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City of Choteau

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OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 16, 2014 MEETING

OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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

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

Citizens present were Melody Martinsen of the Choteau Acantha; Paul Wick, Teton County Planner and Steve Gjerde, Teton County Sheriff's Office.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Conatser called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2014 meeting was made by Council Member Lannen, seconded by Council Member Merja. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

REQUESTS TO BE OUT OF STATE

Council Member Crawford requested to be out of state December 20-28, 2014; Mayor Conatser requested to be Out of State December 21-January 3, 2015; Council Member Owen requested to be out of state December 24-January 1, 2015. A motion to approve the requests was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Lannen. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON RECOMMENDATION FOR CITY JUDGE

Mayor Conatser reported that there is a letter in the council packet, written by Mayor Fifield of Fairfield and revised by Jack. Since the letter was written, he, Council Member Lannen, Mayor Fifield and Council Member Henning of Fairfield, Mayor Fleshman of Dutton, Teton County Attorney Joe Coble, County Commissioner Jim Hodgskiss and incoming Justice of the Peace Wes Myhre met last Friday. He stated that Mr. Myhre was not interested in discussing an inter-local agreement between the three communities and the county for Justice of the Peace services. He wanted to talk with the individual communities in private. Mayor Conatser further stated that he told Mr. Myhre that there was no need to set up another meeting. What he offered to the county is what we would offer to him in private. Fairfield did the same. Mr. Myhre then stated that there was no need to discuss anything further and left the meeting. Mayor Conatser explained that the county was paying 85% of full time and reduced that to 75%. He stated that Fairfield offered him a 50 percent cut and Choteau offered him a 42 percent cut. He took the number of cases per year, divided it by the \$500 he offered, it came to a little more than \$84 per citation. He further explained that since that meeting, he has spoken with Mayor Fifield discussing individuals that they thought they could bring before the Councils. We would share a judge and clerk. We would offer our city vehicle for travel, Fairfield would help defray the cost. This will bring the communities together and potentially be able to share more services. Council Member Owen asked about Dutton. Mayor Conatser replied that Dutton will be working out their own contract.

Mayor Conatser explained that hiring a City Judge requires a resolution. We are covered by the current Justice of the Peace until the end of the year. He asked Undersheriff Gjerde how long the appearance date can be placed on a ticket. He replied that for a misdemeanor it can be up to a year but generally 30 days. His concern would be for DUI's. They need to be taken care of the next day. Mayor Conatser stated that he would speak with Judge Howard about our options.

NEW BUSINESS

VOTE ON REVOLVING LOAN REFI - APPLICATION - FRIENDS 4-EVER CHILDCARE

Mayor Conatser explained that this is re-finance application to make Michelle Hensley solely responsible for the loan. A motion to approve the re-finance application from Friends 4-Ever Childcare was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Owen. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

VOTE ON PAYMENT REQUEST - 10% PAYMENT WESTECH ENGINEERING, INC

Mayor Conatser stated that it is a down payment for the pumping equipment we ordered for the new wastewater treatment plant. A motion to

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

LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT

The Law Enforcement report for November 2014 was submitted for Council's review. Undersheriff Gjerde reported that they have hired a new deputy for Choteau. He will bring him to a council meeting and introduce him. He also stated that they arrested some juveniles for the burglaries back in September.

Mayor Conatser reported that he spoke earlier with Undersheriff Gjerde about complaints of speeders down by the Mini Park. The complainant came in and thanked him for the Sheriff's Office presence.

CITY JUDGE'S REPORT

The City Judge's report for November 2014 was submitted for Council's review.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Public Works Director Hirsch reported that the crew cleaned main lines, hauled gravel, repaired the lagoon road, plowed snow, sanded, removed snow piles and sent a load of recycling. He and Levi met with Kevin Johnson of DOWL HKM today. The wastewater treatment plant is now called the Water Resource Recovery Facility.

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Mayor Conatser reported that our auditor will be here on Thursday.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Council Member Merja asked if the tax abatement is usually applied for when the project is started or after the project is done. Mayor Conatser replied that it can be up to any point in the process and up to one year after completion of the project.

Mayor Conatser reported that he and Council Member Crawford attended a meeting in Great Falls put on by the MMIA and the Local Government Center last week.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Wick reported that some of the structures in Choteau are anywhere from half a block to two blocks off of where they are supposed to be according to mapping. He has asked to see how they show up on the dispatchers map but he has not been able to look at it yet. He reported that he collected three different data bases and gave them to a GIS expert. He put them all together and came up with 118 houses that did not match up to their addresses. He explained that he has been in contact with Sherwin Smith and they have worked out a four stage plan for addressing. The first being a physical inventory of all the structures in town. Does the structure have a number and does it match the data list. Then he, Mark Corte and Sherwin Smith will attempt to fix the 118 problems. The next stop would be to have the scouts post a note on any structure that does not have a number on it. Then there would be communication with the property owner.

Paul Wick stated that he is portraying this to the Teton County Commissioners that there should be a chip set aside for doing this kind of work within the city limits, basically gratis. The funding for the project is from a grant he wrote for GIS work and thought it should be practical work rather than just an exercise. The grant will be paying the contractor. They expect to have a data layer that they will be able to manipulate. He feels the City should contact the League of Cities and Towns to see how other communities are dealing with the E911 and addressing as well as funding for it. Mayor Conatser reported that he can put the question out on the Mayor's List Serve and get feedback from Mayors across the state. Melody Martinsen asked if the Post Office will be notified of the new addresses. The Acantha gets charged more to mail a paper with an incorrect address. Paul replied that it is a possibility but thinks they might work off the Department of Revenues data base.

Melody Martinsen stated that at the last school board meeting, the board unanimously decided to send a letter to the county supporting the tax abatement request for the Stage Stop Inn.

Melody Martinsen reported that a runner was bitten by a dog on 7th Street NW a few weeks ago in the middle of the day. She wants to encourage the City, City Attorney and Law Enforcement to have the owner put up a sturdy fence around the yard. Mayor Conatser replied that he visited with City Attorney Bieler this morning. He also talked to the owner of the dog and Joe Coble. The dog was quarantined for a while, vaccinated and is back in town. The owner has stated they are taking the dog to Simms in the daytime and bringing him back at night. Mayor Conatser stated that if the dog is out again, action will be taken that day. It will not be tolerated.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:08 p.m. was made by Council Member Merja, seconded by Council Member Lannen. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

John W. Conatser, Mayor

Mary E. Corey, Deputy Clerk

