

City of Choteau
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OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE FEBUARY 7, 2017 MEETING
OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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

Staff present was Public Works Director Mike Maples and Deputy Clerk Mary Corey. Finance Officer Jodi Rogers was excused.

Citizens present were Melody Martinsen of the Choteau Acantha; Kevin Johnson of DOWL; John & Julie Shepherd and Lorraine DeBruycker of the Choteau Booster Club; Beth Barlow and Jesse Crawford.

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 17, 2017 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

SEWER PROJECT UPDATE

Kevin Johnson reported that WesTech is here working on the programming at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The plant will be on automatic when they are done. The electrician will not be here this week, there are some loose ends they need to tie up. Williams Brother Construction is working on their punch list items, he will meet with them in the morning. Kevin stated that the one item they need to get done before the city will consider partial substantial completion is the

flow meter into the plant. WBC has tried everything to get it fixed but sounds like they are bringing another meter in. Kevin will be meeting with them tomorrow to determine how long it will take to get the flow meter online and a date for partial substantial completion in order to transfer ownership of the plant to the city. WBC requested a shut down on the work for the drying beds, that will also be discussed tomorrow. WBC is trying to drain the lagoon but it is the wrong time of the year to be doing that. He explained that the suspend work order stops the liquidated damages.

NEW BUSINESS

VOTE ON UPDATED CITY COURT JUDGE AGREEMENT

Council Member Merja asked what is different in the agreement. Mayor Conatser replied that it includes a raise. The raise will bring him to \$1000 per month. Fairfield's portion will be \$303 and Choteau's portion will be \$697 per month. He further stated that there is a 90 day no fault clause if either party wishes to terminate the agreement.

A motion to approve the Judge's Agreement was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Crawford. Council Members Merja, Crawford and Lannen voted aye. Council Member Owen was excused.

FIREWORKS DISCUSSION

Mayor Conatser explained that we are just having a discussion tonight. Comments will be accepted for the next two weeks and fireworks will be discussed again at the next council meeting on the 21st of February.

Mayor Conatser explained that letters have been received, mostly from dog owners, about the possibility of shortening the hours that private fireworks can be set off in the city limits. Others asked to shorten the evening hours that they may be set off. Mayor Conatser stated that this may be a law enforcement issue.

Members of the Booster Club do not wish to see the length of time fireworks can be sold changed in the city limits. There are two other stands just outside the city limits that people can buy from. They stated that they would not have an issue with limiting the hours they can be set off.

Council Member Merja stated that no matter what is decided, it will not affect the stands outside of the city limits. He further stated that he is looking at the safety issue. He is concerned about complaints he received the last two years of fireworks bouncing off peoples windows.

Mayor Conatser explained that he is going to speak with the Sheriff's Office about enforcing our ordinance as to the times fireworks can be set off. Currently the hours are from June 24th to July 2nd, 10:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. On the 3rd and 4th of July, they can be set off until 2:00 a.m. On December 31st, they can be set off from 6:00 p.m. until 2:00 a.m.

Council Member Lannen suggested there be only two sellers allowed in the city limits and would like to change the amount of days fireworks can be set off from ten to five.

Public Works Director Maples stated that the crew spends a lot of time and money to make sure the city is cleaned up for the 4th of July celebrations. He would like to see people take some responsibility to clean up their fireworks messes. The city should not have to be responsible for that.

Beth Barlow stated that there are people that drive up Airport Road to set off fireworks on the vacant lots, which is a fire hazard. They should not be allowed to do that.

Mayor Conatser stated that we need to either shorten up the time in which fireworks can be shot off or have some decent enforcement.

Council Member Merja suggested that signs be posted at all of the fireworks stands notifying people of the hours they may be shot off and to please take pride in our community and take the responsibility to clean up after themselves. The Booster Club stated that they would be willing to put fliers in each purchaser's bag.

Jesse Crawford stated that if the city asks vendors in the city limits to put signs up, they should also ask the stands outside the city limits if they would too.

Mayor Conatser suggested that we need to have some teeth in the ordinance if the Sheriff's Office has to go to the same residence more than once. There needs to be consequences.

Mayor Conatser stated that comments and suggestions can still be sent in until the next meeting where fireworks will be discussed again.

DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON MDT-TA GRANT CONSULTANT AGREEMENT - SIDEWALKS

Mayor Conatser explained that the cost for the engineers would be \$4,000. We are hoping to put sidewalks in on the west side of 7th Avenue NW from the school north to 7th Street NW. The grant we are applying for needs to be in by March 31, 2017. He stated that we will score higher with the grant agency since we would put the sidewalks by the school to make it safer for the

kids to walk to school. The alternative would be up 3rd Street NW from the school to Main Avenue.

Council Member Merja asked if the \$4,000 is the only money the city needs to come up with. Council Member Lannen replied that it will depend on what our grant match will be. Public Works Director Maples stated that he is applying for a grant with the Montana Land Information Act (GIS). The grant would be for mapping and rating sidewalks. He feels that we could use that money for matching funds on the other grant.

A motion to approve the Grant Consultant Agreement was made by Council Member Lannen, seconded by Council Member Merja. Council Members Lannen, Merja and Crawford voted aye. Council Member Owen was excused.

DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON UPDATED PERSONNEL POLICY

Mayor Conatser stated that we need to update our personnel policy in order to keep our errors and omissions insurance through the MMIA. He stated it is pretty boiler plate. It has gone through their Human Resources department and City Attorney Marion Passmore has looked at it.

A motion to approve the updated personnel policy was made by Council Member Lannen, seconded by Council Member Crawford. Council Members Lannen, Crawford and Merja voted aye. Council Member Owen was excused.

CLAIMS

A motion to pay the claims for January in the amount of \$130,243.17 was made by Council Member Crawford, seconded by Council Member Merja. Council Members Crawford, Merja and Lannen voted aye. Council Member Owen was excused.

TBID MINUTES

Mayor Conatser stated the minutes from their last meeting is in the council packet. Council Member Merja asked Beth Barlow if they have a list of projects they would like to do. Beth replied that it was brought up at the Economic Roundtable about the possibility of using TBID funds to help fund a tourism/economic development position.

They also want to put together digital and printed material to be able to communicate with visitors as well as educating businesses about what there is to do in Choteau.

She stated that they raised money to help get the Visit Choteau website going. They will connect the website to the Chamber of Commerce and possibly the City's website.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Public Works Director Maples reported that he is still spending time at the Waste Water Treatment Plant, working with the contractors and engineers to tie up loose ends and complete small modifications as needed.

He stated that he has addressed the 25 deficiencies on the DEQ Open Cut Mining Permit and re-submitted the application.

He reported that the crew has been working on plowing snow, removing snow and sanding streets. He explained that we have used 46 percent of the money budgeted for streets. Technically, we are sitting pretty good, given we are seven months into the budget period. We may have to shift some money within the street budget from Materials, Raw and Fabricated to Gas, Oil and Diesel Fuel. He stated that we have consumed 87 percent of our fuel budget. He explained that it seems reasonable that we will not exceed our total budget for streets.

He further reported that he and Ken Hall of Geodata Services are working on putting in a grant application for \$15,000 to \$20,000 to be used to develop a GIS layer mapping and inventorying of the city's sidewalks. He hopes the grant will provide the matching portion required for the DNRC Sidewalk Planning Grant.

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Finance Officer Jodi Rogers was excused.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Council Member Merja reported that over one third of the baskets have been sponsored for the disc golf course with a few more sponsorships in the works.

ZONING PERMIT REPORT FOR JANUARY 2017

Name	Address	Description
None		

PUBLIC COMMENT

Beth Barlow reported that she would like to have someone come from the Montana Main Street Project come give a presentation.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m. was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Lannen. Council Members Merja, Lannen and Crawford voted aye. Council Member Owen was excused.

John W. Conatser, Mayor

Mary E. Corey, Deputy Clerk