

STEVENSVILLE TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES
Thursday, October 22, 2015
7:00 p.m.

Council for the Town of Stevensville came together at Council Chambers, this being the time set for the regularly scheduled meeting of the Town Council. Mayor Ludington called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmember's Holcomb, Perrin, Crews and Hunter were all present. Several citizens were also present.

Council and all present then rose, faced the flag and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of minutes from:

October 8th Town Council Meeting

Councilmember Holcomb made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Councilmember Hunter seconded the motion. Councilmember Hunter pointed out the misspelling of Loey Knapp's name under Council comments. Clerk Bartlett will make the correction. **The vote was called to approve the minutes as corrected and all voted "aye". Motion carried 4-0.**

Approval of bi-weekly claims:

Council reviewed the bi-weekly claims presented.

Councilmember Perrin made a motion to approve the claims as presented. Councilmember Hunter seconded the motion. Discussion ensued regarding the cost of recycling and playground supplies and equipment. **The vote was called and all voted "aye". Motion carried 4-0.**

Administrative Reports:

Airport

Airport Manager Bob Otte was unable to attend. Mayor read Bob's written comments regarding Airport activities.

Court

Judge Klaphake gave a summary of court activities and financials for the past 12 months since implementing Full Court. Judge informed Council of the speeding issues around the school and encouraged Council to look at flashing signage. He also commented on the turnover in the Police Department and lack of traffic patrol.

Judge requested Council consent of his absence from the Town in December for approximately 2 weeks, approximately December 19th through January 5th. He

informed Council that he has arranged for a substitute Judge in the event of an arraignment.

Councilmember Crews made a motion to suspend Council Rules to approve Judge Klaphake's vacation request in December. Councilmember Holcomb seconded the motion and all voted "aye". Motion carried 4-0.

Police

Chief Marble presented the September report and updated Council on department issues.

Chief informed Council of Officer Robertson's resignation and the recruitment/selection process to replace him.

Discussion ensued regarding officer retention including competitive salaries, possible 3 year contract and what items could be repaid if the office left prior to 3 years, and offering a possible 20 year retirement package.

Chief then gave an update on the bear sightings in Town and MT Fish & Wildlife informing him that it is the Town's responsibility for deterring bears from garbage's. Chief also commented on more foot patrol on Main Street during large events; speed reduction on College Street and successful use of the "decoy" vehicle (currently being painted); and radar signs costing approximately \$5,000-\$2,000. Chief will check into renting or borrowing a radar sign, but recommends the Town look at purchasing a mobile sign that can be moved around.

There was discussion regarding several pedestrian crosswalks in town needing to be repainted and parking stripes needed by CJ's. Chief will talk to MDT to see about repainting.

Treasurer

Treasurer Mapelli presented the Treasurer's report for the month of September. She reported that she and Denise are working with Black Mountain Software on the reduced rate and are hoping to get it implemented in December.

Guests:

Stevensville Main Street Association Director Joan Prather presented the Association's Quarterly Report.

Joan thanked Town employees for cleaning up the bike path prior to the Scarecrow Festival and the Stevensville Police Department for their assistance.

Correspondence:

Mayor Ludington read the following correspondence into the record:

- 3 letters from Susan McCreary 1) U/J turns on Main Street; 2) First Friday Event; 3) Yard Debris Disposal
- Treasurer Mapelli's Retirement Notice

Public Comments:

Clayton Floyd, 210 St. Mary's Drive, commented on texting between the Town Clerk and the Treasurer during Council meetings which violates the open meeting law. He then commented on his appreciation and thanks to Stephanie for the job she has done and the improvement of the process on her watch.

Chief Marble commented on working with Stephanie and her concern and diligence of looking out for the Town and its taxpayers.

Treasurer Stephanie Mapelli read an email from Councilmember Crews to the Mayor recommending combining the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer positions and having a special audit done due to the Mayor and Treasurer's resignations. Treasurer Mapelli then read her written statement in response to Mr. Crews' email.

Chris Weatherly commented on the need to replace the 4 "Welcome to Stevensville" signs on Highway 93 due to their dire conditions. Chris stated he will bring this to Council as an agenda item at the November meeting.

Mayor Ludington called for a 5 minute recess at this time. The meeting reconvened.

Business:

A. Standing Agenda Item: Sewer Project

Mayor Ludington provided an update on the sewer project.

B. Discussion/decision – Change Order No. 2, Additional Well Development-Phase 3 Water System Improvements

Mayor Ludington presented Change Order No. 2 and gave an update on the well work done.

Councilmember Hunter made a motion to approve Change Order No. 2, decreasing the total contract price in the amount of \$9,650.55. Councilmember Holcomb seconded the motion and all voted "aye". Motion carried 4-0.

C. Discussion/decision – Resolution No. 365B, A Resolution Amending the Personnel Policy of the Town of Stevensville, Tabled from the October 8th Town Council Meeting

Mayor Ludington introduced Resolution No. 365B which was tabled due to discussion of adding position vacancies being noticed to Town Council members.

Councilmember Perrin made a motion to approve Resolution No. 365B as presented. Councilmember Hunter seconded the motion. Councilmember Crews recommended including the following statement: “the position vacancy notifications shall be sent to all town employees, department heads and the town council via electronic media. Position vacancy notifications shall be posted in the work place for 5 working days”.

Further discussion ensued regarding hiring procedures/policies and the whether this should be placed within the Personnel Policy or another document. Mayor Ludington commented on looking at placing this addition in a different section of the Personnel Policy. Councilmember Crews will send the Mayor his recommended changes to the Resolution.

The vote was called and all voted “nay”. Motion failed 4-0.

New Business:

A. Discussion/decision – Full-time Temporary Police Officer

Mayor Ludington informed Council that the Town is considering hiring a full-time temporary Police Officer for 30 days until a permanent Officer can be hired. Discussion ensued regarding extending the 30 days if necessary. Mayor informed Council that Chief Marble has a candidate for this temporary position and Chief Marble commented on this candidate’s qualifications and prior experience with the Town.

Councilmember Crews made a motion to approve temporarily hiring a full-time temporary Police Officer until at such time a full-time permanent officer has been hired. Councilmember Holcomb seconded the motion. Discussion ensued regarding Post certification and the qualifications of the temporary officer candidate. **The vote was called and all voted “aye”. Motion carried 4-0.**

B. Discussion/decision – Suspend Council Rules for Council Meeting Dates Regarding Upcoming Holidays

Mayor Ludington presented proposed Council meeting dates as Tuesday, November 24th and one Council meeting in December on December 12-10th due to the upcoming Holidays.

Councilmember Crews made a motion to approve suspending Council Rules and changing the second November meeting to Tuesday, November 24th and only having one meeting date in December on December 12 10th.

Councilmember Holcomb seconded the motion and all vote “aye”. Motion carried 4-0.

C. Discussion – Renewal of Charter Franchise Agreement

Mayor Ludington updated Council of the upcoming renewal of the Charter Franchise Agreement. Mayor will work on a draft contract with Charter and bring this issue back to Council at a later date.

Further discussion was held regarding Charter’s facilities offered within the Town.

D. Discussion – Board Vacancies: 2 seats – Planning/Zoning Board; 1 seat – Park Board; 2 seats – Airport Board; 3 seats – Tree Board; 2 seats – Police Commission

Mayor Ludington informed Council of the current and upcoming vacant Board seats. He requested assistance from Councilmembers in recruiting board members and asked that they refer interested persons directly to the Mayor.

Councilmember Crews made a motion to suspend Council Rules to move Agenda Item F ahead of Agenda Item E. Councilmember Holcomb seconded the motion and all voted “aye”. Motion carried 4-0.

F. Discussion/decision – Consolidation of Clerk and Treasurer’s Office Eliminating the Finance Officer/Treasurer Position

Mayor Ludington informed Council the proper procedure of a Councilmember submitting an agenda item was not followed when submitting this agenda item.

Councilmember Crews made a motion to consolidate the Clerk and Treasurer’s Office Eliminating the Finance Officer/Treasurer Position. Councilmember Holcomb seconded the motion. Councilmember Crews commented this was suggested by a member of the public as a cost savings measure and the money saved could be used in the Police Department to retain needed officers. He also commented that consolidation of these two positions and hiring a Deputy Clerk also trained as a Treasurer would provide a back-up. Councilmember Holcomb commented that the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer were always one position.

Councilmember Perrin clarified that the Town already has a Deputy Clerk. This is a combined position with the Utility Billing Clerk.

Discussion ensued regarding the responsibilities of the Treasurer/Finance Officer and needing someone with the right qualifications; use of Black Mountain software; possibility of contracting with an accounting firm for the Treasurer’s position; keeping accountability the priority; considerably more bureaucracy required by the staff; combining the jobs being a step back and possibly losing current staff if consolidation is done.

Councilmember Crews called the question. The vote was called and all voted “nay”. Motion failed 4-0.

E. Discussion/decision – Creation of the Position of Deputy or Assist Clerk for the Town of Stevensville

Councilmember Crews made a motion to permanently table this item. Councilmember Holcomb seconded the motion and all voted aye. Motion carried 4-0.

G. Discussion/decision – Finance Officer Job Description

Mayor Ludington presented the finance officer job description.

Councilmember Crews made a motion to approve adding the Finance Officer Job Description to the Treasurer/Finance officer. Councilmember Holcomb seconded the motion. Council held discussion regarding the qualification requirements and the human resource job description and duties. The vote was called and all voted “aye”. Motion carried 4-0.

Executive Report:

Mayor Ludington thanked Council for allowing him to attend the MT League of Cities and Towns Annual Conference. He then provided an update of that meeting.

Mayor then reported on his observations of the Town including the well field, sewer plant project and water treatment. He thanked the Town employees for their hard work and commented on his commitment to the Town and hope to continue to communicate and keep Town in positive position. He informed Council that there is always so much going on it will be impossible to update Council on everything, but this does not mean he does not want Council to know. He will do his best for the residents and businesses of the Town.

Town Council Comments:

Councilmember Holcomb commented on the advertisement for the Finance Officer being done prior to Council approval. She also did not know the Mayor was going to be out of town for the conference.

Mayor responded that due to the tight time line of replacing the Treasurer, he decided to advertise now. He also informed Council of the different areas the job is being advertised.

Councilmember Crews commented on his request for a special audit and apologized to the Treasurer stating this was due diligence not “character assassination”. He further commented on an audit being a source to protect the town and those staff leaving, his request not being a demand, his need to know what is going on in Town and Council responsibilities. He asked Council, if he has done anything wrong in doing his job, then try him and censure him now.

Councilmember Perrin responded to Councilmember Crew's comments.

Councilmember Perrin commented on the Montana Department of Transportation not including the bike path along Eastside Highway to Wildfowl in the upcoming highway project. He recommended Council solicit people to comment to MDT in support of the bike path. Mayor Ludington stated the comment period on this issue ended today.

Board Reports:

Park Board Chair Raymond Smith updated Council on a possible grant for Arbor Day celebration, signage at Lewis & Clark Park, park bathroom remodel and the Park Board meeting dates being changed from the third Monday of the month to the second Monday. He then recommended Council install lighting at the park prior to looking at security cameras. He then gave an update on the skateboard park.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

APPROVE:

ATTEST:



Paul Ludington, Mayor



Stacy Bartlett, Town Clerk

