

January 24, 2024
Harlowton City Hall

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council was held on January 23, 2024. The meeting opened at 7:00pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of the January 9, 2024 Council meeting were approved as written.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Merrilee Swickard brought forward adjustments to last week's minutes, Mayor Otten and Council approved the minutes as they were written, no adjustments were made.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Library: Councilmember Johnny Cooney not present.

Ordinance: Has not met.

Pool: Council member Charlie Bennett had a quote for the epoxy of the pool. \$68K for the leveling and epoxy of the exterior of the pool. He is willing to get an additional quote. He also got quotes for the handrails in the pool, which is \$6800. Bennet also received a quote for the bridge on the boomer trail. He is concerned that the bridge is a tripping hazard, he believes reinforcing the bridge with concrete and rebar would prevent having to replace for a decent number of years. A discussion then ensued about the accurate length of the bridge. Public works director Bob Schuchard also received a bid for the replacement of the bridge, which was \$6500. The difference in quotes was due to the materials that would be used. Bennett asked the council to set a date to have the bridge completed and updated. A discussion then ensued about the rot and decay of the wood on the bridge and if it needed to be removed or worked over.

Tree Board: Nothing new to report.

Wetlands Rail Trail: Council member Ron Teig stated he had noticed the bevers had cleared the area pretty good. Public Works director Bob stated they have one more bever to catch.

UPDATE ON PAST AGENDA TOPICS:

UPDATE ON DECAY ORDINANCE COMPLAINTS: Deputy- Clerk Sarah Williams discussed her findings from Montana code annotated about junk vehicles. She let the council know that she was waiting for a call back from Jay Dempster, the gentleman that would be removing the junk vehicles, to clarify if we need a title to dispose of the vehicles. Councilmember Roger Kitts let the Council know that if the junk vehicle was taken, the only reason we would need a title was if we were to want compensation. Council member Charley Bennett stated he would like this to be recorded in bold. **CITY COUNCILMEMBERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS ARE NOT EXEMPT FROM THE ORDINANCE, OR ANY OTHER CITY ORDINANCES.**

UPDATE ON PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED ITEMS: Councilmember Charley Bennett got information on the cardboard compactor; the safety feature has a sensor that can tell when items are being placed in and does not require any operation. The area where items can be placed inside the compactor is small, so it would not be a hazard to the community. He also informed the Council that the company will also come and collect the bundles of cardboard when the compactor is full. Council member Frank Brouillette asked if they will also maintain the compactor, and if we are able to get the owner to come and answer questions for the Council. Charley stated that he would ask to have him attend the next meeting to answer any questions. Councilmember Roger Kitts suggested that a different location be chosen for

where the compactor will be placed. Julie Berg suggested the City Shop as a location, but the city public works director Bob stated they do not have the space for the compactor.

Attorney Brent Brooks updated the Councilmembers on the RV and Trailer street parking ordinance suggestions sent from Council person Frank Brouillette and incorporated it into the ordinance. Mr. Brooks asked if there were any additional updates that the Council would like added to the ordinance. Council member Frank Brouillette was concerned that the ordinance does not cover the individuals who utilize their trailers everyday as opposed to the community members that are leaving trailers for months on end. Mr. Brooks wanted to clarify that we can always amend the ordinance. Public Works director Schuchard brought up that the City has a parking ordinance already in place, which would cover any other trailers parked inappropriately. Attorney Brent Brooks informed us that we should communicate with the Sheriff's Department regarding vehicles and trailers that are parked for extended periods of time.

Mayor Otten suggested having a first reading on the ordinance at the next meeting and asked for Council opinion. Attorney Brooks let the council know that at any time after the ordinance is in place they can adjust or amend with a resolution.

Councilmember Frank Brouillette brought forward the option to sell city property, to assist with the housing shortage. Mr. Brouillette suggested that there would stipulations with the sale of the property. Council person Charley Bennett asked which properties were for sale? Brouillette discussed the properties' locations and the only issue brought forward was that one of the properties that the City owns has a well on it, that the City would need to keep. Public works director Bob Schuchard also informed the council that should that lot be sold, the water at this potential property would be dirty due to it being at the end of the water line. Brouillette also discussed the size of the plots and what the potential revenue would be from the sale of them. Discussion ensued about the sale price of the lots. Public works director Bob Schuchard suggested speaking with our realtor, as did city attorney Brent Brooks.

Deputy Clerk Sarah Williams presented Tree Board applications. She stated that since Public Works director Bob Schuchard and Councilmember Ron Teig were already members of the board, she felt they would be appropriately qualified to accept or deny applications. The final vote, and announcement of members will be held at the next Council meeting.

Attorney Brooks discussed the updates of the Burroughs property sale. He informed the council on the sale, he stated that they received all the final documents and details from Sweetgrass title. Mr. Brooks will be speaking with Mark tomorrow, and they will hopefully be closing in the next few weeks.

NEW BUSINESS: No new business.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT: Public works director Bob Schuchard stated that sewer project was pushed back due to inclement weather. Also, the city crew checked and cleaned the lights at the lagoon, and they need to be replaced. He believes they will be around \$4000. Schuchard will also be researching the rules and regulations on the water sampling of all the homes that have issues with water, he is under the impression that the owners can be shown that all the water samples for the City are passing and are up to compliance. Schuchard believes that the homeowner should be liable for the cost associated with the water testing. Mayor Otten stated someone called complaining about the water causing skin problems. Council member Frank Brouillette informed the city that it is caused by the hard water, and it is the owner's responsibility to purchase a water softener. Public works director Bob also stated that himself and Assistant Public Works Director Jeff Perry had to begin knocking on doors due to vehicles not moving to allow for Harlowton City Council Meeting January 24, 2024

snow removal. He stated that the ordinance is not being enforced, and they are having the same individuals causing an issue and not moving their vehicles. Schuchard encouraged the council to begin enforcing the public on the snow removal ordinance.

REPORT OF THE CLERK-TREASURER: Clerk-Treasurer Petersen began by asking everyone on the Council if they had gotten a chance to go over the RAIL document that was sent out. She then stated if anyone needed help locating that and or had any issues accessing it to please get ahold of her. Ms. Petersen then stated that with the help of Public Works Director Bob Schuchard they have written up an official water shut off/on document. This will give prices of water turn On's and turn off's as well as a breakdown of why we charge these amounts. Treasurer Petersen then mentioned that we have now started to use a work-order document for the Public Works team. This will ensure we have a paper trail regarding work that needs to be done. Public works director Schuchard mentioned when Ian Reed was the director the city has a document similar and caused the Public works team to be called for issues that were not pressing, or that did not pertain to the Public Works. Discussion ensued between Petersen and Schuchard. Treasurer Petersen had one more question to present to the board, she asked if the City of Harlowton wanted to become members for The Chamber of Commerce and split the cost with the Library. Attorney Brooks stated the general idea would be ok, there might be a conflict of interest, he suggested trying it for a year and see how it goes. Petersen stated she will ask other City Clerks if they are currently members of their Towns Chamber and report back.

MAYOR'S REPORT: Mayor Otten stated he got a call from a city resident, that was disgruntled about a council member that was taking photos of his property. Councilmember Charley Bennett had a conversation with the property owner that did not want to claim the garbage that was in his yard. Charley stated he was allowed to take photos of whatever he wanted. The homeowner and Charley then got into a heated discussion. resident proceeded to call the mayor and express his frustration.

No report from the sheriff's office.

ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING:

Tree Board Nominations, Wetland Rail Trail, Recycle Compactor, Speed Signs, First reading or Ordinance 01-2024 RV & Trailer Street Parking, Potential sale of City owned lots, Burroughs Land Sale.

CLAIMS:

Council member Frank made a motion to pass the claims. Ron Teig and Katheleen Schreiber seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Councilmembers Present: Ron Teig, Charley Bennett, Rodger Kitts, Frank Brouillette, Kathleen Schreiber,

Councilmembers Absent: Johnny Cooney

City Office: Mayor Paul Otten, City Clerk-Treasurer Lexi Petersen, Deputy-Clerk Sarah Williams, Public Works Director Bob Schuchard, City Attorney Brent Brooks

Public Present: Merrilee Swickard, Julie Berg, Chad Roelfs


Paul Otten, Mayor


Lexi Petersen, Clerk-Treasurer