

Harlowton City Council Minutes
July 12, 2016
Harlowton City Hall

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council held July 12, 2016 at 7:00 pm opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Minutes of the June 28, 2016 meeting were approved as written.

Resident Joe Brouillette asked if there has been any progress on the West-End SID project. Jeff informed him that nothing has been done so far. Joe also asked about the decision of the council to continue with business licenses. Jeff informed him that a “straw-poll” had been done and the council had voted in favor of Jeff continuing to do research to present to the council. This “straw-poll” did not change the previous decision the council had made. At that time Jeff had informed the council that it would be a while before he was able to complete the business license research. That is the reason business licenses are not currently on the agenda.

Ian updated the council on the Phase III water project. He also informed the council that the south well is back in service. Shutting off and turning on the water valves for the water project as well as the south well getting put back into service could cause some black water issues. The city has not heard back from the funding agencies yet on whether the additional blocks can be added to the phase III water project.

There were no committee reports.

Jeff opened the public hearing for the rate changes to the water and sewer charges. In summary the water base rate will increase \$6.50 and the sewer base rate will decrease \$2.00 for a net effect of a \$4.50 base rate increase. The required posting of the notices had been done in the Times Clarion as well as individual letters being sent to the rate payers. The city had received one letter in protest to the rate increase. The protest was in concern for residents on fixed incomes. Jeff stated that he is still trying to contact HRDC in regards to helping administer a utility share program for the city. Paul Otten stated he felt the base rate changes were necessary to pay for the project. Jeff Sell presented the 2014 Montana Statewide Water and Wastewater Rate Study and commented that the city of Harlowton’s base rates appear to be lower than most of the other cities and towns of comparable size. Many similarly sized municipalities are paying a base rate of \$90-\$120 per month. Bob Jones commented that while living in Billings their rates were higher. There were no additional comments during the public hearing.

RESOLUTION 2016-15 RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF HARLOWTON, MONTANA TO INCREASE RATES FOR THE USERS OF THE CITY’S WATER SYSTEM was presented. Bryan Tomlinson made the motion to accept resolution 2016-15. Bob Jones seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2016-16 RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF HARLOWTON, MONTANA TO DECREASE RATES FOR THE USERS OF THE CITY’S SEWER SYSTEM was presented. John Anderson made the motion to accept resolution 2016-16. Paul Otten seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2016-17 RESOLUTION RELATING TO \$785,000 WATER SYSTEM REVENUE BONDS (DNRC DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING LOAN PROGRAM), CONSISTING OF

\$392,500 SUBORDINATE LIEN TAXABLE SERIES 2016A BOND, AND \$392,500 SERIES 2016B BOND; AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE AND FIXING THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS THEREOF was presented. Bob Jones made the motion to accept resolution 2016-17. Jim Kalitowski seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The city clerk and deputy clerk are requesting that utility bills only be sent to property owners. Jeff presented that of the fourteen responses received from Montana communities, seven will bill only property owners, seven will bill either property owners or renters. Bryan Tomlinson made the motion that the city only bill property owners. It was asked how the office staff would implement the process. Kathie responded that it would be through attrition; as renters move out the utility bill will be put back into the property owners' names. Bob Jones seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Todd Keller and Sharlett Dale presented information on how Wheatland Memorial Healthcare had been researching available possibilities for the Armory. Bryan Tomlinson asked if there would be a possibility for the facility to be used in some way for a veterans' satellite clinic. Todd informed them he was researching this. As the Armory will only be sold at fair market value and cannot be donated, Wheatland Memorial Healthcare would probably not be able to afford the building.

Jeff and Paul had met with the military affairs office on July 8, 2016 along with the county commissioners regarding the armory. They were informed that due to new federal regulations armories must be situated on at least 12 acres. This armory only sits on 5.3 acres. There are additional reasons that this armory is also closing but they were not disclosed. The armory will be offered for sale to government agencies before being offered to the general public. An appraisal for the armory will hopefully be available the end of July.

Ian informed the council that the crew have been trimming trees ahead of the water project and dealing with wind damage issues. The water project is taking about 90% of their time. James Swanson's last day was July 10, 2016. Jeff Perry has been hired and started on July 11, 2016. The south well is up and operating. The VFD needed to be changed and there was a wiring issue that was fixed.

Bryan Tomlinson asked if there were funds available to pay for fuel to haul the donated top soil to the playground area. It would take approximately 15-20 load to get the 300 yards of topsoil delivered. John Anderson estimated fuel costs of approximately \$60 per round trip. Jeff said he would look into the playground budget to see what was available.

Discussion regarding citizens' fences that are on city property and will be in the way of the phase III water project was held. Consensus of the council remains that the city will not pay for the cost of replacing the fences as they are on city property. The city will try to do as little damage to the fences as possible during the water project. Property owners will be notified before the contractors begin working on the water lines in that area.

The next city council meeting will be held on July 26, 2016 at 7:00pm in the city hall. The DNRC requests to be on the agenda to report on the tree survey done about two years ago. They were unable to attend the July 12, 2016 meeting as previously planned.

Jim Kalitowski made a motion to pay the bills, checks #20413-20435 from the June 25, 2016 through July 8, 2016 claims. Paul Otten seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

John Anderson asked if any research had been done on the solar panels at the library. Ian informed him that they have been too busy with the water project. It was discussed that perhaps new solar panels would be a better option as the current ones' technology is outdated. Grants can sometimes be obtained for this.

Jeff Sell clarified to Shelli Randles, editor of the Times Clarion, that the Times Clarion headline in the July 7, 2016 edition reading "Council accepts letter request by newspaper" regarding the letter that was approved for attachment to the June 14, 2016 was incorrect. The letter's contents were not "accepted". It was only approved that the letter submitted by her be included with the minutes of the June 14, 2016 meeting. The contents of the letter were not accepted.

Meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.

Council Members Present:

John Anderson, Bob Jones, Jim Kalitowski, Paul Otten, Bryan Tomlinson

Employees Present:

Ian Reed

Jeff Sell, Mayor

Kathie Newland, Clerk