

City of Choteau

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 06, 2024 MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

This meeting was held at City Hall and via ZOOM.COM.

Council Present: Mayor Chris Hindoien, Council Member Stewart Merja (Zoom), Council Member Sara Coccoli, Council Member Heather McCartney-Duty and Council Member Polly Cunningham

Staff Present: Finance Officer Tom Frownfelder, Jerry Grebenc with Great West Engineering (Zoom)

Citizens Present: Brian Colesworthy

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hindoien called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2024, council meeting was made by Council Member McCartney-Duty; Council Member Merja seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

REQUESTS TO BE OUT OF STATE

Council Member Cunningham will be out of state and miss the meetings on February 20, and March 05, but will try to Zoom the meetings.

NEW BUSINESS

VOTE ON Res. No. 915 – Calling for Election for Local Government Review

Section 9, Article XI of the Constitution of the State of Montana requires that each unit of local government shall conduct an election once every ten years to determine whether the local government will undertake a local government review procedure. Res. No. 915 calls for an election on the question of conducting a local government review and electing a study commission to be held at the primary election on June 4, 2024. The voters will select either For or Against establishment and funding, not to exceed \$17,000 of a local government study

commission consisting of five members to examine the government of the City of Choteau and submit recommendations on the government. A motion to pass Res. No. 915 was made by Council Member Merja; seconded by Council Member McCartney-Duty. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

VOTE ON Res. No. 916 – Intent to Adopt Resolution for City Annexation Service Plan

With the City processing its own planning, rather than utilizing the County, we are required to have certain processes in place. Montana Code Annotated 7-2-47 lays out the requirements for the adoption of an Annexation Service Plan. The City will post for a public hearing to pass the Annexation Service Plan on February 20th, 2024. A motion to pass Res. No. 916 was made by Council Member Merja; seconded by Council Member Cunningham. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

VOTE ON Res. No. 917 – Surplus Property Authorized Representatives

The State Surplus Property Program has requested an updated resolution with authorized representatives. The resolution authorizes Colin Lightner, Tom Frownfelder and Chris Hindoien as authorized representatives to purchase through the state surplus program. A motion to approve Res. No. 917 was made by Council Member Coccoli; seconded by Council Member McCartney-Duty. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON INVESTIGATION OF POTENTIAL FLOODPLAIN VIOLATIONS

It has come to our attention that there are potential floodplain violations on three different properties. These properties are located in floodplain A, the 100-year flood zone, and have been bringing in fill to increase the elevation of the property. Initial investigations show the one or more of the locations may have not applied for proper floodplain permits. Jerry Grebenc, our floodplain administrator from Great West Engineering, explained the steps that we should take. First, we should do a site investigation. Second, if there is a violation, we send notice and corrective steps to the property owner. If they do not comply, then we will take legal action.

Jerry suggested that should take action because the DEQ/DNRC is aware of the issues, and we should try to keep a good working relationship with them. It was also discussed that even though the three properties will potentially come out of the floodplain with the new mapping being discussed, the changes to the maps are years out and can't be used as a current exclusion. Council Member McCartney-Duty said that she thinks we should follow the rules and do right. Mayor Hindoien suggested we move forward with an investigation. Finance Office Frownfelder

explained that we were aware of the fill being placed, but didn't realize the proper process for permitting, as we have just taken this on after separation from the County.

A motion to initiate investigation on the possible violations was made by Council Member McCartney-Duty; seconded by Council Member Merja. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

VOTE ON RECCOMENDATION FOR CAPA BOARD APPOINTMENT – Reese Hunter

A board position for the Choteau Area Port Authority has been open since April 2023. The CAPA Board has found a replacement and is recommending Reese Hunter for the position. A motion to accept the recommendation was made by Council Member Coccoli; seconded by Council Member Merja. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

VOTE ON GRANT APPLICATION FOR TREE AND SIDEWALK BOARD

The tree and sidewalk board would like to apply for a grant to the DNRC Urban and Community Forestry program. The grant is focused on tree removal and urban revitalization. The board would like to remove and trim the dying trees, add new trees, and look at the sidewalks that are affected by tree roots. They plan to ask for up to 50k with a possible 3 to 1 match. The grant application is due by February 16th, 2024. A motion to approve the tree board to apply for the grant was made by Council Member Merja; seconded by Council Member Cunningham. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

CLAIMS

A motion to approve additional claims for January 2024, check #22325 – 22354 for a total of \$197,517.66 was made by Council Member Coccoli; Council Member Merja seconded the motion. The motion passed with all those in attendance voting aye.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Hindoien announced a Proclamation for Arbor Day; to be celebrated with a tree planting on April 26, 2024.

Council Member McCartney-Duty

- She commented on the recent public discussion on animal control. They are making headway with comments from the public on what they would like to see happen with dogs and other animals. There will be a second meeting in mid-March.

Council Member Coccoli:

- She agreed that the animal control meeting went well. She would like to revisit discussions on fines and the kind of complaints that we should be focusing on.
- She gave thanks to the City Crew for keeping streets clean during the cold snowy days.

Mayor Hindoién

- He read a letter from Alluvion Health stating there has been a change in their administration, but will continue to commit to serving Choteau with their services.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Brian Colesworthy asked if the public works crew could spread some sand on the west side of the 4-way, as it is slippery.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:11 pm

Chris Hindoién, Mayor

Tom Frownfelder, Finance Officer