

**\*\* Page 1\*\* A SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
CITY OF THREE FORKS, MONTANA, APRIL 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2025**

**APRIL 8<sup>TH</sup>, 2025,** The Three Forks City Council met at the Three Forks Temporary location in the "Montana Room" of the Three Forks Community Library, 607 S. Main Street and via Zoom. (Zoom is a virtual meeting tool which the City began using due to COVID-19 and social distancing guidelines and continues to use to encourage participation from the safety of one's home.) The meeting was chaired by Mayor Johnston, who called the meeting to order at 6:06 P.M.

**ROLL CALL:** City Council members George Chancellor, (Warren) Garret Buchanan, Ed Tharp, Gene Townsend, Roxi McDermott, and Reagan Hooton were present. City Treasurer Kelly Smith and City Clerk Crystal Turner were also present at the meeting.

The record reflected a quorum with the attendance of six (6) Council members and the meeting was held.

The **Pledge of Allegiance** to the American Flag was led by Mayor Johnston. Mayor Johnston reminded the audience that this meeting was audio and video recorded and may be streamed via Zoom and on our Facebook page.

**GUESTS:** Gloria Howland

**PUBLIC COMMENTS/CONCERNS (For items not on the agenda)**

There were no public comments on items not on the agenda.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. City Claims Paid due to Timeliness on 3/27/2025 Totaling \$86,437.65
- b. City Claim Paid due to Timeliness on 3/31/2025 to Mail Utility Bills Totaling \$204.22
- c. City Claims to be Paid
- d. Three Forks Rodeo Arena Board Claims to be Paid
- e. Council Minutes of 2/11/2025 & 3/11/25 & 3/14/25
- f. Zoning and Planning Board Minutes 2/20/2025
- g. Draw #28 for the Water Project Totaling \$21,847.70 all from ARPA Local Fiscal Recovery (LFR) Funding
- h. Draw #2 for City Hall from State-Local Infrastructure Partnership Act (HB355) in the amount of \$12,544.23
- i. Service Agreement with Red Eye Rodeo for Roughstock, Timed Events, Goats, Pickup Men, Bullfighters for the Three Forks Rodeo Arena's Junior & High School Rodeo
- j. Service Agreement with Formescent Architects for Drawings of Fire Hall Addition (Up to \$6,500 + hourly rates)
- k. Change Order to T and T Electrical Service Agreement for Additional Electric Expenses at City Hall (\$8,400)

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**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**Public Hearing and Decision on a Resolution Closing Kansas Street on Specific Dates due to Reservations at the Three Forks Rodeo Arena**

Mayor Johnston read the resolution into the record, noting it would be #437-2025.

Councilman Chancellor moved to approve Resolution #437-2025, a resolution of the Three Forks City Council closing Kansas Street on specific dates due to reservations at the Three Forks Rodeo Arena, and any future dates reserved for large events which will be noticed on the Three Forks Rodeo and City of Three Forks' websites and Facebook pages. Councilman Tharp seconded the motion.

There were no Council questions or public comment.

**Motion Passed Unanimously.**

**REPORT OF OFFICERS**

City Treasurer Kelly Smith reported an update to last month's report of estimated health insurance rates from MMIA. "They usually are on the lower end of their estimate, but this year they are increasing at the high end of their prediction, a full 12.2%. Everything is going up, so because of that I would like to schedule a meeting with the Water and Sewer Committee (Ed Tharp, Garret Buchanan and Gene Townsend) to discuss raising water and sewer rates," Kelly said. Mayor Johnston said he would like to attend as well. The Committee and Mayor agreed on Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup> at 6PM at the original City Hall.

City Clerk Crystal Turner reported an update to a few months's ago letter from the City Council to the Gallatin County Commissioners and Montana Department of Transportation requesting a reduction in speed limit ahead of John Q. Adams Milwaukee Railroad Park. "The County Commission agreed with the City's request, and have forwarded the request on to MDT who they do not believe will take long to get an answer back to us," she said.

Crystal also reported that she forwarded an email from the Montana League of Cities and Towns training summits. She distributed a printed copy to Ed Tharp. She relayed that if anyone wished to attend to let her or Kelly know so they could schedule their attendance.

**REPORTS FROM COUNCIL COMMITTEES (if any)**

Reagan Hooton said and Gene Townsend chatted about planting two blue spruce trees at the "Welcome to Three Forks" sign in John Q. Adams Milwaukee Railroad Park with the Arbor Day grant funds. Gene Townsend added that Bill Wilson and Steve Johnston also requested and that they have attempted to plant grass along Main Street at this same park, but the Farmer's Market vendors park there (even though there are No Parking

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signs) and unload, or reload after the event and it has deteriorated the grass. "Steve would prefer to just gravel it," Gene said.

Also, there will be a Parks and Trails Cleanup in recognition of Earth Day on 4/24/2025 at 1PM. "We will meet at City Hall and split up from there," Crystal informed everyone. Garret, George and Randy will attend. Roxi said she and Melissa (from the bank) would also come. Crystal added that Hollowtop Heating and Cooling said their staff would help as well.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Flood Mitigation Project Update**

Kelly Smith said she will give the bad news first, then the good news, and she reported the City received its letter from the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is starting the process of adopting the draft maps. "This means within six months or so, the maps will be approved. So unfortunately, that will be before the mitigation project is complete and the west part of town will go in the floodway. You may hear from very upset citizens," Kelly stressed. "Also on March 14, we heard from the State DES that it was unsure, due to the federal government's hold on grants, if the City would be receiving its mitigation grant at all. The feds said they would be doing a manual review of all FEMA grants and there would be no draws because of that. However, on April 4, DES told us that BRIC will not be funded, but FMA (which is what the City applied for) was staying in place. DES said to go ahead and start processing draws, but the return may be slow. We don't have that in writing yet," she said. "We have to complete the project before FEMA will reevaluate the maps and remove the properties designated in the floodway. I would guess it will take until late 2026," she added.

Gene Townsend asked if those properties being designated in the floodway, after our project they would be removed? Kelly replied, "It is called a Conditional Letter of Map Revision. Right now if you build house of the floodplain you ask FEMA to accept it and say you are out. This is starting at the beginning of the project we would submit our plan, and hopefully they approve it prior to us spending the money. The plan must be 60% complete before we can submit that to FEMA. We do not know how long it will take FEMA to review that plan though, in order to acknowledge that those properties will be removed from the floodway. But during that time, no building will be allowed," she explained.

Mayor Johnston asked if the properties designated in the floodway would still have to obtain elevation certificates to rebuild after mitigation project goes through. Kelly said no, those properties will not need elevation certificates anymore to build, they will just need a zoning permit. "The east side of town will still have the Madison Floodplain to deal with, but all of town will be out of the Jefferson Floodplain," she

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added. Kelly also said that the mitigation project, once complete, should drop the base flood for the east side of town too and Great West Engineering is mapping that separately, so it should help those on the east side as well. Mayor Johnston asked about the multi-family home on pillars that is to be built on E. Neal Street, "Will it still have to be built on pillars?" Kelly replied that they will have to adhere to the new maps.

**Water Project**

Mayor Johnston reported he signed the Notice to Proceed so that Emerine will begin the distribution line project next week. "This is replacing the old water mains," he reminded the Council. "We also will have the new well hooked up," he added. Kelly supplemented this information by stating the City must spend its ARPA funds by the end of the year, so the new well at the tank will be converted to a production well, and a new well to be drilled in the southeast region is all scheduled to be complete before the end of 2025.

**NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS/CONCERNS (For items not on the agenda)**

There were no public comments on items not on the agenda.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mayor Johnston wanted to remind all of the Earth Day celebration and cleanup day that will be on April 24<sup>th</sup> at 1PM at City Hall.

Gene Townsend announced he was successful in the Recreation Trials grant for \$100,000 which will be spent on trail maintenance, and he received notice he was unsuccessful on the Trail Stewardship grant. "I am still waiting to hear about the AARP grant. I went last week and spoke before the Open Lands Board for an open space grant also in the amount of \$100,000," Gene reported. Gloria Howland asked what maintenance work would be completed. Gene replied that crack seal and seal coating on the section out to the Jefferson River and along Frontage Road, and also replacing some asphalt on Montana Street. There will be an overlap project on the oldest trail which starts on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue East, to fill in those thicker cracks. He added that if there is enough money, he will also redo the section leaving the School. Last, Gene said he has a couple volunteers lined up to sand and stain the gazebo in Bellach Park.

Gene provided a quick update on the sink hole area near "Buddy's bench" on the trail, which may include the culvert actually caving in as well. We are awaiting final locates before repairs to this section can be made.

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Reagan Hooton asked who pays for those repairs. Gene replied the Trails fund does.

Ed Tharp announced he attended the Chamber of Commerce dinner and said there were lots of attendees, they all had a good time and there were lots of silent auction items sold. Roxi McDermott added the Chamber garnered just over \$12,000 from those silent auction items.

The Mayor asked about the status of the new Historical Society building at Milwaukee Railroad Park. Gene answered it is for storage as they rotate displays, but also for maintenance equipment.

The next meeting will be on May 13, 2025, and will have the following items:

- First Reading of an Ordinance Adding the Southeast Zoning District to the Zoning Code
- First Reading of an Ordinance Adding a Landscaping Chapter to the Zoning Code
- Possibly the resolution to adopt Impact Fees

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilwoman McDermott, seconded by Councilman Tharp. The meeting was adjourned without a vote taken by the Mayor's gavel at 6:52P.M.

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Randy Johnston, Mayor

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Kelly Smith, Deputy City Clerk