

**MINUTES**  
City Council  
City of Arco  
December 09, 2024

Mayor Grady Parsons called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

In attendance were Mayor Grady Parsons, Council President Ben Tessmer, Councilmembers Bobbie Reese, Danny McCurdy, and Amanda Darland. City Clerk Maribel Cahalan, Deputy Clerk Dana Jensen, Assistant Deputy Clerk Josie Smith, Maintenance Supervisor Tony Chisham, and City Planning & Zoning Chair Rebecca Lange. Guests were Tom Cammack, Camille Miller, Rick Miller, Virgil Larsen, Christy McCurdy and Herman Doering.

Minutes of the November 12, 2024 Council meeting were reviewed and approved.

**Public Comments** – Arco resident, Herman Doering gave report on a recent experience of an electrical service that was disrupted here in town. Mr. Doering said that his house is partially solar powered, but his appliances and other items use Rocky Mountain Power service. Mr. Doering said that he recently lost power when he disconnected the solar system and relied solely on RMP. At Mr. Doering request, RMP started recording meters at his residence in attempt to determine the cause of power disruption. This did not give any specifics of his power outage. Despite this, as a former IT system security manager, Mr. Doering would like to invite the City Council and staff, as well as all residents, to think about having an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) until for their electrical appliances, especially computers or any home entertainment systems. Mr. Doering shared that having backup equipment in case any appliances are not recoverable is a great idea. Council President Tessmer and Maintenance Supervisor Chisham stated that because of a power loss incident in the past, the City does have UPS equipment and critical backup systems for the City operations equipment. The Council thanked Mr. Doering for his concern and interest in the operations of the City.

**Camille Miller/Forsgren-Update on All Projects** – Camille Miller was present at the City Council meeting to provide updates on the Sewer Facility Planning report review and funding search and other projects for the City of Arco. Rick Miller with Altura was also present. Last June, the City Council reviewed the Wastewater Facility Planning Study (WWFPS) prepared by Forsgren. The City Council and Maintenance Crew arranged tours of other small city mechanical treatment plants and viewed their operations. The City Council asked Forsgren and Altura to begin a search for funding options for a mechanical facility, rather than repair or upgrade of the existing lagoon system. A mechanical treatment facility is nearly double the cost needed to repair or upgrade the existing treatment system. Rick Miller reported that the initial comments from U.S.D.A. Rural Development (RD) indicated that “RD” does not support the upgrade of rural community sewage treatment facilities. Preliminary review of Arco’s WWFPS, “RD” asked why the Arco Council would not simply repair the existing lagoon system at the projected repair cost of \$7.5 million. “RD” indicated that a grant request for \$10 to \$14 million (depending on the final design) to upgrade to a mechanical facility, would surpass the scope of their grant programs. The City Council sees the improved effluent treatment as a way of conserving water use by planning for water re-use, providing treated water befitting for irrigation of ball fields, parks and golf courses. The high cost of bringing effluent up to re-use standard is an obstacle for “RD” funding management. Council President Tessmer conveyed concern that the FPS has not properly presented the cost differences between simply repairing the existing lagoon system (which would not permit for future expansion) and an additional cost estimate for a mechanical treatment facility that would release effluent at

the same quality as the current lagoon system. Higher quality effluent treatment could be added in the future. This could reduce the initial cost of a mechanical treatment facility, but still put the cost at a level that "RD" would be willing to fund. Mr. Tessmer stated that he sees the tactful expansion possibilities of the mechanical treatment proposal as a big opportunity for the City. Mr. Tessmer noted that by merely repairing and adding a minor aeration upgrade of the existing system would still leave the City in the same condition of barely meeting the DEQ regular testing requirements. The current system is at capacity, even with many vacant properties throughout the City. The City Council sees advantages to installing a mechanical system and allow the City to get back to population levels that it had in the past.

An equivalent cost for a mechanical treatment facility that would be able to discharge effluent at the same quality as the current lagoon system might clarify the City's goals for the "RD" reviewers. This could leave the option to add higher quality effluent treatment for the future years. This could also reduce the initial cost of a mechanical treatment facility. The City Council sees this as an investment of the \$7.5 million base that is needed right away along with the higher cost of the mechanical treatment facility, rather than eventually spending the \$7.5 million now and then needing to spend that much more in the near future. Ms. Miller said she estimates the cost with effluent at the current quality would be in the \$10 to \$11 million cost range. At the City Councils request, Ms. Miller will lay out details in the FPS to add that estimate. The City Council recognizes the advantage in cost difference to an upgrade of the treatment facility is essential compared to a \$7.5 million repair that would have minor advantages for management and maintenance or for the future growth and water conservation and re-use.

Ms. Miller explained to the Council that "RD" concerns would not rule out other sources for partial funding grants or loans from DEQ or from Congressional Delegation Fundings, Community Block Grants, or Army Corp of Engineers grant or loan sources. Ms. Miller asked Mr. Miller of Altura Development if he would explain in more detail. Mr. Miller is aware of the City's desire to install a sewage treatment facility that would discharge water that is suitable for irrigation of parks, ball fields, and golf courses, particularly for a golf course, but asked whether the City has looked at the cost of establishing and maintaining a golf course. Council president Tessmer pointed out that without the upgrade and available space, those actions are premature. The City needs to invest \$7.5 million or more into the sewer treatment facility and the council would like those funds to serve the City in the best way possible with long term results. Regardless, the sewer fees need to increase. That amount would be determined by the dollar amount selected as well as the payback period for the loan. A bond election would need to be held.

Ms. Miller reported on the status of the Greenbelt re-paving and the concrete pad for the restrooms. All work has been completed; she asked the council to approve the final payment to Cook Grading and Paving. Council President Tessmer made a motion to approve payment of \$148,000 and Councilwoman Reese seconded. The motion passed.

Mr. Rick Miller (Altura) asked about paving the rest of the path. Council President Tessmer said a meeting with the County is on hold until January when the new commissioner is seated. Ms. Camille Miller stated that in any case, Cook Grading and Paving agreed to honor the price quote until spring, to finish both the City and County portion as one project.

Ms. Miller discussed the walkthrough for the new restroom at the Science Center/EV Station. Some issues need to be completed or corrected, and recommended holding the final payment to Mountain West Pre-Cast until that work has been completed. The council agreed.

Ms. Miller briefed the council on the status of funding requests to chip seal Highland Drive from Front Street to the hospital. LHRHIP (Local Rural Highway Investment Program) 2026 application was submitted on December 5, 2024. She also informed the council about an FDA Rural Roads funding program. \$2.81 million could be applied for to reconstruct ½ mile section of Sunset Dr. up to Front St, but would require a match from the city of approx. \$207,000 to be paid over 4 years. The council stated the city doesn't have the available funds in the budget and decided to pass on submitting the application. Ms. Miller will continue to look for other grant opportunities.

**Virgil Larsen – Butte County Road and Bridge** – Mr. Larsen was asked to visit with the council about future street maintenance projects within the city. Council President Tessmer said the city has \$45,000 available in the street budget to purchase materials and cover County Road and Bridge labor to chip seal some city streets in 2025. Mr. Larsen advised that amount could cover a simple chip seal for the ½ mile on Sunset Dr to Front St to help prolong the life of the street until such time as the city is able to find funding to do a complete reconstruct of that stretch of road. He suggested the city make a priority list of roads for repair. Highway Dr was also mentioned as needing repair. Mr. Larsen said he would look for opportunities for the city to purchase materials.

**Consider Airport Manager Operational Decision Authority** – The airport manager has asked for pre-approval to purchase fuel. Council President Tessmer sees no reason not to grant that authority to the airport manager and made a motion to grant operational authority, including the purchase of fuel, to the airport manager. Councilwoman Reese seconded and the motion was passed.

**Authorize Deputy Clerk Smith for Financial Signature Authority** – Council President Tessmer made a motion to add Deputy Clerk Josie Smith to the City bank accounts. Councilman McCurdy seconded, motion was passed.

**Alcohol License Renewal Applications** - The council reviewed all alcohol license renewal applications (A&A, Family Dollar, Nathan's, NC Quick Stop, 1870 Subs and Sweets, Mountainview RV Park, Sawtooth, and Melodee Club). This year's applications will expire July 31, 2025, to coincide with the State of Idaho liquor/alcohol licenses. Going forward, these licenses will continue to be renewed annually in July. The fees were prorated accordingly. The application for the restaurant Tres Hermanos was not received on time and will need to be reviewed during the January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Council President Tessmer made a motion to approve all received applications. Councilman McCurdy seconded, and the motion passed.

**Tony Chisham – Flow Meter for Sewer Plant** - Maintenance supervisor Tony Chisham presented costs for the flow meter purchase and installation. Mr. Chisham had not inquired about lead time or delivery. Council President Tessmer motioned to table this matter until after the first of the year when lead time and delivery date can be confirmed.

**Tony Chisham – Vac Truck, Boom Truck** – Mr. Chisham has actively searched for used Vac and Boom trucks thru online auctions and surplus sites. Used Vac truck prices range from \$40k - \$200k throughout the U.S. Mr. Chisham will continue to search and update the council on his findings. He reminded the council that the Boom truck bucket is still in need of replacement, however the current truck is 20 years old, and it may be time to look at replacing the truck as a whole. Council President Tessmer advised that he continue his search for the best deal and availability close to Idaho. He also asked that Mr. Chisham prioritize a list of equipment to acquire in the future, as well as excess to be sold. Mr. Tessmer then made a motion to table this topic for now.

**Bills** - Bills totaled \$16,880.36. Councilman McCurdy made a motion to pay the bills as reviewed and Councilwoman Reese seconded. Motion carried. Council President Tessmer made a motion to authorize the clerks to pay any additional bills for the remainder of the month of December 2024. Motion seconded and passed.

### **Roundtable**

- City Clerk Cahalan started off by thanking everyone for the opportunity to serve as City Clerk and that she will miss everyone when she retires at the end of December. Special

thanks to Tom Cammack for help with publications and to Rebecca Lange for her support.

- Deputy Clerk Josie Smith thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve the city and the residents.
- Mayor Parsons reminded everyone of the Christmas party for the city staff the coming Friday and the Christmas Light Parade on Sunday. He also reported that Tim Snyder has made great progress as code enforcer and residents have been receptive to the city's requests in cleaning up properties.
- Council President Tessmer followed up with the public comment from Mr. Doering at the start of the meeting. He asked Mr. Chisham about uninterruptible power supply units and if all critical equipment had them. Mr. Chisham confirmed that all critical equipment did have a UPS unit. Mr. Tessmer then asked about the cost estimate for replacement of critical software. Mr. Chisham stated that he received an estimate of \$20k per unit for a total of 7 units. Mr. Tessmer also talked about his plans to focus on a city business license and process for Arco. The current ordinance will need revision. Code enforcement for nonconforming use in the commercial zones and nonconforming signage will continue.
- Councilman McCurdy expressed his appreciation for the working relationships with the City Council and staff. He wished all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.
- City PZ Chair Rebecca Lange shared the agenda for the December 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. Highlights: Mr. Wayslow's impact area map input and the parcels he feels should not be included in the proposed Impact Area. PZ will deliberate on that and other comments from the public hearing held on November 14<sup>th</sup>. A third Impact Area Public Hearing is projected for February 2025. PZ ordinance revisions continue but have slowed due to work on the Area of Impact negotiations. Valley Ag inquired about a permit to have a new scale installed. Council President Tessmer expressed concern over delay of projects due to work on ordinance revisions taking a back seat to the work on the Area of Impact. He advised to continue using the ordinances in place for all proposals and urged PZ to find a way to continue the revision work to avoid delay of projects. Ms. Lange reported that Butte County PZ Administrator Jody Harrington has taken another position and that Blakely Date has been named the new Butte County PZ Administrator.

Councilman McCurdy made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 pm. Motion seconded, and meeting was adjourned.

The Arco City Council will not hold a 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in December. The next council meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2025

---

*Grady Parsons, Arco Mayor*

---

*Maribel Cahalan, City Clerk*