

February 22, 2022
Harlowton City Library

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council was held on February 22, 2022. The meeting opened at 7:06pm (issues with phone connection with Charley held up the start of the meeting) with the Pledge of Allegiance. Minutes of the February 8, 2022 Council minutes were approved as written.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1) Paul reported that February 25th the bids for demolition of the Biegels Bar would open.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council member Jack Runner gave a report on the library. The Library's Policy Book was currently being reviewed and updated. The annual fundraiser would be on March 10th at Gally's. There would be a meet and greet with local authors. The computer system for the library would be upgraded in March.

Ordinance Committee Chair Frank Brouillette stated that the revision of the decay ordinance continued. The next meeting would be for public comment.

Council member Charley Bennett gave a report on the pool. Thompson Pools would be sending out a plumber to do the heaters when the weather warms up.

Public Works Director Bob Schuchard gave a report on the Tree Board. They would be ordering trees soon. Bob would be making a list and checking the finances with City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco. He would like to order some evergreens to replace some of the trees that had been removed.

Council member Ron Teig was absent from reporting on the Wetlands Rail Trail

NEW BUSINESS

1) Greg and Cindy Berg presented to Council regarding the property they had purchased from the City in December 2020. The property is located at E Ave and 1st St SE had been surveyed and recorded as separate parcels. The Bergs would like to split the street at the "Horton house", 502 1st St. The surveyor had said this was not a big deal but Page Dringman had requested that the Bergs bring it to the Council for approval. Frank made a motion to allow the Bergs to split the land as requested. Council member Kathleen Schreiber seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2) Kelly Evans and Jane Moe of Wheatland Memorial presented to the Council. During the last presentation at the Council meeting in July 2021, the possibility was discussed of city property being gifted for the location of the new hospital. The planning committee had public comment and revised the plan. Kelly stated that the revised plan included post-acute and acute care. Sustainability of the building is very important. The project is known as an "Anchor Facility"

because of the large employment opportunities as well as the positive impact on the community. The current location of the hospital has antiquated HVAC and sewer lines. The hospital was built in the 1950s, the nursing home in the 1970s and the Bair Clinic in the 1990s. The Critical Access Hospital model (CAH) offers funding opportunities without taxing the citizens. The model allows \$850,000 in revenue each year which helps to pay off the loan. The depreciation schedule sets the value of the new/proposed building high at first because it is new.

The hospital is critical to multiple communities because it is located centrally at a 4 way highway intersection.

Clientele would mostly be Medicare patients. Four primary care providers are projected to be hired. They would be contracted providers and no staff reduction would occur. The proposed hospital would have 13 long term resident beds. The current hospital holds 14 long term beds. Kelly stated that unfortunately more would not work for the feasibility schedule and the reimbursement schedule would be compromised if this was changed. The other 5 beds would be for post-acute care (i.e. post-op) as well as acute care. The new site would need 38,000 sq. ft. but location has not been determined. The USDA wants to see local support of the project. City land donation would be a strong part of this support. Community engagement and letters of support are also important.

Kelly asked what would need to happen in order for the City to donate the land for the new site. Discussion took place regarding concerns with access to the City's water/sewer lines. Currently the properties bordering the requested land are not annexed into the City.

Bob stated his concerns. The rock quarry has not shown interest in being annexed in. The State rest area (managed by the Department of Transportation) down the street has City water and sewer but it would be costly to link up. The Corral Hotel is currently using just city water. Paxton stated that he will follow up with the rock quarry. Paxton asked if the City donating land would be contingent on water and sewer access. He asked if it could be given on condition. Bob stated that the line must be designed to city standards. Kelly asked what the process would be for the city to give the land to the hospital. Harlowton City mayor Paul Otten stated that the city would have to consult with the attorney Karen Hammel. A resolution would probably have to be passed. Kelly stated that if the city was OK with this the USDA would look at the land. Paul stated that the city was leaning towards support for the land donation but because it was not on the agenda it could not be voted on. Bob stated that he would look into where the water lines were going through. Kelly asked if there was a city planner. Bob stated that Great West Engineering would be the city planner. The Department of Transportation would have to speak for themselves.

Discussion ensued regarding the current hospital blueprint. The ambulance barn is currently on the city main.

Paxton asked what the plan would be. Frank stated that the City would need to speak to their attorney and get the vote of approval on the agenda for a council meeting.

3) Lara presented documents regarding an application for the Montana Historical Preservation Grant. The City had previously signed similar documents in February of 2020. The new application required new documents to be approved and signed.

The Council agreed to designate Mayor Paul Otten as the City's Environmental Certifying Official. The Council discussed the roundhouse and agreed that the stabilization of the Roundhouse property would have no significant effect on the environment.

Discussion ensued regarding the plan for the Roundhouse as well as the railcar transport plans. Frank made a motion for the grant documents to be approved. Jack seconded this motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT

Bob made a report. There have been no more alarms at the UV building. The Public Works Department has been jetting the sewer. Tree roots were blocking the line and there was low flow above the park. The jetter got stuck and they had to bring in True Pipe out of Billings to finish the job. Paul asked if there were areas that needed more frequent jetting. Bob mentioned a maintenance plan that Ian and Kathie had when they worked for the City. Bob would like for True Pipe to come back yearly and develop a maintenance plan.

Bob stated that there was still an issue with getting the weekly sewer samples to Billings. He had spoken with the UPS driver (John) who said that it would be fastest to use next day air out of Lewistown. The price of shipping would be competitive.

Frank asked about the Ryegate courier and what the prices would be to use his services. Discussion ensued regarding what the Courier's prices would be and if they would be less than what the City is currently paying. The City is currently paying for City Deputy Clerk Alanna Berg to drive down to Billings every week. Frank stated that the courier is currently being used by Central Lumber and that he would ask what the price would be to take the sewer sample to Billings for the City. Discussion took place regarding the options and prices.

REPORT OF THE CLERK-TREASURER

City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco gave her report. The Auditor would be coming Wednesday to start. The City had begun advertising for lifeguard positions for summer. Currently no lifeguard applications had been returned. There are concerns with the timeline of interviewing, hiring and training employees before the June opening. Lara had signed herself up for the online chemical training course to be the second tester as a backup for Heather Mysse. She would take the exam on March 18th.

Lara presented documents to the Council regarding a third pot of ARPA funds known as a Minimum Allocation Grant (MAG). She would like the Council to review the documents as well as look at the ARPA website. The Council would need to make a decision on how they would like to apply for the funds. Harlowton is eligible for \$240,314.01 with a match requirement of \$63,029.65. The funds can be matched with the City's current ARPA funds. The project must be related to water or sewer. The deadline for the application to be received and accepted is December 31st 2022. Lara asked that the Council come back to the March 8th meeting with a list of ideas. She also stated that Bob felt that the money could be best used in the sewer.

MAYORS REPORT

Mayor Paul Otten gave his report. Jason Seyler from DEQ had sent over documents regarding the cost of moving the railcar back to the Roundhouse property.

Paul stated that AMKO would not proceed with refinancing City's sewer loan. Donna from RD had contacted the City to let us know that the loan had recently been refinanced in 2020 and that the 3% rate was the lowest it could be at this time.

Paul notified the Council that a “Green County” petition was going around again. This would allow another vote on whether to allow recreational marijuana businesses to reside in Harlowton.

ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Council discussion of MAG application ideas.

The next council meeting will be March 8, 2022 at 7:00pm.

CLAIMS

Frank made a motion for the claims from February 7th through February 18th be paid. Kathleen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 pm.

Council Members Present: Charley Bennett (via phone), Jack Runner, Kathleen Schreiber, Frank Brouillette

Council Members Absent: Allison Jones, Ron Teig

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

Public Present: Dan Edwards (Times Clarion), Kelly Evans and Jane Moe (Wheatland Memorial), Paxton Wojtowick (Hospital Board), Cindy and Greg Berg

Paul Otten, Mayor

Lara Brisco, Clerk-Treasurer