

**City of Choteau**  
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OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 18, 2015 MEETING  
OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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

Staff present was Deputy Clerk Mary Corey. Public Works Director Kelly Hirsch was excused. Finance Officer Jodi Rogers was excused.

Citizens present were Deputy Mike Baum of the Teton County Sheriff's Office, Jim Patterson of DOWL, Marion Passmore of Stutz & Passmore and Rich Lusky.

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 August 4, 2015 meeting was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Owen. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

REUESTS TO BE OUT OF STATE

Council Member Owen requested to be out of state August 20-28, 2015. 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 VOTE ON EASEMENT - NEIL BOUMA

Marion Passmore explained that Neil Bouma purchased the property owned by Greg Curtis. He is selling the home and the parcel of land next to it. Consequently, he will no longer have access. She stated that lenders do not like private railroad crossings into property. The crossing at 3rd Street SE is a public crossing. It turns and goes across a small portion of city and county property. She is requesting an easement so the property can be accessed that way. Council Member Merja stated that most insurance companies will not cover a property that does not have access to the property.

A motion to approve the easement request for Neil Bouma was made by Council Member Lannen, seconded by Council Member Crawford. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

#### VOTE ON PRELIMINARY BUDGET

Mayor Conatser explained that there is very little change from last year. Finance Officer Rogers will be moving \$15,000 from the general fund into the Street Maintenance budget. She is looking at a .05 cent increase per front footage in both Street Lights and Street Maintenance. She is looking at remodeling the Visitors Center with the Capital Improvements Fund. Garbage will be going up .75 cents.

Mayor Conatser explained that our mill value has gone up approximately \$500 per mill. By law, the city can levy all 92.48 mills but with this budget, we will only need to levy 73.50 mills. Our reserves will stay at 48%. By doing this, the tax increase for each city residence will be minimal. Even with the sewer increase.

Council Member Owen asked where the money came from for Becky. Mayor Conatser replied that it is from the court budget.

A motion to approve the preliminary budget was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Lannen. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

#### VOTE ON PAY REQUESTS - WESTECH & 3 RIVERS

Mayor Conatser explained that WesTech provides the clarifiers, some pumps and some of the electrical equipment. The pay request is to order and pay for the equipment so it is ready when it is needed. He further explained that 3 Rivers is for the phone line going into the new facility. It was originally budgeted at \$10,000 but will cost \$9,436.58. There will be a \$3,000 rebate but they are going to have to put in a fiber optic cable so it looks like it will be close to the budgeted amount.

A motion to approve the pay requests for WesTech and 3 Rivers was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Crawford. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

#### LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT

Deputy Mike Baum attended the meeting and presented the report for July 2015.

#### CITY JUDGE'S REPORT

The City Judge's report for July was submitted for councils review.

#### PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Public Works Director Hirsch was excused.

#### FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Finance Officer Rogers was excused.

#### MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Mayor Conatser stated that the sidewalk project has been started and is moving forward.

Council Member Merja reported that there is an alley being used for a parking lot. Mayor Conatser stated that it has been taken care of.

Council Member Owen received compliments on our library from some tourists from Quebec.

Council Member Lannen talked about the fire last Friday afternoon. It was caused by a power line and we were very lucky that the only thing destroyed was a camper trailer. The fire skirted around all of the buildings. Mayor Conatser added that the response from our fire department was amazing, they did a great job.

Mayor Conatser reported that the school will be getting an all-weather track. The Hirschfeld Family Foundation is donating the money for the track.

Mayor Conatser stated that if the tennis courts get re-done at the school, the Lions Club might possibly re-surface the tennis courts across from the pool.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Patterson reported that Williams Brothers got started on August 3, 2015 and are working five days a week. They are moving equipment in and temporarily removing sod for a new access. They will be moving and stockpiling topsoil and are waiting for their sign to arrive. The office trailer will be here this week and hooked up to power. They would like to secure the area using the existing gate that belongs to Jim Bouma. Mr. Patterson asked if the city would like to double lock it with one of their own locks or will a spare key for the existing lock work. It was decided to just get a spare key. He also stated that they are waiting for a copy of the activity schedule. Mr. Patterson stated that they found a few monitoring wells.

Mr. Lusky thanked council for approving his dates for the car shows. The shows were well attended. Council thanked Mr. Lusky for putting on the car shows and bringing people to Choteau. Mr. Lusky is hoping the Visitors Center can be left open later during the car shows.

#### ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:34 p.m. was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Owen. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

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John W. Conatser, Mayor

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Mary E. Corey, Deputy Clerk