

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council was held on September 14, 2021. The meeting opened at 7:00 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance. Minutes of the August 24, 2021 Council minutes were approved as written.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bill Jones stated that he would like to address the Council regarding upholding the current Decay Ordinance. Bill stated that in the past there had been “clean up days” where the entire community got together to clean up neglected areas. Bill stated that the house on 3rd St that is poorly constructed of various materials and falling apart be addressed. Bill would like to see the Council step up and enforce the decay ordinance on properties that are being neglected. Mayor Paul Otten stated that it would be made a priority in the Ordinance Committee after current issues are addressed. Discussion took place regarding the legality of enforcing the Decay Ordinance on the 3rd St property owner. Bill was encouraged to attend future Ordinance meetings.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1) Mayor Paul Otten stated that there was no new news from Snowy Mountain Development Company regarding the City property formerly known as Biegel’s Bar.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council member Jack Runner stated that there was nothing new to report on the Library.

Committee Chair Frank Brouillette stated that there was no Ordinance Committee meeting this week due to there being nothing new to discuss.

Council member Charley Bennett gave a report on the pool. The bead blasting had been done by Thompson Pools. They would be bringing the heaters in. The boiler had been removed. Charley would like it to be posted on listserv for another City to possibly purchase.

Public Works Director Bob Schuchard and Council member Ron Teig stated that there was nothing new to report on the Tree Board.

Council member Ron Teig gave a report on the Wetlands Rail Trail. He stated that Pioneer had been down at the Roundhouse area. Paul stated that last week there had been Rail Trail Concept Planning meeting that was very informative.

NEW BUSINESS

1) Joel Pilcher from Great West Engineering opened a Public Hearing regarding the CDBG funding application for Phase 5 of the Water Upgrade Project. Joel presented a handout and stated that CDBG requires a Public Hearing as part of the application process. This application would be due October 2021. The minutes from the Public Hearing would be included in Harlowton’s CDBG application. CDBG requires a 25% match. The Grant can be used for public infrastructure (water/wastewater) or community facilities such as senior centers and nursing homes. CDBG

requires that the project benefit at least 51% low and moderate income people. Harlowton currently has 51.7% low and moderate income population. Only counties, consolidated governments or incorporated towns or cities with populations under 50,000 can apply. The project must address a documented community need. A needs assessment Public Hearing had been held on August 25, 2020 at the Harlowton Public Library. Issues discussed at that meeting included: economic development, housing, infrastructure, types of potential projects funded by CDBG.

The Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) was discussed. The PER is required by regulatory agencies for compliance and funding agencies for grants. The PER develops problem definition, describes the existing system, evaluates alternatives, establishes costs and potential funding, implements a schedule and facilitates public comment.

The current PER recommends the replacement of 25,000 lineal feet of cast iron water main in a phased approach. This allows for maximizing grant funds available. Phase 5 of the project will cover 8400 lineal feet at an estimated cost of \$2,501,000.00.

Joel went over the funding strategies, residential monthly rates, grant eligibility and other loan programs. He presented a map of the prospective area for Phase 5 as well as a list of the other grant/loans in the funding package.

Discussion took place regarding the income survey and whether or not it was accurate. It was thought to be too high. Discussion took place regarding a possible 3rd party survey being done to get a more accurate number.

2) Resolution 2021-05 to apply for CDBG funding was presented to the Council. Frank made a motion to pass the resolution. Ron seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3) Paul presented a document regarding the Central Montana Water Authority and proposed rate increase with the new water source coming to Harlowton. Paul stated that the document did not need to be voted on but should be reviewed and ready to be discussed at a future meeting. Discussion took place regarding what the rate increase would be. Paul stated that it would be an additional \$37.72 to the current base rate. Paul stated that saving in areas of managing wells, pumps, chemicals, testing would possibly decrease that amount. Discussion took place regarding the transition to the new water source and what that would mean for the current wells. Discussion took place regarding areas in the City that would need meters added such as the fire hall and pool. Watering costs at the park were also discussed. Bob stated that a cost assessment would need to be done with Joel to see how the City would save on testing, etc... the new water source.

4) Paul presented the Council the idea of giving the City's essential workers (the Public Works Department) a bonus from the allocated ARPA funds. The bonus would be based on 50% of regular hour wages during the "height" of COVID (April 2020). Charley made a motion to approve the proposal. Ron seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5) Paul presented the Council with Resolution 2021-06 regarding the \$750,000.00 Wastewater Upgrade Bond closure. Ron made a motion to pass the resolution. Charley seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6) City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco presented the Council with the revised version of Resolution 2021-03 regarding FY 2022 city employee wages. Lara stated that she had added the word "current" and also created a paragraph stating that these wages were contingent upon experience and knowledge of any incoming future employees. Lara also stated that she would be soon working on a detailed job description for each city employee job along with a wage scale to refer to when deciding a new employee's starting wages. Discussion ensued regarding concerns about the City's ability to pay the proposed raises. Lara stated that when creating the budget, the first step is to input the proposed wages and then work the expenditures/revenues around the

allocated funds available after the payroll wages were established. Charley made a motion to pass the resolution with Ron seconding. The resolution passed in a 4/2 vote with Allison Jones and Frank Brouillette voting against the resolution.

7) Discussion took place regarding the City's E Ave property being advertised for sale. Paul stated that the property is west of DeBorde's. It is a continuation of the land at Berg's on the hill. The land would be posted in the newspaper for 2 weeks. Allison made a motion to advertise the land. Frank seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT

Bob gave a report. He expressed concern over whether or not a person who is not a resident of the City could have comment during the "public comment" portion of the meeting.

Bob stated that the department had been cutting trees.

There had been issues at the new sewer station with alarms going off. Ron stated that nothing should be signed off on until the issues were fixed. Discussion took place regarding what was causing the alarms to go off.

MAYORS REPORT

Lara would be attending a Grant Writing Workshop in Big Timber the following day.

ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

The next council meeting will be September 28, 2021
at 7:00pm.

CLAIMS

Frank made a motion for the claims from August 23rd through September 10th be approved for payment. Allison seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously by council.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm.

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

Council Members Absent: none

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

Public Present: Joel Pilcher of Great West Engineering, Bill Jones, Kathleen Schreiber, Dan Edwards

Paul Otten, Mayor

Lara Brisco, Clerk-Treasurer