

City of Choteau

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 02, 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, Council Member Sara Coccoli, Council Member Heather McCartney-Duty and Council Member Polly Cunningham

Staff Present: Finance Officer Tom Frownfelder

Citizens Present: Melody Martinsen (Acantha), Chad White, Yvonne Giesel, Crystal and Owen DeBruycker, Phyllis Bechtold, Ali Marschner

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

REQUESTS TO BE OUT OF STATE

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

VOTE ON NEW WELL SITE PURCHASE

This item was tabled at the last meeting. Mayor Hindoien explained that the updated Buy/Sell Agreement is being completed, and the Title Company is working on closing paperwork and is scheduled to close on January 11th. We will keep this on the table until the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

VOTE ON COUNCIL PRESIDENT

With a new two-year session starting, we will vote on Council President. A motion to instate Council Member Merja as council president was made by Council Member Coccoli, Council Member McCartney-Duty seconded the motion. The motion passed with all those in attendance voting aye.

POSSIBLE VOTE ON UPDATING CHECKING ACCOUNT SIGNATURES

Due to Council Member Merja continuing as Council President, there are not changes to the checking account signature card.

CLAIMS

A motion to approve additional claims for December 2023, check #22283 – 22298 for a total of \$17,837.35 was made by Council Member Merja, Council Member Cunningham seconded the motion. The motion passed with all those in attendance voting aye.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Correspondence: Mayor Hindoien mentioned to the Council that he included letters in their packets. One from Mrs. Karla Doncaster and one from Lynn Kimbrough of FEMA. These letters are in the Council Packet for review upon request.

Council Member Merja

- The Choteau Wrestling Classic, and the Choteau Speech and Drama State Tournament, are coming in the next few weeks. Each event brings approximately 800 people to town, which greatly benefits our businesses.

Council Member McCartney-Duty

- She has been doing some research, and it seems all communities, big and small, have issues with animal control. It seems that there are no one-fits-all solutions.
- She is wondering if the public works department can use their GIS mapping system to track spending and projects in the different neighborhoods and parts of town. This information can be useful for projects and grants.

Council Member Cunningham

- She inquired about the plan to resurface 3rd St NE, as the temporary fix from the water project is starting to deteriorate. Mayor Hindoien explained that it will spring before we can fully chip-seal the roads in the NE, but will ask the public works department if they can re-compact the portions of the road that are heavily used.
- She briefly talked about the Teton County Choteau Library. They are working on their budget short-fall and staffing replacement. They hope to have all resolved soon.

Council Member Coccoli:

- None.

Mayor Hindoien

- He announced that Deputy Clerk Henry was left the City's employment as of 12/28/23. He also announced that we have made an offer for a new public works department maintenance worker who should be starting in about two weeks.
- He talked about a new CDL program for government employees that is easier and cheaper for employees to get their license. We will use this program to help all public works employees to get their license over the next year.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Crystal and Owen DeBruycker spoke on their own behalf. They are purchasing a parcel of land on the west side of the City Limits, just southwest of the Benefis Hospital. They expressed their interest in annexing this piece of property into the City, as they plan to build a house. They will continue to communicate with our office as they complete the purchase of the land.

Ali Marschner read that the City is planning on creating a secondary Facebook page that focuses on alerts rather than day to day chatter. She was wondering if there would be Bear alerts on this page. Mayor Hindoien said that once the page is active, that is something that they could use the page for. She also asked about the timeline on Dog Ordinance changes. Mayor Hindoien is planning on having public meetings at the end of January or beginning of February. She also asked about the addition of more streetlights, which will also be discussed in February.

Melody, from the Chateau Acantha, briefly spoke about them winning their case against Governor Gianforte and the Advisory Council concerning privacy and the public right to know during interviews with the 9th Judicial District applicants, who asserted their right to privacy.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:56 pm

Chris Hindoien, Mayor

Tom Frownfelder, Finance Officer