

City of Choteau
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**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE APRIL 7, 2015 MEETING
OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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

Staff present was Finance Officer Jodi Rogers and Public Works Director Kelly Hirsch.

Citizens present were Melody Martinsen of the Choteau Acantha, Harold Yeager, Rich Lusky and Beth Barlow.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Conatser called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2015 meeting was made by Council Member Lannen, seconded by Council Member Crawford. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

REQUESTS TO BE OUT OF STATE

Council Member Owen requested to be out of state April 8-12, 2015. A motion to approve the request was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Lannen. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON BASEBALL COMMISSION REQUEST

Mayor Conatser stated that the request is for \$500 to help defray the cost of the Rodenator, purchased by the Choteau Baseball Commission. Council Member Lannen is in favor of the request. Council Member Merja stated that the equipment has been received and should be in use by the end of the month. Mayor Conatser asked if council wants to make the donation now or wait until the next fiscal year. A motion to put the \$500 for the Rodenator into next fiscal

years budget was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Lannen. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

NEW BUSINESS

DISCUSSION OF GARBAGE CONTAINER REPLACEMENT

Public Works Director Hirsch stated that we have approximately 100 broken garbage containers that need to be replaced. Finance Officer Rogers explained that we have several options. We have \$24,000 in our replacement and depreciation fund. We can spend that and not get as many containers and no dumpsters. She stated that when the budget was done last year, we budgeted to borrow \$30,000 from Inter-cap to purchase 150 containers and 25 dumpsters. That is option one. Option Two is to spend \$15,000 out of replacement and depreciation and borrow \$15,000. The final option is to spend the \$24,000 out of replacement and depreciation and borrow \$6,000. She stated that we have not looked at our garbage rates since October 2006. If we borrow the full \$30,000 we will have to raise rates by .75 per month per unit. A lesser loan would increase the rates by .50. Council Member Lannen asked what the current rates are. Finance Officer Rogers replied that it is \$8.57 for a 95 gallon container and \$6.43 for a 65 gallon container. Council Member Merja stated that if we have 10 times the amount of containers we are looking at purchasing, those are going to need to be replaced in the future. It might be worth raising the rates to set aside money for future replacements. Council Member Lannen suggested we raise the rates by \$1 to \$1.50 per unit. Council Member Merja suggested a structured increase over the next couple of years. Mayor Conatser asked council to keep in mind while deciding on garbage rates that we are going to have to raise our sewer rates and the rate payers are going to be feeling the pinch. He cautioned that we not raise the rates too high too fast. Council discussed the various options but did not come to a decision.

DISCUSSION ON ANNUAL CLEAN-UP

Mayor Conatser stated that the city has sponsored the annual clean-up for the last couple of years. Last year it cost the city approximately \$2600 for the bins and the labor involved. The Lions Club help man the bins last year. He will approach the Lions Club again to see if they will help again. He recommends if we decide to do it again that we not take tires. Council Member Merja feels that the annual cleanup is appreciated by the community. Council Member Lannen agrees. Public Works Director Hirsch stated that it does help. He would ask people to make sure their alleys are cleaned up. Mayor Conatser suggested possible dates of May 9-16, 2015. Finance Officer Rogers stated that would be a little early, we usually do it towards the end of the month. She suggested May 16-23, 2015. Beth Barlow asked what demographic of the community we are trying to target. Mayor Conatser replied that it started out with people that are physically unable to clean their yards or remove debris. The Lions Club pitched in and

helped. Finance Officer Rogers stated that it is everyone in the community the city is targeting. Council discussed possible dates and decided to bring it up at the next meeting.

VOTE ON GIRL SCOUT REQUEST TO MAKE REPAIRS AT THE MINI PARK

Mayor Conatser stated that he received a very nice letter from Girl Scout Troop #3007. They are asking for permission to paint the fence, fix the slide, pick up garbage and put in a flower garden. He stated that the girls came to visit the office to see how things work and Nik Lightner set off the siren for them. He thinks it is a good project for the kids. A motion to approve the girl scouts service project was made by Council Member Owen, seconded by Council Member Crawford. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

CLAIMS

A motion to pay the claims for March was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Owen. Council Member Merja asked who Diana Nelson is. Finance Officer Rogers responded that she was the clerk for Judge Howard and is helping Becky with court paperwork. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Public Works Director Hirsch reported that the crew fixed a broken water line, cleaned and flushed sewer main lines, swept gravel in intersections and sent off a load of recycling. Council Member Owen stated that she was asked if the recycling center could be open more often now that it is not manned. Public Works Director Hirsch replied that he had not thought about it. He stated that we are not getting anything for cardboard and paper. Beth Barlow asked that since we are not getting our bins picked up very often, why would we want to open the recycling center for more hours. Mayor Conatser stated that we will look into it further.

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

None

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Council Member Merja asked who to talk to about soccer, who runs it. Finance Officer Rogers told him to talk to Mari McCracken, she used to run the program.

Council Member Lannen stated that he needs to go speak with a semi-truck owner. He has received complaints about a driver on Choteau streets.

Mayor Conatser reported that there will be a Zoning Commission meeting Wednesday, April 8, 2015 from 4:00-5:00 in City Hall.

Mayor Conatser reported that he attended the Commissioner's meeting last Thursday. He explained that Denny Perry and Harold Yeager also attended. He stated that he fully supported the tax abatement request from the Stage Stop Inn.

ZONING PERMIT REPORT FOR MARCH 2015

Name	Address	Description
Teton Nursing Home	24 Main Avenue N	Handicap Ramp
Nate Jordan	303 13 th Avenue NE	Deck

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Yeager stated that he is highly upset with the Commissioner's decision on the tax abatement for the Stage Stop Inn. He feels the commissioners are looking at it the wrong way. He made a bunch of calls to find out how abatements are handled. Great Falls and Cascade County will approve any abatement request that qualifies. Teton County has to compete with them. Melody Martinsen stated that she contacted the Department of Revenue to find out exactly how the abatement would affect taxpayers but was not given a clear answer. She would print a follow-up article if she can get someone to give her a straight answer. Her concern is their action has sent a message that no tax abatement requested in Teton County is ever going to be granted because the commissioners consider it a tax shift. The issue was discussed further with all in attendance.

Beth Barlow stated that she attended to observe a council meeting. She attended the Governor's Conference on Tourism. She is putting together a meeting at the Stage Stop, tentatively on May 12th at 6:00 p.m. for business owners and community organizations. She will have speakers from around the state speaking on tourism. The conference will focus on how tourism can help our community.

Rich Lusky stated that he spoke with Jack Knight about the possibility of trimming one of his trees that is hanging over the street. Mr. Knight told him that the city has him contracted to trim some of the trees that hang into the street but he is not sure which ones. Public Works Director Hirsch replied that there is no contract with Mr. Knight to trim overhanging branches. He did speak to him about pruning dead branches.

Melody Martinsen reported that the fireworks fund raiser was a success and raised approximately \$7090.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. was made by Council Member Owen, seconded by Council Member Crawford. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

John W. Conatser, Mayor

Jodi L. Rogers, Finance Officer