

City Council Meeting September 23, 2014

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

Absent: Tom Jankowski

Also Present: City Clerk/Treasurer Michelle Richards, Building/Planning Official Janet Morgan, Police Chief Cory Hert, Public Works Director Bryan Swan 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 Koczur moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilperson Miller seconded the motion. Discussion: Mayor Hanser asked Police Chief Hert to provide additional information regarding Claim #19422 to Industrial Communications in the amount of \$640.75. A contractor hired by Rosebud County cut some wires that led to the Dispatch Center and Industrial Communications was hired to fix the wiring. Attorney Schantz is willing to pursue the matter with the contractor that cut the wires. Councilperson Koczur recommends paying the bill and pursuing the contractor that caused the damage. Councilpersons Miller and Williams concurred. Councilperson Miller thinks the City should also pay the interest charges to Industrial Communications even though they are willing to waive those. No public comment received. Motion carried with all in favor.

- Minutes of 9/9/14 Regular Meeting
- Claims Roster 9/18/14
- August Financial Report

Departmental Reports:

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

Mayor's Communications:

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality will be holding a hearing next week in Colstrip regarding the EPA's proposed regulations on CO2 emissions. Montanans are facing a possible 26% increase in electrical costs due to this proposed rule. The EPA's rules are pushing Montana away from coal-fired energy production, which would impact the local coal mine and power plant.

Public Comment and Participation:

Mayor Hanser opened the Public Hearing on Solid Waste Special Assessments at 7:33 pm. No comments from the public were received. Mayor Hanser closed the hearing at 7:33 pm.

Jim Atchison, 7405 Castle Rock Lake Drive and representing SouthEastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC), presented a plaque for the city's continued support and membership in SEMDC. Jim provided a recap of the Energy Open held last month in Colstrip. Jim reported he hosted a recruitment visit with a machinist from Texas and it looks very promising that he will be moving his business to Colstrip next year. Mr. Atchison also encouraged everyone to attend the meeting next week sponsored by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality.

Katie LaDuke, 3131 Antelope Drive, has some disabilities and is wondering if the City will be installing handicap access for the curbs on the streets on the west side of Highway 39. She is having trouble with that area of town. She thanked the City for providing the transportation bus for the senior citizens. Katie stated she loves living in Colstrip and has found her home.

Unfinished Business:

Councilperson Williams moved to remove the Drug & Alcohol Testing Policy from the table. Councilperson Koczur seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion carried with all in favor. Councilperson Koczur moved to approve the updated Drug & Alcohol Testing Policy. Councilperson Miller seconded the motion. No discussion or public comment received. Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Williams made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2014-16 regarding the Goodwill Policy. Councilperson Koczur seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Miller still feels there should be a limit on the amount the City Council is able to award because it may cause hard feelings if they do not. Mayor Hanser talked to Attorney Ryder and he agreed the City Council should consider a maximum to limit the City's liability. Councilperson Williams supports the policy as written stating that the City Council can make a prudent decision regarding the amount awarded to a claimant. No public comment received. Councilperson Miller voted nay. Councilpersons Koczur and Williams voted in favor. Motion carried 2-1.

Councilperson Miller moved to approve Resolution No. 2014-R22 adopting the Solid Waste Special Assessments. Councilperson Koczur seconded the motion. No discussion or public comment received. Motion carried with all in favor.

New Business:

Councilperson Williams moved to approve the Interlocal Agreement with Colstrip Public Schools for Shared Services. Councilperson Miller seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Williams feels interlocal agreements are a good practice. Even though we may give more than we receive should not lose sight that it benefits the citizens of Colstrip to have these agreements. No public comment received. Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Koczur moved to approve the purchase of a mobile home at 207 Currant Drive in the amount of \$5,000. Councilperson Miller seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Koczur asked if the City would try and salvage the mobile home and resell it. Public Works Director Swan stated the mobile is a 1970 and in bad shape. No public comment received. Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Miller moved to approve the request from Public Works Director Swan to purchase a 2015 1 ton pickup in the amount of \$29,472.00. Councilperson Koczur seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Koczur asked if there would be a trade-in of another vehicle? Public Works Director Swan stated there is no trade-in but there are two older vehicles that can be surplus and sold. No public comment received. Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Koczur moved to accept the low bid from Dick Anderson Construction in the amount of \$785,275 for the Backwash Treatment System project. Councilperson Miller seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Miller commented that this is a lot of money but she trusts the recommendations from Public Works Director Swan. Mayor Hanser stated this project is a requirement from DEQ and the City really has no choice. Councilperson Williams stated this is an unnecessary expenditure due to EPA and DEQ mandates and that the city is only putting back the same dirt from the lake that it is in the lake's water. The city bought into an older, outdated system that was owned by Rosebud County and operated by the power plant owners. The issues we are dealing with are inherited so it is necessary to utilize general fund dollars instead of burdening the consumers with the entire cost. Mayor Hanser commented that with more support at the state level that we might not experience as much regulatory sting as we are. Councilperson Williams also feels it is important to recognize that we have a great situation here in Colstrip even with the obstacles we are dealing with. Motion carried with all in favor.

Administrative Matters:

Councilperson Koczur asked about the affect on the city's taxable valuation if Western Energy purchases the dam and the closing of the Corette Plant in Billings. City Clerk/Treasurer Richards has requested information from the Montana Department of Revenue and will share it with the City Council when she receives it.

Mayor Hanser asked about scheduling a work session with Building/Planning Official Morgan. A work session will be held October 6 at 9:00 am.

Councilperson Williams asked about the complaint from Kilgores about paying for utility services that are shut off.

Councilperson Williams stated the City of Colstrip has paid over \$16,000 to Element 8 for union negotiator services. The agreement states a written status report will be provided to the City Council but they haven't received any reports or updates during the process.

Adjournment:

Councilperson Miller moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilperson Koczur seconded the motion. Mayor Hanser adjourned the meeting at 8:05 pm.

Michelle Richards, City Clerk/Treasurer