

**** Page 1** A SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF THREE FORKS, MONTANA, JUNE 25TH, 2024**

JUNE 25TH, 2024, The Three Forks City Council met at the Three Forks City Hall (Council Chambers), 206 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 presided over by Mayor Johnston. Mayor Johnston called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL: City Council members George Chancellor, Gene Townsend, (Warren) Garret Buchanan, Ed Tharp, Roxi McDermott, and Reagan Hooton. City Treasurer Kelly Smith and City Clerk Crystal Turner were present at City Hall. City Engineer Jessica Salo and Planner Jerry Grebenc (both of Great West Engineering) attended via Zoom.

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 this meeting was audio and video recorded and may be streamed via Zoom and on our Facebook page. The Mayor also reminded all to familiarize themselves with the policy of conduct for this public meeting on the back of their agenda.

GUESTS: Gloria Howland

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

There was no public comment for items not on the agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Johnston read the Consent Agenda into the record as follows:

- a. City Claims to be Paid
- b. Three Forks Rodeo Arena Board Claims to be Paid
- c. Zoning and Planning Board Minutes 5/16/2024
- d. Three Forks Rodeo Arena Board's Recommendation to Enter into Contract for Specialty Act Performed by Audrey Snellman and Olivia Leininger During 7/19 & 7/20/2024 Rodeo (\$800 to each performer)
- e. Three Forks Rodeo Arena Board's Recommendation to Enter into Contract for ATM Machines and Wi-Fi Provided by Ascent Technical Services, LLC During 7/19 & 7/20/2024 Rodeo (\$500)

Crystal Turner said Item C should be pulled because the Zoning & Planning Board did not have time to approve them.

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Councilman Gene Townsend moved to approve the Consent Agenda with Item C being pulled and moved to the July 9th meeting. Councilman Buchanan seconded the motion.

Motion Passed Unanimously.

Gene Townsend asked the Mayor for a special point of order, which was granted. "At the last meeting I said something about inebriated sailors when referring to how the VFW spent its funds. That was a poor choice of words and I apologize for that and if I offended anyone," Gene said.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public Hearing, Comment and Input on Working Draft of Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)

Jerry Grebenc said the one section which is not filled in is the highest priority section. Jerry explained, "It's common practice to have the local governing agency pick its top priorities, and these may not line up with the priorities by sections laid out within the document." Mayor Johnston directed the Council to turn to pages 56 and 57 to see the list of overall projects. Garret Buchanan said he would be happy to discuss this in *bite size* sections, but asked if the Mayor would rather have each Council member state what their priority would be. Per the Mayor's request, Kelly Smith informed the Council that the City was awarded a \$40,000 grant from MCEP-ARPA to conduct a wastewater preliminary engineering report (PER). "The City also has been granted a \$15,000 RRGL grant, so the City's match requirement would be \$25,000 for that PER project." Garret Buchanan said he feels that should be something higher up the list then, and Reagan Hooton agreed to take advantage of the free money. Mayor Johnston said Roxi McDermott had brought up the sludge removal being important and asked Jessica Salo if that would fall under the Wastewater PER. Jessica said, "Absolutely, and it can also include a lot of the little projects the City wants to improve upon." Garret questioned if the PER is the first step towards picking a project and applying for funding to fix some of those projects? Jessica said yes, the PER is the first step to identify the critical needs, the less critical needs, and then let the Council choose which one to do first.

Reagan Hooton said she also thinks another Water PER is needed. "The water main replacements are a big project." Kelly Smith asked Jessica when the last Water PER was done. Jessica answered it was completed in 2020 and has had minor updates to it, and yes the old cast iron water mains should be replaced but the last PER found that supply was the biggest concern and that is why the current Water Project is to drill new wells. Mayor Johnston said the main going down Main Street was installed in 1935 and it would be a big project to replace since it [Main Street] is a state highway. He then asked about the lead service lines. Crystal Turner said the lead/copper inventory has been completed but it has not been sent to DEQ yet. Jessica explained once you submit it, the City can

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apply for funding to replace the lead service lines on private property as well. "I forgot to include that in the CIP," she said. Jessica said she will add that in, with what inventory we know so far and an estimated timeline.

Reagan asked about transportation flow at the School, "Is that what is going on now?" Crystal explained that she, Mayor Johnston and Sgt. Doonan have fielded a lot of safety complaints regarding parents dropping off in the middle of the street, or on the opposite side of the street with kids running through traffic. "It's just been a highly discussed topic with the School administration, the Sheriff, and city staff in order to find a solution to improve the flow. Now that the School is redoing its parking lot on E. Neal Street and N. 2nd Avenue E. it makes sense to order some signage and relabel the drop off and pick up locations, and to purchase two flashing crosswalk signs," Crystal said. She anticipated the City's contribution to be less than \$10,000 to remove an old ADA ramp and disintegrating curbs, and replace a portion of the curb to encourage folks to use the new crosswalk.

Garret said the top project for him is water and wastewater, Ed Tharp agreed. Reagan wanted to add stormwater to the list, "Because if we wanted to pave the other part of town we don't have any stormwater [collection] over there." Garret agreed not to rip up roads after the fact. "The fact that there is no stormwater plan may stop growth in that area, stormwater is #3 on my list for sure," Garret added. Gene Townsend asked if DEQ has a stormwater policy for communities? Jessica answered yes. She explained DEQ would review for a new development, but she is not sure how it works (she would need Jeremiah Theys' input) for the entire town. "It doesn't have to be a full in-the-ground pipe system with manholes; it could be some surface area(s) that infiltrate into the ground, or landscaping options that handle stormwater in order to deal with collection and drainage. Then, when the City goes to pave you would know *'you don't need much on this street'* for instance," she said.

Jerry Grebenc added that for a new subdivision DEQ requires the developer to store that water onsite, "So they have to come up with a drainage plan to retain the stormwater onsite. The Montana Coal Endowment Program has money for stormwater PERs." There was discussion on pre-development rate discharging. Gene said that, "You do not have a town if you do not have sewer and water, so those should be the best we can provide with what we can afford (which can be quite a difference), but these are the big priorities. Priorities can change too. When I had little kids my priorities were baseball parks, but now that I'm old I worry about water in the toilets. The town has good systems, and even though our new[er] lagoon may be close to 10 years old, even that becomes outdated," Gene said.

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Reagan asked how the process will be for next year, "Will the budget committee pick this living document up and review it and see what to add into the budget?" Gene answered yes. Reagan said, "But then who updates the CIP document if something does not get done in say 2025?" she asked.

Crystal answered she believed that would be a City Hall duty to remind the Council to review and update the CIP, and she as clerk would schedule the public hearing and advertise the notice for that resolution. Garret added that regarding public input on the CIP from the community's needs, their results were water, sewer and EMS. "So, for EMS with the Fire Truck on the CIP list, would that be a ladder truck?" There was discussion on mutual aid. "If the town keeps growing at the rate they are talking about, we would need a ladder truck someday, maybe not 2024, but maybe 2030 or 2035," Gene replied but he added he knows the Fire Department thinks about that need with the grain elevator. Kelly Smith added that some of the dates in the priority list could be adjusted, such as the remodels to the Library, City Hall and Fire Hall since we have already applied for the grant money from the State. She said the Budget Committee has also discussed replacement of a truck, so one of the trucks Jessica already has listed in the CIP could be moved up to the FY24/25 timeline.

Garret spoke regarding flood hazard mitigation, the CIP mentions the Madison River Levee certification and asked, "Why is it so expensive?" Jessica replied that the price includes the construction of the levee. "For certification you would do a study first, and then that cost [in the CIP] is the construction of the levee," she answered. There was additional discussion on whether that would be City or County since the Madison levee is a County district. Crystal stated that even projects that are not City-responsible could be included in the City's' CIP because that gives say the School an opportunity to apply for funding noting that particular project is a city-wide or community issue. The same would apply for the Senior Center, or in this case, the County for the Madison Dike and Drainage District. "It is a goal of the City to have the District get the levee certified because it benefits the entire town. Jessica then told the Council she would update the date suggestions made by Kelly and Crystal, the priorities the Council has said tonight, and revise the Madison River Levee as a County responsibility but leave it in the CIP, and stated if there were any other comments get to her, Jerry, Kelly or Crystal, then Great West will provide the next draft heading towards a public hearing to adopt. She will remove the highest priority table on page 4 and use the overall priority list. The July 9th meeting we will look at the hopefully final draft - and let the public review it.

Mayor Johnston said a splash park would be a good addition too, and then after discussion with Council members who had already looked into this in years' past (and based on how much people cooled off at the ponds this past weekend) the larger beach is a great addition as well. Gene jokingly said the City ought to buy paddle boards and start renting them over

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there. Crystal will prepare the resolution of intent to be heard and another public hearing held on July 9th and then schedule the resolution to adopt (assuming all goes smoothly and minimal changes at the July 9th meeting) will be scheduled for August 13th.

REPORT OF OFFICERS

City Treasurer Kelly Smith did not have anything to report.

City Clerk Crystal Turner said that Kelly is being modest and she has been extremely busy working on preliminary budget, all sorts of zoning and preparing for a FEMA flood audit. Crystal reported the quarterly payroll reports are complete and have been submitted for the fiscal year. She has let the attorneys who submitted proposals know the Budget Committee's recommendation; the new contract is scheduled for the July meeting. The flags arrived for Veteran's Park pursuant to the VFW's request. "I let D.K. Brooks know today they are here if they want to replace them or let our staff do it," she said. Crystal is getting a few quotes to do a little tree trimming in various parks as well. "The Wading Pool attendants have been very helpful and communicative about issues and are doing a weekly inventory of the three big parks. I am working to schedule a meeting with the Sheriff, Mayor, and Wally on Code Enforcement. Also, I am working on HR stuff for the Library. Then just gearing up for Rodeo," she said.

REPORT OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES (if any)

Gene Townsend reported the Budget Committee met on the June 18th and went through a lot of the things going on now like the flashing crosswalk signs at the School, reviewed the RFPs of the attorneys who submitted, and would like to recommend Susan Swimley. "The City is in good shape financially and like Kelly said we have money saved. We ordered a vac truck (at about \$300,000) and that isn't going to get built until October so it will go into this next year's budget - things like that. The water and sewer accounts are healthy and the change to the rate structure last year has helped. We talked about the Sheriff and Code Enforcement and have a meeting to get it operating maybe a little smoother. We talked about Code Enforcement and Wally has been doing a great job, but like we say he drives that little pick up that the City got in a drug seizure years ago. We brought up buying a side by side or a good used pickup for his use instead." Mayor Johnston said a new vehicle could also be used for transportation for anyone that needs to attend a meeting outside of Three Forks or goes to training. Gene continued, "I brought up a point for a raise for the employees, kicked things around from the other communities near us, and Kelly said COLA is recommended at 4.5% this year so I recommended 5% for our employees. One thing we didn't bring up is if the City Council wants a raise? We never want to bring it up, but I will. We don't do it this [job] for the money but we get paid \$100/meeting, max of

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two meetings a month." Garret said it is not about a quick buck to get on the town council, if you are talking about cost of living raise for the employees maybe consider that for the Council as well? Roxi McDermott did not have anything to add from the Budget meeting. Gene said at the meeting Kelly also handed out the revenue sheets and where the money comes from and where she recommends divvying it out - which the Committee can change but we will bring more information to the Council as we continue to meet. We will probably meet again before the end of July.

Councilman Chancellor moved to approve Susan's [Swimley] proposal for the City of Three Forks as City Attorney. Councilwoman McDermott seconded the motion.

Public Comment: Gloria Howland jokingly asked if she could ask for more money.

Motion Passed Unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Flood Project - Kelly Smith reported that there is nothing much to update, other than a meeting this Thursday with the team, and still hoping to have an update from US Fish Wildlife Services.

Water Project - Kelly Smith reported they were doing pump tests but not sure what the results are yet.

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 & COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Mayor or Council announcements.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT COUNCIL MEETING: June 25, 2024

- Resolution of Intent on the Capital Improvements Plan

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilman Chancellor, seconded by Councilwoman McDermott. **Motion Passed Unanimously.** The meeting was adjourned by acclimation at 7:25P.M.

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Randy Johnston, Mayor

Crystal Turner, City Clerk