July 23, 2024

Harlowton City Hall

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council was held on July 23, 2024. The meeting opened at 7:00pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of the July 09th, 2024 Council meeting were approved as written.

The minutes of the February Roundhouse minutes taken by Lexi were approved as written.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Library: Johnny Cooney stated that the Library board had just met the previous night, one of the things they had discussed was the house bill 355. The library was wondering if they could come up with a list of things, like the sewer issue and security cameras that need to be updated. Mayor Paul Otten said he would like everyone to get together everything we can and get it to Jodie to see what they will or will not accept. Council member Johnny stated that it says existing structures, and the City owns the building, so we they came up with a list and our bids with it if it something we can do. Mayor Paul Otten asked to get a list into Sarah who will get with Jodie on it.

Ordinance: Has not met.

Pool: Council member Charley Bennett stated that he was down there today, and the Kiwanis was building the gazebo as we speak, he stated that it was looking nice, and it was heavy duty. Charley stated that the pool count was between 50 and 103, so it’s being used. He stated that other then that it was running smoothly.

Tree Board: Mayor Otten asked if we had gotten anymore applicants? Clerk-Treasurer Sarah Williams stated that no one has applied yet.

Wetlands Rail Trail: Mayor Otten stated that he would like to get someone on the Rail Trail soon.

Public comment on the Committee reports: none.

**UPDATE ON PAST AGENDA TOPICS:**

**UPDATE ON DECAY ORDINANCE COMPLAINTS:**

1. Clerk- Treasurer Sarah started out by showing everyone the new picturesthat had been turned in and stated that Charley Bennett was going to talk to the person in question and asked if Charley needed to follow up with him. Council member Charley Bennett then stated that we are not supposed to be talking to anyone. Council member Johnny Cooney stated that we took a vote as a council, and we decided that we would keep doing what we are doing and keep having conversations. Council Member Charley stated that according to the state we are not supposed to be doing it. Council Member Jonny asked that he make a motion that whoever makes the complaint must sign the complaint. Council Member Charley said the state said not to do it. Council Member Roger Kitts stated that we decided as a council to continue to have conversations with people. The state has advised us, and so far, he knows of no one getting in trouble for just talking to people. Council member Charley Bennett stated that Brent should be answering that question. Council member Roger stated that he already had. He then stated that they have made more progress just by talking to people and getting them to voluntarily to clean their stuff up then the council has done in many years. Roger feels Brent has gone over it enough that there really isn’t anything else to say. Discussion then ensued about the pictures, who will go visit with the person(s) in question.

Public Comment: Julie Berg stated that her only issue with this is that some people don’t live here, they don’t care what our community looks like, and they don’t take care of the property that they own here. That’s where the formal letters should come in. Give them two weeks to clean up or the city will hire someone to go do it and bill them. Some of these places are fire hazards, especially weeds at certain places. The old Times Clarion building hasn’t been touched or maintained in years. It’s the city’s job to enforce people to keep their property at a place where we don’t have a fire hazard, and that it’s not making the rest of our properties lose value. Counsil member Roger Kitts stated that it’s a great option to send a letter and let them know what they can do to avoid a fine. The council decided at the next meeting they will discuss writing letters.

UPDATE ON PREVIOUS DISCUSSED ITEMS:

1. Resolution to close all bank accounts and combine them for easier banking. Mayor Otten stated that this was recommended by Jodie Campbell. We will be closing all bank accounts and have them put it all into the general fund. It will take care of a lot of paperwork. Mayor Otten entertained a motion to close all the bank accounts and put them into the general fund. Kathelene Schreiber moved to close the accounts into one. Jack Runner 2nd the motion. All in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: none.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Street Closure Requests- AID spirit USA.Council member Charley Bennett made a motion to close the street. Council member Kathleen 2nd the motion. All in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: none.

1. Cody Nelson to discuss Wheatland County Emergency Management. Cody began by stating that a few months ago he was at a meeting and discussed with the council an emergency form that the county invested in and co-Opp’d with golden valley county. The system is up-to-date and fully functional, he has roughly 50 people in the two counties that have already signed up, and alerts are actively being sent out. Mr. Nelson then stated that he wanted to talk to the council about their specific role in his platform. The way it is set up for county level, if they have an incident that is ongoing that requires an emergency declaration, there is a group there I can send a message to at the same time, so that in a disaster he can get rapid fire response from elected officials so we can get things taken care of. Cody then handed everyone a form. He stated that for example the Graves fire, everyone on the city council would have been notified at 5 am, saying there is an active emergency within the city of Harlowton, please respond to the location. Cody also wanted to offer to the City that if someone in the office would like to get trained to be a certified sender on the platform, that can be set up, for water shut offs and sewer shut offs, things like that. Clerk-treasurer Sarah is going to do the training.

Public Comment: none.

1. Library Director Tina Peterson to talk about Library funds. Tina stated that currently the library receives county mills, there is a percentage that goes into our 2220 account, which is our library operating fund, and the other percentage going into 2221 account. The way the 2221 account is set up, it limited to a $5,000 cost to be able to spend any funds out of that. It limits us to making any improvements withing the library. Because it’s a taxpayer base, county mill, the library is asking the council to consider a resolution to keep all the money from the 2221 account but just have a resolution to change the fund number to a 4,000 which will essentially set us up with a library appreciation reserve fund and there is no limit to how we use it. It will still be spent on repairs and maintenance within the building. But it does limit us to the 5000-capital improvement amount. Tina stated that she and a few board members met with the commissioners last December, we asked them if there was any parameters, any specifics on how that county mill money was spent within the library. They stated that it was to offset the library costs. She stated that moving forward, the library would just like to not have that money split, it will all come to 2220 account. And at the end of the fiscal year have any unspent funds transferred into that 4,000 account.

Public Comment: none.

1. Discussion on new roller and loan with the Credit Union to purchase it. Mayor Otten stated that the roller itself is $25,000, there is a couple different interest rates that we will probably be eligible for. Council person Jack Runner asked if this is a part of HB355? Mayor Otten stated that it is, but we aren’t sure if we can get it with that money. Public works director Bob Schuchard stated that the city’s current roller catches on fire. He stated that he looked a lot of places for one, and this one $25,000. A brand new one is $75,000, and everything else Bob has looked at is $40,000 or $50,000. Council member Charlie Bennett made a motion that we buy the new roller. Kathleen Schreiber 2nd motion. All in favor and it passed unanimously.

Public Comment: none.

1. Council members to discuss the price for the lease for the new food hub. Clerk-treasurer Sarah stated that we have an ordinance about leases, and she suggested that we table this discussion until next time when she can get the information out to the council to be better informed. Mayor Otten stated that we will table this subject until a later date.

Public Comment: none

1. COLA report, cost of living raises. Mayor Otten stated that he would like to add 5% to the wages of all City employees. He stated that the national percentage is 4.5%. Council member Charley Bennett stated that this was supposed to be done around the 1st of July. Council member Kathleen stated that after It gets put in then there will be retro pay. Council member Jack Runner asked if September 1st is when the budget will be finalized. Clerk-treasurer Sarah stated that it was, and that she and Jodie will be doing a lot of work on it in the next few days. Charley Bennett made a motion to give the employees a 5% raise. Katheleen Schreiber 2nd the motion. All in favor, motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: none.

1. Charley Bennett to discuss shower use at the pool for HMP. Council member Charley Bennett stated that he received a phone call from one of the pool managers stating that she was approached about using our showers during the Harlo Music Project. Charley also stated that he has been approached by different people as well. He thinks it will be a good thing for the city. The pool manager talked about being open for quite a few hours, maybe 7 to 10 am. Kendra will also work out something on paying the managers wages while she is there. Counsil member Johnny Cooney asked about what about on our end? We must pay for that water the city does. So, is it free? Counsil member Charley stated that we have free swimming. Counsil member Johnny stated that the free swim was paid for. On the city level we must pay for them to run the water. Council member Roger Kitts stated that we should charge them $5 bucks. Charley Bennett stated he has no problem putting a price tag on it. Roger Kitts stated that a truck stop is 7 bucks. And he also stated that he thinks it’s a great idea and you can even say suggested donation 5bucks. Council member Kathleen asked if there is any liability issues with that? Mayor Otten stated that Sarah can get ahold of MMIA and find out. Charley Bennett made a motion that we let people use the pool house for $5.00 during Harlo Music Project. Roger Kitts 2nd the motion. All in favor and it will be passed unanimously pending word from MMIA.

Public Comment: none.

**PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT:** Bob Schuchard stated that the sewer project is complete. They will make a list of what they found next Wednesday and start drawing plans for the next sewer project. He stated that once he knows what his budget is he will address issues that they have, so far two intersections. Mayor Otten stated that we do still have money in our ARPA as well. Bob then stated that Jeff and Chip have been trimming trees on A ave. And it’s the best he has ever seen it look. Bob has a few items he thinks we should put on the agenda for the next meeting. He stated that he was contacted to see how much we rent the livestock pins for, and the pins are not the cities. He thought the rodeo committee did that, and he went to Jeff Sell because he was the mayor at the time. But regardless he feels we need to look and see if the county has insurance on it or if we do, but he knows we don’t, and he doesn’t want something to happen and us to be liable. They were put in 2010 or later. The second item he thinks we need to discuss at the next meeting is we had a function at the Graves on the 4th of July and it is private property. Clerk-treasurer Sarah stated that the Chamber talked with the owners and got the ok. Councl member Johnny Cooney stated that there is new owners, Jeff and Shawna Eagleton. Bob stated that we need to get ahold of them about snow removal and the weeds. Council member Charley asked if we got the county to help pay for the sidewalk. Bob stated that we have not, but he is sure they will because they said they would. Councilmember Johnny asked who do we follow up on that though? The commissioners? And Bob stated them and Everett.

**REPORT OF THE CLERK-TREASURER:** Sarah Williams stated that Jodie Campbell has 18 hours left of the current contract, we will be using that to get the budget stuff done. Sarah stated that is asking Jodie to come back one more time to help her train more. She stated that she received the new contract in time for the meeting to be put on the agenda. Sarah is asking that the council meet Monday for a quick meeting to vote on it. That way Sarah has enough time to put it out to the public. She stated that it will be another new contract. And those 18 hours will be used quickly. She stated that she has never done a budget before or ended a fiscal year, and a lot of other things she needs training with. Council member Kathleen stated that it is very important for Sarah to get trained properly. Mayor Otten stated that it’s important. Sarah stated that if we can meet on Monday and get it signed and approved, then Jodie can get here as soon as she can. Council member Jack Runner asked how much will this cost us? Sarah stated about 1000 a month plus travel, eating costs and lodging. Council member Jack stated that he thinks the more training the better, particularly with the office and accounting, we are money ahead. The council decided that a 9 am meeting will work best. Sarah stated that she would remind everyone. Council member Roger stated that he feels like Sarah is doing good with the amount of work she was thrown into, he wanted to know that after Jodie has done training if Sarah will be comfortable doing the job...? Sarah stated that yes. She stated that there is so much to the job. It is bust all day long. Sarah stated that the best part of having Jodie here is that it is getting done and it is getting done right, she stated that when Jodie was here the first time, they would start something and realize it hadn’t been done or was done wrong, so they spent most of that time fixing things and getting them in order. So, the day-to-day training was put on the back burner. The council decided that they would meet on Monday to go over the contract and sign it into motion.

**MAYOR’S REPORT:** Paul stated that Don Lode expressed concern that people were speeding down by his house, around the corner and to the museum. Council member Kathleen asked if it was still 20 miles an hour there to which Paul said it was. Public works director Bob stated there was no sign there. Council person Johnny stated that we do need a sign there. Bob stated we should put two signs, one on each end. The council decided that they would look and see if there is an extra sign they can post, and if there continues to be an issue they will revisit it. Mayor Otten stated that the pool mangers have requested new cameras as the current ones do not record. Council member Charley Bennett stated that whoever does the Library’s we should have them go and do the pools too. Mayor Otten also stated that he caught someone at the park filling up a 500-gallon tank. Deputy-Clerk Victoria Welshire stated that he came in and gave us $100. Discussion ensued about putting a sign at the park for them to go to the city shop to fill their water tanks. And a discussion on having the price upped from .10 cents to more. It will be on next weeks agenda.

**ATTORNEY REPORT:** Brent stated that he has a draft for the site title opinion ready. Brent then stated that the city does have an ordinance on leases, and when we are starting to do the lease for the food hub, we can get with him and fix things. Brent also stated that he cant locate the ordinances online currently. Brent then stated that he has two jury trials coming up. He also wanted to let the council members know he can draft a lease if the council wishes him to do so.

**REPORT OF WCSO:** not present

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA:** Tyrell Milton stated that he is not able to get any ordinances on the website, and its not explained very well when it was there. Council member Jack Runner stated that the ordinances that are on the website are the ones Lara put on there, that we are in the process of sending them all to Muni code to get them reworked and reworded, back then. Mayor Otten stated that we are currently in the process of that. Julie Berg stated that five months ago she asked about Dempsters lease, not trying boot anyone out, but it’s a city leased property and I want to know what’s happened with that. She stated that she talked to two public members in the last two years that were looking for a place to have a business for just the kind of business that Dempsters owns, Dan has not used it in how many years, I was told that he was not caught up on payment, the lease was never signed and that the building is not being used for its intended purpose and hasn’t for years, so why can’t it be available to someone else for the intended purpose? The City owns the property, he owns the building, the city can force him to clean up that property. Clerk- treasurer Sarah stated that after talking to Brent about it it was decided that we would get ahold of Dan, and have him come in and compare notes, receipts, and checks to make sure things were on the up and up. After trying to contact him by letter and phone, I have not gotten a response back. Council member Johnny Cooney stated that he will help with this process, if he can get the information the city has on it, he will talk with him.

**ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING:** Council member Jack Runner stated that he will not be at the next meeting. Council member Johnny Cooney asked to be on the agenda about how ordinance complaints come in. A resolution for the Library. More talk about leases. Council member Roger Kitts stated that he wont be at the next meeting, however at some point he would like to pick up the Rail Trail, take the lead on that. Bulk water will be on the next agenda.

**CLAIMS:**

Jack Runner made a motion to pass the claims. Johnny Conney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Council Members Present: Charley Bennett, Jack Runner, Kathleen Schreiber, Jack Runner, Johnny Cooney, Roger Kitts

Council Members Absent: Frank Brouillette

City Office: Mayor Paul Otten, City Clerk-Treasurer Sarah Williams, Public Works Director Bob Schuchard, City Attorney Brent Brooks viz Owl, Deputy-Clerk Tori Welshire

Public Present: Jeff Perry, Laura Brisco, Tina Peterson, Lindsey Sramek, Julie Berg, Jack Martin, Tyrel Milton, Cody Nelson, Loyd Horne

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Paul Otten, Mayor Sarah Williams, Clerk-Treasurer