

City of Choteau
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OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 4, 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 Public Works Director Kelly Hirsch and Finance Officer Jodi Rogers.

Citizens present were Levi Warehime, Ed Bumgarner of CGI, Billy Warehime, Rich Lusky, Maxine Lusky, John and Billie Morris and Chris Hindoien.

CALL TO ORDER

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

PUBLIC HEARING - SEWER RATE INCREASE

Mayor Conatser immediately opened the public hearing.

John Morris asked if each residence will pay the same amount or if it will be done by fixtures or people in the home. Mayor Conatser replied that the rates will increase the same as they always have. If you have one sewer connection, you will pay the rate for one. Businesses will pay for two. Public Works Director Hirsch stated that the cost of the project is based on 1160 services. He stated that we need to look at all of the services to make sure they are being charged correctly. He further stated that the rate might have to go up and we also might have to refund some money. He explained that we might have to come up with a way of charging based on water usage or occupancy. Currently a single person is paying the same amount that a family is. Mayor Conatser stated that we may look at it later but lots of communities calculate the rate the same way and others charge by usage. Council Member Owen asked how other communities do it. Finance Officer Rogers replied that it is about half and half. Communities that have all of their residents on city water have meters to go by. Public Works Director Hirsch stated that not every house in Choteau is on city water, about 25 percent of them have wells. Mayor Conatser stated that the issue will be discussed in house at a later time. He further stated that the current rate structure will stand. Mayor Conatser stated that if we were to go by usage, the 25 percent of the residences not on city water would have to purchase a water meter for their well. He does not feel that will fly. Council Member Merja stated that the rates are in place, we need to go

ahead with the project or it will cost more in the future. Mayor Conatser stated that the rates are in place and have been figured out by our bonding company, Dorsey & Whitney. If we don't proceed, we will lose 2.5 million dollars in grant money. If that happens, the rates could triple. Public Works Director Hirsch stated again that some of the businesses are being charged two services and it should only be one. Mayor Conatser again stated that nothing is going to happen this year. John Morris asked Mr. Hirsch why he did not bring this up a year or two ago.

Chris Hindoien stated that when you take government dollars, you have to play their game. He believes that the majority of the residents live on a fixed income with another group getting some kind of subsidized assistance. He admires council for getting this project done and believes that as city leaders, it falls on them to find other ways to offset additional increases to help these people. He stated that the city will get grief but they are doing the right thing. Council Member Lannen stated that the increase is a lot less than originally projected. Council Member Merja explained that they got every bit of grant money they possibly could to help keep the rates down.

Being no further comment, Mayor Conatser closed the public hearing at 7:14 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the July 21, 2015 meeting was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Crawford. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

REQUESTS TO BE OUT OF STATE

Mayor Conatser requested to be out of state August 11-13, 2015. A motion to approve the request was made by Council Member Lannen, seconded by Council Member Owen. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Mayor Conatser stated that they are going to try to have a playground meeting on the 18th of August.

NEW BUSINESS

VOTE ON RESOLUTION NO. 797 - REQUESTING MUNICIPAL ELECTION BE BY MAIL BALLOT

A motion to approve Resolution No. 797 was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Crawford. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

VOTE ON RESOLUTION NO. 798 - SEWER RATE INCREASE

A motion to approve Resolution No. 798 was made by Council Member Lannen, seconded by Council Member Merja. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

VOTE ON RLF RECOMMENDATION OF LOAN TO PAUL AND KARIN DEHN

Mayor Conatser explained that Paul and Karin Dehn are requesting a loan of \$5000 for improvements to the interior of the Alley Cat bowling alley.

A motion to approve the recommendation of the Revolving Loan Fund Committee and approve the loan for Paul and Karin Dehn was made by Council Member Owen, seconded by Council Member Crawford. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

VOTE ON RESOLUTION NO. 799 - SRF BOND RESOLUTION - DORSEY & WHITNEY

Mayor Conatser explained that this gives permission for Dorsey & Whitney to issue the bonds for the sewer project.

A motion to approve Resolution No. 799 was made by Council Member Lannen, seconded by Council Member Owen. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

VOTE ON RESOLUTION NO. 800 - RURAL DEVELOPMENT BOND RESOLUTION - DORSEY & WHITNEY

Mayor Conatser explained that this also gives permission for Dorsey & Whitney to issue the bonds for the sewer project.

A motion to approve Resolution No. 800 was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Crawford. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

CLAIMS

A motion to pay the claims for July was made by Council Member Lannen, seconded by Council Member Owen. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Public Works Director Hirsch did not have a report.

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Finance Officer Rogers reported that she has been working on the budget and the paperwork for the sewer project.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

None

ZONING PERMIT REPORT FOR JULY 2015

Name	Address	Description
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PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Bumgarner stated that he spoke with Public Works Director Hirsch today about a piece of broken rail they have on the railroad crossing at 3rd Street SE. He stated that it will have fixed. He does not want a locomotive to go off the rails and hit a transformer pole. He wanted to run the situation by council to see what could be done. He stated that he spoke with Mayor Conatser before the meeting and he suggested that he contact the Sheriff's Office and EMS to let them know when and how long the crossing will be closed. Council Member Merja asked the location, it is between Kelly's Service Station and K's Auto Parts. Council Member Owen asked if it is the railroads responsibility to fix it. Mr. Bumgarner replied that the line belongs to CGI. Mayor Conatser stated that the city will work together with him to get it resolved.

Maxine Lusky stated that the Visitors Center has four metal pegs sticking up out of the ground where there used to be a mailbox. It is very dangerous and they need to be removed. Council Member Merja suggested they talk to the Post Office. Mayor Conatser will talk to them.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 p.m. was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Crawford. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

John W. Conatser, Mayor

Jodi L. Rogers, Finance Officer