

Harlowton City Council Minutes
April 13, 2021
Library Conference Room

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council was held on April 13, 2021. The meeting opened at 7:00 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance. Minutes of the March 23, 2021 Council meeting were approved as written.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1) Mayor Paul Otten updated the council on the City property formally known as Biegel's Bar. Snow Mountain Development Company is putting together the necessary documents to request funds from Brownfields for the amount of \$75,000.00.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council member Jack Runner reported that the Library was preparing to have its annual fundraiser on 4/15/2021 from 5-7pm. Food will be offered with the option of donations.

Council member Frank Brouillette gave an update on the Ordinance Committee. The Committee wrapped up the water/sewer portion of the book. The Committee also continued to work on updating the dog ordinances.

Council member Charley Bennett gave an update on the pool. The heaters for the pool have been shipped. The pool cover was not fixed because the company did not have the equipment to do the repairs. Charley had checked with *Reliable Tent and Awning* but they were backed up 4 months. *Leisure Pool* in Billings would be willing to take the cover and send it to a company to be looked at. Dave Lode had been working on getting the metal siding put up on the pool house.

Public Works Director Bob Schuchard gave a report on the Tree Board. Thirteen trees had been ordered from Townsend. The trees would be planted on the Boulevard and cost approximately \$800.00. Delivery and planting dates are currently unknown.

Ron Teig was not present at the meeting to report on the Wetlands Rail Trail.

NEW BUSINESS

1) Kelsey Miller, coordinator for the Wheatland County Weed District presented to the Council. The new location for the Weed District office is now in the basement of the County Courthouse. Last year she coordinated the weed pulling along the Smoking Boomer Trail. This year the event is scheduled for July 1st. Kelsey suggested that when the Wetland Rail Trail project is complete, she would like to coordinate a similar event for the area.

Kelsey stated that a small acreage cooperative was being developed to help educate people about containing weeds on their property.

Kelsey stated that there needed to be a cooperative agreement and memorandum of understanding between the City and the Weed District. There has been no formalized agreement between the City and the Weed District in the past. Kelsey will draft a document for the City to review and eventually agree on.

2) Paul stated that Great West Engineering had offered to help the City create a Capital Improvement Plan. Paul stated that it would be good to have for when the City applies for TSEP funding. Because Harlowton is surrounded by ranches, growth is limited and subdivision options are limited. Paul and City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco explained to the Council what a Capital Improvement Plan entails and why it would be of value. Lara also explained how the whole idea came up. The coordinator of the *Wheatland County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan*, Daphne Digrindakis, had requested a copy of the City's Growth Policy. The City does not have such a document. Lara approached Craig Erickson at Great West Engineering and asked if he knew of one existing. He said no but offered to have a meeting regarding the creation of a Capital Improvement Plan, which is similar but supposedly more useful.

Charley made a motion to allow the City to pursue further the Capital Improvement Plan. Jack seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

After the motion was approved, Councilmember Jim Kalitowski asked if it would be necessary to look into other Engineering companies that offered the option of having a Capital Improvement Plan written. Paul stated that he would look into it further with Bob Church from Great West Engineering.

3) Discussion took place regarding the *American Rescue Plan* funding. Water/sewer/broadband would be the main uses for the funds. Bob had some sewer and water project ideas. The projects would more than likely require an engineer. One project at Mariah Breeding's property requires a rerouting of the water line. Joel at Great West Engineering had been consulted. It would be a \$5000.00 minimum for plans to be drawn.

Another possible use for the *American Rescue Plan* funds would be new computers for the City Hall. Paul stated that whatever the City used the funds for, it would have to be well documented. The funds would come in with 50% around May 2021 and another 50% in about a year.

Jim stated that contractors for the work would probably be hard to come by since all the cities receiving money would be needing them.

4) Paul stated that there was an issue by the Roundhouse with beavers. Three dams had been put up in the last 10 years. Cody Schuchard had live-trapped the beavers in the past and would be willing to do so again for a cost of \$30 per beaver trapped. He also requested that the two traps he had put out in the past that were stolen be replaced at the cost of the City. The cost of those traps would be \$70-\$100 each. The beavers caught on City land would be the only ones the City would pay for. A reference to a "government trapper" was also made. Council member Allison Jones asked if there was funds available for this sort of thing. Lara stated that it would probably be considered part of the park funds. Bob stated that it was approximately \$500 in the past.

5) A second reading of the proposed Fire Pit Ordinance was presented to the Council. Jack requested that two words be added. On page 3 change the words to "Wheatland City/County Fire Department". Allison also stated that she felt the 10ft from property line and buildings was not realistic. City Fire Chief Kevin Knudson stated that the words "safe distance" could be used in exchange for "10 ft" in the ordinance. Paul stated that the Ordinance would have to go back to the Ordinance Committee for further review. Kevin stated that he would take the ordinance to the Fire Department for review.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT

Public Works Director Bob Schuchard gave a report. The buyer of the grain elevator wanted water. The Public Works Department spent a week there. The owner does not want to be annexed into the City. He is having water shipped in. Because of this, the City sewer would be used. Bob asked how the City would want to handle the situation. Bob suggested the options of: having the property's sewer severed, forced annexation, charge just for sewer.

Charley asked what was done at the property before. Bob stated that the previous owners paid for water and sewer. The City's previous phases of the water project had severed the water connections to the property, therefore this was no longer an option. The new owners would have to pay to have it put back in as well as the cost for the street repaving.

Discussion ensued regarding options as well as the new owner's plans for the property.

Charley stated that he would talk to the new owner. Paul asked if a flat rate could be set up for the property and not be in violation. Bob stated that that was an option.

Discussion took place regarding tucker town rates and other properties in the area.

Bob stated that the leases up by the proposed Wetlands Rail Trail had left behind 9 tree stands. One was tipped, one was on a rotten tree. A recommendation was made that the tree stands be removed and that the area be opened up to public use. Paul stated that Bryan Tomlinson would take down the tree stands. Bob also stated that after the cattle are removed from the area and no longer grazing, the area would be a fire hazard. He suggested that the land be leased out for cattle to graze for one month but that the current fences were not in place. Paul stated that part of the lease termination letters stated that lessees must replace the fences.

Bob stated that sewer jetting had begun. True North was going to look at the culvert by the pool. They would be drawing up plans and emailing them soon.

Bob mentioned that there had been an issue with unlicensed RVs being parked and not moved for long periods of time.

MAYOR REPORT

Paul informed the Council that Rob Elwood had been the previous Council President. Paul would need to appoint another person. Frank Brouillette volunteered.

ACH billing had begun. Lara gave a report on the success of the program/process so far.

Someone had suggested to Paul in passing that the City look into solar energy options. They gave a comparison to the solar panels in Lavina. Paul believed those were privately set up. Discussion ensued regarding solar versus wind power revenue. Charley stated that the City council would have to change the charter in order for this to happen in Harlowton.

Community member Lance Schuchard was present at the Council meeting. He stated that he would like to purchase from the City a portion of the land that he is currently leasing. Paul stated that he would look into the process for doing so. Frank stated that if the land was going up for sale, it would have to be made public. A fair market value assessment would have to be made as well.

Mike DeBorde would like to propose an abandonment of the end of E St SE and SE Gordon. He would then like to co-purchase the area with his neighbor. He would need the Council's approval to do the abandonment. A survey would need to be done at the cost of Mike and his neighbor. Discussion took place regarding the area and what can and can't be sold. Bob stated that the gas main should be located in the area. Discussion ensued.

The City's waste removal provider, Republic, had raised their rates in January by 3%. In order to keep the transfer station from going into the "red", the 2021 season's rates would need to be increased. Paul stated that the clean up days of 5/7 and 5/8 could keep the old rates but starting May 22nd and through the summer Saturday dates, rates would need to be increased. Jim stated that this could not be voted on presently because it was not part of the agenda. The proposed rate increase would be presented on next meeting's agenda.

Paul presented a copy of a letter from resident Jo Elrod regarding a sewer issue on her property. She believed that the area that proposed a problem was not on her land. The letter accompanied a bill for the rental of equipment to clear the line. This area included tucker town, so it was agreed by the Council that it would not be the City's responsibility. Paul would talk to the County Commissioners regarding who is responsible for the Elrod bill.

Paul stated that he had recently attended another Pre-disaster mitigation meeting at the County. Each meeting covered a different aspect of preparation such as fire, flood, GPS of gas stations.

ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

The next council meeting will be April 27, 2021
at 7:00pm.

CLAIMS

Frank made a motion to pay claims from March 22nd through April 9th. Allison seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25pm

Council Members Present: Charley Bennett, Jim Kalitowski, Jack Runner, Frank Brouillette, Allison Jones

Council not present: Ron Teig

City Office: Mayor Paul Otten, City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco, Public Works Director Bob Schuchard

Public Present: Dan Edwards, Steve Stewart, Kelsey Miller, Kevin Knudsen, Lance Schuchard

Paul Otten, Mayor

Lara Brisco, Clerk-Treasurer