September 24, 2024

Harlowton City Hall

A regular meeting of the Harlowton City Council was held on September 24th, 2024. The meeting opened at 7:00pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of the September 9th, 2024, Council meeting was approved as written.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Library:**

**Ordinance:** not met.

**Pool:** Council Member Charley Bennet stated that Mike Stensaas closed the pool house down. The cross walk to the pool and grocery store is done as well. There is signs up too. The pool camera will be installed Thursday.

**Tree Board:** Public Works director Bob Schuchard stated that there was a meeting, he was not in attendance, but he heard it went well. Clerk Treasurer Anita let him know that they had some money to spend, so he bought some trees from Blake Nursery and wants to get them in the ground. Mayor Otten stated that along this topic he would like the council to ok Bob a check for when he goes to pick the trees up and we will put it on the next one. The council agreed.

**Wetlands Rail Trail:**  Bob Schuchard stated he has a little update on the trail. They called today and they will start hauling today or tomorrow on getting that pond filled in.

**Public Comment on Committee reports**: none.

**UPDATE ON PAST AGENDA TOPICS:**

**UPDATE ON DECAY ORDINANCE COMPLAINTS:**

1. Discussion of decay ordinance complains and updates. Clerk-Treasurer Anita stated that we just need to go through this and update a few of them. Councilman Johnny Cooney stated that Kaye Sherman has moved out of town. And that will send a letter. Councilperson Jack Runner asked if we have formal letters from Brent? Anita stated that we do. Councilmember Johnny Cooney stated that we need pictures along with the addresses now. Councilmember Charlye Church stated that he is letting people borrow his equipment if they need it, he is doing it as a neighbor not a council person. To which Johnny Cooney stated that most of us are doing it as neighbors as well. A discussion ensued on who to send letters of enforcement to.

**Public Comment:** Marilyn Fake asked about Sarah Peck property. Mayor Otten stated that they are caught up on their utilities. And he heard a rumor they are buying plumbing materials. Councilmember Frank Brouillette stated that they are buying martials, toilets, flooring, everything. Marilyn Fake stated that she wanted to say thank you for helping get this going and seeing it though. Councilmember Frank stated that he visits with Pecks significant other at the store and he is willing to take any advice as well wanting to do things property. He is buying good tools; he is wanting to do the best he can.

**UPDATE ON PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED ITEMS:** none.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Road Closure HHS Coming Parade.
2. **Public Comment:** none.
3. Council member Charley Bennett made a motion that we approve the road closure. Councilmember Frank Brouillette 2nd the motion. All was in favor. Motion passed unanimously.
4. Resolution for HB355. Councilmember Charley bennet stated that when Jody Campbell did that, she out the pool cameras on there and he doesn’t see them on there this time. Clerk-treasurer Anita stated she didn’t see them at all. They possibly got missed.
5. **Public Comment**: none.
6. Council decided to table this conversation until next meeting.
7. Formal Letter from Attorney Brent Brooks regarding decay and overdue water bills. Attorney Brent suggested that they look at both the letters and maybe put them on the next meeting for approval. Mr. Brooks then discussed the letters a formal courtesy notice. He then stated that our door hangers’ conflict with our ordinance, and we need to amend that as soon as we can.
8. **Public Comment:** none.
9. The council decided that we will amend the ordinance. And reprint the door hangers.
10. Swear Anita Leach as Clerk-Treasurer. Mayor Otten swore Anita in. Mayor Otten stated that there will be a different salary different then what’s in the budget and will do a budget amendment at the end of the year. Councilmember Frank stated that the wages were between $18 and $20 in the budget. Mayor Otten stated good then we won’t have to do a budget amendment.
11. **Public Comment**: none.
12. Council member Frank Brouilette made a motion to appoint Anita as the City of Harlowton’s Clerk-Treasurer. Councilmember Johnny Cooney 2nd the motion. All was in favor, motion massed unanimously.
13. Discussion on Urban camping for the city. Mayor Otten stated that we had a couple of people that parked at Boomer Trail camping there. We did send the police there to talk to them. But without an ordinance there isn’t anything the sheriff’s office can do. Council person Johnny Cooney asked if they are staying there for hunting? Clerk-treasurer Anita stated no that they were squatting. Mayor Otten stated that he doesn’t know for sure if this will be a problem, it might be something we get in front of, so we don’t end up like Bozeman. They are having a hard time with people camping wherever they want. Attorney Brent Brooks said he would investigate drafting something up and asking League of Cities and Towns if anyone else has enforced this. Discussion ensued on Urban Camping.
14. **Public Comment**: Julie Berg stated that looking ahead the issue that Bozeman is dealing with and trying to fix could happen. So, what’s wrong with adopting something so that you are ahead of the game? She also stated that when you are talking about private property what if someone not from here pulls into someone’s property and the owner doesn’t see it and will never know, that would be an issue. Councilmember Frank stated that we would then let the owner know.
15. The Harlowton City Council decided that they would make signs to hang. Attorney Brent will get something to us in writing before next council meeting.
16. Discussion on Bulk Water Rates. Mayor Otten stated that they found out that we are getting charged 1.25 per thousand gallons. Councilmember Frank stated that what we were looking at before other places, they were charging a penny to 2 cents a gallon, he thinks we should drop down to 3 cents a gallon. He stated that we are still making money on that, and people will be more apt to pay. A discussion then ensued on other places and what they charge and what Harlowton can afford to charge for the bulk water.

**Public Comment**: Marilyn Fake asked if they put restrictions at the bulk water station to where they can’t access it, how are you going to keep them from taking from the hydrants in the park? Councilperson Johnny Cooney stated that that’s what this discussion is for.

Councilperson Jack Runner made a motion to make bulk water 3 cents a gallon. Councilperson Johnny Cooney 2nd the motion. All was in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

1. Discussion on how to replenish Utility Share, we currently have $7000.00. Mayor Otten stated that we had people last winter that used it. Councilmember Frank stated that that was the first time in awhile that it was used, due to other programs being shut down. Frank stated that it will run out and we might talk to The Chamber about helping with some fundraisers. The city can’t do a fundraiser, but we can talk to other groups of people. The Wheatland County Community Foundation is another good one to reach out to as well. Councilmember Kathleen asked if people could donate? Frank replied that absolutely people can donate. We could write up a thing letting people know. Councilmember Charley Bennett stated that the windfarm would probably donate as well.

Public Comment: Julie Berg asked if we could let the senior center know, and there might be some there that could use the help. Donna Hagberg then asked what it was, and Council members Frank and Kathleen explained. Marilyn Fake asked if we could do a dunk tank, and we can dunk the council members to which it got lots of laughs. The council decided to table this for another meeting to get things in the works.

1. Discussion on property Mike Deborde, pending Lexis fair market evaluation. Mayor Otten stated that they have not received this yet. This will be discussed later.
2. Discussion on industrial lease pending Lexis fair market value. Mayor Otten stated that it hasn’t been received yet either. This will be discussed farther later.

**PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR REPORT:** Bob Schuchard stated thathe noticed that division street was closed off, painting for homecoming, he stated that he would like them to have reflective cones next time so that no one gets hurt. He also stated that they didn’t request to close that street either. Mayor Otten stated that he didn’t think it would be an issue. And he apologizes. Bob said he wants safety since there was a little kid that got hit recently. Bob then stated that they are working on their lead and copper inventory and Chip has been spraying weeds. He also is dealing nightly with the bever dams, that as soon as you tear them down, they rebuild. Nathan is trying to trap them again but with no luck. Bob stated that he did get three of them. Chip has been getting things ready for snow removal, he discovered today that the circuit board needs replaced and its $1000. A new plow is $7200. Councilmember Frank asked if he has the money in his budget for that? To which Bob stated that he did.

**REPORT OF THE CLERK-TREASURER:** Anita stated that Deputy-Clerk Sarah has been going through Civic Plus for ordinances and find the missing ones. She stated that the office is trying to get caught up with all the stuff that got missed this summer and making sure everything is done. Councilmember Kathleen asked if there is files to go through for the ordinances? Anita replied that Sarah is just looking through the book and making sure they aren’t in the wrong spot. Councilperson Kathleen stated that she would volunteer to help go through the ordinances for Civic Plus.

**MAYORS REPORT:** Mayor Otten stated that he has a good meeting with EPA down at the Roundhouse. EPA was impressed with the progress and cleanup. We will start the asbestos clean up soon. There is a lot of grant money out there through Brownfield, but it takes a good grant writer to get through the grants. Mayor Otten wandered if there was someone in town who can do this, but he wasn’t sure who. He asked councils permission to reach out to Montana Legue of Cities and Towns to see if they have a grant writer on staff that knows a little bit about these grants. Public Works Director Bob state the one of the guys who works for rural water, his wife writs grants. Councilmember Frank stated that we should check a few different avenues. Mayor Otten stated that the state money will run out on the roundhouse project, and we will need grants eventually. Mayor Otten stated that they rejected a bid for the roundhouse, and he is going to see if they can shave a little off the work they are going to do. Biggest project will be the roof of the roundhouse. Mayor Otten stated that he received a letter from the Sheriffs office, they are putting together a seminar Friday the 4th, Crimes against children and human trafficking. He stated that if anyone would like to go to please RSVP by 1st of October. Councilmember Charley Bennett asked if we could put up some no trespassing signs down by the Roundhouse. He stated that you can see where some kids were playing, and they could get seriously injured down there. Public Works Director Bob Schuchard stated that there already are no trespassing signs there. Councilmember Charley stated that there are manholes there and if a kid was to fall through, we would never find them. He stated that we need to put the fine on the signs.

**REPORT OF ATTORNEY:** Brent Brooksstated that he plans on being in town October 2nd so he wanted to come to the City Office and do some Civic Plus work. He also stated if the city is going to sell property there is a specific section in the state code, which requires a resolution if the city is going to sell something. He also stated that we do have an ordinance on what to do if we are going to lease property. He stated he was going to send that information to Mayor and Anita to look at. He also stated he has several criminal cases within the city of Harlowton.

**REPOSRT OF WCSO:** not present.

**REPORT OF EMERGENCY MGMT, CODY NELSON:** not present.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON ABOVE REPORTS:** none.

**PUBLIC COMMENT OF ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA:** Marilyn Fake stated that she had a question for the Public Works director Bob. She asked if there was a silencer on her gun when he shoots the beavers? To which he stated that there was, he also stated that he has a license to do it and he was deputized to do it as well. Councilperson Charley Bennett stated him, and Steve Stewart went to Helena and brought back loads of books for the depot. He stated that when he gets everything set up Harlowton will have the second largest railroad museum in the United States.

**ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING:** Resolution for house bill 355, Lynn grant to speak, Alli jones to speak, and Sheriff Everette to speak about a cross walk. Public works director Bob stated that the Sherriff wants to put a crosswalk by the school. The city has a yield sign and a stop sign, he recommends we put in a crosswalk by Hoge’s. Misner wants to eliminate the yield and do a stop sign and crosswalk. Councilmember Frank Brouillette stated that they only need council approval not a vote. Frank also stated that bicycles need to adhere to the same rules as a car at a crosswalk. Mayor Otten stated that lets just put it in so no one else gets hurt.

**CLAIMS:**

Council member Frank Brouillette made a motion to pass the claims. Councilmember Kathleen Schreiber seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

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

Council Members Absent: none

City Office: Mayor Paul Otten, City Clerk-Treasurer Anita Leach Public Works Director Bob Schuchard, City Attorney Brent Brooks via Zoom

Public Present: Marilyn Fake, Kevin Knudson, Julie Berg, Lindsey Sramek, Donna Hagberg, Brian Isom

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Paul Otten, Mayor Anita Leach, Clerk-Treasurer