

City of Choteau

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE MARCH 05, 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 Heather McCartney-Duty and Council Member Sara Coccoli. Council Member Polly Cunningham was excused.

Staff Present: Finance Officer Tom Frownfelder, Public Works Director Colin Lightner.

Citizens Present: Brian Colesworthy, Rich Lusky, Phyllis Bechtold, Melody Martinsen (Acantha), Jenny Lee, Al Wiseman, Elaine Wiseman.

CALL TO ORDER

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

PUBLIC HEARING – HOUSE BILL 355

The Public Hearing opened at 5:33pm.

The State-Local Infrastructure Partnership Program, established through House Bill 355 during the 2023 legislative session, is a state-funded initiative designed to assist cities and towns in financing the maintenance and repair of local government facilities through collaborative efforts. Local governments are required to contribute a cash match to participate in this partnership.

Starting from July 1, 2023, for the biennium, a total of \$20 million is allocated from the general fund to the Montana Department of Commerce ("Commerce"). These grants will be awarded in accordance with the provisions of HB 355, ensuring compliance with eligible projects recommended by the legislative bodies of each city or town. The Department of Commerce requests that you make reasonable efforts to submit completed applications by March 30th. [LEARN MORE.](#)

Eligible Projects

- Drinking water systems-Wastewater treatment systems
- Fire suppression systems (if independent of a drinking water system)
- Streets
- Roads

- Bridges
- Landfills
- Streetlights
- Airports
- Public grounds and buildings
- Projects that expand existing water and wastewater treatment plants that are being operated at 90% of design capacity or greater

There was no public comment.

The Public Hearing was closed at 5:36pm.

PUBLIC HEARING – REVIEW ANNEXATION REQUESTS: JENNY LEE, KURT JOHNSON AND NEW CITY WELL SITE

The Zoning Board previously met and has recommended annexation of two properties. The first is for Jenny Lee (1 Sherman Lane), and the second is for the new property purchased by the City of Choteau for the new well site at 6th Ave NE. The third location for Kurt Johnson is still being reviewed and will be discussed at a later date.

Due to complications with installing water line services to Jenny Lee, she installed a well. It was explained that in the future, we may be extending water mains in that area, and she would be welcome to connect at that time. If her well was to fail, she would be required to connect to water if readily available.

There was not public comment.

The Public Hearing opened at 5:36pm.

The Public Hearing was closed at 5:40pm.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 20, 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 Coccoli will be out of state March 19, but will try to Zoom the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

VOTE ON Res. No. 920 – HOUSE BILL 355

A motion to adopt Res. No. 920 was made by Council Member Coccoli; seconded by Council Member McCartney-Duty. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

VOTE ON Res. No. 921 – ANNEXATION OF JENNY LEE PROPERTY

A motion to adopt Res. No. 921 to annex the property for Jenny Lee 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. 922 – ANNEXATION OF NEW WELL SITE PROPERTY

A motion to adopt Res. No. 922 to annex the property for the City of Choteau well site was made by Council Member McCartney-Duty; seconded by Council Member Merja. The motion passed with all in attendance voting aye.

CLAIMS

A motion to approve additional claims for February 2024, check #22371 – 22394 for a total of \$52,234.29 was made by Council Member Merja; seconded by Council Member Coccoli. The motion passed with all those in attendance voting aye.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Hindoien announced that there is correspondence that he distributed among the council members that he has available in his correspondence file for review upon request.

Council Member McCartney-Duty

- She is looking forward to the animal control meeting tomorrow.

Council Member Coccoli:

- March 9th is the Soroptimist Spring Fling event.
- She is excited for the new businesses in town, including LA Mia Cucina, and The Western Feed Corral.
- There is a new highway patrolman that lives in Choteau.

Mayor Hindoien

- He continues to receive complaints, including garbage and animals. He is concerned about the garbage complaint as it comes from a person who lives out of City Limits. He would like to review how we handle and charge garbage customers that live out of City Limits at a future meeting.
- We are currently taking applications for the open Deputy Clerk position.
- There are upcoming zoning meetings to review zoning regulations.
- Great West Engineering will be here tomorrow to review the bid plans for the new well.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Brian Colesworthy explained that the Choteau Area Port Authority will be meeting at City Hall on the 12th at noon to discuss their application for a grant with Montana Tourism. The Pilot Community Tourism Grant Program (PCTGP) is a state-funded opportunity authorized by the 2023 Montana Legislature’s enactment of Senate Bill 540. Building tourism in a manageable, sustainable way can stimulate and diversify Montana’s local economy, protect and enhance local resources, and foster community pride without compromising the qualities that make local communities so special. The purpose of the PCTGP is to elevate communities across the state, increase their economic vibrancy by improving their appeal as visitor destinations, and improve their resilience as a destination by enhancing and diversifying tourism assets and infrastructure. Through this program, communities can cultivate regional visions, identify strategies to harness the power of tourism, and develop unique experiences in tourism.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 pm

Chris Hindoien, Mayor

Tom Frownfelder, Finance Officer