

August 9, 2022
Harlowton City Hall

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council was held on August 9, 2022. The meeting opened at 7:00pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of the July 26, 2022 Council meeting were approved as written.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council member Jack Runner stated that there was nothing new to report regarding the Library.

The Ordinance committee did not meet this week.

Council member Charley Bennett gave a report on the pool. The budget for last year was on point. The cart wheel for safety was ordered and should arrive in September. There would be a follow up in the accident report to show that safety measures had been taken. Charley would be looking into bids and grants to install sprinklers next year. He would also like to focus on a sidewalk and staircase from the parking lot.

Public Works Director Bob Schuchard stated that there was nothing new to report regarding the Tree Board.

Council member Ron Teig stated that there was nothing to report on the Wetland Rail Trail.

UPDATE ON PAST AGENDA TOPICS

Council members were asked to give updates on Decay Ordinance-related complaints from the community. Frank Brouillette of Ward 3 gave an update on the Peck/Best property. The people living in the house told Frank that a dumpster was on hold because they needed to come up with the \$900 deposit. The owners were not helping with these costs. Frank stated that he would need to follow up and that the City might need to take the next step in the Decay Ordinance. Frank stated that the amount of garbage was pretty bad. Charley asked if the people were aware of the vehicle disposal programs through Lewistown, Hagl and vehicles for veterans. Frank stated that he had told them about that option.

Charley asked if the form for filing decay ordinance- related complaints could be posted on Facebook for easier access. Lara stated that she would post the document.

Community member Bill Jones was present at the meeting. He asked if the Council had had a chance to review the letter from the Senior Center and what was being done about it. Bill asked Jack Runner, who is in charge of investigating the complaint (ward 2) if he had a chance to speak with Joe Brouillette (the owner of the property in question). Jack stated that he was in the "preliminary stages" of researching the complaint. He would be taking pictures and would

present the Council with the information he collected at the next meeting (8/23/22). Bill asked if the Council had seen the letter he wrote. Jack stated that they had not but that they would at the next Council meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1) Kylie Meeker presented her ideas for restarting a Little League program in 2023. Kylie mentioned the field by the rodeo grounds as well as the one by the track field. The biggest issue would be with the gophers. She suggested that they be exterminated and then the area could be bulldozed. She would also like a fence built and the bleachers repainted.

Mayor Paul Otten stated that the area to the East was County property and the area to the West was City property. Paul stated that the gopher problem had been an ongoing problem for years. Kylie stated that there must be a temporary fix. Charley suggested that Kylie look into different grantors (Dennis Washington, Bair, Callant, etc...). City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco stated that she would email Kylie the information to apply for these grants.

Discussion took place regarding the best way to handle the gopher problem. Bob stated that poison could not be used. Council member Frank Brouillette suggested flooding them out. Community member Boyd Burroughs suggested using Chad Roelf's dog.

- 2) Continued discussion took place regarding the property of interest to Boyd Burroughs. Paul presented the documents from Realtor Julie Woodard regarding the property lines and fair market value assessment. Paul stated that there would also be floodplain-related regulations regarding building on the land. Livestock would be ok though. Paul stated that the buyer should be responsible for the land surveying costs after the bid is accepted. The land would need to be posted in the newspaper for two weeks before the bids could be reviewed. Discussion took place regarding the necessary easements for the City as well as Boyd's current property. Paul stated that the fair market assessment would need to be considered when setting a minimum bid price (\$10,125.00) Boyd stated that if he didn't get the bid, he would be "land locked". Bob stated that he was already land locked because the road to his driveway was already private property. Paul stated that the ad in the newspaper would need to clarify that easements would be necessary. The property adjacent to the property in question was also discussed. Paul stated that he would consult with City Attorney Karen Hammel about getting the various easements needed on the property. Paul asked the Council if they would like to advertise the land in the newspaper now or wait and look into the easements. Frank stated that it shouldn't be an issue to get the easements in place. Paul stated that he would get them in place by the next meeting.
- 3) Lara stated that the Pool Manager, Heather Mysse, had been approached by the school to use the pool for PE during the first two weeks of school. The dates would be 8/24-9/1. Heather would be the lifeguard on duty. Council member Allison Jones made a motion to allow the school to use the pool for PE. Frank seconded the motion. The motion passed

unanimously.

- 4) Lara stated that to encourage trained lifeguards to return next year, she would like to give them a few incentives. She asked permission to give them a pizza party. She also asked that a “bonus” incentive be allowed for next year which would be broken down over 3 months with the largest sum on the last paycheck of the summer. Getting the employees to return would save the City on training costs. The training costs this year alone had been \$1200.00. Lara suggested either \$75 or \$100 per employee. She also asked that the Manager be considered in this. Council agreed that the pizza party and bonus incentives would be a good idea. Lara also stated that an assistant manager should be considered for next summer. She stated that Isa Caballero was a good candidate for the position. She would be chemical trained as well. At the next meeting the Council would vote on the assistant manager position being offered to Isa.
- 5) Resolution 2022-08 was presented to the Council for review. The resolution is to approve raises given to the Public Works employees in October 2021 as well as the Deputy Clerk in January 2022. Charley made a motion to pass resolution 2022-08. Frank seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- 6) The Council reviewed the RFQ documents from two municipal attorneys—Brent Brooks and Ed Guza. Lara stated that she would email digital versions of the documents so that the council could review them further before the next council meeting. Paul stated that he had met Brent Brooks. Brent was involved in the process of transferring City property to the hospital because he represents the Hospital.
Discussion took place regarding what each RFQ entails and the hourly vs monthly fees of each attorney. Charley stated that because it seemed like both attorneys do virtual meetings a lot, a TV would be necessary to put in City Hall. Discussion ensued regarding the need for a TV as well as if a projector would be sufficient.
The Council will review the documents further and make a decision at the 8/23/22 meeting.
- 7) Discussion took place regarding the FY 22-23 budget as well as wages. Lara stated that because the budget program required that wages be inputted first, she couldn’t move forward without some idea of what wages would be. She suggested the Council create a “high” and “low” number that she could use. Paul asked Bob if the public works employees wages were good. Bob stated that they were. Frank stated that the only wage that seem disproportionate to what other similarly sized cities were making was Lara’s. He stated that it should be \$18.00 or \$18.50. Charley stated that Alanna has cleaned up the water bills so that everyone is paying. Lara stated that currently there are no delinquent bills because of her. Jack asked how much money is current available to use towards wages. Lara stated that this is a fluid thing that had to take into account how much expenditures and revenues would be over the coming year. Discussion took place over whether the raises should be based on 3% or 5%. Lara will apply a high and low to each position and present the budget at the next council meeting.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT

Bob gave his report. The courier company that was being used to ship samples to Billings recently went out of business. Charlie would be delivering the samples.

The landfill dumpsters were not being delivered when they were supposed to. Bob called numerous times to get them in time. They would have to be reserved weeks ahead in order to be ready for the Saturday transfer station dates. There were issues with people wanting to clean up their yards/houses but no dumpsters to drop off at.

A city boulevard tree fell on Travis Hiner's truck during a day of high winds. The City had filed a claim with their insurance but the insurance company had found that it was "an act of God" and would not be covered by the City's liability insurance.

Duane from Do All Construction was starting to do locates and would be starting Phase 5 of the water upgrade project in the next week.

City Council member Kathleen Schreiber asked Bob if the meters were reading properly. Bob stated that Public Works employee Jeff Perry needed to get out of the truck and go door to door with some of the meters because they weren't reading from the truck. Discussion took place regarding certain meters in town not being read properly. Bob stated that a new meter is \$400 and most people wouldn't want to pay that.

REPORT OF THE CLERK-TREASURER

City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco gave her report. Lara stated that the preliminary budget would be ready to review at the 8/23 meeting but that it would need to be posted in the newspaper for two weeks. The public hearing to review the budget and approve it would take place on 9/6. She suggested different ways to increase revenue. This could be through raising rates on bulk water, campground fees, and dog license fees. The Council agreed that 2 cents per gallon was too low for the bulk water. Lara explained that a lot of people homesteading in Shawmut come to get hundreds of gallons a week. The Council agreed to increase the bulk water prices to 10 cents per gallon. The change would be voted on at the 8/23/22 meeting.

Lara was researching grants for maintaining trees. She stated Arbor Day Foundation was only for planting them but that the DNRC Forestry services might have grants. She would look into it.

MAYORS REPORT

Mayor Paul Otten Gave a report. Sabrina McCraw was sent a certified letter on 7/22 giving her two weeks to present the proper documentation as proof of having an up-to-date handicap parking permit. She picked up the letter on 8/5 (one day after the two-week deadline). Paul was told by the Sheriff's department that she had not had an up-to-date permit in a while. Paul had been asked by someone if she could "borrow" theirs but told them no, she must have her own. Jack stated that she had been given sufficient time to come up with proof of her permit and had not done so. Discussion took place regarding whether or not the Council needed to vote to have the sign removed. Lara stated that the letter did not specify that that would be necessary. Bob asked if he should remove the sign. Jack stated that he should let the Sheriff's department know when he did it. Paul stated that he had asked Sabrina to attend a meeting but that she had 3 jobs and couldn't make it.

Discussion took place regarding long term RV parking. Jack stated that the ordinance needed to be updated. Discussion took place regarding Frank's property being drilled by DEQ.

Paul stated that the proposed city owned property that the new hospital would go on is actually part of the Nez Pearce trail and that the Tribal representatives to ask permission to use it. It didn't look like it would be a problem.

Charley stated that Senator Tester had given him some information for moving forward with getting involved with the missile project housing. Paul asked Charley to present a letter to be mailed to Northrop Grumman.

Charley also stated that he asked Judith Gap where they got their new solar speed signs. Lara stated that she was looking into a grant to pay for the signs if the City purchased them. Discussion took place regarding speed signs. Discussion took place regarding who to contact to have signs moved.

ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

The next council meeting will be August 23, 2022 at 7:00pm.

CLAIMS

Frank made a motion to pass the claims from July 23rd through August 5th. Ron seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm

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

Council Members Absent: none

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

Public Present: Boyd Burroughs, Kylie Meeker, Bill Jones, Chad Roelfs, Wheatland County Sheriff's Department Deputy O'Brien

Paul Otten, Mayor

Lara Brisco, Clerk-Treasurer