

February 27, 2024
Harlowton City Hall

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council was held on February 27th, 2024. The meeting opened at 7:00pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of the February 13th Council meeting were approved as written.
Public Hearing minutes from the February 13th meeting were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT: no public comment.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Library: Council member Johnny Cooney stated that the sewer issues have been fixed. Mayor Paul Otten asked if it was a collapsed pipe, to which Council member Cooney stated that it was, and it is now operational.

Ordinance: Council member Frank Brouillette stated that they have not met yet but that they are hoping to soon.

Pool: Council member Charley Bennett informed that he was ordering things for this new summer season, and that he met with manager Kylie, and she gave him a list of things she would need as well. He also stated that the handrails were up. Mayor Otten stated that the new sign was very nice.

Tree Board: Mayor Paul Otten asked if the committee was selected to which Council member Ron Teig stated that they had and that they are hoping to meet next month. Julie Berg asked how often they plan to meet to which Council Member Teig stated quarterly.

Wetlands Rail Trail: Nothing to report, per Council member Ron Tieg.

UPDATE ON PAST AGENDA TOPICS:

UPDATE ON DECAY ORDINANCE COMPLAINTS: Discussion ensued about the Decay ordinance and junk vehicles. Clerk-treasurer Lexi Petersen presented handouts on complaints with pictures. Discussion ensued about the pictures of vehicles and who they belonged too. The Harlowton City Council then designated Ward Members to go visit with people who are in violation of the ordinance. The Council agreed that the best course of action would be to visit with the owners of the decay first to try to remedy the situation, and if the decay/vehicles remain in violation they will proceed to the next step. Council member Charley Bennett stated that members of the community have too many vehicles, to which Council member Brouillette responded we do not get to decide how many vehicles an individual has. The Council agrees that they would like to investigate the vehicles with complaints before any other measures are taken. They all would like to help anyone who needs it regarding junk and the vehicle ordinance.

Clerk-Treasurer Lexi Petersen then stated that the City Hall did get another complaint on a vicious dog in a neighborhood. Located at 116 A Ave NW. The complaint stated that there had been multiple people on the street who have complained about said dogs. That there has been multiple attacks as well. Council member Brouillette asked where they were occurring, to which Treasurer Petersen stated that it did not say that but that there had been complaints to the Sheriff's office as well. In the complaint it states they are barking early in the morning until late at night as well attacking children. Council member Bennett stated that if the dogs are attacking people that it should not be alive. Council member Frank Brouillette stated that if they are in their own backyard then it isn't considered a dog at large. Mayor Paul Otten asked the Deputy that was present if he was aware of any of these occurrences. The Deputy stated that there are in fact multiple reports, and that it is a neighbor dispute that keeps going back and forth. Council members asked the deputy if he knew of any reports of a dog biting someone? To which the Deputy replied that he was not aware as he works the midnight shift. Julie Berg then stated that she is in their neighborhood a lot and that those dogs do bark constantly. Council member Charley Bennett stated that he would go talk to the offender and see what he can do. Council member Frank Brouillette stated that we do have a dog barking/ noise ordinance.

Deputy-Clerk Sarah Williams then presented the council with a flyer Rachael and Joe Hagl approved to be hung around town or handed out to people who are needing vehicles removed or have junk appliances to be dropped off. (attached)

UPDATE ON PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED ITEMS:

1. Approval of Resolution 2024-16. Council member Frank Brouillette asked for an explanation. Clerk-treasurer Petersen stated that we received this from the county and essentially, they are asking if we would like a local government review done by a study commission. Council member Frank Brouillette stated he thinks it would be a good idea to incorporate some way for the City to make a profit on something, if we change our government form of course. Discussion then ensued. Council member Frank made a motion to pass, Council member Johnny Cooney seconded the motion. Four council members voted for the motion with council member Charley Bennett opposed.
2. A discussion ensued for proposed projects for HB355. Which is 20 million dollars in funding from the Montana Department of Commerce for projects that are to help with our infrastructure. Council member Frank Brouillette stated that we could use that easily on the streets. The council members then discussed that they thought that main street and possibly the street by the high school would be great to chip seal. Discussion ensued. Council member Frank Brouillette also stated that it would be a great idea to have another free dump day. Public Works Director Bob Schuchard stated that it costs the City 4,000-5,000 to remove the containers from the dump. The council members mentioned

that it would be good to set money aside for that as well. Clerk-Treasurer Lexi Petersen stated she will need more solid ideas at the next meeting.

3. Clerk-Treasurer Lexie Petersen stated she has put in a grant application for \$7,500 to help with the Boomer Trail bridge and she will know by the end of March. Mayor Paul Otten also stated that we will be talking with our accountant to see if there is funds remaining in previous grant accounts that we might be able to use for it.

4. Council Member Frank Brouillette passed the motion on second reading regarding the ordinance 01-2024, RV and camper street parking. Council member Charley Bennett second the motion. Motion passed unanimously. This will go into effect 30 days from Wednesday.

5. Council member Frank Brouillette stated that he has talked with Lexi McCarthy at the Real Estate office regarding the market analysis on the potential city lots. He said we should be getting a bill for that. Public works director Bob Schuchard stated that we cannot put water on those properties. He stated that he would not do it. He also stated that he must test at least 20 homes a month, and if they do not pass, we will have to go back to Ortho which could bring our water rates up, and we could potentially lose our license. Council member Frank Brouillette stated that if we have issues, we will just put it in the buyer's agreement. Council member Johnny Cooney stated that we could just see what happens after the market analysis comes back.

NEW BUSINESS: No new business.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT: Public works director Bob Schuchard stated that the construction for the new sewer project has started. The first set of contractors will be done by the end of May, then the second contractors will come in. Bob also stated that he really needs this road grater fixed, that it is putting a lot of wear and tear on other vehicles and that isn't good. That we truly need it fixed by April 1. Council member Frank Brouillette said he will go talk to the mechanic about it and see if he can put it as a priority.

REPORT OF THE CLERK-TREASURER: Clerk-Treasurer, Lexi Petersen, informed the council that as of July 1st our meeting will be live to the public. She asked everyone to please read over Roberts Rules. She stated that it took her over a week to type last week's minutes because of all the interruptions, that it is vital we all conduct ourselves according to Roberts Rules.

REPORT OF THE ATTORNEY: City attorney Brent Brooks joined via Zoom, he stated that they are hoping to be done with the Burroughs property soon. They are hoping to meet and reschedule the signing again. He reminded the council that the meeting with Tina Hoeger, the Billings Code enforcement officer, is coming in two weeks so please email any questions you have for her so she can be prepared. She will help with any questions we have about RV and camper ordinance. Mr. Brooks also asked if we received an email from Civic Plus, who is going to help us organize and revamp our City Ordinances and make access to them much easier. He stated that if there is any

part of the contract, we dislike he will get ahold of them and work things out. Mr. Brooks noticed that it doesn't say we can pay after our fiscal year is over with so he will call and get that sorted out. Mayor Otten stated that he did want to wait until after July 1st so we can budget for it in our next fiscal year.

MAYORS REPORT: Mayor Otten stated he has a few meetings coming up. Phase 6 meeting is coming on March 4th. He also stated that Duane Otto is having a hard time receiving his payments, that this last phase is getting over with so hopefully he will be getting paid soon. Mayor Otten stated he will bring it up at the next phase meeting. Clerk-treasurer Lexi Petersen stated that this has been a problem across the state. Julie Berg suggested that we call our state representative and 'poke the bear.' Mayor Otten stated that he isn't super angry yet, but that he will bring it up at the next meeting.

ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING: None.

CLAIMS:

Frank Brouillette made a motion to pass the claims. Ron Teig second. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08

Council Members Present: Ron Teig, Charley Bennett, Johnny Cooney, Frank Brouillette, Rodger Kitts

Council Members Absent: Kathleen Schreiber

City Office: Mayor Paul Otten, City Clerk-Treasurer Lexi Petersen Public Works Director Bob Schuchard, City Attorney Brent Brooks via Zoom, City Deputy-Clerk Sarah Williams

Public Present: Julie Berg

Kevin Froese from WCSO was also present.



Paul Otten, Mayor



Lexi Petersen, Clerk-Treasurer