

City Council Meeting January 28, 2025

Present: Mayor John Williams, Councilmembers Jack Rosander, Wayne Dudley, Greg Koczur and Rose Hanser.

Also Present: Public Works Director Pat Zent, Fire Chief Tony Reda, City Clerk/Treasurer Michelle Richards and City Attorney Michelle Sullivan.

Mayor Williams called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. City Clerk Richards completed Roll Call.

Consent Agenda:

Councilmember Dudley moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Hanser seconded the motion. No discussion. No comments from the public received. Motion carried with all in favor.

- Minutes of 1/14/25 Regular Meeting
- Claims #31319-31342 \$102,598.42
- Payroll Summary 01/17/25 \$137,455.51

Department Reports:

Reports were presented by Fire Chief Reda, City Attorney Sullivan, Public Works Director Zent and City Clerk/Treasurer Richards.

Mayor's Communications

There will be a meeting tomorrow morning at City Hall between NorthWestern Energy and nuclear power representatives.

The Schoolhouse History and Art Center applied for funds from the Community Investment Fund, Colstrip Impact Foundation and Avista and has received \$117,400 for new siding and floor restoration.

There will be a pinning ceremony at City Hall on February 1st for the promotion of Peter Ankney to Colonel in the United State Marine Corp. Congressman Troy Downing will be attending the pinning ceremony, meeting with Mayor Williams and then touring the coal mine. Jack Rosander suggested the congressman be shown our post office while he is in town.

Mayor Williams & Jim Atchison will be meeting with the Big Sky Economic Development Board in Billings this Friday.

Next week Mayor Williams will be in Helena on Monday to meet with Fish, Wildlife and Parks officials regarding a proposal to develop Castle Rock Lake into a state park. He shared the talking points he has developed for this meeting.

The Colstrip Legislative Reception is Monday, February 3, 2025 in Helena. Representative Gary Parry, Senator Ken Bogner from Miles City and the City of Colstrip are hosting the reception. One of our new police officers starts law enforcement training this week at the Montana Law Enforcement Academy in Helena.

Public Comment & Participation:

Becky Rogers, 15 Sagebrush Court, appreciates the services provided by the City of Colstrip and everything Colstrip has to offer but does have some concerns. During the past snow storms, the ice left on the streets is a huge public safety issue. There were some days of warmer weather that the ice could have been plowed off before the next snow storm hit but this did not happen, creating slush, ruts and treacherous ice. She asked if there are budget issues, overtime issues and/or equipment issues.

Jim Atchison, Executive Director of Southeastern Montana Development Corporation, will be meeting with the Big Sky Economic Development (BSED) Council on Friday in Billings along with Mayor Williams and representatives from NorthWestern Energy, Montana Department of Commerce and Grid United. BSED is the largest economic development group in the state of Montana. The bid opening is next week on February 5th for the Business Innovation Center via Zoom. Jim presented Mayor Williams a check in the amount of \$50,000 to the City of Colstrip from the NextEra Community Infrastructure Grant Program.

Unfinished Business:

City Council discussed the renewal of the lease agreement with the Montana Moose Espresso. The owner of the coffee shop would like to renew the lease for another year until her new building is completed. Councilmember Koczur moved to renew the lease with Montana Moose Espresso for \$1,525 per year for one year.

Councilmember Dudley seconded the motion.

Discussion: Councilmember Rosander has some concerns with this lease. The first concern is he does not feel the City of Colstrip should be in the landlord business. The second concern is the price. The current lease equates to only \$116 per month. The proposed increase equates to less than an additional \$11 per month. The lease amount is ridiculously low compared to what other kiosks pay in southeastern Montana. He feels this is not fair to other local businesses and is not in support of this lease. Councilmember Hanser also did some research. One local food truck is charged \$15.00 per day (\$450.00 per month) to park their business. She feels charging anything less than \$300 per month is subsidizing the business and is not fair to the other businesses in our community. Councilmember Koczur is okay with the amount of the proposed lease.

Councilmember Rosander also has an issue with the owner expecting her customers to use bathroom facilities at City Hall or Town Pump. Councilmember Dudley also does not like the bathroom facilities issue. He asked about the city's liability in regards to the property. Attorney Sullivan explained their us premises liability just like any other property owned by the City of Colstrip. The current lease does require the tenant have liability insurance but the City could request a minimum amount of coverage and require proof of the coverage with the City being an additional insured on the policy. She volunteered she could contact our liability insurance carrier for their opinion on any liability concerns and a recommendation for minimum insurance requirements. Councilmember Hanser suggested the possibility of putting the lease opportunity out to bid. Some city residents feel the City of Colstrip is subsidizing this coffee shop and is not fair

to other local businesses. If the City decides to accept bids for leasing the space, Councilmember Rosander feels there should be a minimum established. Councilmember Rosander does not want to put the coffee kiosk out of business but would consider a 3-month lease to give her time to move to another location. Councilmember Koczur is in favor of renewing the lease and stated it has never been an issue before. Councilmember Dudley moved to amend the motion to table a decision until the next regular meeting. Councilmember Rosander seconded the motion to amend. Discussion: Councilmember Hanser likes the idea of a six-month agreement instead of one year. Councilmembers Dudley, Hanser and Rosander voted in favor to table. Councilmember Koczur voted against. Motion carried.

New Business:

Councilmember Hanser moved to approve the purchase of a sewage grinder for the Wastewater Treatment Plant from JWC Environmental in the amount of \$14,931.00 plus freight.

Councilmember Dudley seconded the motion.

Discussion: None.

Public Comment: None

Motion carried with all in favor.

Mayor Williams adjourned the meeting at 7:51 p.m.

Michelle Richards, City Clerk-Treasurer