

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council, held March 10, 2020 opened at 7:00 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance. Minutes of the February 25, 2020 council meeting were approved as written.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mark Feist (206 Wheatland Avenue South) asked the council about the proposed annexation of Tucker Town Sewer District (TTSD). He asked if a map of the district was available as he felt he was not within the TTSD. Mayor, Paul Otten, explained that neither an exact map nor any documentation regarding the TTSD had been found. Council member Rob Elwood asked if Mark knew if the TTSD wanted to reform. Mark explained he didn't know but was pretty sure that the residents of that area did not want to be annexed into city limits. Mark feels annexation into city limits would de-value his property as he currently can have and does have livestock on his property. Council member Frank Brouillette explained that variance requests could be made in order to maintain his current life style. Rob proceeded to explain that the TTSD is not paying their portion of sewer line maintenance and that the rates for TTSD residents would either have to increase and/or the TTSD would have to reform and take care of maintenance themselves. Mark asked that a meeting be held with involved stakeholders before the council proceeded with annexation plans. Mark Feist thanked the council for their time and left the meeting. Jim Kalitowski added that he had spoken with Richard VanCampen who was apparently an original member of the TTSD. Richard informed Jim that all documentation regarding the TTSD had been brought to the Wheatland County Clerk and Recorder-who at that time was Alice Clark. Clerk-Treasurer Kathie Newland added that she and Ian Reed (former Public Works Director) had done research at Wheatland County and no official recording of the TTSD had been found yet. Unofficial documents and notes had been discovered at the courthouse but no official records of the TTSD or signed agreements between the city and TTSD had been discovered.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mayor Otten updated the council on Biegel's Bar ownership transfer. He has not had any further communications with Steve Olson. Frank Brouillette made the motion to submit a quit claim deed and letter stating that Mr. Olson has until May 1, 2020 to sign the deed and turn the property over to the city so that regional Brownfields money can be used to clean up the building. Ron Teig seconded the motion. There were no further questions or discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Otten had talked with Attorney Karen Hammel regarding drawing up documents for the official alley closure in exchange for easement with Bryan Tomlinson. Karen is currently dealing with a city criminal case so when her work on that subsides she will work on the documents needed for the easement.

Council consensus was that holding a meeting with all the stakeholders of the Tucker Town Sewer District should happen. Jim Kalitowski added that he did believe Richard VanCampen mentioned that the members of the TTSD did dig the sewer lines in themselves when the project was initiated.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Jack Runner reported that the library will have a fund raiser at Gallys on March 12, 2020 from 5:00 pm to 8:00pm to raise matching funds for the Washington Grant. Kathleen and Debbie will be attending the MT Library Association meeting April 1-4, 2020. Some library staff and board members will be attending the library federation meeting on March 14 that will be held in Laurel. Many kids have been participating in the yoga and legos activities at the library.

Rob Elwood reported that the ordinance committee reviewed section – through 10.11 of the water and sewer rules and regulations. The committee will proceed with section 10-12 and on at their next meeting.

Council member Ron Teig reported that the railroad grounds property is starting to thaw a bit so work may commence down there. Kathie reported that the MT Historic Preservation Grant application had been submitted by the February 28, 2020 deadline. Decisions on this grant will not be made until spring 2021. This grant application was for \$500,000 and aimed at rehabbing the actual roundhouse building.

Public Works director Bob Schuchard reported that 14-15 trees will be planted on the west side of Don Lode's property (305 S Central Ave). A planting date has not been set yet and Invenergy is being informed of the planting dates so they can participate again. There has also been one memorial tree planting request.

Council member Charley Bennett reported that the Pave the Wave Kiwanis fund raiser was a success and brought in more than enough to replace the sidewalk on the west side of the pool shower building. He also reported that Tom from ASP will be contacting a hutterite colony for cement when ASP starts working on the pool skimmers.

NEW BUSINESS

Representatives of the Harlowton Girl Scouts troop asked permission to do clean-up work at the Chief Joseph Park as part of the Community World Thinking Day. They would like to do this work after school is done for the 19/20 school year sometime during the end of May 2020. Council consensus was to accept the generous offer to perform clean-up work at the Chief Joseph Park.

Community member Ashlynn McKeever presented a proposal to revamp the tennis courts located at Chief Joseph Park into basketball courts with four adjustable hoops. She provided letters of support for the project and details regarding the disrepair of basketball courts currently in the community. Bob informed the council that a previous renovation of the tennis courts had taken place but had not been successful due to heavy compaction equipment not being able to get into the fenced off tennis court area. The current asphalt is very thin and the tennis net posts that had been placed did not have enough support to remain straight. Discussion about using the other four basketball courts located around town was held. Current ownership of these lots would have to be researched. It is believed the city owns three (west end, south of old fire hall and by the Kiwanis Youth Center), and the one on 3rd St NW is on private property. Kathie informed the council that people camping at Chief Joseph Park often ask about the availability of basketball hoops. Frank Brouillette commented that he would like the tennis courts to still be available for tennis and perhaps the area could be “dual purpose”. Additional research into this project needs to be done but the council agreed that having useable basketball courts would be a community asset.

Bryan Tomlinson's variance request to place a private septic on his property located at Block 12 of the Van Cleve addition, lots 1-9 and 16-24 was discussed. Frank Brouillette made the motion to grant the variance request. Ron Teig seconded the motion. Council member Jack Runner ask if there would be an expiration to the variance. The variance request form submitted by Bryan Tomlinson states that the variance expires when city sewer services are available near the property. There was no additional questions or discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Wheatland County DES coordinator, Undersheriff Randy Cameron, presented information to the council regarding the county's emergency preparedness in regards to a pandemic virus outbreak. Randy assured the council that programs and contacts were in place in this regard. Rob Elwood asked if the sheriff's office would coordinate with residents who may "self-quarantine" themselves. Randy informed the council that they would use all resources necessary to get through any type of situation. Rob asked about essential services that the city provides such as water and wastewater and what would happen if the city crew became incapacitated. Bob informed the council that MT Rural Waters has staff that would assist in this matter.

Paul informed the council that he had spoken with Michael Miler regarding the fencing between their property and city owned property. He had also spoken with Tom Tomlinson regarding if cattle were to get into the property he leases from the city. Tom indicated he didn't care if cattle were in there. Additional discussion ensued regarding ways in which fencing could be erected or fixed in that area. The terrain and river make accessing the area difficult. Paul informed the council that Michael will fix and tighten the fences where the cattle will be and if any get onto city property (which is leased by Tom Tomlinson) it would be ok.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT

Bob reported that the phase 4 water project is scheduled to restart around April 1, 2020. He is concerned with the current staffing situation as the water project will consume a lot of time, both he and Jeff have personal obligations during the summer they would like to attend to and there currently isn't a third staff member. Discussion regarding getting the open job positions filled ensued. Kathie informed the council that she (as HR), the mayor and Bob would work on more advertising and getting the positions filled.

MAYOR REPORT

Mayor Otten reported that the audit exit interview had taken place on Friday February 28. Sharon Tripp (auditor) adamantly recommends that the city court report their monthly financial information as it should be included in the financial reports of the city. Kathie added that there will continue to be a finding on the audit in regards to the Harlowton Volunteer Fire Department Relief Association (FDRA). Sharon Tripp has request additional information from Dane Elwood in regards to the FDRA.

Paul reminded everyone again of the Library Fund Raiser on Thursday at Gally's from 5:00 pm to 8:00pm.

ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

The next council meeting will be March 24, 2020 at 7:00pm at the Harlowton Public Library. A public hearing for the phase 5 water project will be held on March 24, 2020 at 6:00pm prior to the council meeting.

CLAIMS

Ron Teig made the motion to pay the claims, checks #22376-22395, from February 22, 2020 through March 6, 2020. There were no questions or comments. Frank Brouillette seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24 pm.

Council Members Present: Charley Bennett (via telephone), Frank Brouillette, Rob Elwood, Jim Kalitowski, Jack Runner, Ron Teig
Employees Present: Bob Schuchard

Paul Otten, Mayor

Kathie Newland, Clerk

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