

March 28, 2023
Harlowton City Hall

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

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Susan Beley would like a town meeting like the one at the Youth Center for the pool. Best done after everyone gets their bills to see what it will look like, and maybe more questions can be answered. Beley doesn't think the water reading program works. Concerned about kids because water will be shut off. Bottled water can be bought with food stamps so they will let their water shut off. Mayor Otten stated we sent a letter out to each water meter person. Council member Charley Bennett stated maybe the school and hospital should step up. He has talked with State Board of Health, and they will be here to meet later on this year. He expressed concern regarding unlivable conditions in some rentals around town. Charley stated he pays the same price here as he does in Yuma. Beley thinks maybe the word "hearing" was the reason nobody came to the public hearing, and they felt like they were not going to be heard. A conversational meeting at Senior Center, Kiwanis Youth Center there will be happier people. Bob Schuchard stated they were in school in Great Falls for the annual water conference. Harlo got a pat on the back for being one of the few communities that has replaced as many water pipes as we have. Several towns in the state that have not started phase I and Harlo is on phase 5. In order to get new pipes, we will have to pay. We can either pay for new pipes or pay to fix broken pipes. Bob challenged Beley to call other towns to see what they pay, and she stated she was told Big Timber pays twice as much and they don't get any services. Council member Kathleen Schreiber agreed that a public discussion would be beneficial as a lot of people were against the new hospital until the hospital people came and presented what the real thing was. Ron Teig, of the city council stated that, for 10 years, we have had meetings and meetings with city engineers here and nobody ever shows up unless you want to license a cat. Beley expressed concern for the kids and hygiene at the schools and requested a more informational meeting. The mayor stated it was a good to thing to take under discussion and maybe sometime mid-May we can put out fliers and possibly continue to discuss. Try to get the word out about what this is going to cost us.

Charley Bennett stated the lawyer taking care of the Graves Hotel will be here Wednesday April 26 and Thursday April 27. They will do an examination to see what happened. This attorney was hired by the insurance company. This attorney told Bennett he has worked on many fires in Montana including one in Butte, Glendive and others claims. All other areas they have cleaned up all contaminants and other stuff. They have already another insurance company that has taken samples off yards from stuff that had blown around town and should have something in the next couple weeks. Bennett is sure he will come and talk to us.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Library: Council member Jack Runner stated that March 29 is the last of the humanities program at the library. Originally this program was scheduled for 9 sessions but changed to 6. There has been between 25 and 36 people attending. Still have tax Tuesday going on until April 11. Library attendance has been good.

Ordinance: Per Frank Brouillette, committee did not meet.

Pool: City council member, Charley Bennett had a meeting with Ron Fischer and all the contractors, except Jimbo, at the pool today and it is really looking good. Couldn't look at the floor because they have it covered with cardboard. Mayor Otten stated he was down there when Stronghold was putting it in and looks like they are doing a great job. Walls are now going in and they are going to ceramic tile the walls. It is now self-sufficient with new water meters. Bennett stated he is asking for 4 to 6 plug ins for cameras and all that stuff. And we will get the cameras hooked up to the cloud for permanent storage. Will be a really nice-looking building when done. Hopefully, once open, we can have a public BBQ so the public can look over.

Charley later stated we have no lifeguards applying for this summer. Only 4 returning from last year. We will have to run the pool on limited hours due to lack of lifeguards. Ron going to do a write up in the newspaper on the accomplishments of the pool house restoration.

Tree Board: Council member Bob Schuchard stated nothing new to report.

Wetlands Rail Trail: Nothing new to report per council member Ron Teig.

UPDATE ON PAST AGENDA TOPICS:

UPDATE ON DECAY ORDINANCE COMPLAINTS

Brouillette talked with Tom Hayden, and he told him he was going to get going on fixing up the previously discussed property in violation of the decay ordinance. Two days later Tom reported he hired Todd Schock to work on it and as he is busy, it may not all going to happen at once. Per Mayor Otten, they are working on it now and Charley stated the main floor is clean Joe Hagl is taking all the refrigerators out of the dirt and all the junk metal.

UPDATE ON PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED ITEMS

Mayor Otten stated we got an estimate from Stronghold for \$3170 to fix the cracks in the foundation of the library basement. This will make a little difference, but we will need to figure out how to get drain away. Bennett asked about the gutters and if they were full. Schreiber stated the water is always gushing out of there. The mayor was also shown where the water was coming over the gutters near the electric meter. Still a drainage problem. The mayor said it would be up to the library board to accept the bid. Jack asked if 2221 would be the fund to use. The council has approved the bid.

There was some discussion on the tin on Joe Brouillette's property. It was brought to Charley's attention that when the wind blows the tin is ready to come off and someone could get hurt if it doesn't get that tin down. Jack Runner, council member was never notified.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1) Vote on Council approval of Resolution 2023-02 for the Increased Water Rates due to Phase 5 of the Water Upgrade Project and CMRWA (Central Montana Rural Water Association) connection. Charley made a motion to accept the resolution and Ron seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- 2) Vote on Tree Board funds from Credit Union to Citizens Bank. Small account used for

- truck loan. Per outgoing City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco to maintain the account we must keep \$125 and if dormant after 4 years it is turned over to the state. If we keep \$25, we can our keep membership but must move one cent per year. Discussion to move money to Citizens Bank so all accounts are in one location. Frank motioned to close Tri-County account and move the Tree Board funds to Citizens Bank. Kathleen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- 3) LIEWAP funding ending Sept 2023 any ideas to replenish utility share program. Kathleen asked about our utility share, and it was asked how it was funded in the past. Council members noted that it was supported by people paying extra on their bill to go to this program. Kathleen asked at their HRDC meeting last week if there was going to be anything to replace. Per Lara, about 10 people using utility share program until LIEWAP. It was a temporary thing to help during COVID and never meant to be permanent. Frank suggested fundraisers and a round up where people can round up their bill or pay extra into that. He stated the city can write a grant this fall to Wheatland County Community Foundation. The council members asked about a couple other grant options. Susan Beley asked about budget billing and Julie Woodard asked about a reduce rate for low income. Frank stated we cannot do that as the water has to pay for itself and it is a Montana State Law. Bob discussed a water leak in the flats. The leak is before the meter and the person will need to get it fixed before the new water line is here or we will have to shut him off. This will be expensive for the city. We will need to ask attorney if we can add this to a current ordinance. This residence could possibly get help from his church per Julie Woodard. Mayor Paul will reach out to state to see if there are other programs. Frank would like to keep making an effort to try and replenish our own utility share program.
 - 4) Kevin Knudson, from the City Fire Department, realized that after the Grave's fire we need to upgrade the city Fire Department's fire truck. In Knoxville IA, he found a 1993 fire truck with a 70-foot ladder and 500 gallons on board and 1250-gallon pump. The other city truck was bought 15 years ago for \$2500 and no longer reliable. Cost of the new fire truck would be \$30,000 and the county would give \$10,000 and fire department to use \$10,000 from donation money along with \$10,000 from the city. The cost of travel was discussed. Per Lara, the city did not allocate for this expense in this year's budget, but we could budget to replenish the fire department account this next fiscal year. The fire department currently has \$23,763.73 in their bank account. Discussion of the next budget and where it would come from. Kevin also mentioned they were paying for utilities from the old fire hall. Lara will look into this on Thursday. A verbal okay was given to proceed, and we will add to next council meeting for a vote. In the meantime, we will ask other city clerks if ARPA could be a possibility.
 - 5) STIP resolution 2023-03 form to change name on account from Lara Brisco to Debbie Johnson. Ron motioned to approve, and Frank seconded the resolution. We will add to next agenda for a vote.
 - 6) Lara discussed FY23 third quarter expense and revenue budget report. There are a couple items to bring to attention. Concern about Kelsey Miller, the Wheatland

County noxious weed Director, had said if we allocated \$4800 for weed control, she would get a grant to match. She has resigned from her position so now there is concern who would assist the city in this noxious weed grant from the DNRC. Some council members thought maybe Mandy Reed would know who could help. Also, the reason the police pension is negative is because we have not received the revenue. Last year we received the revenue in March, so we expect it soon. The BARSAA 2821 fund gas tax is being held until we receive this year's allocation. They are working on a bill and once they pass the bill they will send out the money. We should receive around \$34,000 which Bob want to use, along with last years allocations, for a large asphalt project.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT

Bob Schuchard reported on the number of potholes around but hesitates to fix them as they will be torn out with water and sewer projects so he is thinking we will just put fillings in them as a temporary fix. Will fix the ones that will not be torn up. The mayor asked about any comments from the meeting in Great Falls about the remaining lead lines and Bob replied that we only have about 30 left to do and most towns haven't started yet. However, they asked us to pause because there is some legislation that hasn't gone through yet and there may be changes. They did say Nick, an employee from Rural Water, was hired and will come to Harlo and help with the paperwork. Bob believes we will be done with waterline inventory by the end of summer. Also, we will need to budget for a road grader either repairing the one we have or buying a new one. It has been on Paxton Wojtowick's mind for about 5 years. We need it for snow removal and wet land project. Paxton will give an estimate as it is using 2 or 3 gallons of antifreeze each time Bob uses it. We will use Paxton's decision on which way to go, either repair or buy a new one. Charley asked how to get on a military /government surplus list. Ron has a person he will contact about a site, as he got all the stuff for Martinsdale. Paul states we need to budget for the money to use for the purchase of the grader.

REPORT OF THE CLERK-TREASURER

Per Lara, AFR (annual financial report) is complete. Now working with auditor. Debbie was able to pull some reports for her the auditor.

MAYORS REPORT

Mayor Paul talked about the Great Falls meeting. They were interested in how we went about getting our funds. Joel Pilcher and Chris Hayes, our two engineers, were there and helped answer questions.

We hired 2 pool managers, Darian Murray and Kylie Meeker. They are in the computer system and can start their chemical training online.

City Council members were given an invite for city council member's meeting in Big Timber on April 27th. Probably the same as the meeting we had here that Dan put on.

Word that the \$500,000 EPA grant for the Roundhouse got kicked off the list although we were #1. The mayor got a call from representative Bergstrom, from Lewistown, Sunday night regarding House Bill 12. He will try to put an amendment on the bill, this week, to see if Harlo can be added back on there. Senator Fitzpatrick wanted \$500,000 grant with a \$500,000 match. Where is the

city of Harlo going to come up with that amount of money to match. If not straightened out this week it will go to the senate and hopefully get it amended there. Cathy Barta, of the SMDC (Snowy Mountain Development Company) and Jason Seyler, of the DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality), are advocating for our city.

Paul asked Brent if he had anything, and he stated he will reach out for support for the poor audio connection. We will also check our system. Paul will call Sandra in Roundup to see what they use.

ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Boyd Burrough's on next month's agenda. Land co-purchaser, Chad Roelf, came in and looked at the survey and was satisfied with so we should be on a go status for that.

Need to advertise for Jack's position on the council for Ward 2 on Facebook.

The next council meeting will be Tuesday April 11, 2023, at 7:00pm.

CLAIMS

Frank made a motion to pass the claims 19997, 20014 – 20021, 20028. Ron seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30PM

Council Members Present: Ron Teig, Charley Bennett, Jack Runner, Frank Brouillette, Kathleen Schreiber

Council Members Absent: Allison Jones

City Office: Mayor Paul Otten, City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco, incoming City Clerk-Treasurer Debbie Johnson, Public Works Director Bob Schuchard, City Attorney Brent Brooks

Public Present: Keven Knudson, Susan Beley, Dan Dempster, Julie Woodard, John P Cooney, III

Paul Otten, Mayor

Debbie Johnson, Clerk-Treasurer