

CITY of ROBERTS  
January 9, 2024  
City Council Meeting

The Roberts City Council met for a hearing at the regular place of meeting, after having been notified of said meeting of said council.

Robert (BJ) Berlin.....	Mayor	Ron Grant.....	Maintenance
Connie Surerus.....	Council	Julie Garcia.....	Library Director
Ben Poston.....	Council	Jed Bigelow.....	City Attorney (Absent)
Edidt Sanchez.....	Council	Robert Loftus.....	Certified Water Operator(Absent)
Shauna Lounsbury.....	Council	Gregg Rodrick.....	Certified WW Operator (Absent)
April Galbraith.....	Clerk		

Also present: Sheriff Steve Anderson and Deputy Gonzales with Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, Jaden Jackson with Keller Associates, Casey Burns. Tim Jones, Karol Poston, Jose Sanchez, and Ursula Benkenstein, and Taci Stoddard with Altura via speaker phone.

Mayor Berlin opened the meeting and welcome everyone.

Connie gave the opening prayer.

Mayor Berlin led the Pledge of Allegiance

**Vote to Approve City Council Meeting Minutes for December 12, 2023:** Mayor Berlin asked if there were any questions regarding the meeting minutes for December 12, 2023 in the council's packets.

With no questions, Mayor Berlin entertained a motion to approve the minutes for the December 12, 2023.

Edidt made the motion approve the minutes for the December 12, 2023, seconded by Shauna, all ayes.

**Review and Approve Bills:** Mayor Berlin asked the city council if they had had time to review the bills.

Mayor Berlin entertained a motion to approve the bills.

Ben made the motion to approve the bills, seconded by Shauna, all ayes.

Roll call vote was taken by the Clerk,

Shauna Lounsbury	aye
Edidt Sanchez	aye
Benjamin Poston	aye
Connie Surerus	aye

Motion Passes.

**Swearing in Mayor & Councilmembers:** City Clerk administered the oath of office to Robert “BJ” Berlin as mayor. Robert “BJ” Berlin stood and raised his right hand as Clerk read the oath of office. Robert “BJ” Berlin, “I do.” Oath of Office signed by Robert “BJ” Berlin and City Clerk.

City Clerk administered the oath of office to Edidt Sanchez as councilmember. Edidt Sanchez stood and raised her right hand as Clerk read the oath of office. Edidt Sanchez, “I do.” Oath of Office signed by Edidt Sanchez and City Clerk.

James Zillinger has been appointed to council but was unable to attend due to illness. Mr. Zillinger will be sworn in at a later date.

Mayor Berlin presented Connie Surerus with a Certificate of Appreciation for Service to the City. Connie served as a councilmember from January 1, 2016-December 31, 2023. Mayor Belin thanked Connie for her service and support.

**Elect City Council President:** Mayor Berlin asked for nominations for council president.

Ben nominated Edidt as council president.

Mayor Berlin entertained a motion to elect Edidt Sanchez as council president.

Ben made the motion to elect Edidt Sanchez as council president, seconded by Shauna, all ayes.

Roll call vote was taken by the Clerk,

Shauna Lounsbury	aye
Edidt Sanchez	aye
Benjamin Poston	aye

Motion Passes.

**Sheriff’s Report:** Deputy Gonzalez read the report from 12/09/2023 thru 01/05/24, 98 hrs, 8 complaints, 4 arrest, 0 DUI, 2 citation, and 19 traffic contacts.

Ron Grant let Deputy Gonzalez know that there were motorists doing donuts on the roadways in town.

Mayor Berlin and the council thanked the sheriff’s office for their help. Deputy Lundberg excused himself.

**Mayor’s State of the City:**

City of Roberts Idaho  
Mayor Robert ( B.J.) Berlin  
State of the City January 2024

As I reflect back over my last 12 years as Mayor, I think about why I ran, and have I accomplished my goals. When I was asked to run for Mayor over 12 years ago, I did some discerning, praying, and research. I felt I was “Called” to run, not knowing if I was

called to win. I did win, by a slim margin. I ran on a 2-point platform; That everyone, regardless of their faith, ethnicity or culture should be treated with equal justice and consideration, and that I would do my best to defend Roberts from improper outside meddling.

Looking back, I believe I have met these goals often. I also find the challenge regarding these goals to be an ongoing process, with various and unexpected antagonists.

I have now been reelected, unopposed 3 times. At each election cycle, I again pray, discern and research. This last year was perhaps the most challenging of my 4 times in running to make that decision.

Roberts has been a great little town, with a tight community. People were involved, volunteered and participated in our community activities. Whether that meant joining the Lions, Garden Club or volunteering with fire and E.M.S. Or for some, attending and being immersed in one of our three church communities. People knew each other, and worked together. The town came together to raise money for our great little library, along with many other examples.

Times change. As many of our past residents passed on, or moved away, they were replaced by new residents. While some of our new residents have "Jumped In" Many of our new residents consider our town just a place, not their community. This along with many other factors is causing the city to change. In a sense, "we have lost our innocence" and can no longer be naive about the ways of the world. This fact has caused the city to have to be more exact and definitive in ordinances.

As 2023 started, we were in the midst of the most difficult winter since I had begun. Snow was piling up on a regular basis, water lines and sewer lines were freezing, and winter seemed to have a vendetta. Our city maintenance staff was down to just Ron, April was still new in the clerk's position. Many of our new residents had never experienced a tough East Idaho winter. I did what I could to assist Ron. Eventually, I asked Rick to come back and help us, and he did, even though he had retired. We received assistance from The City of Ucon for water line thawing. Some of our equipment had difficulties, while our new wheeled loader became a great asset. Snow had to be hauled away, as we ran out places to put it. We are definitely enjoying a milder winter so far.

Then came our water issue. We had an accidental over chlorination event.

The problem was resolved within a day and a half, however....

Some new residents bypassed the city, and involved the Department of Environmental Quality. DEQ began an adversarial chase of the city. Social media became mean and nasty. And we found ourselves under attack from outside meddlers. Out of this ugly and disappointing time, some people shined as "The Helpers"

The city council, Mayor and staff where under fire from outsiders, and from some of our new residents. While all of us were unhappy, most of us worked to resolve the problems. The Council, Mayor and staff put in countless hours on the problem, and tried to reassure our patrons that our water was safe, and corrective action was being taken. Many good people came to assist in whatever way they could. We now know who we can count on, and who we can't.

All of the time spent on the water issue, exacerbated the city's efforts to move forward on our other planned projects and upgrades for our city. I would like to commend and thank April, Ron and Rick for all the work they did, while still knowing we have more to do! The City Council, Thank you for your resolve and efforts.

Through that difficult period, it could be easy to let everything else go, but we did not! We continued to move forward with maintenance, repairs and new projects! New sidewalk sections were completed on the west side of town. A new sprinkler system was installed at community park. Continued maintenance, including additional insulation at city hall was completed. The city continued our process on the waste water collection system upgrades, which hopefully will begin this spring. Continued administrative work on new restroom facilities for Mustang Park continued. This project will begin this spring, and be completed before summers end.

And then, our 2858 East Street and Child Pedestrian project has been completed!

What a year! City staff and I continually seek grants, and are always working on the administrative end to complete projects. With the help of Keller engineering and Altura consulting we continue to move forward. Thank You!

All these things I've listed are in addition to the everyday business and works completed by our great staff!

Ron, with the assistance of Rick perform countless tasks day in and day out that keep everything going.

Julie has breathed new life into our great little library!

Then there is April.

April is our front line, taking complaints and concerns from our patrons. Keeping our books straight, and making sure our council is kept informed and ready. April has also done an outstanding job on our accounts receivable, with past due accounts all but eliminated.

To our City Council, thank you for being here, for your resolve to see our city succeed, and for your council!

Thank You to Sherriff Anderson, and his deputies for all that they do!

And thank you to our patrons for keeping the Spirit of Roberts alive!

**Mayor's Report:** Mayor Berlin said that while he was in Boise in an LHTAC (Local Highway Technical Assistance Council) meeting that he had an opportunity to voice the city's concerns regarding last months road discussion. While he was there, District 6 in Rigby were contacted during that meeting. Mayor Berlin said he had a meeting this morning with Idaho Department of Transportation (ITD) and that the city is now developing a relationship with ITD. At this time the guardrail has been repaired, the sign on I-15 has been repaired, and patch work on Highway 48 has been done. During the meeting, they discussed the intersection by Roberts Community Park and ITD will be looking into a longer-term fix than just fixing the potholes. Mayor Berlin is looking forward to a good relationship with ITD.

Mayor Berlin said that the budgetary software that we currently use is not going to be updated in the way we will need in the future. April, Clerk, said that the payroll will no longer be supported after 2024. Mayor Berlin said that we are going to need to change the software and that is going to be expensive and that council should be aware as we start thinking about the next budget year.

**Update on Wastewater Project:** Mayor Berlin invited Jaden with Keller Associates to speak. Jaden said that the sewer lines in the city do not meet the slopes that they should have. The engineers are going to have to address the slope issues. Jaden said that he will meet with Mayor Berlin to go over the plans.

Mayor Berlin invited Taci Stoddard with Altura. Taci said that they are working some more questions the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has and that they are still waiting the for the EPA to approve the environment study.

**Update on Mustang Park Project:** Mayor Berlin invited Jaden with Keller Associates to speak. Jaden said that they had received bids back for the invitations sent out last month. They are awaiting submittals from the company that had the lowest bid. Once those submittals are in then Keller will finish the engineering.

**Vote on Keller Contract Amendment for Mustang Park Bidding:** Mayor Berlin said that Keller & Associates had presented an amendment to their Mustang Park Project contract for an additional amount of \$1800. This increase was due to extra work for the Precast bathroom bids.

Mayor Berlin asked the council if they had any questions.

With no questions, Mayor Berlin entertained a motion to approve the amendment to the contract regarding the Mustang Park improvements.

Edidt made the motion to approve the contract amendment for Keller & Associates regarding the Mustang Park, seconded by Ben, all ayes.

Roll call vote was taken by the Clerk,

Shauna Lounsbury	aye
Edidt Sanchez	aye
Benjamin Poston	aye

**Vote to Accept Bid from Mountain West Precast:** Jaden Jackson for Keller Associates presented the council with the overview of the two bids that were received for the precast bathroom. Mountain West Precast was the lowest bidder at \$91,744.00 and CXT bid at \$120,000.00. Keller has checked into Mountain West and have worked with the them in the past. Keller recommends moving forward with the bid from Mountain West Precast.

Mayor Berlin entertained a motion to accept the bid from Mountain West Precast.

Ben made the motion to accept the bid from Mountain West Precast, seconded by Shauna, all ayes.

Roll call vote was taken by the Clerk,

Shauna Lounsbury	aye
Edidt Sanchez	aye
Benjamin Poston	aye

**Vote to Adopt Cross Connection Policy:** Mayor Berlin presented council with a final draft of the cross-connection policy. He said that the Department of Environmental Quality recommends it.

Mayor Berlin asked if there was any discussion regarding the proposed policy.

Ben asked if everyone knows what the cross-connection policy is. Mayor Berlin said that it is a policy to prevent cross contamination of the city water system from private systems. The city is essentially in compliance already but does not have a written policy and defines it more in-depth.

Connie Surerus asked how the city knows if there is a cross contamination from a water softener.

Mayor Berlin said that the water meters have a built-in backflow.

Mayor Berlin asked if there were any other questions or comments.

With no further discussion, Mayor Berlin entertained a motion to adopt the cross-connection policy for the City of Roberts.

Shauna made the motion to adopt the cross-connection policy, seconded by Edidt, all ayes.

**Maintenance Report:** Mayor Berlin said that the city has had little snow. Ron and Rick have been working on things that they otherwise would not have time for. Window blinds and LED lights have been installed at city hall. Ron said that the new snow equipment is working well. The new sidewalks have been being cleared by Ron and Rick and patrons have been doing them as well.

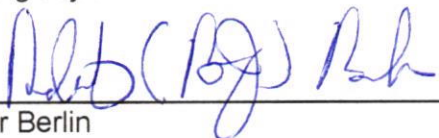
Connie Surerus asked why there are barriers up behind Lucy's. Mayor Berlin said that they are there to help prevent water lines from freezing by reducing traffic driving over the area and pushing the frost line down. Connie asked if it was going to be every winter. Mayor Berlin said that it is the most cost-effective way to deal with the issue. Ben said that because of the way the water lines are laid out that it would cost the city hundreds of thousands of dollars. Connie said that she didn't remember it being a problem in years past. Ben said it has been a problem. Ron said, along with the concrete barriers, insulation has been replaced with better insulation to help prevent the freezing as well.

Mayor Berlin said that snow alert parking restrictions have been issued. The restriction is no parking on the street from 2 a.m.-10 a.m. from January 4, 2024 until March 1, 2024. Violators will be given a warning and then a citation or towed. This is for safety of the snow plow operator and for citizens' vehicles.

**Adjourn:** Mayor Berlin entertained a motion to adjourn.

Ben made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Edidt, all ayes.

Meeting adjourned.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Berlin

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

## December Wastewater Update

From: Gregg Roderick (groderick@mwaterworks.com)  
To: robertscityclerk@yahoo.com  
CC: robertsmayorbj@yahoo.com  
Date: Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at 09:15 PM MST

Happy new year!

In the month of December for wastewater we made some great progress. The needed programming corrections were made to bring the second half of the treatment plant online. Also, on this same task the wasting valve was rewired to make it work correctly. A permanent plug was installed in the chlorine contact tank to stop any unplanned discharge to the lagoons. All required samples were collected on schedule.

Moving forward we are going to monitor the plant operations to get the best possible results. We are going to seed the facility with Mixed liquor from another facility to establish a healthy colony of biomass. This will provide proper settleability and proper plant performance.

Please let us know if you have any questions and we are looking forward to a good year!

Thank you,



**Gregg Roderick**

Wastewater Operations Manager

P: 208.656.3039 Ext. 707

## December water system update

From: Robert Loftis (rloftis@mwaterworks.com)  
To: robertscityclerk@yahoo.com; robertsmayorbj@yahoo.com; robertscitymaintenancetdm@gmail.com  
Date: Tuesday, January 9, 2024 at 02:06 PM MST

Good afternoon, the water system didn't experience any significant issues in December. W3 had a packing seal failure which Ron and I repaired. When the leak was discovered at well 3, well 2 was flushed and set to run to system. Well 2 has been functioning as it should. We are currently working on solutions that will allow the wells to provide the necessary pressure and flow directly to the distribution system and bypass the water storage tank which will allow it to be taken offline for cleaning. I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and a Happy new year and thank you for your continued support in allowing us to help you and your city.



**Robert Loftis**

Regional Manager / Operator

P: 208.656.3039 Ext. 702

E: [rloftis@mwaterworks.com](mailto:rloftis@mwaterworks.com)

[mwaterworks.com](http://mwaterworks.com)