

City of Choteau
PO BOX 619
CHOTEAU, MT 59422-0619
406-466-2510

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE MARCH 1, 2016 MEETING
OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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

Staff present was Deputy Clerk Mary Corey.

Citizens present were Melody Martinsen of the Choteau Acantha; Jim Patterson and Kevin Johnson of DOWL; Brooke Richins of the TCDC Playground; Jesse Crawford; Beth Barlow; 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 February 16, 2016 meeting was made by Council Member Lannen, seconded by Council Member Crawford. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

REQUESTS TO BE OUT OF STATE

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON PLAYGROUND

Council Members Lannen, Merja and Crawford appreciated the fact that Brooke and her group have stepped up to take on the project and are behind whatever they want to do 100 percent. Council Member Owen stated the park is one of the most beautiful green spaces we have in town. She likes the openness of the current playground and the ability to see the trees. She feels that it would be closed off if there were to be a fence placed around the new playground, it would ruin the flow in the park. She would like to see a more natural playground, more in fitting with

the look of the park. She is also concerned about the playground being a big draw as far as parking and being near a residential area. She re-addressed the suggestion of going to the south side of the Pavilion.

Brooke stated that the committee has decided that the current draft for the playground will not work, it is too big. They decided to scale down the size to be able to put it in the current foot print. They also discussed putting in a fence on the residential and 1st Street NE sides. She stated that she has spoken with other playground companies and they come back looking like the one at the school. She stated that Leathers can tone it down and make it more neutral, more like wood and not as colorful. She explained that only one tree will need to be taken down, only because it is dead. She stated the downsides of using the south side of the Pavilion: have to remove a lot of trees, child predators, semi-truck traffic, taking up RV parking spaces and other essential needs of the area. She hopes they will be allowed to continue on in the current location with a more appropriate sized playground.

Mayor Conatser stated that he likes the idea of a half fence and asked about handicapped parking. Brooke replied that she was working with Public Director Hirsch on some ideas but he is no longer working for the City so she is unsure of the next step. Mayor Conatser stated that Northwestern Energy and the Department of Transportation will need to be consulted. Council Member Merja stated that one suggestion had been to put the spaces behind the lean-to and thought two spaces had to be created in order to apply for ADA grants.

A motion to allow the playground group to proceed forward with their planning to use the existing playground area and keep it in the same footprint, not to exceed the footprint of where it's at right now was made by Council Member Lannen, seconded by Council Member Crawford. Council Members Lannen, Crawford and Merja voted aye. Council Member Owen voted nay.

NEW BUSINESS

VOTE ON REVOLVING LOAN FUND APPLICATION - JOLENE MOORE

Mayor Conatser stated that a Revolving Loan Application has been received from Jolene Moore. She is requesting \$2500 to purchase a tub for her dog grooming business, Hair of the Dog. A motion to approve the request was made by Council Member Owen, seconded by Council Member Merja. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

PAY REQUEST - WILLIAMS BROTHER CONSTRUCTION

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

Jim Patterson reported that 27 percent of the monies have been spent and 43 percent of the time used. There is a little discrepancy between the figures. They are working with Williams Brother Construction on updating the work schedule. He hopes to have it sometime this week. He stated the sub-contractors will be starting on the utility work. They will be working on pouring concrete for the oxidation ditch walls and a few platforms for the inside and setting the lift station. Council Member Merja asked at what point we would consider that they will not be done on time. Kevin Johnson replied that they are a little concerned about the discrepancy but things are picking up and it should be OK. As far as the schedule goes, they have a contract that says they will do this job in this amount of time. They will face liquidated damages if the contract is not completed on time.

Kevin Johnson stated that there is a lot of equipment that was left out of the contract that the city can procure such as lab equipment, testing supplies and computers that is considered construction costs so it will not be coming out of the city budget. He will work on finalizing the list. He is also working on training opportunities. He would like the guys to spend half days on Thursdays in Great Falls at the wastewater treatment facility working with the operators learning to take samples and what they mean. He has been talking to Bill Barr of the DEQ to also help with training.

DISCUSSION & VOTE ON COMPOST PILE AT JACK & RONDA REIDING'S

Mayor Conatser reported that he spoke with the Reiding's, they would like to have the composting back. Since we have had some personnel changes, they would welcome us back. He stated that he has had complaints in the past about the odor so he spoke with some of the neighbors in the area. Only one of those contacted were against it. He further stated that he spoke with the extension agent who suggested we use a one to one ratio of grass to straw to help with odors.

Council Member Owen asked if there was any city property we could put it on. Council Member Merja replied that if we have it on city property, we have to deal with the DEQ and permits. He further stated that it would be better to have it on private property or out of the city limits. He suggested he go talk to the new owners of a piece of property out of town. The problem being it is a mile out of town and may not be utilized. He explained that he has spoken with Eco Compost in Missoula. If the piles are watered and turned when they are supposed to be, the odor will be minimal. Council Member Lannen would like to see it at Reiding's, he does not want to have to drive out of town to get rid of his grass. Council Member Merja asked what our ordinances say about composting. Mayor Conatser does not think there is one but he will check.

The item was tabled until the next meeting.

CLAIMS

A motion to pay the claims for February in the amount of \$302,465.51 was made by Council Member Owen, seconded by Council Member Crawford. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Public Works Director Talkington was excused.

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Finance Officer Rogers was excused.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Mayor Conatser reported that Jodi received the Clerk of the Year award from Montana Rural Water.

Mayor Conatser reported that seven applications have been received for the Public Works Director position.

ZONING PERMIT REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2016

Name	Address	Description
None		

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rich Lusky asked who owns the Visitors Center. He was told the Chamber of Commerce does. Council Member Owen stated the city does, the Chamber runs it.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. was made by Council Member Lannen, seconded by Council Member Owen. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

John W. Conatser, Mayor

Mary E. Corey, Deputy Clerk