

City of Choteau
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**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 21, 2017 MEETING
OF THE CHOTEAU CITY COUNCIL**

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

Staff present was Public Works Director Mike Maples and Finance Officer Jodi Rogers.

Citizens present were Melody Martinsen of the Choteau Acantha; Kevin Johnson of DOWL; Lorraine DeBruycker, John & Julie Shepherd and C. Edward Baumgarner of the Booster Club; Steve Dogiakos of the Choteau Chamber/Economic Development Workgroup; Mary Sexton of the Economic Development Committee; Sandra Dogiakos; and Harold Yeager.

CALL TO ORDER

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

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF FEBRUARY 7,
2017**

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2017 meeting was made by Council Member Crawford, seconded by Council Member Lannen. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

REQUESTS TO BE OUT OF STATE

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

WWTP UPDATE

Kevin Johnson reported that the contractor meeting was held today. He stated that in the Williams Brother Construction letter of January 6th, there was a list of items that needed to be completed in order to get partial substantial completion. There are two more items that still need to be completed. He is waiting for the testing and training to be done on the HVAC system as

well as the emergency back-up power generators. The sand drying beds will be started the 1st of April, they will take 4-6 weeks to complete. He stated that WesTech is about 98 percent complete. The manufacturer is sending a valve to fix the grit removal system, the city will complete the repair.

DISCUSSION ON FIREWORKS

Council Member Lannen stated that after the discussion at the last meeting, he suggests that the date of sales remain the same but only set them off from July 1st through the 4th of July. The hours would be 10:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. from July 1st through July 2nd and on the 3rd and 4th from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 a.m. the following morning. He also feels that the ordinance should include allowing only two fireworks stands within the city limits.

Mayor Conatser stated that the law enforcement contract will be in negotiations the first part of March. He will bring up the issue of enforcement at that time. Also, if we can educate the public, that will help.

Julie Shepherd asked if the ordinance included where fireworks can be set off. Mayor Conatser replied that he will look at the ordinance.

Mayor Conatser stated that he has observed people that set fireworks off at the ball fields or other areas, they police the area and clean up after themselves. There are other areas where they leave the messes on the streets and expect the City to clean it up.

Lorraine DeBruycker stated that they could put signs up on their stands requesting people clean up after themselves. Council Member Merja suggested that we talk to the stands outside the city limits and see if they would be willing to put signs up too.

After discussing the times fireworks can be shot off, the following hours were determined. July 1st and 2nd from 11:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. and on the 3rd and 4th from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 a.m. the following morning.

Council Members Crawford, Owen and Mayor Conatser do not feel that there should be a limit to the number of stands that can sell fireworks within the city limits. Council Member Merja stated that with the current MCA regulations, he does not feel there are any other areas that a stand could be set up in the city limits, except possibly near the Weatherbeater building.

NEW BUSINESS

PLAYGROUND UPDATE - BROOKE RICHINS

Mayor Conatser explained the Brooke is home sick but will be on the next agenda.

DISCUSSION ON PORT AUTHORITY - STEVE DOGIAKOS

Steve Dogiakos is looking to start a Port Authority in the City of Choteau. He stated that under the two-mill contingency in the MCA, a two-mill levy can be set and a five-member board appointed.

Council Member Owen asked why we have to levy the mills for the board, is it not a volunteer board? Steve replied that it is a volunteer board, the two mills would be for the functioning of the board. It would include items such as postage, office supplies, etc.

Finance Officer Rogers stated that we would not be able to appropriate the two mills until July as our current budget is already set for this fiscal year. She also explained that the two mills would not have to go to the voters.

Mayor Conatser stated that we can set the wheels in motion but the Port Authority could not be funded until the next fiscal year.

Steve reported that he would like to eventually have a memorandum of understanding with the Chamber, TBID and TCDC for an administrator.

Mayor Conatser explained that the administrator in Shelby is also a grant writer and actively looks for grants for the community. Choteau's will also be a performance driven position.

Steve reported that most of the surrounding communities have their own Port Authorities, they work to drive economic development.

Mary Sexton stated that she fully supports forming the Port Authority and it alone will not be successful unless there is an agreement with the TBID as they have funding options and work with tourism. The Chamber Board, TBID Board, TCDC Board and the Port Authority Board will need to work together so there needs to be some kind of agreement amongst the boards.

Mayor Conatser stated that there is a need to get a board formed and guidelines set. This is a way to keep Choteau viable.

Public Works Director Maples stated that the Choteau Trading Post was in the process of being sold but the buyer backed out because the vote for the county wide Port Authority failed.

LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT

The Law Enforcement Report for January 2017 was submitted for Council's review.

CITY JUDGE'S REPORT

There was no City Judge's Report submitted.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTORS REPORT

Public Works Director Maples reported that the wastewater treatment plant is running on auto, with the exception of the grit removal system. The UV plant is not online at the moment. They experienced dangerous levels of hydrogen sulfide gas in the UV building when the lagoon was iced over. He is looking at how best to handle it.

He stated that the solenoid valve for the grit removal system was the wrong one, they will be replacing it. The influent meter is working, one of the RAS pumps is not functioning properly, the Solar Bee mixer is working, the bug population is down because they diverted flows to thaw the settling ponds and they discovered a sewer main that is leaking and one that is potentially leaking.

He explained that he is down to 5 deficiencies in the Open Cut Mining Permit. He has until March 16th to have them addressed.

He and Ken Wall of Geodata Services have submitted the grant application to develop a GIS layer mapping and inventory of the cities sidewalks. He hopes the funds received will provide the matching portion required for the Montana Dept. of Transportation sidewalk grant.

He reported that the crew has been busy scraping ice and removing snow.

FINANCE OFFICERS REPORT

Finance Officer Rogers reported that the financials are in the council packet. The streets were budgeted high enough that we should be OK. Revenues are coming in as expected.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Council Member Merja stated that he has talked to a lot of people and all are appreciative of the work the crew has been doing removing the snow and ice. He also had someone talk to him about the possibility of grading the alleys down so the water will stay out of garages and driveways.

Council Member Lannen reported that the senate has voted to eliminate Daylight Savings Time.

Mayor Conatser stated that he has received letters thanking Mike and the crew for the excellent job they are doing.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Steve Dogiakos presented a resolution that was passed in Great Falls. The resolution is a show of support for the City of Whitefish in light of the Neo-Nazi and Anti-Semite's that were threatening to go there and march in Whitefish. He is hoping the city will adopt a resolution against hatred in our community. Council is in agreement and will ask the city attorney to look into it.

Harold Yeager reported that there will be a meeting in Helena for the de-listing of the grizzly bear on Friday, February 24, 2017 at 3:00 p.m.

Melody Martinsen stated that Judge Olson issued a ruling that will prohibit the irrigators on the upper Teton from using the Bateman Ditch to divert water out of the Teton at the gravel stretch where it typically goes to ground water. The judge will not allow the use for this irrigation season. He wants to establish if there is connectivity between the ground water in the Teton River Basin and low levels for senior water rights for Spring Creek and stock water users in Chouteau County that have senior rights. She asked Kevin if it is a concern that the ground water is going to impact the treatment plant. Kevin replied that any increase in the ground water level is a potential increase in the amount of flows that go to the sewer system so it is a concern.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 p.m. was made by Council Member Crawford, seconded by Council Member Merja. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

John W. Conatser, Mayor

Jodi L. Rogers, Finance Officer