

January 24, 2023
Harlowton City Hall

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council was held on January 24, 2023. The meeting opened at 7:00pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council reviewed minutes.

Minutes from the 01/10/2023 closed session were approved as written.

The minutes of the January 10, 2023 Council meeting were approved as written.

PUBLIC COMMENT: none

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Council member Jack Runner gave a report on the library. The number of books being checked out lately were strong. The library had received the state library code so they could start registering the books. Mayor Paul Otten asked what the status with the basement leak was. Jack stated that the contractors were not able to check the area. Discussion took place regarding the leaking area and recent weather conditions. Paul stated that the area needed to be checked out before Spring. Discussion took place of contractors in town and who had any availability. Jack asked Public Works Director Bob Schuchard if Do All Construction would be returning. Bob stated that when they returned, they would be busy. Discussion took place regarding keeping the work local or looking at surrounding areas for a contractor. Paul asked Council member Charley Bennett if he had looked at the area and what he thought. Charley stated that concrete should be poured to make the water move away from the building. Paul stated that he would look into the issue the following day (1/25/23) and follow up with local contractors to find out their availability. Paul stated that it was too cold to pour concrete now. He asked what Colony sold cement. Council member Allison Jones stated that it was the Duncan Colony

The Ordinance committee did not meet.

Charley gave a report on the pool. Ron Fischer had updated Charley on the progress of the pool house renovations. The digging was complete and they were waiting to lay pipe and pour concrete. Jimbo had told him that the project would be done by June. Paul asked if it could be closer to March or April. Charley stated that it wouldn't take long.

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

Council member Ron Teig was not present to report on the Wetland Rail Trail project. Paul stated that he had participated in a zoom call with the State to give testimony regarding the \$500,000 grant to continue asbestos removal of the roundhouse area. There were some technical difficulties during the zoom call and Jason Seyler had to provide the testimony on behalf of the City.

UPDATE ON PAST AGENDA TOPICS

Council members were asked to give updates on Decay Ordinance-related complaints from the community. Council member Frank Brouillette stated that he had not heard anything from the current owners regarding the trash removal. He stated that a letter should be sent. Discussion took place regarding who was the current owner of the house and what their current address was. The cadastral map showed an old address for the current owner. Paul asked Deputy Clerk Alanna Berg if there was a current mailing address on file for the account. Alanna stated that there was only a phone number.

Jack asked if there had been any word from the Senior Center or Joe Brouillette. Alanna stated that there had been no word.

NEW BUSINESS

- 1) Discussion took place regarding the need for a public records form and fee schedule. Alanna stated that at the last Council meeting there had been a discussion about public records requests. She stated that it was important to not only document the process of records requests but to also take into account the time to research, print, etc... the documents. She stated that small fee should be attached to time-consuming requests. Alanna stated that this would not apply to Council minutes and that the letter from the Times Clarion was incorrect about this. Jack asked City Attorney Brent Brooks if he thought the template form Alanna presented looked ok. Brent stated that one of the MCA codes referenced was no longer applicable but otherwise the form looked good. He stated that he would review it further and give feedback. Brent also stated that there should be a reference in the form stating that sensitive/private information could not be released. Jack made a motion to approve the form with Brent's advised changes. Frank seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- 2) Discussion took place regarding the upcoming pool season. City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco stated that a current lifeguard who had been employed with the City for 2 years was interested in the position of pool manager if the wages were comparable to those she could get if she stayed in Butte this summer. Lara stated that this person had shown initiative and leadership and would make a good manager. Lara presented the Council with the most current budget expenditure report to show that a majority of wages for the pool were still unspent. The current budget would only apply until June 30th and the City was in a position to give more towards the manager's wages. Lara stated that if the City wanted a good manager, they would have to provide a decent wage. Lara stated that she had asked other Clerks what they paid their managers. Sunburst, Conrad and Winnett had all responded and each one said \$15/hour. Frank stated that if a manager was hired that would be responsible and do a good job, it would be worth the money. Discussion took place about who would be interested in the position. Discussion took place about the importance of the manager being a leader who could also stand up to rude patrons. Lara stated that this wasn't about age because an adult could struggle with this just as much as a younger person. Paul stated that because this was not a permanent position, it would have to be advertised. Discussion took place about hiring two managers—one for

testing/cleaning the pool and one for managing employees and scheduling. Discussion took place regarding the lifeguard situation. Lara stated that there were 9 lifeguards last year and she wasn't sure who would be coming back and who would be moving on. Discussion took place regarding the bonus incentive for returning lifeguards. A letter would be drafted and sent out soon to assess who would be returning in the summer.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT

Bob gave his report. The lift station was fixed. Cracks in the concrete would not be signed off on until the warmer weather returned. The crew was doing tree maintenance as weather permitted. Twenty three trees had been removed so far. The department was about 80% done with doing lead waterline inventory. He had participated in a conference call with the Water Authority. There was discussion about water treatment and chlorination changes when the new water comes in. Discussion took place regarding homeowner's responsibilities with a 2nd meter installation.

REPORT OF THE CLERK-TREASURER

Lara stated that she had filed for an extension for the AFR (Annual Financial Report) as the consultant contracted to do the report was behind schedule. Lara had not heard back from the State regarding whether or not the request had been approved/denied. Alanna and Lara had been working on updated the City's website to include final minutes all the way back to 2014. The site would be updated regularly with all final minutes the day after approval and would eventually include all agendas, ordinances, ordinance meeting documents, etc... which would be advertised with the link on Facebook. Lara stated that Alanna had prepared all grant applications to be submitted. This year's grant requests would also include funding for the Volunteer Firefighters, the transfer station, and the skate park.

Frank asked why the City was closed on Wednesdays again. Alanna stated that the interviewing committee had decided. Alanna presented a document logging the foot traffic on Wednesdays since reopening again. There had only been 23 transactions total on Wednesdays in 14 weeks and some of these weren't even in person. They included Chief Joseph Park payments, mailed in payments and online payments. Frank stated that taxpayers need to be able to pay 5 days a week. Lara stated that it was a waste of tax payer dollars to be open when no one came in. Lara stated again that as a new clerk, being closed Wednesdays allowed her to catch up on her own work since she had no Deputy Clerk on Thursday or Friday and was doing both jobs at once on those days.

Allison stated that the interview committee should decide if the new Deputy Clerk would be full time or half day. Allison asked if a Deputy Clerk was even necessary.

Alanna stated that the City had been closed on Wednesdays for years and that recently opening on Wednesdays again had shown it wasn't worth it. Paul stated that the Clerk shouldn't have to sit around and waste time. Allison asked if they could be open half days to the public on Wednesdays. Alanna asked why be open at all if no one is coming in? Frank stated that the Council should be more involved and not find out on Facebook. Paul stated that it was his fault. Jack asked if the Council should be having the conversation with Alanna yet since they had not approved her yet to be the new Clerk-Treasurer. Lara stated that she had given them 3 months to get everything in order. Lara also stated that the Council had never approved Bob or her being hired as department heads. Discussion ensued regarding the proper procedures for Council involvement of hiring Department heads. Alanna's hiring would be on the 2/14/23 agenda so that the Council

could formally approve it and move forward. Jack stated that the new Deputy Clerk's hours and wages would be set by the hiring committee. Paul stated that City Hall would just be open again. Frank then asked why the City had a sign stated that there were no public restrooms. He stated that his constituents were concerned about this. Discussion ensued regarding why this was important. Lara stated that the restroom would need to be handicap accessible. She had previously asked City Attorney Karen Hammel about but had not received a clear response. She had also asked other Clerks about it and they all said their restrooms were not open to the public. Brent stated that he would look more into the topic and report back.

MAYORS REPORT

Mayor Paul Otten gave a report. The Deputy Clerk interviews would be the following day at 4pm. Alanna asked if since she was not formally hired as the new Clerk-Treasurer and they were interviewing for her job, was she then out of a job? Bob asked about the definition of nepotism. Alanna stated that it would be to hire a relative over someone who was more qualified to do the job. Brent agreed that this would be the clear definition. Brent asked that Alanna email him the applicants information to review.

ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

The next council meeting will be Tuesday February 14, 2023 at 7:00pm.

CLAIMS

Frank made a motion to pass the claims 19899 through 19907. Jack seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35pm

(The City Council asked the public to leave so that a closed session to discuss litigation with the City Attorney could take place.)

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

Council Members Absent: Ron Teig

City Office: Mayor Paul Otten, City Clerk-Treasurer Lara Brisco, Public Works Director Bob Schuchard, City Attorney Brent Brooks, Deputy Clerk Alanna Berg

Public Present: none

Paul Otten, Mayor

Lara Brisco, Clerk-Treasurer