

City Council Meeting May 11, 2021

Present: Mayor John Williams, Councilmembers Mike Esser, Wayne Dudley, Dan Becker and Greg Koczur

Also Present: Police Chief Cory Hert, Assistant Police Chief Kris Egan, Planning/Zoning/Code Official Kami Egan, Fire Chief Rob Pontius, City Clerk/Treasurer Michelle Richards, City Attorney Gary Ryder, Public Works Director Bryan Swan and Assistant Public Works Director Pat Campbell

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

Consent Agenda:

Councilmember Esser moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Koczur seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilmember Becker asked about the claim to Sullivan Miller Law Firm. No comments from the public were made. Motion carried with all in favor.

- Minutes of 4/27/21 Regular Meeting
- Claims Roster 5/6/21
- Journal Voucher No. 2021-03
- Void Claim #27104 and Check #99754

Departmental Reports:

Reports were given by Police Chief Hert, Fire Chief Pontius, Planning/Zoning/Code Official Egan, Attorney Ryder, Public Works Director Swan and City Clerk/Treasurer Richards.

Mayor's Communications:

Mayor Williams administered the Oath of Office to Police Officer James Cookman.

Mayor Williams addressed the PASER Study that was not approved at the City Council's last regular meeting. Mayor Williams stated that the Growth Policy adopted by the City Council includes the PASER Study and there are funding opportunities available to pay for the study such as the CDBG's Planning Grant. In the American Rescue Plan, there will be funds available for public infrastructure projects. The City's share is approximately \$540,000. House Bill 632 that was recently approved in the Montana Legislative Session also includes additional funding through the ARPA. The city's share of this is estimated at \$396,000.

Mayor Williams distributed information from the Montana League of Cities and Towns regarding Initiative 190, the new state law regarding the regulation of marijuana.

The University of Wyoming was successful in obtaining a \$1.9 million grant to produce rare earth minerals and critical minerals from coal and coal-based products. Mayor Williams submitted a letter of support for this grant funding.

According to a recent article in the *Billings Gazette*, Avista has provided \$3 million to the community of Colstrip for transition funding. The City of Colstrip has not heard from Avista since 2019 about community transition funding and was unaware the funds have been provided or to whom. In an email from an employee of Avista in November of 2019, stated they “are committed to a public and transparent process, and we will definitely engage with you as we start to work through the details.” There has been no communication since from Avista regarding this commitment.

Public Comment:

Tyler Egan, Executive Director of the Schoolhouse History and Art Center (SHAC), gave a quarterly update of activities and exhibits at SHAC. Tyler has reported the basement floor repairs have been completed and gutters will be replaced at SHAC. Tyler submitted their 2021-2022 budget proposal, which requests a 3% cost of living increase. Tyler has resigned as Executive Director effective May 19, 2021.

Pat Campbell, 4417 Remington Drive, commented he initially was against the PASER Study. But after looking more into the study, he is in favor of it and feels it will help the City of Colstrip obtain infrastructure grants.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:

Councilmember Becker moved to approve Resolution No. 2021-05, regarding authorized signers and requirements for the city’s investment accounts. Councilmember Dudley seconded the motion.

Discussion: None.

Public Comment: None received.

Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilmember Esser moved to approve the contract with Public Sector Personnel Consultants to conduct a classification and compensation study and pay plan update for city employees in an amount not to exceed \$11,600. Councilmember Koczur seconded the motion.

Discussion: Councilmember Dudley asked what this study will include. Mayor Williams explained the scope of service includes an update to the salary survey, pay plan, position classifications, job descriptions and benefits. The compensation will be compared to the job market in Colstrip, such as the power plant and coal mine employees.

Councilmember Esser amended his motion to from \$11,600 to \$14,000. Councilmember Becker seconded the amendment.

Public Comment: None received.

Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilmember Dudley moved to approve the appointment of Jolene Verlanic, Gary Parry, Wendy Acton, Cheryl Fulkerson, Zane Longacre, Doug Martens and Kayla de la Ossa to the city’s Planning Board for 4-year terms. Councilmember Esser seconded the motion.

Discussion: None.

Public Comment: None received.

Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilmember Esser moved to approve the Lease Agreement with Montana Moose for one year in the amount of \$1,400. Councilmember Dudley seconded the motion.
Discussion: Councilmember Koczur asked if this includes snow plowing around their business. Mayor Williams clarified it does not include snow plowing.
Public Comment: None received.
Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilmember Becker moved to approve a Special Event Permit submitted by John Bleth for fireworks on June 24 & 25, 2021 during Colstrip Days. Councilmember Dudley seconded the motion.
Discussion: None.
Public Comment: None received.
Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilmember Esser made a motion to move forward with litigation regarding Area F at Westmoreland's Coal Mine. Councilmember Koczur seconded the motion.
Discussion: None.
Public Comment: None received.
Motion carried with all in favor.

Adjournment:

Mayor Williams adjourned the meeting at 8:22 pm.

Michelle Richards, City Clerk/Treasurer