

City Council Meeting
June 23, 2015

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

Absent: Councilperson Tom Jankowski

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

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. No discussion or public comment received. Motion carried with all in favor.

- Minutes of 6/9/15 Regular Meeting
- Claims Roster 6/18/15
- May Financial Report
- Journal Voucher No. 2015-05

Departmental Reports:

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

Mayor's Communications:

Mayor Hanser reported the Montana Coal Board approved the city's grant application and awarded a \$500,000 grant for the Wastewater Treatment Rehabilitation project. The City will be moving forward with a \$600,000 SRF Loan to help fund this project.

Public Comment:

Jim Atchison, South Eastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC) and a resident at 7405 Castle Rock Lake Drive, commented on the mosquitos and asked if the City could spray for those before the Colstrip Days celebration this weekend. Mr. Atchison gave his annual SEMDC membership presentation explaining the services provided by SEMDC and the Small Business Development Center.

Doug Whitney, engineer with Kadrmas, Lee and Jackson, addressed the City Council regarding the Zone 3 Water Storage Tank. Due to the failing structural conditions, the excess volume vs. water quality, and incorrect elevation placement the tank needs to be replaced. An elevated storage tank is estimated to cost \$2.2 million. The recommendation is to replace the tank with

a 400,000 gallon storage tank next year and to replace the Zone 2 tank in approximately 10 years. Mr. Whitney also addressed and explained Water Quality Modeling.

Gail Beckham, City Judge, reported that she attended the National Judicial College. She appreciated the opportunity to attend the training and reported that she received \$1,800 in scholarships.

Treina Warfield, 304 Wildrye and representing the Colstrip Senior Citizens, addressed the City Council regarding insurance for the Senior Citizen's Bus. Mayor Hanser explained the city's insurance carrier will provide coverage if the driver is registered with the city for workers compensation insurance and is an insurable driver. There is a concern about insurance coverage for occupants of the bus. Attorney Ryder suggested contacting the city's insurance carrier to work through this issue.

Richard Vasicek, 4019 Prospector, commented on the Zoning Commission's approval of his Conditional Use Permit on 6/16/15. He feels the wording in the letter he received from the Building/Zoning/Planning Official is not the intent of the commission. He also feels he is being discriminated against by the Mayor. He asked the City Council to supply him with the proper materials to apply for a Bed & Breakfast. He also asked that the questions he submitted at this meeting and the previous City Council meeting be answered.

Ed Buckholz, 4416 Remington, is directly across the street from the proposed Bed & Breakfast and attended the Zoning Commission meeting held last week. He felt there was only one unbiased committee member and the whole thing should be thrown out and start over. He also commented on the covenants that are in place. He doesn't feel the commission should have granted something that is contrary to the covenants.

Terry Olson, 4015 Prospector, has filed an appeal to the Zoning Commission's approval of the Conditional Use Permit granted to Richard Vasicek to operate a Bed & Breakfast. He is concerned about the effect on the salability and value of his property. Mr. Olson would like the City Council and City Attorney to review this issue.

New Business:

Councilperson Koczur moved to approve Resolution No. 2015-R05, waiving the Special Events Permit Process for the Colstrip Days Celebration and Christmas Lighting Ceremony in Fireman's Park. Councilperson Miller seconded the motion.

Discussion: Councilperson Williams commented that the Colstrip Days celebration is a very important event to the community and we shouldn't do anything to jeopardize it. He suggested that an Interlocal Agreement be developed between the City of Colstrip, Quality of Life Corporation and Colstrip Park & Recreation District identifying the responsibilities of each entity. Councilperson Williams made a motion to amend to a 10 day notification period instead of 20 days. Councilperson Koczur seconded the amendment. The amendment passed with all in favor.

Public comment: None received.

The main motion as amended carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Miller moved to approve Resolution No. 2015-R06, intent of the City Council to raise Water and Sewer Rates. Councilperson Koczur seconded the motion.

Discussion: Councilperson Miller commented that raise increases are unavoidable and that the Public Works Department and engineers try to operate as efficiently as possible while keeping up with requirements and improvements. As requested by Councilperson Koczur, Mayor Hanser explained the water increase would be 2.7% on the base rate only, which is \$.93 per month for most water users. The sewer rate increase would be 16% on the base rate only, which is \$3.82 per month for most users. No increase is proposed on the usage rates.

Public Comment: Lloyd Gange asked what will it cost him when he is gone in the winter months since the Senior Resident Snowbird rate was eliminated. Mayor Hanser responded the next agenda item will address his question.

Ted Stimac, 122 Olive Drive, asked about the increase for different meter sizes. Mayor Hanser clarified the \$.93 per month is on a ¾ inch meter service. Each meter size base rate will be increased 2.7% so the larger meter sizes will be more than \$.93 per month.

Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Miller moved to approve Resolution No. 2015-R07, intent to establish a Water and Sewer Shut-off Rate. Councilperson Koczur seconded the motion.

Discussion: Mayor Hanser explained the shut-off rate will be charged to any service that has their services shut-off for more than a month but would not be the full water and sewer base rate. The shut-off rate would consist of the debt service and replacement/depreciation expenses only. Councilperson Miller commented that the City cannot offer rate discounts based on age. Councilperson Koczur's commented that he is glad people are here to find out what we need to do for now and in the future to keep operating. There are a lot of expenses coming up in the water and sewer. He is not necessarily in favor of equal rates for everyone.

Public Comment: Jim Atchison, commented on the infrastructure challenges faced by many communities in Eastern Montana. He feels it would be good for the public to know about all of the different water and sewer projects the City of Colstrip is facing.

Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Miller moved to proceed with amending City Code Section 9-1B-3.

Councilperson Williams seconded the motion.

Discussion: None

Public Comment: None

Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Koczur moved to approve the Special Events Permit Applications for Tom and Rose Hanser and Phillip and Phyllis Lewis for fireworks during Colstrip Days. Councilperson Koczur seconded the motion.

Discussion: It was clarified that the permits do not allow that the street be blocked off for the fireworks.

Public Comment: None

Motion carried with all in favor.

A formal appeal has been filed regarding the Zoning Commission's approval of a Conditional Use Permit at 4019 Prospector Drive for a Bed & Breakfast. A date for the hearing on the appeal will be discussed at the next regular city council meeting on July 14th.

Councilperson Miller moved to approve 2% compensation increases for the non-union positions of City Clerk/Treasurer, City Judge, Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, Police Chief, Assistant Police Chief and Public Works Director. Councilperson Williams seconded the motion.

Discussion: Councilperson Miller feels 2% is a reasonable amount. Councilperson Williams feels 2% is a reasonable amount. However he recalls that the Public Works Department union employee increases are \$.75 per hour. The 2% amount is less than \$.75 per hour for the City Judge and Assistant Police Chief. Councilperson Williams made a motion to amend that the City Judge and Assistant Police Chief receive \$.75 per hour increases and the temporary summer public works employees receive \$.50 per hour increases. Councilperson Koczur seconded the amendment. Councilpersons Williams and Koczur voted in favor. Councilperson Miller voted nay. Amendment carried 2-1.

Public Comment: None.

Councilpersons Williams and Koczur voted in favor. Councilperson Miller voted nay. Motion carried 2-1. Councilperson Miller stated she is not against the 2% raises for the non-union employees but is against the increase for the temporary summer employees.

Councilperson Williams moved to make the compensation increases effective July 1, 2015. Councilperson Koczur seconded the motion.

Discussion: None.

Public Comment: Ted Stimac, 112 Olive Drive, thanked the City Council for paying the public employees a reasonable and livable wage.

Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Koczur moved to change the City Court Judge from an hourly paid position to an exempt salaried position. Councilperson Williams seconded the motion.

Discussion: Councilperson Miller asked how the City Judge felt about this proposal. Judge Beckham stated her hours and her clerk's hours are increasing every year. They are not always able to keep their hours each week below the budgeted amount. She does not have an opinion one way or the other except that her compensation cannot be decreased during her term.

Motion carried with all in favor.

Adjournment:

Councilperson Koczur moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilperson Williams seconded the motion. Mayor Hanser adjourned the meeting at 8:56 pm.

Michelle Richards, City Clerk/Treasurer