

City Council Meeting  
March 12, 2014

Present: Mayor Rose Hanser, Councilpersons John Williams, Greg Koczur and Lawretta Miller

Absent: Councilperson Tom Jankowski

Also Present: City Clerk/Treasurer Michelle Richards, Assistant Police Chief Kris Egan, Public Works Director Bryan Swan, Building/Planning Official Jan Morgan, City Attorney Gary Ryder and Fire Chief Ryan Reid

Mayor Hanser called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Clerk/Treasurer Richards called the Roll Call.

**Consent Agenda:**

Councilperson Williams moved to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of Claims #18800 and #18802. Councilperson Koczur seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion carried with all in favor.

- a. Minutes of 2/25/14 Regular Meeting
- b. Claims Roster 3/06/14 excluding Claims 18800 & 18802
- c. Journal Voucher No. 2014-02

Councilperson Williams moved to review Claim #18800 to Reid's True Value and Claim #18802 to Quill Corporation. Councilperson Koczur seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Williams is concerned about the expenditures made because they were purchased for the Sewer Treatment Plant. The supply budget for the treatment plant was already overspent by \$2,800 when these purchases of \$6,500 were made. The City just went through a sewer rate increase and the City should be looking at ways to control costs. These items were never discussed during the budgeting process and it appears to be excessive and extravagant. No public comment received. Councilperson Williams made a motion to approve Claim #18800 and 18802 and requested the Mayor have a discussion with employees about going over budget and the effect on accounts by going over. Councilperson Miller seconded. Discussion: Councilperson Miller commented the City Council needs to closely monitor the expenditures. Public Comment: Andrew Kohn, 1555 Piedmont, asked if the City has a plan to cover the deficit. Councilpersons Williams and Miller voted in favor. Councilperson Koczur voted nay. Motion carried 3-1.

**Departmental Reports:**

Reports were given by Assistant Police Chief Egan, Building/Planning Official Morgan, Fire Chief Reid, Attorney Ryder, Public Works Director Swan, and City Clerk/Treasurer Richards.

**Mayor's Communications:**

Mayor Hanser read a letter from Mark Ator, Athletic Director of Colstrip Public Schools, thanking the Colstrip Volunteer Fire Department, Police Chief Cory Hert and the Colstrip Police Department for their assistance during the basketball tournament held in Colstrip.

**Public Comment and Participation:** None.

**New Business:**

Councilperson Williams moved to grant a variance to the garage size limitation for a 2,620 square foot garage at 4011 Prospector Drive commenting that the City Council has previously approved similar requests. Councilperson Koczur seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Williams suggested Building/Planning Official Morgan review the code and consider revising it to reflect the actual use of property in the acreage tracts. Councilperson Koczur stated the semi-trailer has been parked at this residence for years and is not aware of any complaints or problems. Building/Planning Official Morgan stated semi-trailers are not normally allowed in residential areas but Colstrip does not have an industrial district to accommodate this and feels this qualifies as a hardship. The garage size limitation has already been increased once from 1,500 square feet to 1,800 square feet. Mayor Hanser commented that this request would not decrease land values or constitute a fire danger and is consistent with the neighborhood. Councilperson Miller believes the garage sizes should be handled on a case by case basis because not all of the lots in this subdivision are larger than an acre. No public comment received. Motion carried with all in favor.

Building/Planning Official Morgan introduced a request from Dorian Sichi to operate an assisted living facility at 7437 Castle Rock Lake Drive. Montana law states a conditional use is not required for facilities with 8 or fewer residents. This request is for 7-12 residents so a Conditional Use Permit is required so she can have more than 8 residents. Councilperson Koczur moved to approve the Conditional Use Request for Dorian Sichi to operate an assisted living facility at 7437 Castle Rock Lake Drive. Councilperson Miller seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Koczur asked if this request is for both buildings currently operating as the bed and breakfast. Building/Planning Official stated it is not; it is for the home at 7437 Castle Rock Lake Drive only. Councilperson Miller asked what type of patients will be cared for. Attorney Ryder stated the state licensing procedure specifies what kind of patients can be taken care of at the facility.

Public Comment:

John Sizon, of SouthEastern Montana Development Corporation, read a letter of support from Jim Atchison of SEMDC.

Branden Blake, 7435 Castle Rock Lake Drive, has concerns about this request and the type of people possibly living in it. He stated that the current bed and breakfast has vehicle overflow problems into the city street for parking.

Dorian Sichi, address unknown, explained she plans to take elderly residents who cannot take care of themselves at home. She is not bringing in transients, drug addicts, criminals, etc. She wants to do an upscale living facility for the residents of Colstrip. The residents would not have their own vehicles since they cannot drive so the only vehicles

normally parked there would be two employee vehicles. This will be a licensed facility monitored by the State of Montana.

Andrew Kohn, 1555 Piedmont, commented he knows Mrs. Sichi well and that she sets a high standard in everything she does. If there are any concerns regarding traffic, etc she would keep the standard as is or higher.

Councilperson Williams commented on his personal experience with residents of an assisted living facility. He welcomes the opportunity for people in this community to be taken care of. It is a much needed facility and is thankful Mrs. Sichi is filling this need. Councilperson Miller also commented on the need for an assisted living facility. Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Williams moved to provide the opportunity for the elected officials to purchase insurance through the MMIA Employee Benefits Program and that any possible funding for the Mayor's insurance be sent to the Personnel Committee for their discussion and recommendation. Councilperson Miller seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Williams commented when he became a council member he tried to address the compensation level of the Mayor. He feels the Mayor's compensation should be commensurate with the responsibilities of the position. Councilpersons Koczur and Miller concurred it should be sent to committee for a recommendation. Public Comment: Ken Stokes, 11 Sage Court, agrees that the Mayor and City Council should be able to purchase the city's health insurance but does not feel the city should pay for it. Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Koczur moved to sell the 2008 Crown Victoria as is without repair via online auction. Councilperson Miller seconded the motion. No discussion or public comment received. Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Koczur moved to approve the additional cost of purchasing the new police vehicle without the trade-in of the 2008 Crown Victoria in the amount of \$36,674.00. Councilperson Miller seconded the motion. No discussion or public comment received. Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Koczur moved to refer the question of an additional Maintenance Worker/Laborer position to the Public Works Committee. Councilperson Miller seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Koczur asked if it would be a part-time or full-time position. Public Works Director Swan is requesting a full-time position. No public comment received. Motion carried with all in favor.

**Adjournment:**

Councilperson Miller moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilperson Koczur seconded the motion. Mayor Hanser adjourned the meeting at 8:20 pm.

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Michelle Richards, City Clerk/Treasurer