

Harlowton City Council Minutes
February 11, 2020
Harlowton City Hall

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council, held February 11, 2020 opened at 7:00 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance. Minutes of the January 28, 2020 council meeting were approved as written.

There was no public comment.

Mayor Otten updated the council on Biegel's Bar ownership transfer. Paul reported that he had not had any further communication with Steve Olson. Paul will provide an update to SMDC on the status of the building.

Rob Elwood made the motion to table the variance request from Bryan Tomlinson until more information can be obtained. Ron Teig seconded the motion.

Paul had spoken to Ken Berg regarding the easement through his property for Sixth Street NE to reach the Old Gap Road. Paul will check with Karen Hammel regarding if an easement is assumed (grandfathered) due to it being used for many years or if an easement will need to be developed.

Jack Runner reported that the library has received an HRDC grant to help people obtain their GED. Kathleen and Debbie will be attending the library convention in April. The Washington grant for \$5,000.00 is a matching grant so a fund raiser will be held at Gally's on March 12, 2020 to start raising the matching funds.

Rob Elwood reported that the ordinance committee reviewed section 7 of the water and sewer rules and regulations. The committee will proceed with section 8 at their next meeting. The ordinance committee is requesting that Tucker Town Sewer district potential annexation be added to the next Harlowton City Council meeting agenda.

Ian reported that the RFP for the wetland rail trail concept plan is currently out to bid and a selection panel will review the submitted proposals at 11:00am on February 19, 2020. Jason Seyler of MT DEQ had suggested that funding to clean up asbestos issues in the roundhouse would be more available if the project also includes preservation of the building. An architect has come to look at the structures at the railroad property and suggested that the buildings are rehab-able.

The tree board has received the \$750.00 Arbor Day grant.

Charley Bennett reported that the pool committee has been doing ongoing fund raising. He would like the skimmer repair contract approved so that process can start.

Esther Fischer from the Harlowton Kiwanis Club presented their proposal to fund raise for the Harlowton Pool. The Kiwanis club would like to replace the west sidewalk due to its poor condition. They are proposing replacing it with 12x12 and 12x18 rock pavers, each about 1 ½ inches thick set on a gravel base with sand around the pavers. These pavers could be purchased by pool supporters as a fund raiser. There would be no cost to the city. Esther explained that this project would be completed before the pool opened for the 2020 season. Frank Brouillette made the motion to accept the Harlowton Kiwanis Club's offer to replace the west sidewalk and to raise funds for the project by selling pavers. Jim Kalitowski seconded the motion. There were no further questions or comments. Motion passed unanimously.

The ASP (Americas Swimming Pool Company) contract for fixing the skimmers at the pool was discussed. Some council members had concerns about the contract due to come conflicting information within the contract and that there was no protection to the city for a cap on the cost for repairs. Charley Bennett made the motion to approve the ASP contract so that the Harlowton pool could get placed on their schedule to get the work done timely. After further discussion, Charley Bennett amended his motion to say once the conflicting information was corrected the mayor could sign the contract to proceed with the project. There was no second to the motion. Paul will contact ASP to get a more clearly defined contract proposal for the skimmer repairs.

Paul reported that Jimbo Fisk is interested in purchasing three industrial lots. Paul said an easement for the water line and road would need to be attached to the property before it would be sold. Frank commented that Ron Swickard was interested in purchasing a lot but not for the price that had been determined to be fair market value. Discussion regarding whether to sell the lots or not ensued. Council consensus is to have the remaining industrial lots (currently leased by SilverTip Propane, Cream of the West and Cross County Petroleum) fair market value determined. Paul will contact Julie Woodard (sales agent for Central MT Real Estate) to have a comparative market analysis done.

There is a MT Historic Preservation Grant that the city could apply for to help fund stabilization of the roundhouse at the former Milwaukee railroad property. The council discussed the options it has for the roundhouse as well as other buildings/structures on the property (leaving as is, improving the use-ability and safety by cleaning and maintaining or removal of structures). The council consensus was to preserve the roundhouse and other structures if they are deemed to be usable. After further discussion, the council felt the stabilization of the roundhouse would qualify for a categorical exemption from the environmental review process as “minor repairs, operations and maintenance of existing facilities” and as such felt that applying for this grant would benefit the city and its residents. In addition, an Environmental Certifying Official would need to be designated for this grant. Ron Teig made the motion to determine that the exclusion of “minor repairs, operations and maintenance for existing facilities” would apply to the railroad buildings/structures, the city approve applying for this MHPG grant and that Mayor Paul Otten be designated as the Environmental Certifying Official for this project. There were no questions or comments from the public. Rob Elwood seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Ian Reed informed the council of his resignation as the Harlowton Public Works director effective February 28, 2020. As open positions are posted internally first, Bob Schuchard has indicated his interest in the position. Ian also reported that seasonal park worker Kathy Yates will not be returning this year. An ad for the seasonal park maintenance position as well as an ad for filling a vacant public works position will be posted.

Ian reported that he and Bob had met with Great West Engineer Joel Pilcher to discuss the continuing phase 4 water project.

Ian reported that a funding call will be held on February 12, 2020 at 9:00am for the waste water project. Delays in the process are causing issues with the TSEP funding and the city has to move forward quickly to secure those funds. A meeting with RPA is scheduled for 11:00 on February 14, 2020.

Ian asked if the council was going to continue working on the phased water project. If so they would need to start the PER etc. shortly as 2021 is a legislative year and preliminary work would need to be done in order to write grants for the project.

Charley Bennett asked if work was being done on the railbed west of town (toward Klock's). Ian said that Martin Excavating will be working on it in the spring. Ian also reported a possible grant to help pay for a portion of the project.

Rob Elwood asked if Ian still was recommending additional paving of streets be done while an asphalt company was here working on the phase 4 water project. Ian indicated that he still feels it would be a good idea to do a larger project than the 2020 fuel tax funds would cover.

Mayor Otten did not have anything specific to report.

The next council meeting will be February 25, 2020 at 7:00pm at the Harlowton City Hall. Discussion on the "Tucker Town Sewer District" annexation will be placed on the agenda as the ordinance committee requested.

Ron Teig made the motion to pay the claims, checks #22339-22354, from January 25, 2020 through February 7, 2020. There was no further questions or comments. Frank Brouillette seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:17 pm.

Council Members Present: Charley Bennett (via telephone), Frank Brouillette, Rob Elwood, Jim Kalitowski, Jack Runner, Ron Teig
Employees Present: Ian Reed

Paul Otten, Mayor

Kathie Newland, Clerk