

# Town of Twisp

## Council Minutes – 3/23/2021

Mayor Ing-Moody called the video conference meeting to order at 5:34p.m.

Council Members present via phone/video:      Hans Smith  
Mark Easton  
Alan Caswell  
Hannah Cordes  
Aaron Studen

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

Council Member Easton led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Additions/Deletions to the Agenda:**

N/A

**Public Comment:**

Mayor Ing-Moody read the following public comments out loud:

Dear Twisp City Council Members,  
I would like to express my support for the new Twisp Civic Center. It is my understanding that the town must apply for a loan through the USDA to cover the gap in current funding sources. There is considerable thought, planning, and process in designing the new building to meet the needs of our community. I would be redundant if I list the needs for a new facility for our town government. Of particular interest to me is the health and safety of the town employees, council members, the mayor, the community, a central Emergency Operation Center, and a safe place for the town police department. There is never an easy solution and all options are well thought out. I place my trust and faith in the Twisp City Council Members to move forward with this project.

With Great Respect,  
Cindy Button  
Aero Methow Rescue Service

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Please register my comment at the Town Hall meeting tonight.  
I'm in favor of the Twisp Civic Building.

Dan Donohue  
business owner Twisp

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Dear Twisp Town Council -  
I'm writing in support of the new Twisp Civic building. As a business owner and resident, I recognize the importance of a new Twisp Civic building for public safety, as well as for the health and well-being of our town employees. The new Twisp Civic building will also contribute immensely to the vitality of the retail businesses in Twisp, and will strengthen a sense of connection and community in our town.

Sincerely,  
Meg Donohue  
Co-Owner

Blue Star Coffee Roasters

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I have been a valley resident for just short of 40 years. I have been a resident within the town for 16 years.

I am sending this email in support of the going forward of the new Civic Center for our Town. This is a past due upgrade we have needed for our area for some time.

The new Civic Center Building will not only support the growing needs of our town but also reaches out for the needs of all the Methow Valley as a whole. This past year is a good example of the growing needs that arises from one of many such emergencies. Covid has taken a toll in so many ways. The blessing is that we were not hit with the pandemic like so many other areas, but there was the stress with the amount of people who have now made the Methow Valley their home which does create a big need for an updated facility.

There are many different entities that can share in this facility during such a time as the fires of 2014. From our fire department, Aero Methow, and the rising need for space for our Police department.

I am not sure of the opposition for a such needed facility??

I want to thank the Town for their continual hard work for the upgrades they have accomplished thus far and looking forward to the new Civic Center.

Instead of wasting energy opposing of a much needed facility that would only benefit the residents of the Methow Valley I would love to see a truck that says opposing constant rise in property taxes for ones who work and have their lives here, instead of taxing us out of our homes at the same rate as King County.

Thank you again,

Katrina Auburn

Resident and business owner

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Council members and Mayor Soo- I would like to voice my whole-hearted support for the new civic building and the efforts to secure funding for the construction project. We had a recent election, and the majority (a LARGE majority, at that) voted for the council members and the Mayor, which was a vote of confidence in the direction that this council and Mayor are taking the town. This alone suggests that the majority of townspeople are behind you, and that a manufactured controversy popped upon you at the last hour does not reflect the true desires of most of our citizens. The additional moneys for the "Communications and command center" aspect of the project have been secured thru grants, at no extra cost, and should give us confidence that the Mayor and council are working on our behalf with many hours of hard work and dedication. Please continue in the direction of delivering a new Civic Building for the town of Twisp.

Sincerely, Dwight Filer

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I am totally in favor of moving forward with the new civic building. Looking to future needs of our community, it is important to do this upgrade and expansion. I applaud the council and mayor for all of their hard work in bringing the project to this point.

Annie Filer

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Dear Twisp Council members:

I am writing you as a long-time Twisp business owner and taxpayer to register my strong support for the planned new civic building for our town.

Respectfully,

John Bonica, Tappi

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To The Twisp Council:

I'm sure you have all seen our truck parked in front of City Hall the last few days and are aware that we have been passing around a petition pertaining to the USDA Loan Resolution #21-667. You folks need to know that in the last four days we have been able to get 210 plus signatures from residents that have serious concerns/or object to this taking place. It's not too late to reconsider and stop this loan process. People are truly concerned and have reservations on additional taxation, not to mention the large amount of money that will be spent on such a project.

You as Council, are to represent the people and what's best for the Town, it's not too late to start.

Thank you,

Mark and Leone Edson

Twisp

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I have discovered that the only way one can be added to the agenda at council is to:

Be like minded and think ONLY inside the box.

Be married to one of the council members and be threatened with divorce if they can't be added....

I would easily forgive the council for unwisely spending the dollar amount that you have.

And for that you have 2 sets of plans and a bunch of pretty pictures, and a building that is over budget...

(does the offer to buy the old bank building look like a maybeweshoulda???)

Well, would you forgive me?????

But to foolishly spend what you are going to do tonight, that we the low people will have to pay back, for the next 40 years.....

By natural attrition, ask who of you at the desk tonight will still be alive to see this paid off??

A serious question to answer....

Well, I asked you once, would you forgive me?????

Mark Edson

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I support the TWISP Civic Building.

Jane Hill, TWISP resident

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Hello Twisp town leaders,

As a full time resident of Twisp for the last 14 years, I am in full support of moving forward on the new town hall complex construction. I know it is an essential infrastructure upgrade that will house many elements that support our town and the community beyond. Every year building costs will go up so the sooner we begin the project the better. I am impressed with the grant raising and creative funding solutions in place so far. We cannot afford NOT to do this project as a vital investment in our great town.

Please disregard the vocal minority who oppose this and are spreading misinformation. Everyone I know supports this project.

Thank you for all your good work!

Sincerely,

Kate Posey

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Dear Council,

Please list Bill and me as being in favor of a new civic building for Twisp. As one of the largest land owners in the town, we understand the need and encourage the building of a new

building.

Signed,

William and Diana Hottell

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My name is Jasmine Minbashian and I live and work in Twisp. My family and I own a house and property in town. I strongly support the Twisp Civic Center and urge you to proceed with a contract to get it built. It is not acceptable to expect our town employees to work in a place that is unsafe and unhealthy. Also, consecutive years of fire emergencies have shown us that we are in great need of better infrastructure to support our community in times of crisis. We can expect to see more large wildfires in our future and it would be a grave mistake not to learn from our past experiences and prepare for the future.

Supporting the civic center is forward-thinking the responsible thing to do.

Thank you,

Jasmine Minbashian

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Having read the proposal to borrow \$1.5 million from USDA, I have to voice my opposition. While the need for a new town hall facility is not in question, the assumption of such a large loan is. This loan would unduly burden the residents of Twisp. \$4.6 million total cost seems exorbitant for a relatively small structure. Please reconsider.

Nancy Dicus

\_\_\_\_\_  
Hello,

I am writing in support of the Town of Twisp civic building. As a resident of Burgar St., I would like to know that emergency resources are nearby and ready to be activated in the next crisis.

I also support the civic building so that the people working for the city of Twisp can continue their challenging work as we grow our community. At the least, our city officials should have a safe and healthy environment to work in.

Thank you,

Brynne Edwards

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To the Town of Twisp Mayor and Council Members,

I support the construction of a new Civic Building. Given the state of the current building and our ongoing need for emergency communication and planning, a new Civic Building seems like money well spent.

Justin Porter

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I want to let all those involved in the decision to build a new town hall for the City of Twisp that as a home owner, a tax payer, and a voter here in Twisp, I am strongly in support of the construction of the new town hall.

We need it NOW. The cost will never be lower. The large amount and structure of the financing and funding for the project is a huge positive. We literally cannot afford to give this project up. Our little city is showing towns all over the western United States what can be achieved with imagination, hard work on the part of our community leaders, and a vision for the future that is every year a bit better than the past year. Let's keep that going.

I reiterate, I strongly support this project and I want it to begin as soon as possible.

Please share this e-mail with my representatives who are making the decision on the new town hall tonight.

Patrick M. Hannigan

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Hello, I'm a Twisp resident and I support building a new Civic Center!

Thank you,

Kathleen Manseau

**Mayor's Report:**

Mayor Ing-Moody reported that she continues to be in touch with the Department of Health on current Covid updates. She reported that there is sad news in the Valley this week as we had our first Covid-related death. She also reported that the State Auditors will be meeting with the Finance Committee as they begin wrapping up the audit. She said that staff have been doing a fantastic job preparing for a potential move of Town Hall dependent on decisions made for the Civic Building tonight.

**Staff Reports:**

Director Denham reported that there is a Town-wide curbside chipping event happening on April 12<sup>th</sup>. He is excited to use the chipper that was purchased last year with an Ecology grant. The Town has partnered with Clean Air Methow to help with direct advertising to residents and more information should be coming out soon.

Council Member Easton asked Director Denham about the sludge being put on bare fields this year. Denham responded that they just made it this year and there is still some room for storage on the fields. He hopes to have new equipment installed by next year to eliminate the storage issue.

**Commission/Committee/Board Reports:**

Council Member Cordes met with Tree Board Chairman Dwight Filer and Joshua Portman to discuss upcoming projects. She said that Filer has requested that people contact him with any leads on potential housing for the 5 interns that will be working in the Valley this summer.

Council Member Easton attended the Climate Task Force Economy meeting. He said they are working with TwispWorks to create a brochure for tourists with tips to help lessen the climate impact in the Valley while they are visiting. He also attended the Twisp Chamber of Commerce meeting where they are cautiously optimistic about tourism this summer. There were 6 businesses that pitched business plans to the Methow Investment Network and 3 have been fully funded. He said TwispWorks continues to explore affordable housing options. Chamber Marketing Director Jamie Pettito is exploring opportunities for businesses on Glover Street to get through the summer. It might include an outdoor seating area or something similar to what was proposed last year. He also said the Chamber is planning to have a table at the Okanogan County Fair this year to help promote tourism in the Valley.

Council Member Studen attended the TranGo meeting. He said they have a tentative date of April 26 to resume regular transportation routes. They said as long as they can safely run busses while keeping the drivers and the public safe, they will do so. Currently they are running on a reservation only system where you can ask for a specific ride.

Council Member Caswell attended the Planning Commission meeting where he said all three items discussed are on the agenda tonight so he will let those items speak for themselves.

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS:**

**Discussion/Action: Planning Commission – Chapter 14.05 TMC Administrative Procedures:**

Planner Kurt Danison said that the Planning Commission started this process over a year ago when the Council asked for an update to the Administrative Procedures code to update the process and incorporate

the new standards in the chart. He said the Planning Commission worked with Council Member Smith to ensure that all of the processes were addressed in the code.

Council Member Caswell moved to approve the updates made to Chapter 14.05 TMC as presented. The motion was seconded by Council Member Cordes and passed unanimously.

This will be followed up with an ordinance at the next meeting.

**Discussion/Action: Planning Commission – Twisp River Suites Planned Development Modification #3:**

Planner Danison stated that this modification incorporates the parking lot that was part of the old Twisp Pub parcel that Joe Marver split to incorporate into his Twisp River Suites Planned Development for required parking. He said that without this modification they cannot accept the Final Plat.

Council Member Caswell moved to approve Twisp River Suites PD Modification #3 as presented. The motion was seconded by Council Member Studen and passed unanimously.

**Discussion/Action: Planning Commission – Sign Code:**

Planner Danison is representing the Planning Commission who has been tasked with updating the sign code as their next project. He is asking for clarification on what was previously requested to be changed with the sign code.

Council Member Smith stated that he would think that pulling the previous draft of the sign code would show some notes on what was requested to be updated. He said from what he remembers the sign code needs to have language that is clear and concise to ensure that it is an enforceable code. He said there are issues of setbacks, safety at intersections, political signage and sign standards that also need to be considered. Council Member Studen said he would like to see issues with temporary signs such as sandwich board signs, banners and all other non-permanent signs be addressed. Deputy Clerk Grennell will follow up with previous draft and talking points for the Planning Commission at their next meeting.

**Discussion/Action: Civic Building/EOC Construction Contract Award: Leone & Keeble:**

Mayor Ing-Moody expressed the need to address the questions that have come forward over the weekend regarding the Civic Building / EOC project. She stated her belief in transparency of government as it relates to the importance of trust with the community. She said it's apparent that with all of the public comments that have been read tonight and discussions on social media this past weekend there is a need to clarify some things. She would like Council to have all the facts before them as they make a decision tonight regarding the project. She has asked staff to compile a list of questions from social media and what they have been asked in the community so that the true facts can be shared tonight. She said that, as always, she will endeavor to answer any additional questions that anyone may have.

She stated that this project is a critical and important piece in the Town's history and acknowledged that the Town is about to undertake one of the biggest projects the town has ever seen, which had started with Phase 1 of the project – the construction of the new Public Works Shop.

She showed a PowerPoint presentation of an image of the truck that has been parked in front of Town Hall for a number of days with a sign misrepresenting the facts of the project. She corrected the misinformation with the facts: the project cost for the construction of the Civic Building is \$4,620,122.27 with total available funds of \$3,120,122.27 which leaves a funding gap of \$1,500,000.00. She said these are the numbers and the facts, any other numbers are not correct.

The apparent low bidder is Leone & Keeble with a final recommended contract award amount of \$3,518,400. Sales tax, contingency, construction management, and other project costs total \$1,101,722.27 to equal \$4,620,122.27.

She said that in 2020 the town had put the project out to bid which came out too high and a decision was made to value engineer the project and go out to bid again the following year. The town had spent years securing mostly grant funds to pay for the project so as not to put an undue burden on the taxpayers of the town.

She explained that previously, council approved a loan application from USDA Rural Development in the amount of \$750,000 which would have covered the needed funding gap from the previous bid once value engineering was completed. Recently when the bid awards came out, the bids came in higher than anticipated again and the town realized they would need to increase the loan application an additional \$750,000 making the request up to 1.5 million dollars in order to cover the new funding gap. Council had passed that request unanimously. She shared that she and staff had a meeting today with USDA Rural Development to hear on the status of the loan request and asked Clerk Kilmer to give the update.

Kilmer stated that the reason for the meeting with USDA was to check in on the status of the application. He said they were told that the application is being processed and that we were given verbal affirmation that nothing is standing in the way of funding the project. They will be issuing a letter within the next 2 weeks that will entail an obligation of funds.

Mayor Ing-Moody said that in the meantime, she has been working hard on finding additional funding. The intent is still to not incur additional debt for this project. The overall desire for the project is to have zero debt. Unfortunately, with the current pandemic, building prices have increased by 20% within the past year which has caused the increase in the overall cost. She wanted to answer a few questions that have been brought to her attention.

1. How much will the total project cost? Mayor Ing-Moody said she already stated this amount earlier in the conversation.
2. How much of the total project cost is being funded by the Town and or it's citizens? How much is being paid for by grants? Mayor Ing-Moody pointed to the numbers she had given earlier in the meeting.
3. Is the amount needed to build the building available in the town budget or do you have to get a loan? Currently a loan is needed, but if we do not use the loan or pay back anything owed there is no penalty.
4. If you must get a loan, how will it be paid back – for how long, and will it increase property taxes for town residents? Mayor Ing-Moody explained that loan repayments will be paid for in future budgets. However, the idea is still not to need the loan or incur any debt. She noted that there has been misinformation spread about the Town raising taxes to pay for the debt and said this is absolutely false. A voter-approved bond is needed to have taxes raised to pay for the new facility, which Council had not decided to do. Additionally, the Town has had the intention all along to piece together as many grant funded options as possible so as not to burden our residents with any financial or tax burden. This partially explains why it has taken so many years to get to the point where we are just about able to construct the project. She warned against listening to individuals purposely spreading false information on taxation as a means to feed on fears and purposely attempt to sabotage the project for personal reasons.
5. Is it true that the town cannot afford to open the pool, but can afford a new building? Does that mean that the pool will never open because the town can not afford it now? Mayor Ing-Moody responded that the Town always works on multiple projects at the same time and that one project does not necessarily preclude another's success. Funds received for the Civic Building project cannot be used towards another purpose as they were specifically appropriated for that purpose based on the merit and need of this facility alone. She said that a potential pool re-opening is still being discussed.
6. How can the Town justify putting this small town of 1000 residents millions of dollars in debt? Mayor Ing-Moody responded that the Town continuously has multi-million dollar projects under

construction, requiring some debt. However, unlike those projects, she reiterated that the Town continues to seek additional funds so that no or very little debt would be incurred.

7. How was the architecture chosen? Some residents feel the design does not fit in with the town. Steve Roth from Architects West explained that they designed the building based on what the residents wanted through several public meetings and forums. Materials and aesthetic came out of these meetings and public comments submitted. He explained that Architects West took cost into consideration and made it as cost effective as possible by keeping it a single story which eliminates stairs and the need for an elevator. He stated that with rising building costs this past several years, it has been hard to know what the final cost of the building would be.

Council Member Studen asked what the repayment schedule on the loan, at worse case scenario, would be assuming that the Town borrow the full requested amount? Clerk Kilmer said for the full loan amount of \$1.5 million it would be a 40-year annual repayment amount of \$56,055 which amounts to \$4,671.25 per month.

Council Member Caswell asked how it to work into the budget and where will this money would come from? Council Member Smith, who is on the Finance Committee, answered that the budget is approved on an annual basis although they do project out into the future for things like loans. He said the money would be part of the regular budget as an anticipated expenditure. He asserted that the millions of dollars of appropriated funds the Town has received from the State can only be spent on a new building and that these funds cannot be re-allocated for any other project. He said he feels that even if there were some debt incurred, the added cost would still result in an overall net gain since the value of the building would put the Town way ahead for our citizens. The value of the building long-term, far outweighs the additional cost to us locally since it remains a fraction of what amount we have received to construct it. Mayor Ing-Moody agreed with Smith saying that this building is needed and it is the right time to build it. We would lose more than just the monies received in funding at this point since it is a recognized need for our community and we would never be able to afford it on our own. She reiterated that the available funding is not able to be used for renovations on the existing building nor could it be used to purchase and renovate another building, contrary what some people have been misstating.

Council Member Caswell stated his belief that it would be a disservice to the Town and its residents not to move forward and build the Civic Building/EOC.

Council Member Easton said he doesn't see the cost of building going down anytime soon. He sees another fire or crisis happening in the future and instead of worrying about how to manage the town during a crisis, having an adequate building would allow us to focus on the job at hand. He thinks building the project is good for the future of the town.

Council Member Caswell moved to award the Civic Building/EOC Construction Contract to Leone & Keeble as presented, pending complete funding. The motion was seconded by Council Member Cordes and passed unanimously.

**Discussion/Action: Sports Complex Phase 1 Construction Contract Award: Northwest Turf Solutions:**

Director Denham stated that with a successful partnership with RCO and Methow Valley School District, the Sports Complex will be built this year. The fields will not be able to be used this season, but that was to be expected when using grass versus turf.

Director Denham is recommending the Construction Contract Award for the Sports Complex Phase 1 to Northwest Turf Solutions in the amount of \$588,893.84 with bid alternates.

Council Member Caswell moved to award Phase I of the Sports Complex Construction Award to Northwest Turf Solutions. The motion was seconded by Council Member Studen and passed unanimously.

Council Member Easton wanted to commend Denham for finding a cost saving solution that works for this project and all projects that the town is a part of.

**Discussion/Action: Small Asset Disposal:**

Mayor Ing- Moody stated that the photos in the packet are of the excess furniture that will not be used in the temporary location nor the new building. Per the asset disposal policy anything that is less than \$200 in value can be disposed of. She asked Council approval for disposal as per policy.

Council Member Studen moved to approve asset disposal for the items listed. The motion was seconded by Council Member Cordes and passed unanimously.

**Consent Agenda:**

- Accounts Payable/Payroll
- Minutes – 2/23/21, 3/09/21

Vouchers audited and certified by the auditing officer as required by RCW 42.24.080, and those expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090, have been recorded on a listing, which has been made available to the Town Council. The following voucher/checks are approved for payment by a majority vote on this 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2021.

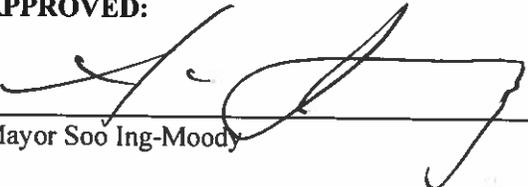
Payroll	EFT# 606-613	8616.00	3/15/21
Accounts Payable	EFT # 637	683.00	3/23/21
Accounts Payable	Warrant# 36058-36083	40795.22	3/23/21

Council Member Caswell moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Council Member Studen and passed unanimously.

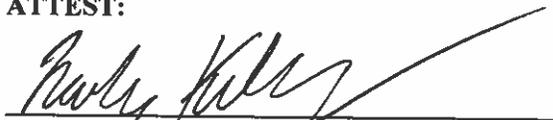
**Adjournment:**

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Ing – Moody adjourned the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

**APPROVED:**

  
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Mayor Soo Ing-Moody

**ATTEST:**

  
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Clerk/Treasurer Randy Kilmer