

City Council Meeting
August 23, 2011

Present: Mayor John Williams, Councilpersons Evan Stewart and Dan Becker

Absent: Councilpersons Gale Palmer and Tom Jankowski

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 Fire Chief Ryan Reid

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 Becker asked about Claim #15837 for medical services for a prisoner. Police Chief Reinlasoder was not aware of the claim. Attorney Ryder explained that a prisoner was incarcerated and needed medical attention and was under arrest when transported to the medical clinic so the city is responsible for the medical expenses. Motion carried with all in favor.

- a. Minutes of 8/9/11 Regular Meeting
- b. Claims Roster 8/19/11

Departmental Reports:

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

Mayor's Communications:

A Deer Management Meeting was held last night at City Hall. Extra permits will be available for harvesting animals. No issues were brought up regarding city residents or hunters from the Department of Fish & Game.

Comment and Participation:

Mayor Williams opened the Public Hearing at 7:19 pm regarding a Utility Charges Grievance for 7384 Castlerock Lake Drive. No comments were received. Mayor Williams closed the hearing at 7:20 pm.

Mayor Williams opened the Public Hearing at 7:20 pm regarding a Variance Request for 1099 Laramie Circle. Pat Nees, 1099 Laramie Circle, explained he is requesting a 6" by 3' pie shape variance for an addition to his mobile home. No other comments or objections were made. Mayor Williams closed the hearing at 7:21 pm.

Joe Oberth, 7439 Castlerock Lake Drive, has questions regarding proposed Resolution 2011-R18 to change the Mayor's compensation. He is one of the first to admit our Mayor is under-compensated. He asked if this means we will not be getting the same amount of work and representation from the new Mayor. He thinks this stinks. He stated the council is supposed to working for the taxpayers and voters of Colstrip. Mr. Oberth asked who submitted the Resolution. Mayor Williams answered that Councilperson Gale Palmer requested the change. Mr. Oberth stated he must have some misunderstandings about the office of Mayor. He wonders if Mr. Palmer is trying to chase away other people interested in being Mayor. He also understands that Mr. Palmer has a full-time job and doesn't think the office of Mayor is a part-time job. Mr. Oberth feels the council should reject this and the public is not going to like this.

Jim Atchison, with SouthEastern Montana Development Corporation, stated as an economic development professional he serves four counties and five cities in the region. He attends a lot of meetings with public officials and feels the City of Colstrip is the cream of the crop from his observations. He encouraged the council not to treat the office of Mayor as a hobby type office nor should it be paid as such.

Mike Johnson asked if the Mayor or City Council has given the Building Inspector permission to change the codes or deviate from the codes and asked if any tickets have been written for violations of the code. Mayor Williams responded personnel issues or grievances are not handled at City Council meetings and any issues should be submitted in writing to the Mayor's Office.

Ken Stokes, 11 Sage Court, doesn't feel we should cut the Mayor's salary. If the person elected as Mayor can't do the job full-time or do it justice they should not be running for the office. They are not going to be able to do the job in 2 or 3 hours after work.

Joe Oberth, 7439 Castlerock Lake Drive, stated if the City Attorney is worth his salt he won't recommend lowering the Mayor's compensation and again requested the council not do it.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

Mayor Williams read the recommendation from the Public Works Committee to the grievance filed regarding utility charges at 7384 Castlerock Lake Drive. Per City Policy, action on the grievance will not take place until the next regular City Council meeting.

Councilperson Stewart moved to approve the Variance Request for 1099 Laramie Circle for a 6' by 3' pie shape variance to the side setbacks. Councilperson Becker seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Stewart is impressed and thankful that the owners came to the city for a small variance. He does feel this falls under our rules and guidelines for a variance due to the construction of Pine Butte Drive. No other comments or objections were made. Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Becker moved to approve Resolution No. 2011-R17 to amend the plat for Lots 21 & 22 of Block 7, Stillwater Subdivision. Councilperson Stewart seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Becker stated a previous plat was approved for three lots that includes these two lots, but was not filed. Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Becker moved to approve Resolution No. 2011-R18, a resolution to decrease the compensation of the Mayor. Mayor Williams seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Becker doesn't feel this is out-of the realm of things. The Mayor of Billings only makes \$800 per month with a vehicle provided. This resolution does allow the Mayor to claim reimbursement of actual expenses incurred. Councilperson Stewart explained he didn't second the motion due to the public comment received. At the last meeting Councilperson Palmer mentioned that looking at the rest of the state, the standard for Mayor's compensation is 2.5 times council pay but after reviewing elected officials pay information from other cities this is not accurate. This change would only reduce the compensation \$200 per month and stated by no means is the current compensation level outrageous. Anybody considering the Mayor's position should consider it a full-time job. Mayor Williams explained the Mayor of Billings does not have any administrative duties, he is only the presiding officer of the council and spokesperson for the city. Mayor Williams recommends waiting until the new mayor and council members are elected and take over to consider any changes to the compensation level. Councilperson Becker voted in favor. Councilperson Stewart and Mayor Williams voted nay. Motion failed.

Councilperson Stewart moved to approve the Cedar Street Repair Contract with Total Asphalt Repair in the amount of \$5,610.00. Councilperson Becker seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Becker moved to award the bid for tree trimming services to Prorover in the amount of \$3,700. Councilperson Stewart seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilperson Becker stated the city has a lot of trees that need trimming along our boulevards. Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilperson Becker is glad to know that the budget will be discussed again at a Special Meeting as he has several questions. Due to the budget timeline the city is facing, Councilperson Stewart is interested to hear what questions Councilperson Becker has. Councilperson Becker asked about the General Fund Personnel Supplies, Legal Services, Forestry Grant, Criminal Investigation Equipment, and Education Reimbursement. Councilperson Stewart moved to adopt the Preliminary Budget as submitted. Councilperson Becker seconded. Discussion: Councilperson Stewart feels the Budget Committee did a good of preparing this budget. They addressed questions that came up during the process and it went well. No other comments or objections were made. Motion carried with all in favor.

Adjournment:

Councilperson Stewart moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilperson Becker seconded the motion. Mayor Williams adjourned the meeting at 8:06 pm.