

City of Choteau

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 05th, 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, and Council Member Steve Howard. Council Member Heather McCartney-Duty was excused.

Staff Present: Finance Officer Tom Frownfelder

Citizens Present: Brian Colesworthy (Teton County), Phyllis Bechtold, Rick Lusky, Dru Hanson (Lions Club)

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 November 21st, 2023, council meeting was made by Council Member Merja, Council Member Coccoli seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

REQUESTS TO BE OUT OF STATE

Council Member Howard will be out of state December 15 – 18, 2023.

NEW BUSINESS

There have been previous discussions on the possibility of adding street lighting around parts of Choteau. We have been in discussions with Northwestern Energy, and they have come up with some options. In a separate meeting Jess Grenager from NW Energy presented us with their suggestions for the NW, SW and NE sections of town. Their plans include removing some existing lighting and replacing them with additional lighting place in more strategic locations. The number of lights would approximately double in each section. Two concerns are whether or not all homeowners will want the additional lighting due to added brightness and light pollution, and if they would like to pay for the increased electricity costs. The monthly electricity costs for each section almost quadruples. We would have to potentially increase the street lighting

assessment from \$0.40 per foot to \$0.60 or \$0.80 per foot. Mayor Hindoien plans on having additional public meetings concerning this topic before any decisions will be made.

CLAIMS

A motion to approve additional claims for November 2023, check #22229 – 22247 for a total of \$81,187.03 was made by Council Member Merja, Council Member Coccoli seconded the motion. The motion passed with all those in attendance voting aye. Council Member Merja inquired about the payment made for the pool filters and if this is a cost for the City. Finance Officer Frownfelder explained the City is a passthrough for the LWCF Grant and will be reimbursed from the grant and Lions Club for the expense.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Merja:

- He expressed his delight in the success of the Christmas Stroll. He thought it was well attended and people seemed to be having fun.
- He has been working with Terah Henry on trying to revive the plans for a skate park in Choteau.

Council Member Howard:

- He had an interesting experience when he was on a work call at a home in Choteau. He had left his truck doors open, and there were chickens in his vehicle when he returned. Though amusing, this only reiterates our issue with the public not taking care of their animals.

Council Member Coccoli:

- She expressed her concern for safety during the parade of lights when they throw candy from the floats, it is a hazard for the children.

Mayor Hindoien

- He announced that we received the resignation of Public Works Director Mike Maples. He will work until the end of January 2024 and has plans to move to Red Lodge, MT.
- We mailed our petition and letters to FEMA today concerning the changes in the Floodplain. He briefly talked about Musselshell County and their troubles they recently had when dealing with FEMA and the floodplain.
- He announced that City Hall is ~~not~~ back to being open from 8am to 5pm, and is open during the lunch hour.
- He talked about the possibility of creating an additional Facebook page that would just be for public works announcements, different than our normal Facebook page that has more posts about events and regular happenings around the city.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dru Hanson, representing the Lions Club, gave a review of the almost complete swimming pool and tennis courts improvements. The Lions Club received a grant from the LWCF of approximately \$250,000. This was to replace the boiler and filters at the swimming pool, and replace the entire cement grounds for the tennis court. The project should be complete this spring as they anticipate striping and final surface treatment of the tennis courts, and final installation of the new pool filters. There will be a memorial sign installed for donations received. There will also be a sign installed for the LWCF grant.

Brian Colesworthy briefly spoke about the Pint Night put on by the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation. They had a successful night, and plan on having additional events, maybe quarterly.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:04 pm

Chris Hindoen, Mayor

Tom Frownfelder, Finance Officer