

Harlowton City Council Minutes
February 9, 2021
Library Conference Room

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council, held February 9, 2021 opened at 7:00 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance. Minutes of the council meeting on January 26, 2021 were approved as written.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment. Council member Frank Brouillette asked about bids on lots by the Cream of the West. He inquired about the new floodplain map and whether it would affect the Fair Market Value of the properties. Mayor Paul Otten stated that it would. A discussion took place regarding the new floodplain map and areas affected by it. Paul presented copies of the new FEMA floodplain map for the Council to review. He also read the letter from DNRC regarding the map. There would be a Public meeting, a commenting period and then eventually a formal adoption of the map over the coming months.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mayor Paul Otten updated the council on Biegel's Bar ownership transfer. A letter had been drawn up by City Attorney Karen Hammel to send via certified mail to Steve Olson. A discussion took place regarding whether or not the City or Toggery (where the Pharmacy is) buildings had any shared walls with the Bar building. It is believed that neither of them do. An easement would be allowed on the property once the Bar building is demolished to allow access to the Toggery building for services.

Paul asked the Pool Manager Hiring Committee for an update. Council member Jack Runner stated that there was no new news to report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Jack reported that there was no new news since the last Council meeting since the Library Board will meet next week. The Library had a new bookshelf built recently and it is already full of books. The library orders 75-100 new books each month.

Frank stated that the Ordinance committee met. A continued discussion took place regarding the State Marijuana use and dispensaries within City limits.

Council member Charley Bennett gave his report on the pool. Shipment of the new heaters and diving board (by Thompson Pools) are being delayed due to a hold up with distribution centers and COVID-related issues.

Public Works Director Bob Schuchard stated that there was no news to report on the Tree Board.

Council member Ron Teig stated that there was no news to report on the Wetlands Rail Trail.

NEW BUSINESS

1) The FEMA map looked at earlier in the meeting was discussed further. The Council members discussed reading the map and issues with clear visibility due to colors/patterns. Paul stated that

later on there would be a public meeting at the Courthouse and that Page Dringman would probably be present for that meeting.

2) A discussion took place regarding City owned land for sale/lease. The industrial area by where Dempster rents land was discussed. The Fair Market Value of the land was discussed and how the new floodplain lines might affect the land values.

3) Jack has a meeting set up with the County Commissioner, Jeff Sell, regarding the Inter-Local Agreement between the City and County. It was discussed that if Page Dringman helps the City, the agreement is that the City would pay Wheatland County and then in turn Wheatland County would pay Sweet Grass County for her services. County Attorney Lynn Grant would need to draw up an agreement to be signed by all parties. Jack made a motion for this agreement to be set up. Frank seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously by council. Jack will get this agreement set up with the County so that the City can sign it.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT

Public Works Director Bob Schuchard gave a report. Lots of snow removal going on. The metal detector broke and is about \$900.00 It was old and a new one will be charged to the sewer/park funds. The sand truck broke down so no sand had been poured lately. Paxton Wojtowick had brought it back recently but it will not start. A discussion took place regarding certain areas that would need to be annexed into the City in order to have access to City water/sewer.

MAYOR REPORT

Paul presented a letter from the Montana Leagues of Cities and Towns regarding a service line warranty program. The program would insure the water and sewer lines for residents for areas of their property not covered by the City. The prices start at \$6.75 a month with “full coverage” being about \$30/month. There is a 5% discount if the year is paid in full. The Council agreed that is would be good to present to the citizens of Harlowton.

Paul brought up the Wharton Asphalt bill (\$114,104.00) from work done in the Summer of 2020 on A Ave and D Ave. BARSAA funds allocated from the Fiscal Year 2020 budget would cover \$31,227.00 and BARSAA funds (\$30,654.50) would be allocated from the Fiscal Year 2021 (due to be received in March 2021). (After both years of BARSAA funds are applied, the total still owed to Wharton would be \$52,222.50.) Discussion took place regarding how to pay the remaining balance to Wharton. In the past when the work was being done, the Council had discussed taking out a loan to pay the bill. Paul stated that he was reluctant to take out the payment from the current Street Maintenance fund of \$80,000 and that he would prefer to instead take a loan out. At the end of the fiscal year in June, the funds could be reevaluated and possibly a lump sum be paid back to the loan. Frank suggested that the Credit Union also be looked at for a loan to find the best interest rates. Paul stated that he would look into Citizens Bank and Tri-County Credit Union to find out what the best loan would be.

Regarding upcoming elections for Mayor, as well as the Wards covered by Jim Kalitowski, Frank Brouillette and Charley Bennett, Paul stated that he had reached out to County Clerk/Recorder Mary Miller for due dates. Jim stated that he more than likely would not be running.

Paul stated that City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco was coming up to the end of her 6-month probationary period as of February 19, 2021 and would be due for a raise. Her current wages of \$12.89/hr were proposed to increase to \$13.50/hr per her employment contract. Frank inquired about what the wages of the Deputy Clerk currently were and that the Clerk-Treasurer’s wages should be at least that, if not more. Ron agreed. Frank made a motion for the wage increase to \$13.50/hr and Ron seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Paul stated that in order to protect the pay station at Chief Joseph Park from weather damage, Bob would be creating a cover. He would create plans and bring it to the Council for approval.

ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

The next council meeting will be February 23, 2021 at 7:00pm.

CLAIMS

Frank made a motion for the claims from January 25, 2021 through February 5, 2021 to be approved for payment. Jack seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously by council.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10pm.

Council Members Present: Charley Bennett (via phone), Jim Kalitowski, Jack Runner, Frank Brouillette, Ron Teig, Allison Jones

City Office: Mayor Paul Otten, City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco, Public Works Director Bob Schuchard

Public Present: Dan Edwards, Times-Clarion reporter

Paul Otten, Mayor

Lara Brisco, Clerk-Treasurer