

City of Choteau

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 19th, 2023 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, Council Member Sara Coccoli, Council Member Heather McCartney-Duty and Council Member Steve Howard

Staff Present: Finance Officer Tom Frownfelder, Deputy Clerk Henry, Public Works Director Maples

Citizens Present: Brian Colesworthy (Teton County), Bill and Polly Cunningham, Melody Martinsen (Acantha)

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the December 05, 2023, council meeting was made by Council Member Coccoli, Council Member McCartney-Duty seconded the motion. Council Member McCartney-Duty noticed a correction on the second page under Mayor comments, to strike the word “not” in the third bullet point. The amended motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

REQUESTS TO BE OUT OF STATE

None

NEW BUSINESS

VOTE ON APPROVAL OF LAND PURCHASE FOR NEW WELL SITE, RES. NO. 913

As part of the current water project, the city is looking for a backup water well. There is a current buy-sell agreement that we are wanting to approve. After reviewing the agreement with the city attorney there are a few changes to make to the agreement before accepting it. The Mayor requested we take no action on this agenda item at this time. A motion to table this item

was made by Council Member McCartney-Duty, seconded by Council Member Merja. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

VOTE ON APPROVAL OF NEW ZONING BOARD MEMBERS, PHYLLIS BECHTOLD AND BILL HODGSKISS

To complete the renewal of the zoning board members, Mayor Hindoien is recommending new members Phyllis Bechtold and Bill Hodgskiss to replace previous members Carol Cole and Al Kostelnik. A motion to approve the new zoning board members was made by Council Member Coccoli, with a second by Council Member McCartney-Duty. Motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

OATH OF OFFICE FOR NEW/RENEWING COUNCIL MEMBERS

As of January 1, 2024, we are renewing terms for Sarah Coccoli, and starting new terms for Heather McCartney-Duty and Polly Cunningham. (Steve Howards term is ending.) Mayor Hindoien swore the members into office, and they signed oaths of office to be recorded at the Teton County Clerk's office.

ACCEPT RESIGNATION OF PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR MIKE MAPLES

Mike Maples has submitted his resignation, with his last day worked to be January 31, 2024. He voiced his pleasure working for the City, but is moving to Red Lodge. The Mayor and Council all expressed their appreciation for the work he has done. A motion to accept the resignation was made by Council Member Merja, with a second from Council Member Howard. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

VOTE ON MAYOR'S RECCOMENDATION OF NEW PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR COLIN LIGHTNER

Outgoing Public Works Director Maples made a recommendation to Mayor Hindoien to promote employee Colin Lightner to the Director position. Mayor Hindoien recommended to the Council that we appoint public works employee, Colin Lightner, to the Public Works Director position starting January 1, 2024, and to start training with Public Works Director Maples until his last day. A motion to accept the recommendation was made by Council Member Howard, with a second by Council Member Coccoli. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye. We are currently advertising for a replacement public works employee to replace the new vacancy.

CLAIMS

A motion to approve additional claims for December 2023, check #22248 – 22282 for a total of \$263,617.79 was made by Council Member Merja, Council Member Howard seconded the motion. The motion passed with all those in attendance voting aye.

REPORTS

Reports were received for Law Enforcement, City Judge, Public Works Director, Finance Officer, and Zoning/Building Permits. See the council packet for printed reports.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Merja:

- None.

Council Member McCartney-Duty

- Despite rising energy costs, she is impressed by the display of Christmas lights and house decorations.
- The school holiday concerts are going well and seem to be well attended.

Council Member Howard:

- There is an upcoming Incident Command System training January 19 – 21, 2024, that will be hosted here in Choteau.

Council Member Coccoli:

- None.

Mayor Hindoien

- The City is still receiving dog complaints. He is still planning on having a public meeting some time in January or February to discuss options going forward.
- Due to budget shortfalls at the Teton County Choteau Public Library, the City has offered to help by sending the Utility Billing Clerk Jamison to work at the library on Tuesday and Wednesday from Noon to 5pm, for the next 10 to 12 weeks. This is only a temporary agreement until the library can adjust their budget and hire a new director.
- The Lewis and Clark Brewery has cancelled their summer music event that was to be held in Choteau in August. This is only due to their own issues with finding bands.
- He spoke about a recent meeting he has with the DNRC, Jerry Grebenc from Great West Engineering, and others concerning the upcoming Floodplain changes. Mayor Hindoien is working with Choteau residents to sort through hydrology data to confirm the findings of the DNRC. There will be public meetings possibly late in January, 2024.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Melody Martinsen inquired about this years property tax payments received. She was curious if they had been coming in quickly, as it seems like the county hasn't had any protests so far. Finance Officer Frownfelder said that we have received a large payment already and hasn't heard of any issues with residents protesting the recent increase in taxes.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:01 pm

Chris Hindoién, Mayor

Tom Frownfelder, Finance Officer