

City Council Meeting
June 28, 2011

Present: Mayor John Williams, Councilpersons Evan Stewart, Gale Palmer, Tom Jankowski and Dan Becker

Also Present: City Clerk/Treasurer Michelle Richards, Police Chief Larry Reinlasoder, City Attorney Gary Ryder, Public Works Director John Bleth, Building/Planning Official Jan Morgan, and Assistant Fire Chief Rob Pontius

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

Consent Agenda:

Councilperson Becker moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilperson Stewart seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Palmer asked about Claim #15665 for forklift rental. Public Works Director Bleth explained the city's forklift broke down and was sold. A new one is included in the budget requests for the upcoming new fiscal year and the amounts paid for renting will be credited towards the purchase price. Motion carried with all in favor.

- a. Minutes of 6/14/11 Regular Meeting
- b. Claims Roster 6/24/11
- c. Wire Transfer Approval for Bond Payments

Departmental Reports:

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

Mayor's Communications:

Councilperson Palmer moved to approve Mayor Williams recommendation for 2% Compensation Increases for all city employees. Councilperson Jankowski seconded. Discussion: Councilperson Palmer feels this is a fair increase and goes along with the rest of the area. Councilperson Stewart objected as he feels this decision should be postponed until the city is further into the budget process. He isn't opposed to the increase but would like to wait and doesn't feel it is appropriate to act at this time. Councilperson Jankowski asked if the increase in the police bargaining unit contract runs fiscal or calendar year. Mayor Williams stated it is effective July 1st and the city is obligated to a 2% increase or whatever the other employees receive. Councilperson Jankowski suggested if City Council wants to wait until final budget approval for the non-bargaining unit employees, make their adjustment retroactive to July 1st. Councilpersons Palmer and Jankowski voted in favor of the motion. Councilperson Stewart voted nay. Councilperson Becker abstained as he is also an employee of the city. Motion carried.

The next Coal Board meeting is July 15th in Billings. The city needs to have a representative attend the meeting to represent the city on the grant application for an emergency alert system. Councilperson Jankowski volunteered to represent the city.

Mayor Williams distributed a proposed agreement with the Schoolhouse History and Art Center. The current agreement expires July 31, 2011. This agreement will be on the next meeting's agenda.

Public Comment and Participation:

Lloyd Gange feels the "snowbirds" are being ripped off. They are paying for water and sewer they are not using. He said he called City Hall and asked if everyone in the city who has property was paying and was told yes but that is not true. Don Tapp has two lots with water service to each lot but only pays for one.

Al Arensmeyer said it sounds like there are only four snowbirds who leave in the winter time, and he calculates it would cost the city \$250 per year for each one if they wouldn't have to pay the snowbird rate. That is only \$1,000 per year.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

Mayor Williams asked the City Council if they were ready to make a decision on the snowbird rates or if they would like to have it reviewed by a committee. Councilperson Jankowski stated he was not aware of how many true snowbirds the city has and feels these people should not be penalized for not using the services. Councilperson Jankowski moved to offer the reduced snowbird rates that were in place prior to the recent rate changes to the "true snowbirds" while they are gone in the winter. Mayor Williams stated language would have to be developed identifying the specifics of the situation. Attorney Ryder suggested having an application form with specific criteria that would have to be met to receive the lower snowbird rate. Councilperson Stewart recommended this be sent back to the Public Works Committee for further discussion and review. The committee discussed the snowbird rate at length and Councilperson Stewart had the same question of whether it was fair making people pay the full base rate if they weren't using the services. He is open to discussion of modifying the snowbird definition but is comfortable leaving the rate as is due to the financial condition of the utility accounts. Councilperson Becker feels this issue needs studied more before making a decision. Councilperson Stewart moved to defer this back to the Public Works Committee. Councilperson Becker seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Stewart stated there needs to be more discussion and criteria developed if changes are made to the snowbird rates and also need to review the ramifications of any rate changes. Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Stewart moved to approve Resolution No. 2011-R09, adopting resource categories and expenditure order for governmental and proprietary funds. Councilperson Jankowski seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Stewart stated the resolution seems reasonable and appears required as explained by the Clerk/Treasurer. Motion carried with all voting in favor.

Councilperson Becker moved to approve Resolution No. 2011-R10, committing fund balance resources for special revenue funds. Councilperson Stewart seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion carried with all in favor.

Attorney Ryder drafted a resolution establishing guidelines for approval of city contracts as previously requested by Councilperson Becker. Councilperson Palmer is curious why anything less than one year would not need to be brought to the City Council for pre-approval. Attorney Ryder explained he doesn't feel minor, necessary and routine items need to come before council. Councilperson Stewart feels anything that is signed and has a financial obligation needs to come before the council. There maybe could be exclusions for certain items or emergencies but he is not comfortable with the one year or less exclusion.

Mayor Williams asked if the City Council is interested in setting up a Policy Committee. Councilperson Stewart asked what the committee's purpose would be. Attorney Ryder explained the committee would be for general policies, ordinances, resolutions, etc that are not specific to an already existing committee. Councilperson Becker would like to see a committee of the whole formed.

Mayor Williams asked if the City Council would like to request a mail ballot election for this year's city election. Councilperson Palmer stated it would be nice for those wishing to vote on election day not have to drive to Forsyth and have a place for them to drop off their ballots in town. Attorney Ryder stated we would have to look at the election rules to see if this is possible. Councilperson Palmer said he doesn't have a problem with it as long as people can still vote in Colstrip on election day.

Councilperson Palmer moved to approve the response to the audit report for fiscal year ended June 30, 2010 as submitted. Councilperson Stewart seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Palmer stated the response attempts to address the auditor's findings. There were no objections or other comments. Motion carried with all in favor.

Administrative Matters:

Councilperson Palmer stated since we have an employee serving on the City Council and it is election time, he would like the ordinance restricting city employees from serving on city council on the next meeting's agenda for discussion.

Mayor Williams called for an Executive Session at 8:20 pm. Council returned from Executive Session at 8:44 pm.

Adjournment:

Councilperson Stewart moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilperson Jankowski seconded the motion. Mayor Williams adjourned the meeting at 8:45 pm.