people with experience and then they never get a raise, when we hire new people at certain rates, it has created issues. That is why we have a 5-year budgeting, it is not just being able to say we can but to be able to sustain it to be able to continue to move staff to where they should be. It is a very tight budget. Dan said the State is over 25% down with employees. You must stay ahead of it and make decision so you can stay ahead of it. Chris Hulme if we are going to talk salaries across the board, he would like a list of all staff and salaries so we can get a better idea of where we are and to make a more informative decision. Julia asked how many police officer one we currently have. Chief said we have two police officers one. I have two officers still getting paid in that range. He has six officers under \$50,000. Charri said every time a new chief comes in, they have a different mindset and then it messes up the whole departments. Chief Peters brings a very different perspective on wages and is very fair. Julia asked if we could change the budget to reflect these changes for this budget year. Charri said we could vote on the budget next month and then do a budget amendment in July to make any changes that you want to do. Missy agrees we make this a priority to look at the salary. One major issue our staff is having is the cost of buying a home in Lander. She hopes we serious look at the recommendations on the affordable housing and see what we can do.

4. Discuss amending City of Lander fee schedule

Charri Lara talked about the water and sewer rate increase of 5%. It has been 2 years since we have increased these rates. We increased rural water rates and the sewer lagoon dumping fees. Community Center rates will be increased by \$100 each. Missy asked would the increase of the rent, cover the \$10,000 cost of property taxes. Charri said no. To offset the property taxes, we would have to raise the rate by a couple hundred dollars or more. The community center costs are \$70,000 to \$80,000 a year without any repairs or maintenance. Missy asked Lance to explain the 5% water and sewer rate increase. Lance said just look at the cost of the water tank project cost. Material prices have gone up. Putting our capital improvement plan over the next 10 to 15 years to figure out what must happen within Lander to continue to provide safe drinking water. That will be part of the master plan discussion and a rate study will come from that. We have a lot of infrastructure that is aged and in need of repairs. Lance said received another estimate for the mechanical system that would take the trash from the sewer lagoons, Came in between \$6 and \$7 million. Trying to be conscientious about people's rates but also understand what it costs to replace infrastructure. We will keep working through all these processes and get the work done that is required of us. Charri said there will be an increase on water meters also Julia would like to know if we could get a break down of who rents the community center. More than 50% is governmental agencies and about 10% for weddings. Julia what if we looked at a fee schedule based on who rents it. Charri feels it is not a fair way to rent the facility. Missy asked maybe we have a rate for weekends and a different rate during the week. Lance talked about the cemetery rates. Our rates are very low. John Larsen said if we are supplying the service, we should at least break even on it. Julia asked would these prices break even. Lance said no we are still substantially low. Missy asked what it would look like if we came to 90% break even. Charri explained the cemetery budget is \$200,000. and we bring in \$40,000 in cemetery fees. Chris Hulme said this is the upkeep and maintenance of the cemetery. It would help if we can chip away a little at a time. Lance said to become a district and get three additional mills it would have to go to the vote of the people. Chris questioned the price on 3" meters. Lance said we should put call for pricing instead of listing an actual price because the prices change a lot. Julia talked about public request fees. This is a very minimal. Seems standard. She supports this fee. Charri said we compared it with Riverton. Adam Phillips said this is fine to increase this fee.

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5. 2022-2023 Budget Discussion

Missy White the only question she has. which can't be decided tonight, is the ambulance. Mayor said we are meeting on the ambulance and budget with WRTA tomorrow so will have more information. Lance thanked the council for all the help you give the staff.

Adjourned 7:25 p.m.

The City of Lander
A Municipal Corporation

Monte Richardson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Tami Hitsheiw, City Clerk

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