

July 12, 2022
Harlowton City Hall

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council was held on July 12, 2022. The meeting opened at 7:00pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of the June 28, 2022 Council meeting were approved as written.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

Ordinance Committee Chair Frank Brouillette gave a report. Committee member Jack Runner had done some research and found that the State is in the process of updating their codes. Jack sent over Title 11 and the revised Decay Ordinance for the State to review and give feedback.

Council member Charley Bennett gave a report on the pool. He had not heard back regarding the safety rail for the cover roller. The pool was doing the first round of swim lessons and been very busy.

Public Works Director Bob Schuchard gave a report on the Tree Board. The recent strong wind/hail rainstorms had caused a lot of damage around town. The Public Works Department had been clearing the damaged trees and branches around town.

Council member Ron Teig was not present to give a report on the Wetland Rail Trail.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1) Kelsey Miller from the Wheatland County Weed District presented a document which would create an agreement between the City and the Weed District. The agreement would establish a plan for containing and spraying noxious weeds on City owned property. Mayor Paul Otten stated that the portion referring to "provision training" should be removed, as the Public Works Department employees would not be taking on the responsibility of managing the weeds. Paul stated that the job would be contracted out to Todd Schock. Kelsey stated that she would re-word this portion of the document. Council member Allison Jones made a motion to approve the City/Weed District agreement. Jack seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.
- 2) City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco explained that the resolution numbers for the 6/28/22 meeting's Street and Light Maintenance district had been presented incorrectly. Resolution 2022-03 should become 2022-05 and resolution 2022-04 should become 2022-06. Jack made a motion to approved the proposed resolution number changes. Allison seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- 3) Lara explained that the required MMIA Library liability insurance document presented (and approved by Council) at the 6/14/22 meeting was missing the word “liability” from page 4. She stated that MMIA had asked this word to be added in order to be sufficient. Allison made a motion to pass the document with the added word “liability” to page 4. Jack seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- 4) The bids for the property at 21 S Central Ave (formally known as Biegels Bar) were opened. The first bid, from Rebecca Thomas, was for \$6128.00. The second bid, from Rob Elwood, was for \$6502.00. Frank asked Rob if he had any ideas for the property. Rob stated that investors were interested in putting apartments on top with office spaces in the front for rent. He would like the new building to match the look of other buildings on Central Ave. Bob stated that Brownsfield funds might be available to help fund the project and that he should reach out to Snowy Mountain Development Corporation in Lewistown. Rob stated that he would also like to add an electric car charging station onto the light in front of the property. Frank made a motion to accept Rob’s offer of \$6502.00 Allison seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- 5) Paul presented Resolution 2022-07 regarding the annexation of the Sportmans property into the City. Charley asked if they would have access to the sewer. Paul stated that they had a septic tank that would be grandfathered in but that if sewer was made available in the future (if the Hospital built next to it), they would be required to hook up to the City’s sewer line. Allison made a motion to approve the annexation of the Sportmans into the City’s water. Frank seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- 6) Paul stated that City Attorney Karen Hammel’s contract with the City had expired as of June 30, 2022. Discussion took place regarding the timeline for renewal. Frank stated that he would like the City to look into other firms and do a “request for qualifications” to gather information from other attorneys. Paul asked if attorneys that were not local would be able to attend court hearings. Frank stated that it could be added to the contract as a necessity. Discussion took place regarding the current City Attorney’s availability and priority with City issues. Paul stated that no matter what, the City could not go without an attorney—even for a short period of time. Frank asked if the contract with Karen could be month to month. Paul stated that a 3 or 6-month contract would be better. Concerns with a new attorney charging more than \$100/hour were discussed. Lara stated that this would be best sorted out before the new budget for FY 2023 would be approved. Frank made a motion to make Karen’s new contract for 3 months as well as look into a “request for qualifications” from other municipal attorneys. Jack seconded the motion. Charley voted against the motion. The motion passed 3/1.
- 7) Bob presented the Council with his concerns regarding the water upgrade and sewer upgrade project timelines overlapping. Bob stated that when he started working for the City in 2005 there were 5 employees in the Public Works Department. There are now 2 full time PWD employees and one park employee. Bob is concerned with the water upgrade project cutting into next summer’s sewer project timeline. Chris Hayes from RPA said that the sewer project cannot be delayed because funding would be jeopardized. Bob was also concerned about not having a chance to take vacation because of the water project schedule. Paul stated that Jeff Sell had said no additional mills could be requested

from the County to be used for wages but that if the City wanted to establish a “Parks and Recs” department, the County could contribute to that. Allison stated that she had suggested this idea a while back in regards to maintaining the rodeo grounds and park together but had been turned down.

Discussion took place regarding why the Public Works Department is short one guy. Jack asked who was responsible for this and Paul stated that he was.

Frank stated that the previous let go employee had not passed the required water/sewer tests to hold his position.

Discussion took place regarding Do All Construction, who would be doing the water upgrade phase 5 project soon, the timeline for the project as well as how a lack of Public Works employees would be affected by this project.

Jack stated that budget documents should be reviewed and that interviews should be lined up soon to fill the necessary position in the Public Works department. Bob stated that Charlie Church would not be interested in taking over the position (or taking the necessary exams) and would prefer to focus on park responsibilities. Discussion took place regarding wages and competitiveness in hiring a new City employee.

- 8) Lara presented the Council with a volunteer policy that had been modeled off a template from Choteau. Jack made a motion to approve the document. Frank seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT

Bob gave his report. There had been a water break at the park and currently there is a leak. Dennis Parisi would be working on it. The storm damage had kept the PWD guys busy—many trees had been damaged. There would be more signage going up at Chief Joseph Park to allow clarity with navigating the area. Allison asked Lara what the profits had been when the Rodeo, Harlo Music Project pt 1 and bike rider event came through town. Lara stated that Alanna manages this and that she wasn't sure but could look into it and get back to them.

Bob had received calls concerning the (non-City approved) closure of Central Ave at the base of the hill for fireworks during the 4th of July.

REPORT OF THE CLERK-TREASURER

City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco gave her report. The Auditor had paid a visit and had questions. She is still working on the FY 20-21 audit. The City had purchased a large enclosed bulletin board and Lara was contacting Joni Freeser regarding possibly drawing up a map to be put in the case at Chief Joseph Park. She was waiting to hear back from Joni regarding costs and a timeline of completion. Allison suggested a few other local artists to consider.

MAYORS REPORT

Mayor Paul Otten Gave a report. Boyd Burroughs was present regarding the land he was looking to lease or purchase from the City. Local realtor Julie Woodard was present to discuss the process. There was concern with the land not being “saleable” due to its location in the flood control zone. Paul stated that this would need to be researched further and that he would get a hold of Tiffany Lyden and/or Page Dringman. Discussion took place regarding the City limits in the area and grazing horses. Bob stated that there is a water line there but that there is no easement, legally. Frank asked if an easement plan could be worked out. Boyd stated that in the 25 years he has been there, a flood has never affected it. Charley stated that in the future this could change. Julie stated that clarification would need to be made regarding whether the area was considered a “floodplain”

or “flood control”. Julie stated that they were very different terms and the legality involving each one would be different. Bob stated that this would need to be looked into further before a decision could be made. Discussion took place regarding where the water would go in the area if it rose. Julie stated that there would also need to be specifications of what areas the fair market assessment would cover. It was stated that this would be a process of dealing with technicalities and government offices and that it would take time to figure out. Paul stated that he would get in touch with Tiffany and/or Page and would have more information at the 7/26/22 meeting. Julie and Boyd would also meet to discuss the land.

Paul stated that the bids for construction for Phase 5 of the Water Upgrade Project were opened the previous Friday. Do All Construction was the lowest bid at \$2,345,042.88. They would like to start ASAP. Paul stated that in September or October there would be a public hearing to discuss raising water rates by \$3/month to cover the SRF loan. Paul stated that Joel at Great West had sent over the documents too recently to put them on the agenda to be voted on. He asked if the Council would tentatively approve Do All as the chosen bid and that on 7/26/22 the approval could be formally voted on. The Council agreed.

ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

The next council meeting will be July 26, 2022 at 7:00pm.

CLAIMS

Frank made a motion to pass the claims from June 27, 2022 through July 8, 2022. Jack seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.

Council Members Present: Allison Jones, Charley Bennett, Jack Runner, Frank Brouillette

Council Members Absent: Kathleen Schreiber, Ron Teig

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

Public Present: Julie Woodard, Boyd Burroughs, Chad Roelfs, Kelsey Miller

Paul Otten, Mayor

Lara Brisco, Clerk-Treasurer