

Harlowton City Council Minutes
August 22, 2017
Harlowton City Hall

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council held August 22, 2017 opened at 7:00 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance. Minutes of the July 25, 2017 council meeting were approved as written.

There was no public comment.

Mayor Jeff Sell explained the need for the council to review the improvement district assessments yearly (street lights and street maintenance). There are other special districts that could be set up to help the city's general fund, such as a county/city parks and recreation district and possibly a landfill/garbage district. These two examples would be in conjunction with the county and would need county approval and cooperation to set up. Jeff suggested a \$10-15 increase then small annual increases to get to the point where the street light district is paying for itself. At this time there is a negative cash balance of \$44,301.00 and an expected 2018 fiscal year loss of \$16,750.00. Bob Jones wondered if the number of street lights has stayed steady and are the lights technologically up to date. The number of street lights has changed over the years and we do not use the most efficient type of street lights. However the current contract with NorthWestern Energy is a flat fee per light which includes the electricity costs. The original contract for the first lighting districts has a very advantageous monthly rate so to re-do the contract with NorthWestern Energy would have to be analyzed carefully before proceeding. Bryan Tomlinson suggested looking for grants to go to LED technology in phases and work on changing the contract with NorthWestern Energy. Bryan commented that the current lighting district assesses city residents by tax parcel not lot. Bryan Tomlinson made the motion to increase the street lighting district assessment by \$12.00 for the next fiscal year (*which would put the assessment rate at \$42.00*). Paul Otten seconded the motion. John Anderson clarified that this assessment would stay by tax parcel not individual lot. Bryan commented that some properties do not have street lights on them but all tax parcels within the city limits are assessed the same. Motion passed unanimously. The council proceeded to reviewing the street maintenance assessment. Bryan commented that street maintenance is a more pressing issue than street lights in Harlowton right now. Not wanting to increase both street lights and street maintenance assessments was a concern. Ian commented that it costs approximately \$80,000 to pave three blocks. It is hoped that with the next phase of the water project some streets that were damaged in previous phases of the water and sewer projects could be paved. All streets affected by phase 4 water project are budgeted to be repaved. Gas tax received from the state is calculated on the city streets' mileage. Ian certifies a document from the Department of Transportation yearly that indicates the city's street mileage. Paul Otten suggested there be no change to the fiscal year 2018 street maintenance assessment. Council was in agreement.

The fiscal year 2018 City of Harlowton budget was reviewed. Ian commented that the weed budget needs to keep getting increased. In the past the budget was \$3,000 and there was a \$3,000 match – so the total budget was \$6,000. For the past few years the budget has only been \$3,000 and the city is having a major weed problem. The fiscal year 2018 budget was already set at \$5,000. That was deemed sufficient for the year. Bryan Tomlinson asked about the cost of chip sealing streets. Ian said it cost approximately \$10,000 per block contracted out. The city crew is capable of doing it at a lower cost, however there isn't enough man power to keep up with regular tasks to add this to their work load. John Anderson asked for

clarification on what the permissive medical levy fund is for. Paul Otten made the motion to accept the fiscal year 2018 City of Harlowton Budget as presented. Bob Jones seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Paul asked about property annexation process. Jeff explained that our city attorney would need to be involved with the process, so once the city attorney situation is resolved more work will be done on this. Ordinance updates are in the same situation.

Ian reported that they have been fixing hydrants and trimming trees. Ron asked about the hydrant by the bank. Ian reported it was shut off on purpose to see if it was contributing to the water issues in the buildings along Central Avenue. Ian will inquire of the businesses if they still have water issues in their basements. If not, the water leak detectors that are scheduled for September can be cancelled. There is a suspected water leak in the alley by the post office causing low water pressure to several residences. Rural waters is coming to help pin point the location. That alley has many service lines (natural gas, electricity, telephone, etc.) going through it so it will be difficult to dig. John Anderson asked about the potential fuel plume contamination of the Thompson Well. Ian reported that the actual well reports came back with no detection of contaminants, so there is no danger for now. Ian reported that the fire hydrant by the forest service had broken and the crew had to spend considerable time and money on fixing it. At this time the forest service is not getting charged for bulk water or for the broken hydrant. Ian wanted the council to be aware of this. As the forest service helps the local fire department considerably, council consensus was to leave this as is. Ron asked about the sidewalks/curbs getting completed on A Avenue. Ian responded that the contractor hired to do this work has not come yet but the site is prepared and ready for cement.

The next city council meeting is scheduled on September 12, 2017 at 7:00pm at the Harlowton City Hall. Flood plain mapping will be on the agenda. Updated flood plain maps have been completed. There will be meetings in September or October, coordinated by the county/city flood plain administrator, to get property owners involved for potential protest process.

Paul Otten made a motion to approve prior reviewed and accepted claims, checks #21040-21065 from July 22, 2017 through August 4, 2017. These claims had been previously approved by at least four council members and the mayor. This was due to cancelled council meeting. John asked about the detail on Jon Hesse invoice referring to the Army. This was for the WRDA-Corp of Army Engineers contract review for the phase 4 water project. John Anderson seconded the motion. Motion to accept previously paid claims passed unanimously.

Ron Teig made a motion to pay the claims, checks #21066-21090 from August 5, 2017 through August 18, 2017. Bryan Tomlinson seconded the motion. Jim commented on the expense of maintenance for the Black Mountain Software. Motion to pay claims passed unanimously.

Bob Jones asked about the status of the Armory building. Jeff explained that the Department of Military Affairs is in discussions to figure out if it can be donated to the city and county. Ian reported that at a recent Snowy Mountain Development Corporation meeting Commissioner Moe had asked about funds from the SMDC planning grants be reserved/used for assistance with the Armory.

Meeting adjourned at 8:26 pm.

Council Members Present:

John Anderson, Bob Jones, Jim Kalitowski, Paul Otten, Ron Teig, Bryan Tomlinson

Employee Present:

Ian Reed

Jeff Sell, Mayor

Kathie Newland, Clerk