

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

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

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

Citizens present were Melody Martinsen of the Choteau Acantha; Corlene Martin and Karen Horn of the Tree & Sidewalk Board; Cole Peebles of Great West Engineering; Tom Frownfelder of the Choteau Chamber/TBID; Brooke Richins of the TCDC/Playground; Steve Dogiakos of the Tourism/Economic Development Work Group/Chamber; Sandra Dogiakos; Rich Lusky and Paul Dreyer.

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 21, 2017 meeting was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Owen. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

REQUESTS TO BE OUT OF STATE

Council Member Lannen requested to be out of state March 9-14, 2017.
Council Member Owen requested to be out of state March 9-15, 2017.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

RESOLUTION NO. 815 - SUPPORT FOR WHITEFISH

Mayor Conatser read Resolution No. 815 showing support for the citizens of Whitefish against racial and ethnic hate and intolerance.

A motion to approve Resolution No. 815 was made by Council Member Lannen, seconded by Council Member Merja. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

NEW BUSINESS

PLAYGROUND UPDATE

Brooke Richins showed drawings of the proposed playground. She also spoke about the possibility of having to remove two trees. She stated that they still have about \$82,000 to raise and are working on some fundraisers.

DISCUSSION ON TA GRANT APPLICATION - COLE PEEBLES

Cole Peebles handed out maps of the proposed sidewalk and a draft of the TA (Transportation Alternatives) Application and budget. The Tree & Sidewalk board proposed a sidewalk going from the High School to 7th Street NW. He explained that this is not a grant but is a set aside fund through the federal highways administration that targets bike and walkways. He reported that all of the work would be done on the city's right of way.

Paul Dreyer suggested there be cross walks at the 5-way intersections or some kind of traffic control. Mr. Peebles replied that the intersection was looked at but at this point of the project, the sidewalk would score higher for funding. It would be better for the next phase of the project. Mr. Dreyer also discussed the option of a sidewalk going up 3rd Street NW to Main Avenue.

Steve Dogiakos asked if the city receives funding for this project, would it affect other projects in Choteau. Mr. Peebles replied that it is possible. Finance Officer Rogers stated that is a timing issue as to when the MDT will be coming through town and re-doing Main Avenue. She further stated that the Tree & Sidewalk Board will be looking at doing a sidewalk planning document for the entire city that will allow them to set priorities.

Paul Dreyer asked if the homeowners will have input on the curbs and access points into their property. Mr. Peebles stated that hopefully the design firm will take that into account when working on the design.

Council Member Owen asked if there would be a sidewalk at the high school parking lot. Mr. Peebles replied that there would.

Melody Martinsen stated that as a runner, she fully supports the project.

Paul Dreyer asked about the time frame of the project. Mr. Peebles replied that we would be looking at 2018.

VOTE ON 1ST READING ORDINANCE #312 - AMENDED FIREWORKS

Mayor Conatser explained that the only part of the ordinance being changed is the section on when fireworks can be discharged, the date of sales is not changing. The new hours would be 11:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. from July 1st through July 2nd and on the 3rd and 4th from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 a.m. the following morning.

Council Member Owen feels we need more clarification on the sale dates. Finance Officer Rogers explained that when it is codified, the only portion that will be changed is the dates of sale. The rest of the ordinance will be the same.

A motion to approve the 1st reading of Ordinance #312 with the amendment of adding the sale and use dates was made by Council Member Owen, seconded by Council Member Merja. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

CLAIMS

A motion to pay the claims for February in the amount of \$45,831.45 was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Owen. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

RESOLUTION NO. 816 - AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION IN THE SHORT-TERM INVESTMENT POOL

Finance Officer Rogers explained that investing in STIP is in our investment policy. Our resolution is old so they are requesting an updated resolution. She stated that it would be similar to our current EZ Exit cd's but the interest rate is much higher, also, the money will be safe.

A motion to approve Resolution No. 816 was made by Council Member Lannen, seconded by Council Member Crawford. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Public Works Director Maples reported that the wastewater treatment plant is operating in auto mode with the exception of the grit removal system. We have received the correct solenoid and will get it fixed. The UV system is still offline. The influent flow meter is functioning properly. One of the RAS pumps was not functioning correctly, WBC is contacting Wehr to resolve the

issue. The bacteria population is coming up slow because we had to divert the flows to the settling ponds. He stated that the transfer switch at the lift station has a bad circuit board, will be taken care of next week.

Public Works Director Maples reported that they found a break in a pipe near a manhole that we can fix without having a company come in and slip line it. They still need to film the sewer main from 7th Street SW to the plant, he estimates I/I at 85 gallons per minute. We would have to have that one fixed if it is found to be leaking.

The crew has been busy removing snow and scraping up ice trying to facilitate drainage. He is hoping the people that park on Main Avenue will move their vehicles when it snows so the plows can remove the snow.

He attended water school at the Montana Rural Water Conference the 22nd to the 24th of March. He does not have his test results yet.

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Finance Officer Rogers reported that we are at 50 percent in the streets budget, but she does not think for much longer since Public Works Director Maples will have to buy street patching supplies.

Finance Officer Rogers stated that there is a bill (HB447) in the legislature that has passed the house that would allow communities that have only one name on the ballot, the option not to have to have an election. In Choteau, it costs about \$3500 for an election. This would only be allowed after the write in period is over.

Finance Officer Rogers explained that there is a bill on the fire relief to make it more of a common-sense issue. It would require communities to hold five years of fire relief payments instead of the current 1,000 percent in reserves. The bill has passed the House so far and has the support of the firemen.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Mayor Conatser reported the he was in Helena the 1st through the 3rd of March for the Mayor's Conference. He reported that the proposed 8% gas and 7.75% diesel tax increase has passed the House and is now in the Senate. The funds would go to fund infrastructure projects. He stated that our current fuel tax allotment is \$50,759 per year for our front footages to help maintain our streets. If the bill passes, we will receive an additional \$68,788 per year. Mayor Conatser urged everyone to call to support this bill. Council Member Lannen reported that the sticking point in

the bill is electric and hybrid vehicles and how to come up with a formula so they pay their fair share.

Mayor Conatser also reported that there will be changes made in our employee health insurance. The MMIA is looking at ways to reduce the cost to the employees.

ZONING PERMIT REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2017

Name	Address	Description
Gary Dale	106 1 st Avenue SW	Garage

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rich Lusky thanked the crew for working so hard to keep the streets and alleys clear of snow.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m. was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Owen. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

John W. Conatser, Mayor

Jodi L. Rogers, Finance Officer