

February 28, 2023
Harlowton City Hall

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council was held on February 28, 2023. The meeting opened at 7:00pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of the February 14, 2023 Council meeting were approved as written.

PUBLIC COMMENT: none

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council member Jack Runner stated that the library currently has many activities and programs. This included brick building, a new art display, story time, and "Tax Tuesday". On "Tax Tuesday" from 10:30 to 11:30 Jay Lode would be helping people with their taxes up until April 11th. Mayor Paul Otten stated that he had asked Les Christensen about working on the library basement leak. Les stated he was very busy but he would take a look at it. Les thought that it would be a similar repair to what the Triangle Communication building's alley had and that it would probably be around \$30,000.

The Ordinance committee did not meet.

Council member Charley Bennett gave a report on the pool. Ron Fisher had reached out and let him know that the epoxy people would be visiting soon. They were not wanting to do the epoxy until five weeks after the concrete had been poured. They would probably grind it first and possibly the walls would go in before the epoxy.

Public Works Director Bob Schuchard stated that there was nothing new to report for the Tree Board.

Council member Ron Teig stated that There was nothing new to report for the Wetland Rail Trail.

UPDATE ON PAST AGENDA TOPICS

Council members were asked to give updates on Decay Ordinance-related complaints from the community. Frank Brouillette was not present to give an update on the decay ordinance related complaint he was following up with. Paul stated that he would like to review the decay ordinance to see how to get the Sheriff's Department involved in helping move the process along. Paul stated that the issue had been going on for six months. City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco stated that it had been going on since June of 2022.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1) Community member Kylie Meeker was present to discuss her plans for starting Little League in the spring. She expressed concern about the gopher holes and asked if the area could be tilled by the City. The registration for the Little League would start mid-

- March and she would not know her “numbers” until then. Discussion took place regarding how to deal with the ongoing gopher problem. Kylie stated that she would also like to use the area by the back road in the park. She was considering asking to use the football field and high school field as an another option. Again, discussion took place regarding proper ways to remove the gophers. Poison was not an option because it would be a threat to other animals. Kylie stated that she had heard from a pest control person that something could be put into the soil to detour the gophers. Bob stated that he could have the area tilled but in the long run it would not do much with the gopher holes. Kylie stated that she was hoping the season would start in April and she would let this City know. She asked who was responsible for the dugout and concession area. Bob stated that Tonya Martin would have the key.
- 2) Kathleen Schreiber was present to discuss needing a water variant at the RV park by her house on 406 4th St. NE. She was told by the State that she would need permission documented from the City stating that having a camper and RV park would not disturb the sewer. Bob stated that the trailer court meter was the same size as a house water and the water would be slow. Kathleen stated that she just needed documentation from the City stating that it was OK to have increased wastewater. Bob stated that the sewer lagoon could handle twice as much as it currently has and that it would not be a problem. Paul stated that it would be OK to continue as things were set up at Kathleen's trailer park and that it would not affect the wastewater system.
 - 3) Lara stated that three lifeguards had given notice that they would be returning in the summer. Lara was working with City Council member Allison Jones to create 3 job descriptions for the pool manager taken from the current pool manager job description. Allison stated that she was going to ask the County Commissioners for support with the pool but first needed to know exactly what was needed. She stated that there should be a breakdown of how we need support and what our plan would be going forward with the pool. Lara stated that it was the lifeguards that were having a lot of overtime during swim lessons, not the manager. Lara also stated that free swim had not been secured for this pool season yet. The City would need to consider having to charge an entrance fee again. Allison stated that swim lessons would also need “revamping” and that perhaps the County could help support the cost of overtime. Lara presented an expenditures report for the budget showing pool wages. Although the pool wages allocated were still good, the Public Works Department occasionally worked at the pool. Also, anyone being trained for the incoming pool season would need to be paid while being trained. The budget was only representative of the season until June 30th and then the new budget would start. Discussion took place regarding what the maximum overtime hours per day could be not only for teenagers but for any employee. Lara stated that even if the employees were to work overtime you would not want to exhaust them. It would also not be safe if they were worked long hours. Discussion took place regarding the pool possibly not being open five or six days a week due to lack of employees. Allison stated that 8 lifeguards would be nice. Discussion took place regarding the managers

- all being CPR, first aid, and lifeguard certified and possibly chemical certified. It was discussed that any pool employee with children would not be allowed to have their children with them while working. Discussion took place regarding lifeguards working a minimum amount of hours per week in order to not put too much stress on the other lifeguards to work long hours. Lara stated that in the past people going on vacation had made it harder for other lifeguards because there was not enough help. Allison stated that when reaching out to teens and their parents to possibly work at the pool they were concerned about how things were run in the past. Allison stated that hopefully with changes to the manager responsibilities people would see that things were improving and that working there would be better. Lara stated that she would advertise for pool lifeguards since only three would be returning. She would also set up interviews for the managerial positions.
- 4) Discussion took place again regarding being open on Wednesdays. Lara stated that there was not a good turnout to justify being open. Last week only three people came in and one was to ask about snow plowing and two were for dog licenses. Discussion took place regarding new employees needing time to get comfortable. Lara stated again that being a new clerk and having Wednesdays to catch up without interruption was crucial when she first started. Lara stated that an option in the future would be to stagger lunches so that people wanting to pay their water bill during their lunch hour would be able to come in. Lara felt that this was more helpful to most people than being open Wednesdays. Paul stated that closing Wednesday would not need to be permanent and that may be in a few months, after the new employees got comfortable, the topic could be revisited. Discussion took place regarding changing an employee's originally agreed upon hours without their consent. Discussion took place regarding draft minutes being submitted to the newspaper prior to the Council reviewing them. City attorney Brent Brooks stated that he would have a phone call with Paul and Lara later in the week to discuss the concerns.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT

Bob gave his report. The Public Works Department had been doing snow and tree removal mostly. Bob presented a picture of the Times Clarion building roof for review. He was concerned that the roof was mostly plywood and would eventually deteriorate and fall through. He also stated that the rain gutters were deteriorating. He asked if a letter should be sent to the Times Clarion in regard to the roof decay.

REPORT OF THE CLERK-TREASURER

Lara introduced new incoming Deputy Clerk Deshawnda Carver to the Council. Deshawnda had been training under Alana Berg since February 16th and was doing great. She had learned a lot in those short weeks. Lara stated that Debbie Johnson would be starting the next day with her training.

MAYORS REPORT

Mayor Paul Otten gave a report. The water rate increase public hearing would take place on March 14th. Joel Pilcher from Great West Engineering would be present to help facilitate the meeting.

Paul mentioned that people had been posting incorrect information on Facebook regarding the mailers that had went out the previous week summarizing the changes. Discussion took place regarding the fact that this rate increase had been an ongoing discussion over years and was not something new for people to be shocked about. Bob stated that Joel would be able to show people the math. Lara stated that most questions about the mailer had been regarding what size pipe they had in their homes. Bob stated that most homes had 5/8 inch or 3/4 inch size pipe and only a few buildings in town have larger size pipes. Paul stated that when the new water line came in there would be the possibility of a few weeks of free water in order to flush out the old water. Bob stated that the lagoon could handle it and that dilution was actually good for it. Discussion took place regarding people who are not in town all year and what would be better for them-- to turn the water on and off for the \$400 reconnect fee or pay base rate. Discussion took place regarding revenue being needed in order to pay back the loans for the project. Bob did state that there was a major decrease in the amount of water breaks over the last few years as the lines are being replaced.

ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

The next council meeting will be Tuesday March 14, 2023 at 7:00pm.

CLAIMS

Ron made a motion to pass the claims from 19944 through 19963. Kathleen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20PM

Council Members Present: Ron Teig, Charley Bennett (via teams), Jack Runner, Kathleen Schreiber, Allison Jones

Council Members Absent: Frank Brouillette

City Office: Mayor Paul Otten, City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco, incoming Deputy Clerk Deshawnda Carver, Public Works Director Bob Schuchard, City Attorney Brent Brooks (via teams)

Public Present: Kylie Meeker

Paul Otten, Mayor

Lara Brisco, Clerk-Treasurer