

Harlowton City Council Minutes
May 23, 2017
Harlowton City Hall

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council held May 23, 2017 at 7:00 pm opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Minutes of the April 25, 2017 meeting were approved as written.

Resident Mr. Ron Swickard provided photos of unfinished water project work and trees on A Avenue SW and asked about the incomplete water connections, unfinished street and sidewalk repairs that arose due to the water project in addition to tree removal. Ian informed him that the contractor indicated they would be back the week of May 29 to continue their work. Street damage done by heavy equipment will be the responsibility of the city. Mr. Swickard continued to comment on his opinion of the sub-standard quality work the past contractors and city have been performing. He asked for a resident ad-hoc committee on contractor selection. Mayor Jeff Sell defended the process the council uses in contractor selection. Mr. Swickard asked about the trees on A Avenue SW being cut down. He indicated that Jeff Sell had told him trees were not being cut down. Jeff rebutted that he assumed Mr. Swickard was talking of the trees directly in front of his property which have not been cut down. Ian informed him that the state forestry office had come to Harlowton to perform a complete tree inventory. In that process the state forester had indicated the trees within the city limits that were in need of removal due to disease, rot, etc. Mr. Swickard argued that removal of the trees (*at approximately 10 A Ave SW*) would cause additional damage to the sinking sidewalk in that area as the tree roots help stabilize the ground. Mr. Swickard questioned the credentials of the state forester and also asked if a resident committee could be put together for tree maintenance. Council Member Ron Teig indicated there is a Harlowton Tree Board which Ron Teig is a member of and that is one of the purposes of the tree board. Lauri Teig is also a member of the Harlowton Tree Board and explained that the committee has been working on a plan of tree replacement that would be implemented in stages and with planting different varieties of trees. Council consent was that they would follow the recommendations given to the city by the state forester. Ian indicated that once a tree has been identified as a potential hazard the city would be liable for damages it causes if the city can't prove they are working on a plan to rectify the situation. Mayor Jeff Sell informed Mr. Swickard he is not allowed to harass city employees. Mr. Swickard denied harassing city employees. Mr. Swickard thanked the council for allowing him time to voice his concerns.

Jeff Sell indicated ordinance updates are still being worked on. Clerk/Treasurer Kathie Newland had attended Clerk's Institute and had been given some conflicting information regarding some of the ordinance Jon Hesse recommended to be repealed. Further research will be done. Jeff indicated that Attorney Jon Hesse's contract is up for renewal the end of June 2017. Jeff will continue to research the city's options for a different attorney.

John Anderson gave a committee report on the library. The library board has been doing their yearly evaluation of library employees. The library had been broken into again. The money from the "donation jar" from the counter was taken. All other money had been secured in the safe and was not taken. Bars will be going up on the back window where it is assumed the thief has been entering. Security camera information has been given to the Wheatland County Sheriff's office for investigation.

Jeff Sell informed the council of the public hearing to be held on June 13, 2017 regarding the fourth phase of the city's water project. It will be held at 6:00pm June 13, 2017 in the Harlowton city library conference room.

The agenda contained an item "Resolution 2017-01" pertaining to grant submittal for the wastewater preliminary engineering report to be performed by Robert Peccia and Associates. Jeff had not been informed of the total funding for this project so asked the council to not vote on the resolution until he could get additional information from the engineers. Item tabled.

Jeff Sell presented information regarding increasing the yearly payment to Wheatland County for the Law Enforcement Interlocal agreement (from \$50,000 per year to \$60,000 per year). Council member Paul Otten and Jeff Sell had attended the May 2017 county commissioner meeting to discuss the interlocal agreement with them. Jeff explained that the money for this comes from the city's general fund. A review of the city's cash position shows that there is currently an approximate \$18,000 increase in the general fund. Council member Bob Jones asked about the city's request to increase county funding for the pool and library. Jeff indicated that the county had given the city \$2,000 more for the pool. They had also increased the mill levy for the library from 1 mill to 2.02 mills, which if all tax money was collected would equate to approximately \$19,000. A reprieve had been given to the city for a few years during financial hard times for the city. Bryan Tomlinson made the motion to increase the Law Enforcement interlocal agreement payment from \$50,000 per year to \$60,000 per year. Paul Otten seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-1. (Approval of motion – Paul Otten, Jim Kalitowski, John Anderson, Bob Jones, Bryan Tomlinson. Opposed to motion – Ron Teig).

Jeff Sell asked the council for approval to send formal letters of notice of annexation to the owners of un-annexed property currently receiving city utility services. John Anderson asked if property owners protest to the annexation what is the city's repercussion. Jeff indicated he did not know at this time what the official process was. Bob Jones made the motion to have Jeff Sell send formal letters of notice of annexation to property owners currently receiving city utility services. Jim Kalitowski seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Jeff Sell gave an update on the open house that was held in regards to the National Guard Armory building. There was no attendance from people outside of the community. There were a few in attendance from within our community. The armory building is due for public auction on May 31, 2017.

Jeff Sell asked the council for approval to section off a portion of the Chief Joseph Park specifically for a dog walk area. Many people currently bring their dogs to the park and do not control them nor clean up after them. It is hoped that by providing a designated area for this, dog owners would be more responsible with controlling and cleaning up after their pets. In the future grant funds could be asked for to fence and contain the area. He suggested a portion of the east end of the park that currently has part of the "folf" course in it would be a good area. Ron Teig made the motion to pursue a designated dog walk area in the Chief Joseph Park. John Anderson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. A map will be provided at a future council meeting to show the exact area that will be designed for this purpose.

The 3rd quarter 2017 financial statements were reviewed. Jeff Sell provided a summary of the cash report. He indicated that the library department will likely need a budget amendment to account for the additional security equipment that was purchased during the fiscal year. Jeff again pointed out that the lighting

district rates need to be reviewed to start rectifying the cash situation in that department. A report of city fines and forfeitures revenue and attorney expense will be provided to the council.

John Anderson asked if renting of the “Deer Park” was available. The city’s “Park Use Agreement” covers all parks in the city and that agreement is to be used to reserve the area.

Jeff Sell gave the council an updated on the city pool. The pool bottom is currently getting stripped and re-painted. This may delay the opening of the pool for the season as the weather has not been cooperating. The shower room floor paint is peeling again. It was discovered that there is likely a moisture problem coming from outside so the floors will not be painted until the moisture problem can be researched. The city did receive a Charles M. Bair Family Trust grant for \$10,000 to be used towards the pool maintenance. Funds from the Callant Family Trust have also been requested, however it is unknown at this time if the city will be granted any funding for this project.

The Harlowton High School received funding from Callant for an 8’x16’ cement pad with roof. They are asking for permission from the council to place the structure between the track and baseball field in the Chief Joseph Park. The council agreed to the placement.

Ian reported that it was not going to be possible to refurbish the old lift pump station. The one that recently gave out has been pulled and they are waiting to find out if it is fixable or will need to be replaced. At this time they are operating with only one pump. NorthWestern Energy has installed the upgraded power into the park. The panel has been ordered. It is expected that the work on the actual camp sites will begin June 1, 2017. Battle Ridge Builders (contractors for the phase 3 water project) should be here this coming week to complete the rest of the work from that phase. Their project manager has quit, so action from the contractor has been slowed. Bob Jones asked about the paving of Pritchard Street. The city will either be placing millings on that road or graveling it rather than re-paving. This would have to be completed in fiscal year 2018 as there is no money in the budget at this time to do it. City Clean Up days were held May 12 and 13. Eight dumpsters were filled. More than half of the people that come on clean up days were county residents rather than city residents. The council will have to discuss continuing the clean up days as the cost is getting prohibitive and the intent of these days is being abused.

John Anderson asked about if the city was going to provide a “coupon” for a free yard waste pass if the resident’s utility bill was paid in full as it has been done in the past. This will be placed on the next council agenda.

The next city council meeting is scheduled on June 13, 2017 at 7:00pm at the Harlowton Public Library. The public hearing on the phase IV water project will start at 6:00pm prior to the council meeting. Free yard waste pass, and future city clean up days will be discussed.

Ron Teig made a motion to approve prior reviewed and accepted claims, checks #20896-20918 from April 22, 2017 through May 5, 2017. These claims had been previously approved by at least four council members and the mayor. This was due to cancelled council meeting. Paul Otten seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

John Anderson made a motion to pay the claims, checks #20919-20942 from May 6, 2017 through May 19, 2017. Ron Teig seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:41 pm.

Council Members Present:

John Anderson (arrived at 7:04), Bob Jones, Jim Kalitowski, Paul Otten, Ron Teig, Bryan Tomlinson

Employee Present:

Ian Reed

Jeff Sell, Mayor

Kathie Newland, Clerk