AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: Mayor Brian Blad called the City Council Work Session to order at 9:01 a.m. Council members present were Heidi Adamson, Rick Cheatum, Jim Johnston and Linda Leeuwrik. Council member Roger Bray arrived at 9:02 a.m. Council member Beena Mannan was excused.

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AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: Mark Dahlquist, Executive Director; and Larry Bell, Board President from NeighborWorks, gave an update on their new 5-year Strategic Plan and activities. It was noted that NeighborWorks is also seeking input from the City Council regarding the Plan.

Mr. Dahlquist shared they wanted to give an overview of their new 5-year Plan. He noted that their organization provides home ownership creation, community beautification, home ownership sustainability, neighborhood management and financial education. Mr. Dahlquist explained there is a program that provides $10,000.00 for qualifying individuals that need a down payment on a home. Education is offered for seniors regarding Reverse Mortgages. Neighborworks acts as a neutral party offering information only.

Mr. Bell shared they provide face-to-face counseling for seniors regarding reverse mortgages. Many seniors are hard of hearing and this format is helpful to them. He noted that NeighborWorks is part of a national organization that performs an annual review of their activities. Pocatello’s office is an example for other NeighborWorks groups and has received recognition for their effectiveness in the community.

Mr. Dahlquist gave an overview of the 5-year Strategic Plan which includes Neighborhood Revitalization; Greater Mission Impact; Financial Stability; and Board of Director Development.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Bell explained reverse mortgages are trending to be used by individuals with lower income or can’t afford their house payment. Policy requirements for basements to be installed in homes that qualify for their programs are being reviewed. Homes without basements are in demand for individuals that have difficulty using stairs.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: Heather Buchanan, Human Resources Director; and Lynette Sampson, Human Resources Consultant; presented an update regarding current employee pay equity within the City.

Ms. Sampson gave a summary of the pay equity topic – With the adoption of the Hybrid Pay Plan in Fiscal Year 2018, the City of Pocatello shifted pay focus from a COLA plan to a Market Based plan. This plan depends on two primary factors: 1) Market Analysis and 2) Internal Equity.
Old Compensation Program – Longevity was granted to every employee at their 5 year mark with the City. Fire Department employees are the only ones to still receive longevity. This increases with each COLA and also .005% each year.

Police, General Employees, Police Civilian Employees, and Fire Department employee pay structures were reviewed. There are three different pay structures for full-time employees.

These are: 1) Sworn Officers, 2) General Employees and Civilian Police Employees, and 3) Fire Department Employees. Numbers 1 and 2 - It was noted that 229 employees are below market, 28 employees are at market, and 94 employees are above market. Ms. Buchanan gave an overview of the market levels and how these were determined. Number 3 - The breakdown for Fire employees is very complicated and a brief overview was given by Ms. Sampson.

Ms. Buchanan feels Human Resources staff advocates for all City employees. As a result, staff is seeking Council direction with pending wage negotiations on the horizon for both Fire and Police Unions. She shared it is very difficult to retain Police officers due to competition by other cities. Fire staff has asked for information regarding pay equity. It was noted that it is very challenging to find qualified individuals to hire for technical positions. Recruiting qualified candidates has been difficult and staff is looking at ways to improve this.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: Heather Buchanan, Human Resources Director; Jeff Mansfield, PROPOSED Public Works Director; Levi Adams, Water Pollution Control IMPLEMENTATION OF Superintendent; and Justin Armstrong, Water CERTIFICATION Superintendent; and provided information to implement a proposed incentive INCENTIVES program for water and water pollution control certifications that employees hold above the requirements of the position they hold. This proposal was developed with input from the City’s Water Superintendent, Water Pollution Control Superintendent and Public Works Director.

Ms. Buchanan gave an overview of the proposed certification incentive program and why it is being requested.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Armstrong explained the certifications being discussed are awarded by the State and many of his staff and Water Pollution Control staff is required to have this certificate. He also noted that several technicians in the Water Department are 45 years old and older. Mr. Armstrong is looking to fill positions as employees retire, with employees that are willing to go through the certification process.

General discussion of how a person becomes certified was held. An apprenticeship program has been developed by the State because of the shortage of certified individuals across the state. It was mentioned that individuals cannot get certified if they are not already doing this type of work. As a result, the City proposes to give incentives to current employees who will work toward the higher certifications. The higher certification positions are very difficult to fill.

Mr. Cheatum agreed finding employees that are willing to be certified is a large problem across the state. He mentioned that smaller cities are reaching out to larger cities to help them with this issue.
Water Department Licenses incentives –

1) Water has a specific number of positions required to have the certifications.

2) Any certification above the requirements of the position would be eligible for the incentive.

3) There are two certifications available: Drinking Water Distribution Operator and Drinking Water Treatment Operator.

4) Incentives would be paid on the last pay in August (no exceptions). Proof of certification must be submitted to Human Resources with the incentive pay request signed by the employee and department head.

Waste Pollution Control (WPC) Department Licenses incentives –

1) WPC puts employees in job positions based on the licenses they hold.

2) Incentives would only be paid for maintenance positions, non-supervisory level 4 licenses, and licenses held outside the positions scope (i.e. collections license for a treatment position).

3) Incentives would be paid on the last pay in August (no exceptions). Proof of certification must be submitted to Human Resources with the incentive pay request signed by the employee and department head.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Armstrong reviewed the certification process. He mentioned members of Water staff have shared with him that they are interested in supervisor positions. The proposed incentives would encourage staff to seek higher certifications to fill these positions.

In response to questions from Council, Ms. Buchanan shared Human Resources staff is looking at other positions within the City that may benefit from this program. Electricians and mechanics are the type of certifications that could be included in the program.

General discussion regarding the need to review the program to see if it is working was held. Monitoring outcomes of whether employees were encouraged to get their certifications as a result of the incentives or things remained the same. Hopefully the incentive program will retain staff because extra pay is available and is considered a value.

A motion was made by Mr. Cheatum to bring the certification incentive program before Council for consideration during the budget process for Fiscal Year 2020 and to review the program’s effectiveness in three years.

Council discussion regarding the period of time to review the program was held. It was noted that annual updates will be given during the budget process by Human Resource staff.

Mr. Johnston stated he would 2nd the motion if the program was reviewed in five years. Mr. Cheatum accepted the proposed revision.
Mr. Cheatum’s revised motion to bring the certification incentive program before Council for consideration during the budget process for Fiscal Year 2020 and to review the program’s effectiveness in five years was voted upon at this time. Upon roll call, those voting in favor were Cheatum, Johnston, Adamson, Bray and Leeuwrik.

Mayor Blad called for a recess at 10:44 a.m.

Mayor Blad reconvened the meeting at 10:57 a.m.

Ms. Judkins gave an overview of the proposed FMLA policy for City employees.

Eligibility – An employee who works for the City of Pocatello must meet three criteria in order to be eligible for FMLA leave. The employee must: a) Have worked for the employer for at least 12 months; b) Have at least 1,250 hours of service in the 12 months before taking leave (special hours of service requirements apply to airline flight crew employees), and c) Work at a location where the employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of the employee’s worksite.

Leave Entitlement – Eligible employee who work for the City can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protect leave in a 12-month period. The criteria for eligibility were discussed.

Serious Health Condition Definition – A serious health condition is an illness injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care or continuing treatment by a health care provider. The FMLA does not apply to routine medical examinations, such as a physical, or to common medical conditions, such as an upset stomach, unless complications develop. Different types of condition under the FMLA were reviewed.

Requesting Leave – Employees must give 30-days advance notice of the need for FMLA leave. If it is not possible to give 30-days’ notice, an employee must notify the employer as soon as possible.

Certification – The medical certification supports the employee’s need for FMLA leave. The certification document or form is completed by a health care provider. Military family leave was added to the policy.
Intermittent Leave, application exempt employees, spouses who are both employed by the City, benefits and protections, retaliation prohibited, military family leave entitlements, employer responsibilities and enforcement criteria were reviewed. Staff recommends approval of the updated FMLA policy.

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A motion was made by Mr. Johnston, seconded by Cheatum, to approve proposed amendments to the City’s FMLA policy as presented. Upon roll call, those voting in favor were Johnston, Cheatum, Adamson, Bray and Leeuwrik.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: Jeff Mansfield, Public Works Director; Tom Kirkman, Deputy Public Works Director; and Teresa Caudill, Fleet Manager; gave an update on the remodel of City property located at 2405 Garrett Way. The update included areas such as the main building, rear building and new fuel site.

Mr. Kirkman gave a brief overview of the Fleet Management project and eventual purchase of the building at 2405 Garrett Way to house the City’s fleet. He reviewed the renovation phase of the building which took place February through September 2018. Renovation of Phase 2 Wash and Weld bays was also reviewed.

Mr. Kirkman anticipates completion of the remodel to be late January 2019. The extended completion date was a cost effective move and saved the City money.

Mr. Mansfield mentioned staff recently performed repairs on one of the City’s pavers. He noted that overhead cranes stationed in the new facility were utilized. Use of the cranes made the repairs easier to complete.

New Fuel Site Proposal –

Current fuel site is 29 years old and housed on Idaho State University (ISU) property, ISU Public Safety has recently resumed fueling at this location. Dispensers are aging and hardware upgrades have been made. But, the technology is becoming obsolete and it is very difficult to repair the equipment. In addition, the current tank warranty expires in 2019; site repairs and downtime are increasing; and there will be some logistical issues with managing off-site.

Cost to construct a new fuel site is approximately $600,000.00. This would include two 12,000 gallon unleaded tanks; two 12,000 gallon diesel tanks, all essential operating equipment and site construction. For an additional $221,000.00 a wireless tracking to coordinate all fuel sites and
decrease human error could be installed. Staff have researched compressed natural gas (CNG) options and determined it is not a viable option at this time. However, the fuel site can be constructed to allow for this possibility in the future as well as any other alternative fuels (propane, electric, etc.)

Current fuel site costs $900,000.00 to $1 million per year to operate which includes staff, fuel supply, and regulatory costs, but is dependent upon fuel costs. Average about 218,000 gallons of diesel and 123,000 of unleaded fuel is purchased annually. The cost savings having a fuel station and not paying for fuel at the pump were reviewed.

FLEET DEPARTMENT

Teresa Caudill is the City’s new Fleet Manager. Mr. Kirkman gave an overview of completed tasks toward development of a Fleet Department. The list included the following: development of policies and procedures, fuel use, fuel purchase, anti-icing tool allowance, take home vehicle, conducted department interviews, developed a timeline for implementation, determined projected staffing levels, performed City needs assessment, development of a preventative maintenance program, develop a Fiscal Year 2019 budget plan and software acquisition.

In response to questions from Council, Ms. Caudill gave a brief overview of the Asset Works software. She noted the software should be ready to go live the first week of March 2019. All of the vehicles and equipment city wide have been identified and will be in the system. This will include a preventative maintenance program. All departments will utilize Asset Works and this information will be available to them. Fleet will include more vehicles as the program progresses. PRT, Airport and WPC will not be included in the maintenance group at the fleet building. This is not cost effective and/or may be a duplication of services.

General discussion regarding the implementation and benefits that will be seen as a result of the new fleet program followed.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: Jeff Mansfield, Public Works Director; Hannah Sanger, Science and Environment Administrator; and Maggie Clark, Project Manager; gave an update on funding for the Centennial/Rainey Parks Floodplain and Stormwater Improvement Project. Staff is seeking Council direction regarding the use of $100,000.00 from Science & Environment Division reserves to augment donations for funding the design.

Ms. Sanger gave an overview of the project. The proposed plan is the number one project identified through the public survey taken in 2016. She noted that Council approved $100,000.00 for construction design. Ms. Clark has worked on a request for qualifications and staff feels they are ready for this step. It was noted that the estimated cost for construction design drawing is $126,000.00. Funds have been raised in the amount of $26,000.00. Funds are available in Science and Environment Division reserves and staff is asking to use the reserves to fund the initial design. Ms. Sanger reported the design must be at least 60% complete before the drawings will be reviewed by the Army Corps of Engineers.

In response to questions from Council, Ms. Sanger explained an Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) hydrologist has reviewed the project and they conceptually support the proposed project. She clarified that the City must have at least 60% of the design completed before the ACOE will actually
review the project. This phase of the project is a critical review period and additional fund raising can take place during the review period.

Ms. Clark explained the Request For Qualifications will be released after the January 17, 2019 Council meeting. Staff anticipates an update on the design portion of the project will be available for Council’s review in April with 60% completed in July in order to send the design to ACOE.

Ms. Hannah feels the City has a very strong design concept and this will help move the project along.

Mr. Bray shared his concerns with the potential costs of the proposed project.

In response to questions from Council, Ms. Sanger explained the time line for the project is dependent on fundraising to build the project. Review by ACOE will be an additional period of time to secure funds.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnston, seconded by Mr. Cheatum, to use $100,000.00 from Science and Environment Division reserves and $26,000.00 from additional funds raised for the Centennial/Rainey Park project as presented by staff. Upon roll call, those voting in favor were Johnston, Cheatum, Adamson, Bray and Leeuwrik.

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AGENDA ITEM NO. 8: Terri Neu, Assistant Planner, presented a proposed Historic Preservation Plan for the City.

Ms. Neu gave an overview of the purpose of the proposed Historic Plan. The City of Pocatello recognizes the importance of historic resources and historic preservation to the community. Historic preservation is included in the City’s recently updated Comprehensive Plan under Section 11, “Special Sites or Areas,” and is also referenced in other sections of the plan. The Comprehensive Plan is based on planning concepts that fall under the Smart Growth Planning approach, which includes, but is not limited to, support for mixed use areas, pedestrian friendly neighborhoods and shopping areas, and a variety of housing types.

Awareness of community’s history and preservation of historic resources will help meet the Comprehensive Plan’s goals. This plan is intended to provide the City of Pocatello and the Historic Preservation Commission with specific community preservation goals and objectives and provide the step-by-step guidance to achieve them.

Develop a Historic Preservation Plan –
In 2016, the Pocatello Historic Preservation Commission (PHPC) retained Historic Research & Consulting (TAG) to assist with the development of a historic preservation plan. The project was broken into two phases. Phase One completed in 2016, was the data collection phase, which provided the history of preservation activities in the community and provided general recommendation for elements to include in the historic preservation plan. In Phase Two, comments and suggestions for the plan were received from members of the PHPC as well as the results of a public meeting in March 2018, where comments on the preservation program were accepted. The comments and suggestions were reviewed and have been incorporated in the proposed plan.

Ms. Neu mentioned a public hearing could be held and/or a resolution created to adopt the proposed Plan. She noted an open house is scheduled on February 6, 2019 to inform businesses and residents of how to restore their historic property.

Mr. Johnston shared that he would like to see public input regarding the plan. Mr. Bray agreed a public hearing would be informative for future City Councils.

Ms. Neu announced she will schedule a public hearing to discuss the project in the next 30 days.

Mayor Blad announced Agenda Item No. 10 would be considered at this time.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10: Art da Rosa, Senior Engineer, is looking for Council approval to submit an application for a Local Highway Safety Improvement Grant for the South 5th Avenue Safety Improvement Project. The project is located along South 5th Avenue from Interstate 15 northbound off-ramp to Jason Avenue. Staff is asking for approval at this time because the grant application must be submitted by 4:30 p.m. on January 17, 2019. If the grant is awarded, Council will consider acceptance of the grant at a later date.

Mr. da Rosa gave an overview of the improvement project. He explained staff is seeking authorization to apply for a Local Highway Safety Improvement Program (LHSIP) grant for the South 5th Avenue Safety Improvement Project. The project location is along South 5th Avenue from Interstate 15 northbound off-ramp to Jason Avenue. Mr. da Rosa mentioned the scope of the project is to install medians on South 5th Avenue between the Interstate 15 on/off ramps to Jason Avenue; upgrade all wheelchair ramps within the project limit, and to install a set of rectangular rapid flashing beacons at the intersection of South 5th Avenue and Jason Street. He also noted that multiple reports on traffic accidents and near misses at the intersection have been documented.

Mr. Mansfield noted that staff was made aware of the grant the last week of December. The application deadline is prior to the Council’s next meeting of January 17, 2019 and that is why they are before the Council at this time.

Council discussion regarding additional sidewalks under the interstate for safety concerns and local property owners followed.
A motion was made by Ms. Adamson, seconded by Ms. Leeuwrik, to authorize staff to pursue and apply for a LHSIP grant for the South 5th Avenue Safety Improvement Project as presented, authorize the Mayor’s signature on the application, and if the grant is awarded, staff will seek Council’s approval to receive the grant at a later date.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. de Rosa clarified the accident report near the proposed area. He confirmed the City will not need to take any right of way for the project and adjacent land owners should not be adversely affected.

Ms. Adamson’s motion was voted upon at this time. Upon roll call, those voting in favor were Adamson, Leeuwrik, Bray, Cheatum and Johnston.

Mayor Blad called for a recess at 12:22 p.m.

Mayor Blad reconvened the meeting at 1:18 p.m.

Mayor Blad announced that Agenda Item No. 9 would be considered at this time.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9: Ashley Linton-Welsh, Senior Accountant, was present to review the City’s new Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Book.

Ms. Welsh gave an overview of the purpose of the new budget book format. It is to give an overview of the budget process and decisions made during that process; explain how the City is planning for the future; and show the citizens of Pocatello where their money is going to have more transparency.

The new format also explains how the City is planning for the future. City received the distinguished budget presentation award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). Ms. Welsh reviewed the criteria to receive the award. The organization skills and policies put in place in the Finance Department have met the criteria.

Ms. Welsh gave a quick run through of the new budget book. She noted that the GFOA review committee suggests the Council adopt a new set of goals for the City to be included in the budget book.

Mayor Blad announced the City Council is going through the process to update their goals for the City.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11: Lynn Transtrum, Building Official, will give an update on the Monarch building located at 244 West Center Street.
Mr. Transtrum gave an overview of the dates and activities regarding a fire which destroyed the Monarch building on September 12, 2014 and the activities according to City records that have occurred up to November 6, 2018. Mr. Transtrum noted that he and Mayor Blad have been contacted by different individuals several times regarding the building. The contacts were about concerns with safety issues and multiple other concerns.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Transtrum explained he is seeking Council direction as to whether the City wants to abate the building because the building has been posted as dangerous. He is concerned about liability if the City continues to ignore the dangers. Mr. Transtrum shared there was a building in the downtown area with similar conditions which fell over into Main Street during the night. Fortunately no one was injured.

Mr. Transtrum explained Jerry Meyers of Myers Anderson Architects hired an architectural engineer to assess the building in 2014. The engineer presented Mr. Meyers with information showing the building was dangerous and ready to collapse. The current owners applied for a demolition permit in 2017 and have asked for multiple extensions. City staff has asked for verification that the building is safe and it has not been provided.

Mayor Blad noted on February 13, 2018 the owners asked an extension to the demolition permit. February 23, 2018 Building Department staff asked for verification of structural safety. This information was requested again on April 2, 2018. On April 8, 2018 an email was received from the owner stating a letter would be provided. Nothing has been received.

Mr. Transtrum reported the building was posted as a dangerous building in 2017. Subsequently the new owners have asked for a demolition permit and multiple extensions. As the City’s Building Official, Mr. Transtrum wants verification the building is structurally sound before granting another extension.

In response to questions from Mr. Johnston, Ali Gorny and Tiffani Wilson of Endurance Home Investments, LLC and co-owners of the Monarch building addressed the Council.

Ms. Wilson reported structure integrity reports were done in 2014 and once more. Recommendation from the report at the time of the evaluation stated there was debris in the building. However, it was not extensive/full evaluation. Endurance Home Investments is trying to clear the area to allow another review. They developed an initial scope and are working toward that scope. Ms. Wilson explained they want to rebuild the building to current code and are working with Krystal Chanda of A&E Engineering, Inc. to move forward with this goal. She would like to have the building reevaluated. Ms. Chanda was contacted in spring of 2018.

Ms. Gorny shared there has not been a contractor available to do the work. Everyone they have contacted is busy.

Ms. Wilson added that it has been challenging to find a structural engineer that will take this project on. She mentioned it is difficult to work around the dangerous building criteria to verify the integrity of the building.

Ms. Chanda explained she has done a visual analysis of the building, but feels she cannot look at
building as a whole. It should be broken down by sections. Ms. Chanda mentioned it was not clear if the dangerous building posting was for occupancy or in general. She feels potential danger to the adjoining buildings has been taken care of.

In response to questions from Council, Ms. Wilson clarified that Endurance Home Investments LLC purchased the building in 2017. They knew at that time Building Officials had determined the building to be potentially dangerous.

Mr. Transtrum gave an overview of the purchase by Endurance Home Investments LLC and confirmed the owners knew the building was a condemned structure.

Mayor Blad mentioned is has been 5 years since the fire took place. There are concerns with the building falling into the road or onto the buildings next door. In addition, rodents and feral cats are living inside the building.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Transtrum feels demolition of the building is a City responsibility because of safety concerns for citizens. He is seeking Council direction of how to proceed. 1) Approve another extension or 2) move toward abatement of the building.

In response to questions from Council, Ms. Gorny explained their ultimate goal for the building is to make it a unique hotel with ground floor commercial space and convert the back half into a monarch butterfly exhibit in conjunction with Zoo Idaho.

Ms. Wilson feels after structural repairs are in place, they plan for one year out or approximately spring 2021 to be open to the public. The more challenges they face the longer the project will take. She gave a brief overview of the plans they have for the building.

Ms. Chanda gave a brief review of the timelines she feels it will take to begin actual work on the building.

Council discussion regarding the proposed timelines, costs and possible problems going through the process followed. Timeframe to make the building structurally sound was debated. A completion date and not an open ended date for the project is a concern.

Mr. Johnston stated he was prepared to make a motion. However, he would like to hear from Stephanie Palagi, Executive Director of Old Town Pocatello, Inc. regarding the project.

Ms. Palagi shared this is a very difficult topic to discuss. She explained Old Town Pocatello Board asked for the City’s condemnation process to begin on the building. The Board was concerned, under the current ownership, the situation would continue. Ms. Palagi shared they were very excited about the building being purchased and potential improvements. However, they are now concerned about the lack of work being done to the building. Ms. Palagi mentioned that property owners with a shared wall with the building and thriving businesses in the Old Town area feel impacted by a building that is an eyesore. The Board also has concerns regarding lack of a completion date for the project. The structure’s integrity is also a concern. No one wants to see the monarch building fall down.

Mr. Johnston is very much in favor of the project and the City will work with you to get this moving. He suggested three months to get the structure integrity assessment completed.
In response to questions from Mayor Blad, Ms. Chanda gave an overview of what she needs to do to verify the structure integrity. She felt three months would allow time to complete the report.

Discussion continued regarding the removal of the structure or the rebuilding of the structure. In closing, the monarch building and the adjoining walls shared with other businesses are the greatest concern.

A motion was made by Johnston, seconded by Bray, instructing Endurance Home Investments, LLC to provide a structure integrity analysis of the Monarch building which shall include a time-frame for the completion of the project to the City Council at the April 11, 2019 Work Session. Upon roll call, those voting in favor were Johnston, Bray, Adamson and Leeuwrik. Mr. Cheatum voted in opposition to the motion. The motion passed.

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AGENDA ITEM NO. 12: There being no further business, Mayor Blad adjourned the meeting at 2:36 p.m.

APPROVED:

BRIAN C. BLAD, MAYOR

ATTEST AND PREPARED BY:

RUTH E. WHITWORTH, CC, CITY CLERK