## City of Choteau

### PO BOX 619 CHOTEAU, MT 59422-0619 406-466-2510

# OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 16, 2016 MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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

Staff present was Public Works Director Lindsay Talkington and Utility Billing Clerk Rebecca Olsen.

Citizens present were Jesse Crawford of the Elk Country Grill; Kelli Berlin, Roy Deshner and Jeremiah Anderson of GW Towing; Melody Martinsen of the Choteau Acantha; Mark Korte of the Teton County Weed District; Brooke Richins of the TCDC Playground; 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 January 2, 2016 meeting was made by Council Member Lannen, seconded by Council Member Crawford. Council Members Lannen, Crawford and Merja voted aye. Council Member Owen was excused.

REQUESTS TO BE OUT OF STATE

None

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS** 

**NEW BUSINESS** 

#### PLAYGROUND PRESENTATION AND POSSIBLE VOTE - BROOKE RICHINS

Mayor Conatser thanked Ms. Richins and her group for doing something for the community, they are doing a wonderful job.

Ms. Richens re-capped the history of the project so far. She stated that all but two people they contacted want the playground at the current location. She stated that as is, the size of the proposed playground is too big. They are asking council to allow them to put the new playground in the current location, scaling it back so it will fit in the current footprint. Jesse Crawford asked if they were scaling it down so they would not have to cut down trees. Ms. Richens replied that there was a lot of concern about taking up too much of the park. Mr. Crawford stated that he is in favor of the current location.

It was decided to table the playground vote until the next meeting when Council Member Owen can be here.

#### DISCUSSION AND VOTE - ON CALL POLICY UPDATE

Mayor Conatser stated that the current on-call policy allows for a 30 minute response time. He explained that a lot can happen in 30 minutes if there is an emergency. He would like to see it reduced to a 15 minute response time. A motion to approve the City of Choteau on-call policy change was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Lannen. Council Members Merja, Lannen and Crawford voted aye. Council Member Owen was excused.

#### DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN WITH TETON COUNTY

Mark Korte stated there is an increasing problem with noxious weeds in the city limits of Choteau, Fairfield and Dutton. He has researched how other communities are handling this problem. He stated that the overall best of the weed districts is Madison County which includes the Town of Ennis. He is proposing a co-op agreement with the city that would include:

Donation of a 1994 Honda ATV and sprayer (shared with Fairfield), with the stipulation that the public works director obtains the proper license to spray herbicide and that the city treats the rodeo grounds area and the lagoon. The county will work with the incoming PWD and will supply the herbicide. Council Member Merja asked if we need special insurance. Mayor Conatser stated we can contact the MMIA and check. Mr. Korte stated that he has never heard of having to have special insurance. The city will be responsible for daily application records anytime they spray.

The Weed District will treat the airport, gravel pit and surrounding acreage and the area east of the golf course near the walking path. They will supply the herbicide. The cost of the herbicide purchased by the city will be reimbursed by the Weed District.

The Weed District will supply bio controls for the area surrounding the Richem Pump House.

Mr. Korte stated that he would write up a detailed plan for Council's approval and also a weed management plan that should be reviewed every two years. He will also address private property in the city limits. He feels that the city should take care of the problem initially but if it is not taken care of by the homeowner, it would then revert to the Weed District for compliance.

Council Member Merja asked if there is a list of noxious weeds available. Mr. Korte stated that he will get a book to us. He feels that the biggest weed issue in Choteau and Teton County is Spotted Knapweed.

Mr. Korte stated that he spoke with Mayor Conatser about the possibility of eliminating their water bill as they will be supplying all of the herbicide and doing a bunch of work for the city. He further explained that every place a fire camp is going to go, will need to be inspected by the county weed coordinator and the forest service before it can go in. The fire line officers would like a list of potential spots so they will know where they can go that is already approved.

Mayor Conatser stated that he spoke with Finance Officer Rogers and they will work something out for the water bill.

Council Member Merja asked who is responsible for the weeds along Main Avenue. Mr. Korte replied that he would look into it but believes the state has done it once.

A motion to approve the Weed Management Plan with Teton County was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Crawford. Council Member Members Merja, Crawford and Lannen voted aye. Council Member Owen was excused.

#### **CLAIMS**

A motion to approve the claims in the amount of \$1640.64 was made by Council Member Crawford, seconded by Council Member Lannen. Council Members Crawford, Lannen and Merja voted aye. Council Member Owen was excused.

#### LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT

There was no Law Enforcement report submitted.

#### CITY JUDGE'S REPORT

There was no City Judge's report submitted.

#### PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Public Works Director Talkington reported that the crew has been busy grading alleys, cutting brush in the alleys and picking up brush from the last windstorm.

#### FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Finance Officer Rogers was excused.

#### MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Mayor Conatser stated that we should have an update to the community clean-up at the next meeting. He will also be setting up a committee to tour the city, determine which properties are not following the ordinances and go from there.

Mayor Conatser reported that there is an ad in the Acantha for a Public Works Director. The City will be accepting applications until 5:00 p.m. on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Applications are available at City Hall.

Mayor Conatser stated that he met with the County Sanitarian over the weekend about an unsightly property that will be getting a visit from the EPA in the very near future.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeremiah Anderson stated that he runs a business that was asked to clean up the area. He stated that he has State, Highway Patrol and local regulations that he has to follow but the competitor in town is operating even though he does not follow the regulations. He is confused as to why this is. He is not getting tows and the competitor was not in compliance as to having a Class A tow truck until he brought it to the attention of the Highway Patrol. He just wants a fair chance to earn a living for himself and his employees.

Council Member Crawford thanked Mr. Anderson for bringing this to everyone's attention. Mayor Conatser asked him to please be patient. He is working on getting things done.

Rich Lusky stated that even if the playground needs to be scaled down, it will be good to get rid of the old equipment, it needs to be safer. Also, it took four winds but his fence blew down. He is still working on getting things cleaned up.

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m. was made by Council Member Lannen, secon	ded
by Council Member Merja. Council Members Lannen, Merja and Crawford voted aye. Co	uncil
Member Owen was excused.	

ADJOURNMENT

John W. Conatser, Mayor Rebecca E. Olsen, Utility Billing Clerk