

MINUTES

City Council
City of Arco
February 27, 2023

Mayor Parsons called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and lead those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance. In attendance were Council Members Travis Gilchrist, Ben Tessmer, Bobbie Reese, Danny McCurdy, Deputy Clerk Dana Jensen, and Maintenance Supervisor Tony Chisham. Guests in attendance were Rosanne Smith, Monica Hampton, Rebecca Lange, Tom Cammack, James Riemenschneider, Richard Dean, and Donna Murray.

Minutes from the February 13th meeting were reviewed by the Council and approved upon motion.

Public Comments – there were two people signed up to make comments. Rebecca Lange and Wayne Ouellette. Ms. Lange thanked the city staff and crews for clearing the snow and ice from the Rec Center sidewalk and also for reducing ice at the street parking in front of the Post Office.

Rebecca Lange's main concerns are the continuing search for clarity on the 2021-2022 City budget. Ms. Lange pointed out that the 2021-2022 Audit Report by Searle Hart & Associates provided good information about certain revenue and operational costs for the City utilities. The audit specifies that operational expenses for Water and Sanitation exceeds fees collected for that year. Ms. Lange provided copies for the Council of the Audit pages that highlighted that information.

Mr. Ouellette signed up to update the status of a proposed Car Show, but Mr. Ouellette did not show up for the meeting.

Monica Hampton/Butte Co. Economic Development - Broadband – Monica Hampton has been searching into information about the Imagine Idaho broadband project. Imagine Idaho Action Inc. is a 501 (c)(4), tax-exempt, non-profit organization hosting an internet speed-testing campaign to get Idahoans connected. The Imagine Idaho effort is aimed at increasing awareness of the importance of broadband throughout our state. The highest goal is to increase broadband access that allows all Idahoans to live, learn, and to work anywhere in Idaho. If you will, imagine Idaho is committed to serving Idaho communities and its citizens by helping promote policies that will help their ability to deploy broadband communications infrastructure in a pro-competitive way.

A member of the Imagine Idaho group is willing to meet with the Arco City Council to explain the internet speed-testing project. After some discussion and questions, several Council members showed interest in learning more and asked Ms. Hampton if she could set up an informational meeting with a representative from Imagine Idaho.

Rosanne Smith/Budget & ARPA – Rosanne Smith requests that the City continue to work on documenting the amount of American Rescue and Recovery Act funds received and spent by the City of Arco for the fiscal 2021-2022 budget year. It isn't clear that the ARPA funds were included in the budget published by the City, or whether the City budget process was re-opened to include the ARPA funds. Ms. Smith reminded the Council that the Federal Government requires tracking of the ARPA expenditures and that without a proper accounting, she warns that the government may come looking to take the funds back. Deputy Clerk Jensen has been working with the City accounting system and the existing ARPA tracking records to provide clarity and answers to all Ms. Smith's questions. It seems that the City's online financial system has suffered some operational breaks that the financial system provider and the City's IT support contractor are working together to get the financial system working again. Deputy Clerk Jensen said that the current records shows the bulk of the ARPA funds from 2021-2022 budget year were spent to pay for the sewer system condition study undertaken by Forsgren Associates, and the Community Development Specialists, the firm contracted to produce the new City Comprehensive Plan. Both contractors are ongoing, with a final product expected in 2023. Once the City's financial system is back to full operational capacity, Deputy Clerk Jensen will be able to produce reports on the status of and the closure of the fiscal 2021-2022 city budget and ARPA expenses.