

Stevensville Town Council Meeting Minutes

THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2021

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Dewey called the meeting to order. Councilmembers Ludington, Shourd and Vick were all present. Councilmember Devlin was absent

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Comments

Public comment came through via the town clerk's email. Mayor Dewey read an email from Jim Crews regarding public comment. Mayor Dewey addressed an email that had been sent to all councilmembers from Craig and Delaine Johnson.

4. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Berthoud gave an update on the meeting minutes that are outstanding. Mayor Dewey: as I am sure you are aware Jenelle has also been given the task of BFE meeting minutes.

5. Approval of Bi-Weekly Claims

a. Claims #16457-#16524

Mayor Dewey: introduced bi-weekly claims.

Councilmember Vick: made a motion

Councilmember Shourd: 2nd that.

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Mr. Vick and 2nd by Mr. Shourd to approve the bi-weekly claims. Discussion?

Councilmember Ludington: claim # 16515 to Ravalli County Sheriff's Department office Zuercher field opts license?

Mayor Dewey: correct the pronunciation of Zuercher. That is a special app that officers have on their phones to coordinate with the CAD system at 911.

Councilmember Ludington: so, it is an app?

Mayor Dewey: yes, it is a yearly subscription to an app. And that subscription is tied to the individual officer not to necessarily to the phone of anything so, when we have an officer, we have so many subscriptions that we purchase, and they are assigned accordingly. The fire department has the same set up. I think it is listed as anvil.

Councilmember Vick: in this format it didn't come up as annual but I remember seeing it last year.

Mayor Dewey: questions from the council on the claims? Public comment? Hearing none, Ms. Berthoud please call for the vote.

Councilmember Ludington: aye

Councilmember Shourd: aye

Councilmember Vick: aye

Mayor Dewey: the motion passes.

6. Guests

No guests.

7. Correspondence

a. Letter from Don Lorenzen dated January 10, 2021 to the city council. Mayor Dewey: introduced the letter and read it into the record.

8. Public Hearings

No public hearings.

9. Unfinished Business

a. Discussion/Decision: Police Department Staffing

Mayor Dewey: this is a carry over from your last agenda item, I am going to hand out this packet it is not included in your council packet, but we will upload it. This is from the survey, police department survey, community survey that went out after the last council meeting. I think that it was published like on the 15th of January to date we have received 194 responses to the survey and mind you when we run these, we run partial results and anybody that did not finish the survey their answers counted you will see different numbers for different questions in response and depending on what it is. In large they are pretty consistent. Just bear that in mind, that has a lot to do with why the no response column is not in some questions and short in other questions. The other reason that you will see a no response column that is pretty large for example the second page or back of the first page it says "were you satisfied with how the officer treated you" you will see no responses is 63% of the response the reason for that is the survey is programmed to skip that question if they answered no to the previous question. Because it was not relevant you would not be satisfied or dissatisfied if you haven't had any interaction with the police department. So that is primarily why those columns are larger in some of those questions. There was an algorithm response from the previous question it would skip the question. Overall, I don't think that there is anything glaring results of the survey I pretty much lines up with our gut feeling regarding the police department and where it sits. It does provide some insight into how people prioritize or show what factors into their perception of the police department and how they are viewed in terms of professionalism. You know there are some people that are not sure how they can either make a complaint or get access to a

police officer so that is something the police department would like to address of course. I think that one piece the council discussed at the last meeting was of a public safety levy and those results are at the end of your survey or at the end of your packet. These are specific questions that we included in the original survey to answer the prospect of the town council going towards a levy or considering that and so the first question was "would you support a public safety levy to assist the Stevensville Police Department" of the 194 responses 50 said yes 57 said no and 87 did not respond. Part of the rationale behind that is there are ways to, when it says no response, there are ways to do the algorithm of the survey, if they answered no to living or working in Stevensville then it did not bring up the question about the levy because we didn't think it was relevant if they didn't live or work here. We did not think it mattered to us if they supported a levy or not. On the back page you can tell there, for those that did support a levy what they were willing to pay in terms of increase of \$100,000 in property value. Mostly those folks would support \$50.00 of increase per \$100,000 of property value. The rise is where they did not respond to the question. In terms of "would they support the annexation of additional property into the town limits to increase revenue to fund" that was a pretty split response there were 51 that said yes and 40 that said no and there were 21 that did not know if they would support that or not and 34 had no responses. It gives you a little insight as to where the community sits in terms of funding its police department with a levy, you know we did not provide an opportunity, because sometimes they are difficult to consolidate and report back on, but we did not provide an opportunity for general comment, but we did see some comment through our social media channels where we posted the survey. We haven't closed the survey we would like to continue collecting responses on it all though just under 200 responses is pretty good in the short time that it has been out, and we have only done it online we would like to print some off and mail out to some people that we know don't have computer access or don't engage with us on social media. In fact, from past surveys, we can tell which quadrants of town don't respond to surveys so we will, or don't respond to our social media channels, they just don't engage with us in certain neighborhoods so we are probably going to target those neighborhoods with surveys to see if we can get some responses from those neighborhoods as well and kind of round out the data. Largely this data is coming strictly through a mass email that we sent out to every contact we had access to in our data base and then through social media posting. I know for sure that the email went out to about 650 people and that usually yields about a 30-40 % open rate those emails do, so obviously we could reach out to. we reached a pretty good berth of people through social media as well. So that is encouraging and like I said we are going to try to diversify the results a little bit, so we don't see anything one sided in terms of people that use computers and people that don't. Questions on the survey? I think that is really the large reason for having the police department staffing item on the agenda tonight. I don't think that there is anything further to discuss unless you want to discuss the survey amongst yourselves tonight. The time is yours to do as you wish.

Councilmember Shourd: we have proposed running a levy for the two positions, would it be possible to use the police officer grant for the one position and then run the levy for a single officer position.

Mayor Dewey: I think anything is possible I don't know as if we have some firm data on grant funding from COPS, in fact CARES through a monkey wrench in that where we have had a hard

time finding dates as to when those programs will be funded and when they are going to call for applications. That is a concern you know they were pretty consistent in saying these are the dates when the application deadlines and we are not seeing that. We are watching and not seeing it and it is a little bit unnerving. To us that means that there is going to be a delay if we want to fund a position through COPS.

Councilmember Shourd: just a little help in understanding how much benefit would one officer be opposed to having two officers and are they supporting themselves in the third position. Do they work in teams?

Mayor Dewey: for the town of Stevensville to provide 24/7 police coverage to have one officer all the time day and night we need 4 ½ officers and that does not account for vacation or sick leave. If somebody calls in sick that shift gets missed. Today we have three sworn officers, and then with a chief of police there would be four. We are ½ an officer short of that benchmark without counting vacation and sick leave. I think the reason for seeking five or six officers is to accommodate increased growth as, we have been trying to do this catch up game for a long time we would like to get ahead for a little bit and take a breath I think that is the rationale behind the six officer request it also helps address those deficiencies with vacation and sick leave and it would be helpful if the sixth position was not an outright patrol person, that had some investigative responsibilities as well and spent more of their time in investigations I think it is a good opportunity to provide you with an update on where we are with discussions with the Sheriffs Office. I think that is pertinent to this conversation instead at the executive report. After a lot of trying on the part of city attorney Scott Owens, very difficult time nailing down the county attorney to set up a call with him, when he did, he was late, none the less they finally got on the phone with each other which was good. The city attorney gleaned some information out of that meeting that was helpful in addressing the communication challenges between the two agencies, SPD and RCSO. And so, after that meeting Mr. Owens and I discussed the next steps and how to move forward in resolving the matter. He agreed that me sitting down with sheriff's office was a good approach with council to hear out the challenges in the mist of that there were some interactions between the sheriffs office and interactions with interim chief Ellington that I guess there was some friction between the agencies maybe some misconceptions of personalities in our agency by theirs that needed to be addressed and Mr. Ellington did a great job in addressing that with the sheriff as soon as he was made aware of those challenges he scheduled a meeting with the sheriff right away, he learned of these things on a Friday and by Monday morning he was meeting with the sheriff. The interim chief and the sheriff they met for just over two hours and nailed out a lot of the nuances and frictions that were caused between the two agencies. As it turned out despite what the letter stated and what we all in the room perceived as the letter's intent, it was expressed by the sheriff that it was not their intent to circumvent Stevensville's law enforcement and take over investigations. What came of the conversation that I had with the sheriff this week was that the sheriff's office was apparently seeking a dialog in the meeting with Stevensville's leadership and they were doing so through former Chief Marble as early as November when chief was still with us. Those requests never made it to my office and part of the conversation with the sheriff was challenged with meeting the calls for service demands 911 calls, the calls that come through the dispatch center, he was having a hard time meeting those calls for the town of Stevensville, the calls that were coming in

were taxing on his patrol resources, but he has investigative resources that can handle additional investigations and can allocate resources to assist us in getting investigations wrapped up and completed. With the idea if Stevensville PD was spending less time on investigations then maybe they could handle more of the calls for service, that was the philosophy. That was where the communication really broke down, that request was never passed into my office or to the interim chief so, you know they felt like we have to send them a letter, I think the letter was obviously stronger worded than what their intent was based on our conversation. So, as of this week now that we have flushed out all of the problems and the challenges that we have identified the sheriff's office is not taking over all felonies in Stevensville SPD is still capable and will continue to investigate felonies where it is appropriate and where there are cases like child sex crimes and even certain frauds that take a lot of tedious time those we are going to start shuffling over to the sheriff's office, they are very time consuming and there is a lot of work that needs to be done to make them prosecutable. We don't admittedly have that kind of resource to investigate and some we just can't. We have a good path forward in terms of the sheriff's department which we are relieved to have they and us both admit that communication was just not there, and it frankly was an internal break down of communication in our organization that did not help the situation and that has been addressed. I hope that kind of eases some feelings in the community about SPD. Officer Alspaw will be released from field training on Saturday and he will start his first full shift on his own next Tuesday it has been a long time since we have had three officers on some sort of schedule for this community. Every time we take a step forward, we always take a step back, Officer Guida unfortunately is in quarantine because he was deployed to Washington D.C. through the national guard, so he has been out for a considerable a lot of time this month, the month of January we have been running on an officer and a half because Officer Alspaw is doing his field training. So, that will bring us back up and we will have coverage on Tuesday through Saturday nights with Alspaw and when Guida gets back we will have seven nights of coverage and then some day shift coverage as well, we are getting closer and closer to covering the schedule and so we are also eager to see, we have these three officers on schedule, and we kind of want to see what the results of that look like first, I can tell you statically when we talked with the sheriff they ran statistics for calls for service that come through the 911 center from the town of Stevensville, the sheriff's office is covering half of those calls for service that come through their office, so they know roughly 50% of things that come through RCSO handles the other 50% we handle. If you look at the whole picture it makes sense. If we need four and a half officers to do 100% of the time 24/7 and we are running with two officers and we are covering half of the cases that makes sense. So, you know when we get back up to full, we are going to be in a really good position and that is when we have to buckle down and look to the future and the future needs of the community as it grows because it is going to happen so quickly. Anything else.

Councilmember Ludington: I am certainly glad that it is all done, and we were able to communicate efficiently I know that it is difficult not only is our department busy, but I have looked at statistics for the sheriff's department and they get a lot of call for service every week, so I appreciate the effort that was put in between everybody.

Mayor Dewey: thank you. We acknowledged overnight that I don't think that the relationship is repaired it is still going to take some work on both of our agencies to get us in a really solid

place so we are firing on all cylinders, but we made a really giant leap this week in communication and I think we are both eager to see what a new chief of police whether that is an internal hire or an external hire regardless we are going to see what that person brings to a better collaborative environment with our CSO. I am trying to remember there was something else in regard to police staffing that I wanted to address with you folks but maybe I have already hit it. Is there anything else from council on the police staffing subject, okay I will just leave you while we continue to gather survey results and the council continues to weigh the levy question as you are aware in a workshop with the staff tomorrow on our fifth Friday workshop and a good portion of our morning is dedicated to some issues and priorities for our organization. We are going to have a very open and frank conversation about our budget where we can get more creative in as we have already discussed the general fund is paired down pretty low, but we think we can get a little tighter there. So, we are going to have that conversation in a global way and discuss if there are opportunities that we are missing in regards to revenue. Are there services that we are providing to special people, special groups of people in the community that every other taxpayer is paying for and not using and so we are going to take a look at that to see if there is a way to lesson the burden of all, be more creative there and maybe make some funding available in the budget to continue the progress in the SPD staffing dilemmas. Ready to move on? Wonderful. Is there any public comment on police staffing before we move on?

10. New Business

a. Discussion/Decision: Utility Assistance Program

Mayor Dewey: introduced new business item (a). There is a council communication in your packet this evening addressing the utility assistance program how it states there are 11 customers on that program, this month was the last month to fund or provide funding for the program. So, we would have like to have had more notice but it was one of those things that kind of snuck up on us faster than we wanted it to, so we reconciled the account and have found that the funding is depleted and so essentially before the council tonight is how do you want to continue with the program, I am not pressuring you one way or the other to make a decision tonight however it would be useful to make a decision tonight we have to run bills on Monday so we would like to know. I can tell you that the eleven customers on the program received a letter that said hey the funding has been depleted for the program and this item is on the council's agenda for this meeting and this is how you can contact your councilmembers if they suggest "X" than you can expect "Y" and we address that with them. I have not checked with Laura to see what kind of response she received if any, regardless we want the council to kind of give us some direction on how the program may move forward in fact that is the consensus.

Councilmember Vick: the first thing that I would like to see and this would not directly or this would not benefit me at all is that added to the house hold income I would like us to add permanent 100% disability for VA, because not everybody that gets 100% benefits from the VA also gets social security, it is not guaranteed. That is something that I would like to see added to this program as we do have some disabled vets that live here and are not able to work and are 100% disabled and they are having a hard time getting their bills paid and what not.

Councilmember Ludington: so, you are talking about the table that is in this document talking about age and household income.

Councilmember Vick: Correct.

Councilmember Ludington: making \$28,000 or less and receiving permanent you would also like to read and also receiving disability payment.

Councilmember Vick: at the 100% level.

Councilmember Ludington: at the 100% level.

Councilmember Vick: yes.

Councilmember Ludington: are you going to change the resolution?

Councilmember Vick: I just wanted to bounce it off first.

Mayor Dewey: if the council wants to make changes like that to the program than I think modifying that by resolution would be the way to go I think we are going to end up with it in resolution format anyway. Depending on how you proceed, you are given some latitude from previous resolutions and my review of those you are given the latitude to change the fee collection and the fee how you chose. Of course, by resolution is best practice and you can resolve, there is nothing preventing you from tonight resolving and that being ratified in the resolution, so you don't have to have the paperwork or the resolution in front of you tonight we will just take that action on the resolution when you resolve. I guess what ever changes to the program if that is your intent, we just need to know those very clearly.

Councilmember Shourd: just for clarification the original dollar fifty-two charge was because council did not know how many people were going to participate?

Mayor Dewey: correct it was a shot in the dark.

Councilmember Shourd: and then the thirty-five-cent monthly charge is to cover the eleven participants, correct?

Mayor Dewey: correct.

Councilmember Shourd: so, any additional individuals may be qualified for this program the thirty-five cents would have to increase as well.

Mayor Dewey: that is correct, that is a consideration you should take if you do reinstate a fee just so you know the fee covers the people on the program today, we rarely see it go over twelve by the time we add a participant someone has dropped off whether their income increases, or they pass away so I have never seen in my ten year the program exceed twelve participants.

Councilmember Ludington: I don't think even when it started in 2015 it went over 15, I don't think it has ever gone over the teens.

Mayor Dewey: and we have over the years tried to involve more people and there is not a ton of interest in the program by some and there are various reasons for that certainly a trust issue with the government handling your documents, you send your taxes to the government and so dropping them at city hall is a better deal. I think we are seeing less of that, last year during corona virus we extended the application deadline through July 15th and nobody really took advantage a couple one or two came in because their taxes were filed late so that is why largely we extended the deadline because we knew they weren't going to get their taxes back or their filing back so we need that for a determination and so we extended it. Somebody calls in the middle of the year we will consider their application.

Councilmember Shourd: So, if someone could do the math for me what are we looking at for the monthly charge to cover another 2-3 participants?

Mayor Dewey: if it were that easy Patrick.

Councilmember Shourd: it is just numbers.

Mayor Dewey: the challenge that we have, and I have a work sheet on my desk, the challenge that we have is what, I would encourage you to expect the worst-case scenario, because they could qualify for 25, 50 or 75%. So obviously the 25% reduction cost us less in terms of funding the program. I think you are even if you took thirty-five cents, and I know I can already tell you that number I rounded up a penny, there was a decimal in there and I rounded up a penny. So, if you took the thirty-five-cents and divided by the eleven participants it would give you a pretty good idea of what per participant costs us on the program, participants on the program are dealing with age.

Councilmember Vick: so, that is roughly (unclear audio)

Mayor Dewey: per participant you are not looking at, if you went up to forty cents you would cover a few more people and have a reserve.

Councilmember Shourd: I definitely strongly support this program.

Councilmember Vick: I will go ahead and make a motion to with utility assistance program with the change that I had discussed with the adding 100% disabled veterans that are below that household income level.

Mayor Dewey: is there a 2nd?

Councilmember Shourd: 2nd.

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Mr. Vick and 2nd by Mr. Shourd to continue the reduced rate program with the amendment to the program that the \$28,000 or less and receiving social security/disability payments and/or 100% disabled veteran.

Councilmember Vick: correct.

Mayor Dewey: the change we didn't clarify if you wanted to the charge reinstated in your motion.

Councilmember Vick: and reinstate the charge of thirty-five-cents.

Mayor Dewey: the motion has been amended to include to reinstate the charge for the program at a rate of thirty-five-cents.

Councilmember Shourd: just to clarify thirty-five cents covers the participants currently.

Mayor Dewey: correct.

Councilmember Shourd: we would need to increase if we had more, so we would have to have forty cents to cover any individuals in addition to the eleven.

Councilmember Ludington: I wonder if we need to break this out into two motions.

Councilmember Vick: yeah.

Councilmember Ludington: one could add the VA disability and the other to reinstate.

Mayor Dewey: okay we are going to ditch the amendment and are going to chase down continuing the program and adjusting the income bracket.

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Vick and 2nd by Shourd.

Councilmember Vick: you are going to hate me but there was something in the list that we would have to remove the VA benefits from income. So I make another amendment to remove VA benefits from under income in the table that was in the document created on July 15th 2019 page 22 in your packet.

Mayor Dewey: I am sorry I was reading, was that an amendment or another motion?

Councilmember Vick: it was amending the motion I made.

Mayor Dewey: is there a second to the motion.

Councilmember Shourd: 2nd.

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Mr. Vick and 2nd by Mr. Shourd. To amend the original motion to remove the benefits from the income criteria. Council discussion?

Councilmember Ludington: check boxes, it those receiving income from and one of them is VA benefits.

Councilmember Vick: correct that is what I was talking about.

Councilmember Ludington: you want to eliminate that from the list of incomes?

Councilmember Vick: correct.

Mayor Dewey: so I am just reviewing the program information on our website and were we identify income and the granted that it says where it says \$28,000 or less and receiving social security/disability payments right in our system the social security/disability payments still count towards your income but that is a criteria to meet in order, you have to make \$28,000 or less and check the box that you receive some sort of disability income and that social security/disability still counts towards your income. We still request that income, I don't know if you want to explicit in removing VA benefits, I think you are just adding you could be making

\$28,000 or less and receiving 100% disability VA payment isn't that what you are saying, right? But the VA payment or the VA benefit would still count towards their income.

Councilmember Vick: the disability benefit or other disability that they have?

Mayor Dewey: I think, we are not discriminating I mean we are pulling disability payments out of their income considerations so I mean that could be receiving disability social security payments and making over \$28,000 and they won't qualify for the program and that disability is counting towards their income there could be some people that ride the line where they make less than \$28,000 without their social security/disability payments but because they are getting those payments it is considered income we are counting it towards income here.

Councilmember Vick: the only reason I am bringing it up here for the 100% level is because at the 100% level they would be bringing in more than \$28,000 per year however there are some quite a few disabled veterans and I don't know the number here in our area that are able to work and that 100% level is roughly \$3200 per month which that has to pay for their housing, electricity, water and what not but it also has to pay for them some medical expenses that the VA doesn't cover and in those cases some of them have to have a vehicle that the VA won't cover for these people to be able to live a decent life and once it comes down to the end of it they sometimes have to rob Peter to pay Paul to pay your water bill.

Mayor Dewey: my concern is if you exempt VA benefits from the list are, we going to have problems because you aren't exempting social security benefits, that is my concern from that perspective. It is still income to the participant.

Councilmember Ludington: we are already not including workman's comp disability.

Councilmember Vick: right. And also, when it comes to social security/disability and someone is on it they are not able to work at all, I personally, unless Robert can explain it to me better, why would we use a disability income unless it was from like a private company annuity on this?

Robert: I am the one that validates the guys that go on the program and the program all of them are on social security and that is their sole source of income and so the only document that they come in with is that document and you are right if you do 100% VA that they would not qualify most of the people on the program have a certain income just like the VA, the VA would not put them over the top we know that. Some of what the participants have now are pretty low so, I kind of forgot your question, I am trying to I know people that are 100% disabled, and the VA covers almost all of their expenses and should and then some of the 100% VA disability person can also get or apply for social security/disability at the same time. So, I think my gut instinct, I am a 100% VA disability guy too, I think you should add that in because if you take out social security/disability or social security anybody on this program would qualify so once you have social security or social security/disability or VA disability you get are going to get 25% off of your water even though you are bringing in some sort of income some of those people on the program right now are living on \$1100 per month that is their income. So, you are talking 75% level we are giving them 75% off their water bill. And so....

Mayor Dewey: which turns out to be a credit at the 75% level and there would be a credit of \$34.00 they don't get a reduction on the bond payment. Something that we will address in

water rates when we get to that this summer. Bear that in mind it is about a \$35.00 a month reduction in their bill I do recall when the program was implemented there was a lot of discussion about what income gets included and what income doesn't get included at the council level and at the executive level and the office staff discussed at length what should and shouldn't count. Some of these benefits are being paid for their living expenses and their water and sewer bill is a part of their living expense. We are still responsible to run utilities for the community if they are receiving income to help with those expense of course if their income is less than \$28,000, they qualify.

Councilmember Ludington: they are strictly retired and receiving social security as the only benefit that is difficult to make ends meet, even if they are receiving social security and disability payments from social security or the VA sometimes it can still be difficult. Depending on what your other expense are, now that isn't really included in here, figuring out what your other expense are so.

Councilmember Vick: what about, this is something that I just pulling out of somewhere, similar to a program where at the state level, 100% VA recipients that make less than \$45,000 per year they don't pay property taxes. What about making a third bracket for people only at the 100% level, that is something that would have to be permanent and total, that is not for somebody that is receiving for individual or TDIU and things like that.

Councilmember Shourd: so, you are saying creating a third bracket that is just identifies for receiving 100% not attaching dollar amount.

Councilmember Vick: right. I would probably say a \$10,000 amount yearly and receiving their VA benefits. \$10,000 is just a number if you have a better one.

Councilmember Ludington: we have already kind of established in the original resolution they did do quite a bit of research on when they came up with the \$28,000 if you are 62 or older and you are not making \$28,000 a year no matter what type of income you have, you are eligible. If you are over 18 and making \$28,000 and receiving social security if you are receiving disability from the VA and making under \$28,000 you are eligible. Now if you are making more than \$28,000 because you have 100% VA disability to me that is a different issue that puts you above the poverty line. (unclear audio) that is what the poverty level is if you aren't making \$28,000 and have total disability from the VA

Mayor Dewey: that is a good point Paul it is household income, we have a number of customers come to us we have three and I am the disabled one and I don't make \$28,000 the water bill is in my name, give me a break. We need your household income because you have others helping you pay the bills.

Councilmember Ludington: we were purposefully trying to, retired those that were widowers that are living in a house that they have been living in for how ever long and they are living on social security and that is it at this particular time when this came about the time when the water rates got raised 40% the people were hurting so they came up with this to help some of these people out and they were finding out they were getting behind on their water bills.

Councilmember Vick: than in that case until I can spend sometime fine tuning some things to present to the council, I will rescind my motion.

Mayor Dewey: does anyone object to rescinding the motion? Groovy, we will not consider it. So,

Councilmember Ludington: I will make a motion to reinstate the utility assistance program at a rate of forty cents per month.

Councilmember Shourd: 2nd

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Mr. Ludington and 2nd by Mr. Shourd to reinstate the utility assistance charge at a rate of forty cents per month, council discussion? Just making sure that I am not missing anything.

Councilmember Ludington: I don't think so.

Mayor Dewey: I think we are fine I think we can make that work.

Councilmember Ludington: I think we are okay, basically resolution 409 suspended it, suspended the collection because there was too much money. We have worked things out and did not want that fund to get to big so, we suspended it and now we have spent down that surplus.

Mayor Dewey: does the council want to make that charge effective immediately? Or, because bills go out Monday and we could throw forty cents on every bill and I guess to a degree it doesn't matter when we put it on the bill, do we want to give people a heads up that there is going to be a forty cents charge on their bill and continue the program any ways I can tell you if you are collecting forty cents that is going to help us do some catch up we keep the program in place and give those people their credit on the February bill tell everyone by the way in March you are going to see forty cents on your bill that may or may not soften the blow I would like to hear on how you would like to proceed.

Councilmember Shourd: I think the heads up is good.

Mayor Dewey: so we are agreeable we will continue the program and we will give everyone their reduction on their February bill and then on their March first bill everyone will have a forty cent charge, we can do a public notice in the paper and I am sure there will be an article on this anyways we can put it on the bill Monday that says when you get this paper next month it is going to look different. Everyone is okay with that? Any public comment on reinstating the rate of forty cents? Effective March, our live stream has been down most of the meeting I grossly apologize to the community, we can do virtual meetings really well, we can do in person meetings really well but when we put the two of them together, we suck at it, I just don't know what to do. We even dedicated internet connection and ZOOM still failed us, okay. With that Ms. Berthoud call for the vote please.

Councilmember Ludington: aye

Councilmember Shourd: aye

Councilmember Vick: aye

Mayor Dewey: thank you I appreciate your indulgence on that matter.

11. Executive Report

Mayor Dewey: I have covered the law enforcement issues in the police department staffing discussion and I can tell you we held three of six interviews with police chief candidates today, Robert and I struggled with ZOOM most of the afternoon through three different ZOOM calls I think all together we spent 4 ½ hours interviewing three different candidates for the job. It has already a very interesting experience and we are very blessed and fortunate to have a really good pool that I am excited about and I am eager to get the other three under our belt next week. Following that through the rest of the process I anticipate moving forward is that the process will speed up pretty quickly that we would like to narrow down this pool from six to three or four max and then I intend to put a community panel together and that can then hold a community form with the remaining candidates. We also will get some internal interviews done with the police department staff that aren't those staff remaining that have not applied for the position and just we are trying to be as diverse as possible for what we are getting for this position because it is a key position for this community and critical so we are putting a lot of thought so when we get through the six candidates and Robert and I are able to narrow it down to a much more manageable number then we will really kick up the speed in terms of the public engagement and interaction on that so we will even go as far as, and part of that public forum is where we will give each candidate a topic to more or less present to the public on and they can give their presentation so there is some material for the interview and people get a chance to see how they present in a matter of their expertise to citizens and engage that way through questions and stuff. I don't know how; I don't know what to expect in regard to public attendance and that sort of things it will be more or less daytime type of things, but we will be adamant about some open houses and stuff as much as we can with COVID going on and whatever travel we have to accommodate. Just letting you know that is rock in and rolling. I would expect mid-February meetings will be announced and we are excited to bring in some really cool experience and knowledge to the community. In terms of meetings, we are still working to get a couple of public hearings scheduled for Burnt Fork Estates we are right on the cusp, we have contacts out to two separate facilities here in town that can facilitate large, that are not the school, we just found challenges and just didn't think we could count on school we thought safer than sorry lets just line up one of the churches we have two leads and hope to confirm. So, once we have one of those facilities confirmed and set in stone and we hope for that tomorrow and as soon as we get that we will get the public notice out in the newspaper next week and then we will get the mailing and all those things that are required so you can expect more than likely a public hearing will be set, don't let me look at January any more that was close, I think the week of the 15th we are targeting the 15th we are closed for Presidents Day one of those days following the 15th will be when you will hold a public hearing assuming we can get an answer tomorrow, if we don't get an answer tomorrow than first thing Monday morning than assume the next week just because we need fifteen days lead to get the notice in the paper ahead of the meeting so it has to be fifteen days ahead of the meeting and then all the other nonsense we have to go through. So, that will be an in person public hearing and we plan to hold one of those and then we will hold a virtual public hearing, like I said we are good at one or the other, but we are not good at both at the same time. In person public hearing will not be live streamed we are not going to virtualize it we are not going to do any of that we are just going to do an in person hearing if you want to come you come, if there are individuals that want to participate virtually then we will hold a separate public hearing we won't even get together we will hold it like we used to on ZOOM on a

separate night and we will hold a public hearing that way I imagine that one will be brief. You will run through that and then we are purposefully keeping your agendas a little lighter so you won't have a lot of business come up unless it is necessary so when you start seeing Burnt Fork Estates matters showing up on your agenda which hopefully you will be able to consider it if you get your public hearings done the week of the 15th then presumably on the 25th you could start discussing the matter in depth so I would imagine the 25th and going forward on however meetings it takes to discuss that is how we will approach it so if you have feedback, thoughts or shower thoughts or whatever you have on how we proceed with that and you want to get that in my mind before we pull the trigger on any noticing please, please let me know. We have extended an offer of employment to a public works director candidate at 5:50 and he accepted that offer so on your February 11th meeting you will see that consent item on that agenda for you folks to consent to my appointment the gentleman's name is Steve Kruse so given if you don't mind don't give any phone calls tonight and announce to the world that is the individual because the other candidates in the running obviously haven't been notified that they didn't get selected so we will get that accomplished first thing tomorrow as we can let those folks know so I imagine by Monday everybody will be notified, just to let you know that is coming down the pipe and we are excited to kind of present his qualifications for the position, Mr. Ludington and Ms. Devlin were both part of the process in selecting the public works director replacement I didn't expect to have the second interview the first round of interviews that Robert and I conducted we both kind of sat dumbfounded, we had two really strong candidates for the position and needed a little extra help and nudge to help us come to a conclusion on it and Jaime and Paul were both very helpful in that regards so we appreciate their assistance with that. That is good so we have public works good to go we will have a chief of police sooner rather than later. A position that I would really like to get filled that has been vacant since we adopted the budget in July is the community development director which fulfills the planning functions and department oversight, that has been a really hard one to fill we have received one application for that and wasn't necessarily qualified for the position, so we still wait it is very specific skill set understandably so. As you are aware staff and I meet tomorrow morning, town hall is closed, for staff development we will meet in the morning and do some internal workshopping, we have some classes lined up and some training lined up that we are implementing that is all on line where they can do their training and certifications on line and that will bridge all the way into police department and fire department so if for some reason we went back into shut downs, fire department is a good example all these firefighters that usually meet for trainings so if trainings are shut down it is very hard for them to train and practice and this new software will help resolve some of that moving forward so we are excited to implement some of that, some will happen tomorrow and we will do some other training, afternoon is set aside for council workshopping if you guys are able to attend you are welcome to if you can't we understand exceptions and obligations if you don't come it isn't that we are going to be sitting around, we can get by without you but we really want your input and engagement in the exercises in the afternoon and I think those start off at 1:00, only giving a 45 minute lunch to the clerk that only takes a 30 minute lunch.

Councilmember Vick: my associates get more than that Jenelle you can come and work for me.

Mayor Dewey: they are all given an hour and one of them either doesn't take it or takes a half hour or 45 minutes. Okay I think that largely covers the executive report unless there are any questions from council, I will turn it over to town council comments.

12. Town Council Comments

Councilmember Shourd: I just appreciate the opportunity for people having public hearing both in person and a virtually. I think that will satisfy quiet a bit of the public.

Mayor Dewey: we think that it is critical that everyone gets a vice in terms of those who wish to attend virtually and those that don't we want both of those audiences to engage if they chose to.

Councilmember Shourd: when you say in the newspaper are you referring to the Bitterroot Star or the Ravalli Republic?

Mayor Dewey: The Bitterroot Star.

Councilmember Ludington: I think there is quiet a bit out there about Burnt Fork Estates I think that there is quiet a bit of opinion out there. Jaime and I met with some members from the HOA of Creekside Residents yesterday and had a pretty informative meeting with them you guys are not going to like this, I can guarantee that, this is a lot of opposition out there and I will say the same thing in this group as I said yesterday this is the only opportunity that a group of people has and can tell another group of people what they can do with there property. I don't get to tell you what you can do with your property and you don't get to tell me this is the only opportunity we have to do that and one of those things we get to tell them and we can't just say no, we have to be able to come to some suitable arrangement in order to be able to let people to do with their property as citizens, it is their property, it belongs to them and it also happens to be in the Town of Stevensville there are rules and regulations to follow being in the town and this is our opportunity to say here are some additional things that we would like to do in order to enhance our community and not be a detriment to them. I think through the thirteen hours of planning and zoning meetings that I was in I think we got to that pretty well, there are some significate issues that go along with that and belong to the town and in my opinion they don't have anything to do with the subdivision we still have some issues out there that need to be addressed and we can address them through the conditions of the subdivision we can address them separately however you feel, conversation that I had with the mayor last night in my opinion the town has been under siege for the last four years and hasn't been able to accomplish anything and there are people out there that say that is no excuse you still should have figured it out and they are not wrong, I apologize I was part of this attempting to find the solution for eight years when I was on the council I was on the council when they approved Creekside Meadows and HDR at that time said don't worry here is the application we will turn it in we will change the place of use you know, no worries. I had no idea that DNRC would say I don't know what this is you need to start over. So that is why we are where we are today such as it is, so that being said, that is all I have to say.

Mayor Dewey: any further council comments?

Councilmember Vick: nah.

13. Board Reports

Mayor Dewey: I don't know if any boards have met have, they, no we have met since the Planning and Zoning Board didn't, we, Planning and Zoning Board report and I emailed that to you all yesterday and it is also available on the website if you have any questions for myself or the planning and zoning board chairman know

Councilmember Ludington: I can certainly answer anything on that.

Mayor Dewey: Paul is pretty critical; on that, actually ask Paul don't ask me. I will just refer to Paul. In terms of boards February sucks and it hasn't happened yet in terms of meetings we promised you all that we would get these boards together and get some workshopping done with these folks they need to be meeting we need to get things underway and the TIFT TEDD board hasn't met for over a year and maybe a year and a half, its hard. The pandemic added a whole new layer of complexities communities holding their virtual meetings with out a hitch and still getting some progress done and we are moving in that direction. Poor Jenelle and I are the only two that have the capacity to pull these things together we are really bogged down with everything else so bear with us we had a a date on the calendar and then realized we never told anyone the date existed and then we had to push the date out and then we realized that we still didn't do what we said we were going to do so now we have taken the date off the calendar have it all together on a sticky note and keep moving it until we get it done, that is where we are at with boards. Patrick?

Councilmember Shourd: could I have just a review, I just want to make sure the legal document that I received in exportay communications in regards to Burnt Fork Estates from my understanding information gathering I am not allowed to do other than what is public record is that correct.

Mayor Dewey: with anyone that has a substantial interest in the project so please don't go have lunch with the developer.

Councilmember Shourd: correct. How about having a conversation with Paul is acceptable.

Mayor Dewey: according to the legal memo that sounds like an acceptable procedure I don't see any reason, three of you should not be in the room and do that.

Councilmember Shourd: correct.

Mayor Dewey: and if you do that by accident please disclose it. That is really, you rid yourself of exportay issues when you come to a meeting and say in the last two weeks, I have these two conversations with these seven people, and they were regarding Burnt Fork Estates and leave it at that you have essentially resolved yourself of any issues.

Councilmember Shourd: okay. Just want to make sure that I am walking the line.

Councilmember Ludington: we did that because they are our constitutes, they are our ward. (unclear audio)

Councilmember Shourd: my question is more me after the meetings wanting to reach out and ask a specific question from somebody that was at the meeting and clarify if I could do that.

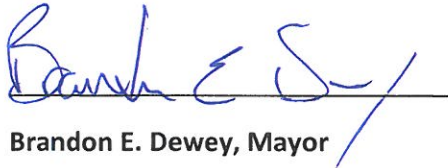
Mayor Dewey: you are doing your diligence with that.

Councilmember Shourd: thank you.

Mayor Dewey: I don't see why you couldn't go balls to the walls at the meeting and say I talked to Paull and he said. Okay anything else for the good of the order this evening? Very good with that we are adjourned.

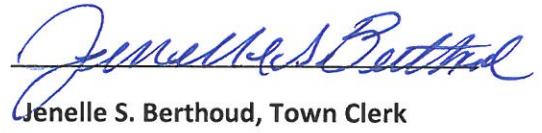
14. Adjournment

APPROVE:



Brandon E. Dewey, Mayor

ATTEST:



Jenelle S. Berthoud, Town Clerk