

City of Choteau
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OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE APRIL 19, 2016 MEETING
OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Present were Mayor Jack Conatser, Council Member Stewart Merja, Council Member Dan Lannen, Council Member Rose Crawford and Council Member Jill Owen.

Staff present was Interim Public Works Director Lindsay Talkington, Public Works Director Mike Maples, Deputy Clerk Mary Corey and Finance Officer Jodi Rogers,

Citizens present were Jesse Crawford of the Elk Country Grill; Ashlynn Rogers, Christine Funk, Nicole Krone, Ellie Lee, Soren Cummings, Liberty LaValley and Soreena Nurnane of the 7th grade; Beth Barlow and Steve Dogiakos of the Choteau Tourism Committee; Sarah Converse of Sweetgrass Development; Mark Grove of the Teton County Sheriff's Office; Melody Martinsen of the Choteau Acantha; Jim Patterson of DOWL; Al Wiseman; Neal Wedum; John Murnane; Jenny Lee; Della Yeager; Micah Martin; Nate White and Rich Lusky.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Conatser called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of March 17, 2016 meeting was made by Council Member Lannen, seconded by Council Member Crawford. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2016 meeting was made by Council Member Owen, seconded by Council Member Merja. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

REQUESTS TO BE OUT OF STATE

Mayor Conatser requested to be out of state April 28, 2016 until May 3, 2016. A motion to approve the request was made by Council Member Crawford, seconded by Council Member Lannen. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON COLUMBUS DAY VS INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY - CHOTEAU 7TH GRADE ENGLISH CLASS

Mr. Wedum stated that the 7th grade class had an assignment to read a couple of articles titled "Should We Celebrate Columbus Day?" There was one in favor and the other suggesting we celebrate Indigenous People's Day. Their assignment was to write a letter stating their position and justifying it. It was decided they would address them to the City Council. Things mushroomed from there. Five of the students came to the meeting and stated their positions, pro or con.

A motion to split the middle and add Indigenous People's Day and continue to celebrate Columbus Day was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Lannen.

Council Member Merja stated that the girls did an awesome job.

Council Member Lannen thanked the girls for coming and told them that he learned something new.

Council Member Crawford thanked the girls and told them they did an excellent job.

Council Member Owen reiterated the sentiment.

Mayor Conatser thanked the girls for coming and asked the girls to come in if they have other things they would like to see in our community.

The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

VOTE ON RESOLUTION NO. 803 - ADOPTION OF UPDATED GROWTH POLICY - PAUL WICK

Mr. Wick stated that the joint City/County Planning Board put the Growth Policy out to the public and updated the document. Most of the writing was done by Kate McMann of Applied Technologies.

A motion to approve Resolution No. 803 was made by Council Member Owen, seconded by Council Member Merja. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

FLOOD PLAIN UPDATE - PAUL WICK

Mr. Wick stated that he attended a flood plain conference held about 30 days ago. One issue he feels the City is not addressing is handling substantial improvements in the flood plain. It comes into play if the cost of the improvement is 50 percent of the market value of the structure. He stated that language needs to be put in to the flood plain regulations that will allow the Flood Plain Manager access to the property with reasonable cause in order to enforce the flood plain ordinance. The document was recently updated and reviewed by FEMA and the DNRC. The way it was written should be adequate. It was discussed that all residences in the flood plain be noticed about substantial improvements and what it means to them. There are currently about 70 structures in the NE section and 50 in the SW sections of town. He stated that since we have building permits, it will be easier for the city to enforce. Council Member Merja asked if we have a way to make a database. Deputy Clerk Corey replied that we can print labels and use just the ones we need. Mr. Wick would like to see it done by next spring if possible.

WI-FI OPTIONS - STEVE DOGIAKOS

Steve Dogiakos stated that he is part of the Tourism and Development committee. They are working to improve tourism and business in Choteau. They identified that faster internet would help attract businesses and remote workers. He stated that having slow internet has deterred at least one job so far. He stated that Trion, North Carolina, population 1700, received a grant in 2000 to lay seven miles of fiber optic cables. It is being managed by a local 501-c-3. He stated that Choteau will need to make some decisions on how much money we want to spend, what kind of speed we want, etc. Council Member Owen asked what the status of 3 Rivers is. Mr. Dogiakos does not know. Mayor Conatser asked Mr. Mills if he would like to address that but he is not prepared tonight, he will be back at a later date. Council Member Owen stated that she had a PhD candidate come into the store asking about other internet providers. Council Member Merja stated that we are not the only community with this problem and hopes we can find a solution. All agreed that we need to look into our options.

CLAIMS

A motion to approve the claims in the amount of \$5,892.69 was made by Council Member Crawford, seconded by Council Member Merja. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT

The Law Enforcement report for March 2016 was submitted for Council's review.

CITY JUDGE'S REPORT

There was no City Judge's report submitted.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mayor Conatser welcomed Mike Maples, he is the new Public Works Director for the city. He also thanked Lindsay and the crew for all of the work they did during the storm.

Public Works Director Talkington reported that the crew was busy plowing snow and picking up branches.

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Mayor Conatser reported that the audit report came back with no findings.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Council Member Merja stated that he is looking at streaming the council meetings on U Tube. He and Adam Woith were going to dig post holes for the disc golf course last Saturday but weather prevented it. They will try again this weekend if anyone would like to help. They have also gotten their first donor for the baskets.

Council Member Lannen welcomed Mike Maples and thanked Lindsay and the crew for all of their hard work.

Council Member Owen stated she is still looking into the electronics recycling and having it one day only.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Wick thanked council for such a quick response in getting a monitor for his presentation.

Jim Patterson stated that the next construction meeting will be in two weeks. The lift station is in and the electrical is being installed.

Beth Barlow gave a short presentation on the last Tourism Committee meeting. They are looking at various ways to fund an Economic Development office in Choteau.

Sarah Converse said she had a great meeting with Mayor Conatser, two of the Teton County Commissioners and Cheri Fuhringer of the Town of Dutton to begin communications to discuss the steps in forming a Port Authority.

Steve Dogaikos thanked the Choteau Online Yard Sale for passing out information and helping keep citizens informed during the storm. Mayor Conatser also thanked Melody Martinsen of the Choteau Acantha for her help.

Nate White was not surprised council voted on the Columbus Day issue. He appreciated the girls coming in and giving their views on the matter but he thinks council should have put a little more thought into it.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 p.m. was made by Council Member Lannen, seconded by Council Member Crawford. Council Members Lannen, Merja and Crawford voted aye. Council Member Owen was excused.

John W. Conatser, Mayor

Mary E. Corey, Deputy Clerk