

## Regular Meeting

September 9, 2008

Present: Mayor John Williams, Councilpersons Rick Harbin, Dan Becker, Betty Jo Ellison, and Susan Hert

Also Present: Public Works Supervisor John Bleth, City Attorney Gary Ryder, City Clerk/Treasurer Michelle Richards, Police Sergeant Cory Hert, and Fire Chief Ryan Reid

Mayor Williams called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Consent Agenda:**

Councilperson Ellison moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilperson Hert seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Becker asked about the towing fees on the claim to Childers. The county has a junk vehicle program and hauls junk vehicles off at no cost. Clerk/Treasurer Richards explained this invoice was for towing the vehicles that the fire department used for training. Motion carried with all in favor.

- a. Minutes of 8/26/08 Regular Meeting
- b. Claims Roster 9/05/08

### **Departmental Reports:**

Department Reports were given by City Clerk Richards, City Attorney Ryder, Fire Chief Reid, Police Sergeant Hert, and Public Works Supervisor Bleth in addition to written reports provided in Council's packets.

**Public Comment and Participation:** None.

### **Mayor's Communications:**

Mayor Williams reported the next Coal Board meeting is September 26<sup>th</sup>, not September 19<sup>th</sup> as indicated on the city's calendar. The Coal Board is considering adopting a one application process instead of the two application process now in place to cut down on travel to meetings for the applicants.

### **Unfinished Business:**

Councilperson Ellison moved to approve Resolution No. 08-R11, adopting the 2008-2009 Fiscal Year Budget as submitted at 26.29 mills. Councilperson Harbin seconded. Discussion: Councilperson Harbin asked if the city has a target reserve amount. CPRD has a target reserve of 33%. Mayor Williams explained the City started at a 50% reserve with its first budget but the

reserve has changed due to capital purchases, infrastructure needs and escalating costs. Councilperson Harbin asked if something happened today to the Orchard lift station where would the Mayor look first for funds to replace it. Mayor Williams stated the city's Sewer Fund could borrow money or go into the general fund reserve by budget amendment. Any budget change does require council action and hearing process. Mayor Williams stated there currently is no reserve in the Sewer Fund due to lack of funds. Mayor Williams would recommend going to the city's general fund reserve before borrowing money. The City hasn't heard yet from Harry Whalen of Montana Rural Water Systems on sewer rates. Councilperson Harbin asked if low utility rates could affect the city's chances for matching grants. Mayor Williams said yes, service rates do factor in grant funding and the city has not increased rates even though expenses have risen over the last several years.

Councilperson Hert said it's not just a matter of raising the mill levy to increase the reserve but to be proactive instead of reactive. She feels it's very important to be prepared to pay for infrastructure improvements and to prepare for the future. Councilperson Ellison stated when meeting with Mayors from other communities the first thing said is hind sight is 20/20. The city needs to prepare for the future and stick to the capital improvements plan.

Mayor Williams explained the city has a plan for replacing the orchard lift station next year. The city's contract engineer, Kadrmass, Lee and Jackson, is already working on this along with street improvements for Antelope, Cheyenne, and the Sweetgrass area. Councilperson Harbin asked if the Orchard lift station is smaller capacity than Lift Station "C", and if so will it be cheaper to repair. Public Works Supervisor Bleth estimates \$225,000 to replace it. Councilperson Harbin stated the city should be proactive with the sewer rates. Councilperson Becker voted against the motion. Councilpersons Harbin, Ellison and Hert voted in favor. Motion carried 3-1.

### **New Business:**

Councilperson Ellison moved to approve Resolution No. 08-12, Budget Transfers for fiscal year 2007-2008. Councilperson Becker seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Hert moved to approve the Homecoming Parade Permit Application submitted by the Colstrip Booster Club. Councilperson Ellison seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Harbin asked about the Resolution passed last year to exempt the Homecoming Parade. City Clerk/Treasurer Richards stated the resolution specifically states the permit application process is exempt if the Colstrip School District sponsors the parade. Councilperson Harbin asked that the resolution be reviewed and any necessary changes be brought back to the City Council.

Mayor Williams adjourned the meeting at 7:40 pm.

---

Michelle Richards, City Clerk/Treasurer