
PANGUITCH CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

PANGUITCH CITY OFFICE
CONFERENCE ROOM, 25 S 200 E
PANGUITCH, UTAH 84759
JANUARY 28, 2025, 5:30 PM

Those present at the City Council meeting were Mayor Kim Soper, City Manager Mat Houston, City Recorder Tyrissa Howell, City Attorney Barry Huntington and Council Members Cindy Stewart, Tracy Wright, Mike Sarles and David Dodds. City Council Member Paul Dastrup was in attendance via Zoom.

Others present were Sheriff Eric Houston, Tom Talbot, Wesley Syrett, Richard Church, Camille Moore, Gaylen Moore, Steve Garrett, Dave Hardy, Terri Hardy, Rick Story, Sweetie Story, Eli Menet, Chad Veater, Melissa Veater, Julie Bishop, Treena Bridges, Brandi Dickinson, Stan Williams, Ralph Perkins, Jamie Veater, Craig Marrow, AJ Avellar, David Pascal, Rebbecca Imes, and via Zoom Bri Talbot, Shayne Howell, Lori Williams, Lisa Baldwin, Derek Kingston and Sean Garrett.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

OPENING CEREMONY

Mat Houston conducted the opening ceremony.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Cindy Stewart moved, seconded by Mike Sarles to adopt the agenda. The motion passed with all in favor.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Tracy Wright moved, seconded by Cindy Stewart to approve the minutes. The motion passed with all in favor.

BUDGET UPDATE/ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

City Treasurer Carla Farnsworth reported that Panguitch City is at 60 % of the Budget year with General Fund Revenues at 76% and Expenditures at 67%. In the Water Fund revenues are at 61% and expenditures are at 58%. In the Sewer Fund revenues are at 77% and expenditures are at 72%. The airport project is almost closed out. In March Carla and City Manager Mat Houston will begin working on next years budget.

Mike Sarles moved, seconded by Tracy Wright to approve the payments and budget as shown. The motion passed with all in favor.

PUBLIC HEARING – OLD MOTORCYCLE RALLY

Mayor Kim Soper opened up the meeting for a Public Hearing a 5:40 PM to hear public comment about the Old Skool Motorcycle Rally. Mayor Kim Soper stated that some public safety concerns were brought to the City Council. Garfield County sent a letter stating that the County Fair Building could not be used for the event. The Old Skool Motorcycle Rally is not a organized Panguitch City Event. Sheriff Eric Houston stated that the Sheriff's office supports the events in the community. Events are critical to the community and he understands how hard it is to keep events going. The Sheriff stated that Sargent Leach went to a training held on motor cycle rally's and the Old Skool Motorcycle Rally was brought up multiple times at that training. Two years ago, Utah Highway Patrol stopped a vehicle on I-15 with 2 pounds of methamphetamine and weapons that was headed to the Panguitch motorcycle rally. This year after the rally there was a suicide which wasn't the problem it was the incidents that happened after the suicide. Chris Randal with Washinton County Gang Task Force told Sheriff Houston we don't have the 1%ers and motorcycle clubs yet but they will come and when they

do we will not be able to stop them. The Sheriff stated that every event that is held spreads the county law enforcement thin.

Deputy Wesley Syrett reported that on July 14, 2024 at 1:30 AM there was a domestic call at the campground south of town. He called for additional officers. The nearest on duty officer was twenty minutes away. When he arrived on scene, he could hear elevated male and female voices. He knocked and was met by a Mr. Avellar, Mr. Kingston, Miss Kingston and Miss Allen at the scene. He separated the males and females and stayed with the males, he noted alcohol and drugs in the room. Outside he spoke with the Mr. Avellar and Mr. Kingston and then the females who were inside. He returned to the males outside and heard a pop. At which time everyone started screaming. Wes radioed in to dispatch that a shot was fired. He then tried to create a perimeter that was not respected.

Officer Tom Talbot stated he got a call that shots were fired and they couldn't get ahold of Deputy Wes Syrett. When he arrived to the campground, he found Deputy Syrett consoling the victim's boyfriend. He found out it was suicide. Officer Talbot secured the gun. They again tried to secure and extend the perimeter. Mr. Kingston wanted in the cabin to retrieve Miss Allen's phone. Motorcycles were kicked over. Other bikers in the campground were coming out from the dark. There was a lot of yelling, it was a tense situation.

County Assessor Camille Moore stated that Sheriff Eric Houston came to the County Commissioners with concerns about the Motorcycle Rally. The county asked the city to work with the county for all events. Until the concerns are elevated the county doesn't want the rally to be held at the fair building.

Steve Garrett the organizer the Old Skool Motorcycle Rally stated that the rally has been held for nine years without problems. He stated that the suicide was a domestic issue and not associated with the rally. Mr. Garrett submitted a letter from the Christian Motorcycle Association with their version of the incident. Mr. Garrett stated that there have never been any 1%ers at the rally and any patched motorcycle clubs that show up, are told to leave. Mr. Garret stated that not much beer is sold at the beer garden. The band stops by 10:30 and the event is done by 11:00 each night. Mr. Garrett surveyed all the business owners and they were all in favor of the rally and believed it was good for business and they would like to see

the motorcycle rally event continue. Mr. Garrett stated that he contacted the Utah Drug Task Force and can't find any record of the drug bust on I-15. Mr. Garrett believes the letter from the county stating the rally can't use the public facility is unjust.

Rick Story stated he started the rally as a traveling rally, but later with the then City Manager Lori Talbot established a Panguitch based rally. He stated that the Sheriff used to do a walk-through of the rally and that the rally has never caused problems.

Rebecca Imes said she is a family specialist. She has lived in Panguitch twice. She believes the suicide rate in Panguitch is extreme along with a high level of miscommunication and domestic disputes. She then stated that the officers did not handle the situation correctly after the suicide and took too long to secure the gun.

David Pascal said he sells event merchandise at the motorcycle rally. He has been selling event merchandise for 40 years at a lot of different events. Bikers are the best to work with. He is surprised Panguitch as a Christian community is not fellowshipping them.

Stan Williams dressed in his motorcycle leathers and gear stated it is all about perception and understanding. He took off his leather coat and his bandana and his other gear and ended his in dress white shirt and tie. He then said to be openminded.

Richard Church said his family has owned the Blue Pine Motel since 1903. He has motorcycle groups stay at his motel every year and never had any trouble from any motorcycle group. He is concerned that the county and city are deciding who can and can't use the tax paid public facility.

AJ Avellar the boyfriend of Megan Kingston who committed suicide on July 14th 2024. He stated that the officers handled the situation good. He never felt anyone's life was in jeopardy. He stated he was the one that kicked his own bike over. He feels the suicide should not stop the rally from happening. Prior to her suicide Megan was in therapy and on medication, she should not have been drinking. Mr. Avellar stated he has been coming to the Rally since 2019 as sells rep

for Indian Motorcycles. He loves Panguitch and the beautiful country surrounding Panguitch and Megans suicide should not be the end of the rally.

Brandi Dickinson stated that Janet Oldham started the original Bike Rally. Brandi asked if there has been any issue with the rally at the fairgrounds. There have been many suicides in Panguitch, this suicide is not anything new for Panguitch. The bikers spend a lot of money in Panguitch.

Treena Bridges spent time at the rally with the 6th grade class fund raising for the Washington DC trip. The kids had water ballon fights with the bikers. The bikers donate lots of money to the kids for their trip and lots of money to the Garfield Memorial Nursing Home.

Craig Morrow from Russ Brown Attorney's a large sponsor at the Rally said he is very grateful for the event. He attendants all different sizes and types of motorcycle events and he feels Panguitch's rally is well organized and a quality event. He stated he questions the testimony of the officers and feels like they are profiling bikers. He stated that the bikers were not armed and did not put anyone in danger.

James Veater stated that we have outstanding law enforcement officers. He has many bikers stay at his cabins yearly. The only problem he has ever had was some burn contests. He stated that the businesses depend on events.

Ralph Perkins appreciates all the events. He stated he would like to see a policy and permit system put in place.

Mayor Kim Soper stated we are working on coming up with a permit system.

Derek Kingston, Megan Kinsgton's brother apologized to the officers. He said he had never been to the Old Skool Motor Cycle Rally until 2024. Megan bragged about how fun it was. He was the one with the medical marijuana. There was not anyone else with drugs. He did cross the permitter for insulin for his girlfriend. He feels like more law enforcement could be hired for the rally.

Sean Garrett said he volunteers every year to help with the rally. There has never been a fight at the rally. There are prayers held; church held on Sunday.

Council Member Dave Dodds stated he is sorry for what the officers went through, for what the family went through. Panguitch is a small community. When the law enforcement has a concern, we listen. We have businesses and events. We appreciate hearing both sides. This has been an emotional public hearing.

Council Member Paul Dastrup said he feels bad they had to go through the experience that they did. Events are big for our community. He wasn't able to hear what Sherrif Eric Houston said through Zoom. He is glad we had this meeting.

Council Member Mike Sarles stated he is grateful for our law enforcement who were visibly moved and willing to protect our community. In the community he has had a lot of people voice support for the Old Skool Motorcycle Rally and only one speak against it. Business Owners have stated they want it to stay. He feels it is important to have both sides.

Council Member Tracy Wright apologized to AJ Avelar and Derek Kingston for their loss. She said she loves her law enforcement. She does not feel this is about the loss of Megan and we should not judge people. She said she has been to the Rally. Officers turns the heads to a lot of things that happen at all the events in Panguitch. She feels Panguitch community members don't want to take their family to the bike rally, because they don't like the environment. The bike rally needs more security if it is to continue, she asked how much money is it worth to our community to continue this event.

Council Member Cindy Stewart told AJ Avellar and Derek Kingston she understands suicide and apologized for their loss. She then asked what is the value of a life. Her concern is with the officers, they need to all go home to their families, you can't replace a life.

City Manager Mat Houston stated that when your law enforcement tells you something you listen. When the county says something, you listen. We support our law enforcement. This is not a Panguitch City event. The building is a county building. The city works with the county.

Mayor Kim Soper stated that Panguitch City contracts with the Garfield County Sheriff's Department. When they come to us, we have to listen. Panguitch City partners with Garfield County. Panguitch City could not function without them. If they say the building is closed, we have to listen to them. The mayor asked Sheriff Houston if he thought there is a way to work this out. Sheriff Eric Houston said yes, but it doesn't change the safety issue and to say there are not motorcycle clubs coming to the rally is not true. He remembers breaking up a fight between the Hells Angels and the Sundowners at highway 12 and highway 89 during a rally a few years ago.

Mayor Kim Soper closed the Public Hearing at 7:44 PM.

BID OPENING – MUNICIPAL CODE REVIEW

Two bids were received one from High Mountain Consulting in the amount of \$12037. 50 and one a bid from Sunrise Engineering with different tier amounts of \$34,000, \$62,500 and \$95,100 depending on the scope of work.

Cindy Stewart moved, seconded by Tracy Wright to accept the bid from High Mountain Consulting at 12, 037. 50. The motion passed with all in favor.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Landfill – The Mayor, City Manager, Cindy Stewart and David Dodds met with the BLM to discuss the Landfill expansion. Illegal dumping signs will be posted to deter dumping outside of the landfill. The landfill only has five to ten years of capacity left a current usage rate.

Marilyn Bulkley Memorial Park – Council Member Paul Dastrup is working on a grant application at \$100,000 without a restroom for the Marilyn Bulkley Park. It would cost another \$48,000 with \$5000 matching funds from the city to add restrooms.

Pavillion – Mayor Kim Soper has received some bids for a pavilion at the baseball field and will begin working on a grant for that.

ADJOURNMENT

David Dodds moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:13 PM.

Kim Soper, Mayor

Tyrissa Howell, City Recorder