CITY OF POCATELLO

CITY OF POCATELLO, IDAHO
CITY COUNCIL
BUDGET DEVELOPMENT MEETING
JUNE 4, 2025

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1:
ROLL CALL

Mayor Brian Blad called the City Council Work Session to order at 9:04 a.m. Council members present were Rick Cheatum, Linda Leeuwrik, Corey Mangum, Brent Nichols and Hayden Paulsen.

AGENDA ITEM NO: 2:
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES:

Brent McLane, Planning and Development Services Director, Becky Babb, Planning Manager, and Christine Howe, Grants Manager, were in attendance to give a presentation.

Ms. Babb gave an overview of the organization of the Planning and Development Services Department (P&DS) and highlighted P&DS projects including the completion of the Parks, Recreation, Open Spaces and Trails (PROST) plan, downtown survey, housing study and updates to Title 17 City Code. In response to a question from Council, Ms. Babb explained that code updates are being phased over a two-year period. She added that the downtown survey is funded through grant funding.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3:
GRANT FUNDS:

Ms. Howe provided an overview of the Grants Division, established last year within the General Fund. She explained the establishment of a separate Grant Fund (Fund 081) has provided better tracking and compliance for competitive federal grants outside of CDBG funding. She detailed personnel transfers, salary allocations, expenditures, and anticipated revenues, noting the City currently manages just under $5 million in active grants. Projects include DOT's Terry First grant, EPA's Johnny Creek project, Firewise, Watersmart, and others. She reported that some projects, such as Urban Community Forestry, were canceled, while others, including the RAISE (Build) Grant and Brownfield funds, remain secure.

Councilmembers discussed the phasing and oversight of the Terry First project, with Ms. Howe confirming work is underway and an RFQ for engineering services is expected by September. She reported CDBG funding is in place through April 2026 and the lead abatement grant is extended through May 2026. She noted that future CDBG funding remains uncertain, pending congressional budget decisions. The Grants Division is requesting $50,000 in FY26 in anticipation of future grant matches, allowing the City to respond quickly to grant opportunities.

Council discussed ARPA funds previously obligated for grant matches and clarified that specified allocations are fully committed.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4:
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT):

Chris Sorensen, Chief Information Officer, and Aaron Lyon, Network Engineer, were in attendance to give a presentation. Mr. Sorensen noted no personnel changes, but emphasized that the department operates at one-third the size of industry standards while supporting all City systems. Funding is derived from interfund transfers, with 47.5% of the departments being tax-funded. Mr. Sorensen reviewed salaries, expenditures and new maintenance costs, including the following upcoming projects: CentralSquare ERP, Bluebeam for Community Development and KeldairHR for Human Resources. He noted a $25,000 request to replace the City's aging battery backup system.

Council discussed the IT budget and increases that occur when new software is implemented by City departments.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5:
MAYOR & COUNCIL DEPARTMENT:

Anne Nichols, Chief of Staff, and Konni Kendell, City Clerk, were in attendance to give a presentation. Ms. Nichols gave an overview of the organization of the Mayor/Council Department and current staffing levels. In response to a question from Council, she confirmed that funds have been allocated to pay for a runoff election, if necessary. Ms. Nichols reported that the department has been saving funds each year to replace the department vehicle. She clarified that the amount would not be an additional tax ask, but spending authority to procure a newer vehicle. Ms. Nichols shared comparative information regarding Pocatello's tax levy with information excerpted and summarized from Associated Taxpayers of Idaho "State of Idaho 2024 Property Tax Levies" publication.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6:
BUILDING DEPARTMENT:

Richard Bigelow, Building Official, was in attendance to give presentations on the following divisions:

a) Custodian/City Hall Facilities – Mr. Bigelow discussed personnel and capital project needs including a heating and cooling system replacement, estimated to be $1.5 million. He explained that the current system is aging, difficult to maintain and is reliant on outdated refrigerants, creating a risk of failure. Mr. Bigelow noted that the heating system remains functional, yet the cooling system is at risk and replacement of ductwork is necessary for efficiency.

Council members discussed logistics of relocating employees during construction and the possibility of incremental replacement. They discussed the potential impact of total system failure.

b) Building Department – Mr. Bigelow gave an overview of the Building Department structure and personnel. He reported recent strong revenue from development activity. He noted significant growth in commercial and multi-unit housing, with 800-1,000 apartment units anticipated to be constructed this year.

Council members discussed ongoing inspection services provided to the City of Chubbuck, including cost recovery and whether fee adjustments may be warranted.

Mr. Bigelow indicated that inspection services nearly cover the cost of one full-time employee. He also reported the department's ongoing need for reliable vehicles, noting current workarounds but highlighting long-term replacement planning.

Council discussed the following topics: inspections and reviews for the City of Chubbuck; recent legislation requiring inspection completion within a specific timeline; permitting requirements and the current services provided to the City of Chubbuck.

Mr. Bigelow clarified that the permitting requirements do not directly impact Pocatello, but if Pocatello were to terminate services with Chubbuck, the City of Chubbuck would bear the burden of hiring its own inspectors or relying on the state for inspections.

Mayor Blad noted that Pocatello often receives criticism from developers who view Chubbuck's permitting process as easier. He emphasized that Pocatello provides significant support to Chubbuck by handling inspections and related work.

In response to a question from Council, Mr. Bigelow confirmed that the revenue collected through inspection fees nearly covers the cost of one full-time employee but varies depending on inspection type. He explained that a proposal has been made to align fees with state levels, as City fees have not increased in many years. Mr. Bigelow committed to reviewing Chubbuck's current inspection contract and present information to the Council at a future Work Session. He presented information regarding Building Department vehicles. The department has requested new vehicles each year, as current vehicles have over 100,000 miles and serve as mobile offices for inspections. The department has four vehicles plus a spare older vehicle available for use in cases of emergency. In response to a question from Council, Mr. Bigelow stated that small SUVs are preferred, as inspectors must transport ladders and tools securely, as needed.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7:
NON-DEPARTMENTAL:

Finance Department representatives were in attendance to give a presentation.

Anne Nichols, Chief of Staff, Theron Hill, Finance Systems Technician, and Chantelle Macy, Budget Manager, presented the Non-Departmental budget. They reviewed expenditures within the General Fund, including interfund charges, and memberships to Association of Idaho Cities (AIC) and Chamber of Commerce.

Council discussion focused on the complexity of interfund allocations, their impact on departments and the need for clearer and more consistent reporting. Council members reviewed the types of services funded through the non-departmental account, noting that many are shared across multiple departments. For example, the City's timekeeping system, TimeClock, is utilized by all employees rather than a single department.

Ms. Nichols noted that processes would be developed to provide a clearer understanding and reporting of interfund charges.

Mayor Blad announced that the next Budget Development meeting will be held June 5, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8:
ADJOURN

There being no further business, Mayor Blad adjourned the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

APPROVED:

BRIAN C. BLAD, MAYOR

ATTEST AND PREPARED BY:

KONNI R. KENDELL, CITY CLERK