

Stevensville Town Council Meeting Minutes

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2021

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

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

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Comments (Public comment from citizens on items that are not on the agenda)

No public comment.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. January 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Mayor Dewey: introduced the minutes for 01/14/21

Councilmember Devlin: I will make a motion to approve the minutes.

Councilmember Shourd: 2nd that.

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Ms. Devlin and 2nd by Mr. Shourd. Council discussion?
Public comment? Hearing none Ms. Berthoud please call for the vote.

Councilmember Devlin: aye

Councilmember Ludington: aye

Councilmember Shourd: aye.

Councilmember Vick: aye.

Mayor Dewey: the motion passes unanimously.

5. Approval of Bi-Weekly Claims

a. Claims #16504-#16567

Mayor Dewey: introduced bi-weekly claims.

Councilmember Vick: I will make a motion to approve the claims.

Councilmember Shourd: 2nd that.

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Mr. Vick and 2nd by Mr. Shourd. Council discussion?

Councilmember Shourd: the billing question I had a question on is 16533, fourth from the top. Just a clarification on what that expense was.

Mayor Dewey: We have a subscription through Muni Code, the subscription enables to build agendas through our system takes the agenda and compiles it all together and that is how we publish our packet to you folks it helps with our scheduling and all those other pieces.

Councilmember Shourd: thank you.

Mayor Dewey: you are welcome. Any other questions on claims?

Councilmember Ludington: Montana Environmental Community Connection fee, annual connection fee.

Robert: what number again?

Councilmember Ludington: 16536 (unclear audio)

Mayor Dewey: is that \$200.00?

Councilmember Devlin: I hope not.

Robert: (laughing) I know it is an annual one that we do every year let me look. Sorry about that. I know it is the annual fee that we pay for the part of their outreach from the community connection fee that we pay it is two units of \$161 each if you want, I can get more information on it and get back, that would probably be the best to do. They have, we pay these guys a lot and just, I don't know the real detail behind this stuff I know.

Councilmember Ludington: it is probably, I just wanted to know.

Mayor Dewey: does it say from the fiscal year 18/19? Or is that just a carryover from another claim?

Robert: it is a carry over.

Mayor Dewey: so, when it is a reoccurring claim, they will use the reoccurring claim and just make a copy of it and it looks like we change the date. It is not that we are paying an old claim. Any other questions from council? Is there any public comment on the claims? Alright Ms. Berthoud would you please call for the vote.

Councilmember Devlin: aye.

Councilmember Ludington: aye.

Councilmember Shourd: aye.

Councilmember Vick: aye.

Mayor Dewey: thank you, motion passes unanimously.

6. Administrative Reports

a. Airport

Mayor Dewey introduced the airport and gave a report, volunteers are handling the snow plowing (unclear audio) challenges in that regard. We do have challenges at the airport in regards to wildlife crossing the runway and so we are working with law enforcement to address that along with Fish Wildlife and Parks our preference is to get the animal out of the airport unharmed and when that doesn't happen, we sometimes have to resort to dispatching the animal so, we are exhausting all options first of course keeping public safety paramount. We did have an aircraft collide with an animal weekend before last luckily no one was injured of course there was damage to the aircraft we are keeping a close eye on that. We are exploring options, it appears that it could be the animals are crossing the cattle guard based on how it is designed there are some gaps easily just cross there have been some accounts from contractors, in that regard we are exploring some options to maybe upgrade the cattle guard or install some sort of gate system that would allow traffic to flow but would prohibit animals into that space. We are just kind of notifying aircraft operators that there is a risk to landing in our airport we do have a wildlife fence but sometimes it is inadequate. I think otherwise the airport is doing well in terms of operations the only other piece I will bring to your attention is we expect to see an influx of traffic, Hamilton has notified its users that they will close their airport on March 15th they are saying three months are experience with projects is that three months is ambitious we are anticipating an increase flow of traffic because of Hamilton's closure during their project and we will have a significant number of people using our airport instead, fuel operations has already been moved temporarily from Hamilton to our airport so, outside of that I think that hits everything the airport is covering.

b. City Court

Mayor Dewey introduced the city court report, the judge gives a annual report to the town council and she does so in writing and this is included in your town council packet for your information.

c. Community Development

Mayor Dewey: the other change you will see on your agenda is we kind of changed the building department report to community development report. Part of our budgeting process was consolidating building, planning and zoning and our community development, you will see the report in your packet tonight that covers the detail of the building department specifically in terms of what they are doing. Permits on the planning and zoning side I can give you a report there, public hearings, as you are aware, public hearings have been scheduled for Burnt Fork Estates and we will hold a total of two of those hearings and of course you will then dive into the details of that subdivision through your approval process we continue to see increased activity in terms of phone calls and inquires from realtors and perspective buyers developers throughout the community, anytime a piece of property especially in town goes up for sale and has some potential for development the phones usually ring off the hook. And so that is, I will cautiously use the word burdensome, it causes a bog down of regular operations when those kinds of things happen, we are going to initiate a few PR measures to help realtors, so they can better understand our code and how they can utilize the code as a resource instead of calling us with questions, when they can find the answers to. So, we are working on some of that and

address that community development pieces that we are working on continual projection of growth coming our way and the town council can expect some revisions to the plat of Twin Creeks phases 2 and 3 it looks like they are going to maintain the same density, I think they are proposing the same density but may be reconfiguring how that density looks in the subdivision and open up a little more common area than what is already platted for. So, you can expect that to come through and we also have to applications for a zoning change coming up that the town council will eventually get through once the planning and zoning board has a chance to review those. On one of those applications, it has been deemed incomplete, so we are trying to gather more information the other one looks to be complete and brought forth to planning and zoning very soon. That concludes community development, any questions on that rapid fire report.

d. Finance

Robert: a couple of things for tonight we just stated the budget process for FY 21/22 at the very beginning of it with some of the department heads. We submitted round five CARES just last month for a little over 150K, I haven't heard back on that yet. We did get some money from round 4 and should be hitting our bank any day we just got the stuff saying we got our stuff approved for round four. We are also, the airport project talked with Morris Merle and the project will be coming in front of you later on the project went over by 200K, put an amendment into the FAA and it looks like they are going to fund 90% of that, that would leave the town with about 20K that the town, that the airport would owe on top of that we got a 30,000 dollar CARES grant so we are going to put that money towards the airport it should be pretty good in the end, bottom line the airport will still be over by 100K at the end of the year. Cash report right now we are a little under 3.4 million in the bank, we do have some money like the Montana Aeronautics coming in that would cover the 10% would be our cost share for the airport project which is about 170K that should be coming in. Revenues for the year right now, I gave you a sheet there, we are 64 % collected when we get some of that bigger money come in you will see that number go up. Expenditures for the year right now we are at 58% spent on the budget. Any questions?

e. Fire Department

Chief Motley: I am sure my report is in the packet pretty self-explanatory. Chief Motley gave his report in person from the admin report that was provided in the packet for tonight's council meeting.

f. Parks & Recreation

Report was provided in the packet to the council by Bobby Sonsteng.

g. Police Department

Interim Chief Ellington gave his report in person from the admin report that was provided in the packet for tonight's council meeting.

h. Public Works

Mayor Dewey introduced public works report it was provided in the packet for tonight's town council meeting.

7. Guests

None.

8. Correspondence

a. Letter from Stevensville Business Owners

Mayor Dewey read the letter from Stevensville Business Owners; letter was provided in the packet.

b. Letter from Victoria Howell and Joan Prather

Mayor Dewey introduced the letter but due to the length of the letter it was not read but was provided in the packet to the council.

9. Public Hearings

None.

10. Unfinished Business

None.

11. New Business

a. Discussion/Decision: Resolution 484, establishing the written minutes as the official minutes of record for hearings and meetings of the Town Council

Mayor Dewey: introduced new business item (a). This item as an introduction is widely in response to repeated comment, we receive from a citizen there seems to be a lot of confusion around the recordings of our meetings and whether they are designated as the official record of the town council minutes. We have not been able to find any policy in the town's records that states that the audio is the official record. State law does say that you have the ability to designate it if you so choose and doesn't require that you do, and we can't find anything in our recent records where that has been done and designated. With that being said there is a long history dating back into a little bit into the 90's where we did record meetings and we have recorded meetings and we have kept those as permanent records per the retention schedule required by the state. This resolution is not saying that we are going to do away with recorded meetings especially via audio, we will always record those meetings and we will keep those recordings as permanent record, but what this does, what this resolution does is basically clarify for the administration and the clerk which set, is it the recording or is it the written minutes that is the official record. Now when we bring minutes in front of the town council, we ask you to approve the written minutes we never ask you to approve the recording. And those written minutes are stamped, signed, and scanned in and then stuck in our records. Generally speaking, if there is ever an issue where we are subpoenaed or asked for minutes for court proceedings or any other type of litigation rarely do, they ask for the audio they ask for written minutes. If there are questions about the written minutes, then it comes back to the audio. So, we are just kind of clarifying, the written minutes are in fact the official record, it is not our intent to change any procedures we are basically hoping if the council approves Resolution 484 that you are

reinforcing and solidifying the practice today which is your written minutes are the official record of the meeting, we will maintain audio recordings as records for meetings in our official files and on our website. That we want to maintain the written record as the official record. I am happy to answer any questions from the council before adoption.

Councilmember Ludington: what about correspondence, is that kept with the minutes or with the general.

Mayor Dewey: so, we had this conversation today with Jenelle on how we are compiling some of these documents. Practice has been when minutes are approved, they are signed stamped approved. They go into a binder with that entire packet for that meeting so, when you open the binder you would find the agenda for February 11th and then you would find the approved minutes for tonight's meeting and then you would find from that point forward you would find exactly what we published on line in terms of the packet and any additional correspondence or material that may have been handed out during the meeting , so if someone came to the meeting tonight and read aloud a comment and gave us a copy of that we would include that in the permanent file. That's been done, most of our records look that way with the exception of thirty years that burned in a fire, otherwise that is the way everything looks. That is the way we were able to go back and find out who was mayor and who was on council when and it was based on who signed the minutes.

Councilmember Devlin: so, when we get the email with the ZOOM meeting those are included in there as well?

Mayor Dewey: correct. I think that is maybe where some of the confusion maybe came about is that we were getting some very lengthy public comments through email that it would have been prohibited time wise to read those notes in a meeting a lot of the concern that we heard from one individual was that the audio was the record so you are basically diminishing those public comments by not including them in the record, but we state those into record that those exists so if someone was to ever listen they would know they exists and that they should look for them. We have always printed those and included them in the file for the meeting which is why you want to designate the written minutes as the official record so if there was ever a request for a certain meeting or public comment, we know that the official record exists in paper in the permanent file.

Councilmember Shourd: I will make a motion to approve Resolution 484.

Councilmember Devlin: I will 2nd.

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Mr. Shourd and 2nd by Ms. Devlin to approve Resolution 484. Any further council discussion?

Councilmember Vick: the only thing that I have to say is that any organization that I have done any business with that has done any thing with Roberts Rule of Order the written minutes has been the final say so, there has never been a question I don't think about that besides the single individual that has made the same statement over and over again.

Mayor Dewey: that is why we type them and put them in front of you for approval so both eyes see them before they are blessed with ink. Further discussion from council? Any public comment?

Leanna Rudabaugh 203 Ravalli Street: gave public comment, problem with this is, this is a public meeting people without computers have no idea what the email said like the planning and zoning they have no idea, if you don't read them no one knows. They can't access what happens here in a written form online because they don't have computers. I think it is 41% of people in Stevensville that are my age, elderly I know how to run a computer I have four neighbors that don't. and you are denying them public participation which in the past we have objected to if you don't include the public all you are is a governing body talking to yourselves. Thank you.

Mayor Dewey: any further public comment? I will just address that for the benefit of the conversation there are people out there citizens who wish to engage in the affairs of the local government it is as simple as coming to town hall and requesting copies of what they need so they can review I guess I don't know how establishing an audio recording as the official minutes of record would help someone who can't operate a computer or doesn't own a computer understanding what happened at the meeting. With that we will go with whatever means to help in fact just statistically we know about 15% of Stevensville's community in the city limits do not have a computer in their home and 10% don't have a smart phone in their home which is relatively low when you think of percentages. So, but it is something that we are looking at we are tracking by quadrants on who interacts with us on the internet none the less anything further from council or public comment? Ms. Berthoud would you please call for the vote.

Councilmember Devlin: aye.

Councilmember Ludington: aye.

Councilmember Shourd: aye.

Councilmember Vick: aye.

Mayor Dewey: the motion passes unanimously.

b. Discussion/Decision: Consent to Mayor's appointment of Steve Kruse as Public Works Director

Mayor Dewey: introduced new business item (b). The cover letter and resume for Steve Kruse was provided in the packet. Mr. Kruse has been kind enough to join us this evening he has been blessed with the privilege and fully baptized with the public works realm with plenty of snow and cold weather. And if that has not scared him off and he still showed up tonight I think we can proceed. His cover letter, resume and supplemental questions and answers are in your packet, just kind of a highlight to the process that we followed in replacing the public works director following the retirement of George Thomas in 2020 we solicited nation wide applications for the public works director position that actually yielded three applications which wasn't as large of a pool as we had hoped but all candidates were qualified in their own ways Mr. Underwood and I conducted the first round of interviews that were quiet lengthy and elaborate and answered a lot of questions that we had about the candidates we interviewed all

three and we were able to narrow down that pool from three to two. From there I invited Mr. Ludington and Ms. Devlin to join me in the second interview, Robert and I frankly came to a pretty split place between the two candidates like I said they both brought strengths to the organization in their own unique ways and it was a very tough decision to weigh the two so we wanted some other influence knowing the council would weigh in on this decision through consent I invited Ms. Devlin and Mr. Ludington based on their experience with the town and the hiring realm so we conducted a second interview that was very successful and in part helped me in my decision to appoint Mr. Kruse as the public works director. Is there anything that you would like to highlight about your experience which maybe isn't already stated?

Steve Kruse: I don't think there is anything else to say, happy to be here, thank you for putting your faith in me one day on the job, interesting day removing snow from the city, very excited about this job and I hope to meet or exceed the expectations and we are excited about being part of the community.

Mayor Dewey: are there any questions from the council for Mr. Kruse?

Councilmember Vick: I was just going to say I was glad that you didn't say he was baptized at the sewer plant.

Councilmember Vick: I will make a motion to approve the appointment.

Councilmember Shourd: I 2nd that.

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Mr. Vick and 2nd by Mr. Shourd to approve the appointment of Mr. Kruse as public works director. Council discussion? Public comment?

Leanna Rudabaugh: just a couple it was never recorded what the pay scale was for Mr. Kruse is.

Mayor Dewey: Mr. Kruse is salaried at \$56,900.00.

Leanna Rudabaugh: and what kind of certificate does he have? Anything from where he came from which is another state is not transferable to Montana.

Mayor Dewey: if you are asking about water and wastewater certifications, he does not have the certifications.

Leanna Rudabaugh: doesn't he have to have them?

Mayor Dewey: not as the public works director.

Leanna Rudabaugh: we have one person that is employed for the town currently that has all of the certifications, doesn't he have to be DEQ qualified?

Mayor Dewey: no.

Councilmember Devlin: this is not a time for questions.

Leanna Rudabaugh: so he is handling our water and sewer and he doesn't have any DEQ qualifications?

Mayor Dewey: I will answer once, we have two individuals that are already certified on the plants and we have two more individuals that are in training we are required to have one individual to be certified on the plants. Any further public comment? Hearing none, Ms. Berthoud.

Councilmember Devlin: aye.

Councilmember Ludington: aye.

Councilmember Shourd: aye

Councilmember Vick: aye.

Mayor Dewey: the motion passes unanimously.

c. Discussion/Decision: Vehicle Use Agreement with BVS Inc., providing use of backup ambulance for mobile COVID-19 Testing

Mayor Dewey: introduced new business item (c). this item is more as less conceptual to see how engaged you want the town to be in some sort of endeavor like this, we do have the vehicle available there are some concerns from the fire chief in regard to the reliability and maybe mechanical fitness there may be some things that need to be repaired there are certainly things, Mr. Vick is aware that need to be repaired on the vehicle but aside from the mirrors that he tore off the side there may be some mechanical things as well that aside I wanted to bring this to the councils attention to gage how far down this road do you expect to go if you are interested or not I think that will refer to Mr. Wick he can speak to the testing that he does and some of that background for the councils benefit and some more of the concept of what we are looking at here.

David Wick: I am with VBS Inc. doing virus testing for nearly 20 years VBS has been around working with honeybees for 14 years we have technology that we got from Army labs in Maryland that were designed for protecting the troops in the battlefield from engineered viruses' unknown viruses and we the technology was designed for human protection we adapted it to honeybees, COVID-19 popped up and the bee community sent data out and started to test for COVID-19. We have tested with Charles Rivers Laboratories. 14 years ago, masatona virus which is a corona virus very closely related with sars virus which there are only three of them associated with the corona virus. We are very rapid and inexpensive we are very quick about five minutes it is a saliva test we collect saliva in a test tube dilute it with water put it in a test tube and in five minutes we have results. Right now, I am collecting samples and then driving them back to my lab it would be nicer and quicker and more efficient if I could put it into a vehicle and get an idea what the virus is doing in the community as well as in the county and then through the state. The county commissioners are on board with what we are doing, and they are reported in doing this they wanted me to do this last March that did not come together, but we are here now and I talked to Mayor Dewey and made this proposal and bringing forward and looking for a vehicle, looking for funding or help what ever we can do to get this come together I am a small company working in a big world we can make a difference and test a lot of people and we can do asymptomatic testing my false positive are zero my false negatives are zero bold statement but that is what are records show. PCR has a very high false

positive and false negative we can eliminate that we can eliminate the need for masks we can eliminate the need for social isolation we can go to the school and test the basketball team before they go out and play, we can give them a clean bill of health. If you don't have the virus which is what we look for then you are not infections, period. We track, would be a big benefit not only to me but to the community and if it needs to be repaired, I will take on the repairs we have people that can do that. Maintenance, the vehicle maintenance, we will repurpose the vehicle which means we will modify it to put in the basic needs for lab equipment in the back of the vehicle, I don't need the cot, but I do need the benches the electrical, places to put compressed air and compressed gas. Any questions that is pretty, 20 years into a couple of minutes.

Councilmember Vick: my question is would the Stevensville Fire Department markings be covered on the vehicle.

David Wick: we will cover that we will mark it with our markings I will change it from BVS to something else so it really don't need people coming to my lad I need people coming to the mobile lab and we will address that to come to the mobile lab.

Councilmember Vick: okay.

Mayor Dewey: just so everyone is clear the proposal is not the Town of Stevensville providing to the community in anyway we are more or less loaning a vehicle to another organization that can provide that service to the community, so the Town of Stevensville is not getting into the testing business today.

David Wick: as I understand the ambulance has not been in use for a while for one or two years?

Mayor Dewey: it is in backup status to our primary ambulance that our fire department operates as a response unit and a backup to Marcus Daly. So, this is the towns backup, backup. It has been some time since it has been run. The expectation of this agreement is that once the term of the agreement runs out the vehicle is returned in substantially the same condition and serviceable as it is today.

David Wick: or better.

Mayor Dewey: or better. Chief do you want to speak to the points before us. Also, if there is an expense it will not be coming out of the fire departments budget, let's just be clear about that.

Chief Motley: the only question that I would have is one I think that it would be a reliable resource to the town to the county provide this type of service, my question would be what would the term be I mean is this for now and forever amen or are we done in two months or in six what would that term look like?

David Wick: I would suggest a term on of it of a year. Time flies when you are having fun and then a year and make it renewable if everyone agrees upon it and in would also put terminated some sort of time frame, 60 days, written notification, I am easy on that all of the vehicle would be returned in the same or better condition than it is in.

Councilmember Devlin: so, when you say backup, backup what are the odds we would need that and will this lead to us having to buy a new backup to backup.

Chief Motley: so, that was kind of my thought as well, I think the agreement can be written such that if our first two ambulances were to go down due to mechanical or for whatever reason we would have some type of a short turnaround to receive that ambulance back so that it can be in service for our needs and poor David would have to find a cart to which to continue until our ambulance would be back up and running. I think we should be able to work that out between the two entities however we would do that. I would agree that I would want some sort of a way to if the town needed that back as an ambulance that we would be able to turn that around in a short amount of time and be back in service and provide that service to the community. I don't know if that is a real stumbler, but it does need to be addressed. My other question is, is there any financial exchange for this use.

Mayor Dewey: the way that it was originally proposed is that in exchange for the use of the vehicle knowing the expenses of that vehicle in exception of the insurance which we are already insuring anyways, would fall on to VBS and Mr. Wick has offered to test our staff on a regular basis at no cost, that is kind of what we came to. you want to speak to the cost of your test and how that balances.

David Wick: the speed of the test is part, allows me to do more samples, the cost of the test is minimal, supplies are disposable throw a ways there are a couple parts that could enter into more expensive but we are talking a cost per test of \$15-\$20 per test versus the \$120-\$200 per test that is currently out there so turning that around I would take on all of the maintenance of the vehicle take care of all of the added liability of the vehicle will not come back to Stevensville, trade off would come back to, not even sure how many people are on staff that we can test but it is pretty much as needed anybody that is there even Mr. Kruse on his first day put him on the group and you guys are all welcome as well. The financial end of it is a low cost for me and low liability for the city it helps get this off the ground and it does serve the community well.

Councilmember Devlin: I just want to follow up with a question that I asked before, is there ever a time when we would need both of the ambulances at the same time? Do we ever need those ambulances at the same time?

Chief Motley: I am sure you could probably come up with a scenario for that would be it would be some type of a mass casualty event of some sort it may be some sort of catastrophic evacuation that would be another time that would come into play we do have Marcus Daly Ambulance service and 3-Mile has ambulance, Florence has ambulance there are several ambulances up and down the valley that we could draw upon with that being said it is very nice to have a backup rig sitting in the hall ready to go. I do also believe that this is a great service to the community and the situation that we are in.

Councilmember Devlin: that is my comment, I don't think that there is a lot of opportunity to be able to give back to our community, we have never gone through a pandemic before everything has been go go go and try to figure it out as we go, I think that it is a nice way to give back to our community.

David Wick: as far as Chief Motley mass casualty events where we need all hands-on deck, it is it would be difficult to get that vehicle back into ambulance mode shorter than a couple days short of removing equipment and then putting it back together, it is just putting a bunch of equipment in there will probably be close to 100,000 dollars' worth of equipment that we will put into it new and used. If there is a need because the primary vehicle goes down in a couple of days, we could have it back up and running.

Chief Motley: the fire department is situated that we would not be out of EMS services we would be with out transport capabilities we have EMS equipment on everything that we own we would still be able to provide service just would not be able to transport.

Councilmember Vick: make a motion to approve the agreement.

Councilmember Devlin: I 2nd that.

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Mr. Vick and 2nd by Ms. Devlin to approve the agreement. Council discussion? There are a few details that have been discussed tonight that are not incorporated in the agreement and there are some things in the agreement that probably need to be removed or reworded. Is it council's desire tonight to approve the agreement as a concept with an understanding that the fire chief and I can move forward and finalize an agreement with VBS or would you like us to bring an agreement before you?

Councilmember Vick: you can go ahead and negotiate.

Mayor Dewey: any further council discussion?

Councilmember Ludington: I think that there is a lot of good elements in what you have written so far there are some additional natures that need to be worked.

Mayor Dewey: absolutely, I will be honest I copied this off of the internet. Any further council discussion? Public comment? Hearing none Ms. Berthoud.

Councilmember Devlin: aye.

Councilmember Ludington: aye.

Councilmember Shourd: aye.

Councilmember Vick: aye

Mayor Dewey: motion passes unanimously. We will reword the aspects and work with Mr. Wick and make sure all parties are on the same page. Then you for your indulgence.

12. Executive Report

Mayor Dewey gave his executive report. I will as usual even though we have a little over an hour before we call it I will keep my executive report brief. I told my wife tonight I won't be home earlier than seven and no later than ten. The executive report I am going to turn this into a conversation and get some feedback from you in regard to COVID 19 and the governor's intent

to cancel the mask directive statewide tomorrow. First and for most I think I would like some feedback from the council on how you would like to proceed with town council meetings I think that is step number one in your consideration is how do you want to proceed with council meetings in terms of mask wearing and how you want to legislate that. So, we, I can pause and allow you to answer or if you care to defer and share your thoughts with me later that is okay, I don't want to put you on the spot, but some feedback would be helpful.

Councilmember Ludington: liability is a big issue for me I think that is where we are headed with this to protect each other if we don't show that we are trying to protect each other and our constituents we are liable whatever the governor and the legislation has passed, they will assist us in that, or I think that is a matter of clarification when the time comes as far as that goes.

Councilmember Devlin: this facility requires masks and social distancing are we going to continue in this facility and if we are, we need to keep doing what we are doing.

Mayor Dewey: I haven't consulted with the library my assumption is that they will continue to require masks in their facility and before I start that conversation I wanted to know more or less where your guys' head were, and it is our intent frankly until a bigger facility comes along, we will use this one in perpetuity the library's been agreeable to that in the foreseeable future. We do kind of have a little restraint there in terms of complying with what the library asks of us when using this room and as Mr. Ludington stated in terms of liability if they let us use this room free and clear without having precautions in place you don't want to see any liability out of that either.

Councilmember Devlin: I am thinking back we are losing a mask mandate at the very time that the state is putting in even more regulations so does it mean who are the specialist in this right. I think that we need to listen to our specialists.

Mayor Dewey: I think there is something to be said to the fact that tomorrow when the mask mandate is lifted across the state or the mask directive, the risk of getting COVID-19 is no less magically because blue pen met paper it is really a matter of legislation and the reduced liability for business' how it is exactly affecting local government I can tell you the town hall meeting with the other cities and towns across the state with the Leagues of Cities and Towns hopefully tomorrow we will see some guidance or clarification on how we are impacted in terms of liability the other piece of it is from my perspective and I will let you continue to answer, liability or otherwise I think we want to do the right thing and keep our community safe. Anything further from council on that.

Councilmember Shourd: I think we should mandate it and follow the CDC guidelines they have directions for us to go.

Mayor Dewey: what I am hearing is that you would like to maintain status quo in terms of our conduct at council meetings and so forth and those protocols are incorporated into our meetings so I think what I will do is just for the sake of discussion bringing it to you next council meeting forward the pieces that were agreed to early on to the in person meetings and have you review those and have you give your official blessing to those first (a) it is demonstrated to the citizens on what we are doing as the council we will continue in that regards. I can tell you

discussing the matter with the staff at town hall it is by my incarnation to continue wearing masks when they enter the facility and we have not been overly pushing by any means on mask wearing in the lobby especially when there is no one else in the lobby but we do ask for folks to be mindful of face coverings when they enter town hall especially when interacting with staff unprotected we rely very heavily on our staff in terms of making sure that they can come to work in a healthy way and stay healthy and maintain that, face coverings are a good line of defense to that. So, I guess more or less status quo at town hall as well. Most of the staff have indicated to me that they are most comfortable with that atmosphere. Okay in think that covers it. I will move onto, I participated in a meeting this afternoon and it was the first one of the year, national league of small cities council you are probably aware that I was appointed to that council earlier in the year there are roughly fifty or so of us on that council from across the nation and represent the communities of fifty thousand or less I think we are one of the smallest cities represented on that council, none the less, just over a dozen of us or tow dozen of us got together on zoom today to address a number of initiatives that the league of cities is pushing forward I kind of wanted to give you a quick over view of some of the things that may impact our organization, one is rules and regulations in terms of lead and water system relationships and the standards of lead in water and those will effect communities of ten thousand or less so, I am planning to send some information that I learned from that and there are some town halls that they are hosting at the national level that I will pass along to the public works department keeping a pulse on those EPA changes and it looks like three years that you have to come into compliance not sure exactly what those changes are but that is for Public Works to nail down and figure out how that is going to affect us. They of course covered a bunch of initiatives that are from the Biden administration, infrastructure is one of those availability for housing the standard initiatives that you see cities and towns chase after those are pretty cookie cutter. One big thing that we covered was the severance package that is coming forward for relief and aid particularly for local governments if you have studied up on the latest proposal that is coming our of the White house and being run through congress is including 350 Billion dollars in aid to states, tribal government municipalities and counties across the nation and about 96 billion of that or 69, 69 excuse me, 69 billion dollars of that is allocated to municipalities specifically for the big municipalities it will go straight over to those metropolitan areas directly to treasury for the smaller municipalities those of us under 500,000 people which is most of us, we will see that aide come to us through the state of Montana if that aide is approved, the difference will be unlike CARES this money comes directly to us from where we see fit, in terms to pandemic response we can use that funding to implement programs to respond to the pandemic or we can use it to offset revenue losses if we see any losses in our revenue budgets namely would be our parks programs where we see a decrease in revenue naturally because people aren't participating in programs and they are herder to put together. If that legislation is successful, I can see opportunities where communities across the nation will benefit from that maybe this community will benefit, the amount of money we receive is based on census data and the latest data so, we will keep you as updated as what we can expect in that regard and I think the biggest concerns from the national level is that the fact, they think that it will sail through the house relatively smoothly the senate is where there are some serious myths that that will be quick. So with that they were eager to see on that funding to come through, there isn't a whole lot I will tell you that we are funding because of the pandemic today

that CARES covered before other than things like our subscriptions and some other technological subscriptions type services that we implemented during that pandemic that are relatively minor impacts to our budget that we can usually go lighter some place else to help compensate for that, but there are also programs that we haven't been able to do that could greatly benefit from some relief money passed down to the town we haven't at all touched on even the testing situation even that was something that we have a hard time participating in because of our resources and this may give us the resources to help in unique ways that even it is two business' that can have an opportunity to utilize that funding then we chose how to use that funding the state is not telling us how to use it so there is a tremendous benefit in terms to CARES. CARES was totally regulated by the state sometimes the state would change their minds on how things would work, so, I think that relatively raps up that piece and the last piece that I will update you on is the chief of police recruitment. We have narrowed down the pool of candidates for that position down to four from an original pool of eleven or twelve I think, and all four candidates are outstanding candidates and bring great value to the organization in fact if we could have four chief of polices' that would make this a whole lot easier we could just quit today I realize that is not a reality so, Robert and I have worked through an interview process and have done interviews and have narrowed it down to four. I have put together and this information, it is probably the first time it has hit anyone's ears, and we will obviously put out a press release to explain it to the citizens and how they can engage. I put together a panel of citizens that will hear presentation from each of the four candidates in a public way so, we have targeted February 24th as a day the panel will get together to hear presentations from the four candidates and will have an opportunity to evaluate those presentations as a panel the public will be invited to participate they can come and ask questions of the candidates that either relate to the presentation that they give, pre assigned topic , or maybe it just relates to something in the community we invite the public to participate in those, there are four it will be a days long process and so I appreciate the volunteers that are willing to help us evaluate that. But what I really want is a public engagement in this discussion, it doesn't happen very often where we get to replace a chief of police it is a rare opportunity and I want to take it seriously and I really want to look through it as thoroughly as we can. I want to give an opportunity; we will go through that process of the second presentation and interview the candidates will also have an opportunity to meet with the existing SPD staff and there will be kind of a facilitated forum there as well so the current staff have an opportunity to meet the candidate and provide me with their feedback and from there, in fact, we are trying to schedule this as such that each of the candidates can the next time council meeting so that and we are necessarily doing so to interview them or anything like that, just so they have an opportunity to see how the community engages and interacts and how we all conduct our business so, we wanted, if they were going to come all this way and visit the community we really wanted to immerse them into what Stevensville is all about and what better place than a town council meeting on a Thursday evening. So, that is where we are in that process and I look forward to hopefully have or bring an appointment before you in March for your consideration or consent rather. Barring any questions, I will move it on to town council comments.

Councilmember Devlin: so, if you have been on Facebook lately you will notice that a weekend has been chosen for Creamery Picnic so with that said the Civic Club is looking for a lot of volunteers to help with that, they are also looking for board members so, I just want to remind people that we are alive and well, but it just needs some help it just needs some new blood and some new excitement. So, if you are dying to get involved in something that really does give back to our community the Stevensville Civic Club would be a great opportunity.

Mayor Dewey: one more thought on the police chief position, I got a little ways and realized that I left out a step. We will work through that process and when I make the final decision on the appointment that candidate will go in front of the police commission before I bring it in front of the town council for consent and give them a final offer. So, their contingent offer is also contingent on the police commission and then they will go through their process as they usually do with applicants so everything that I just described is right behind the police commission.

Councilmember Vick: I have a couple of things that have been brought up over the past couple of weeks since our last meeting. One is, biggest thing that I got and the Johnson's sent us all a letter and they were concerned about water quality once that is getting into their home some people are starting to notice an odd odor, a guess chemical like odors in their water there is a lot of concern about that and the discoloration of water, I understand that obviously after the meters your pipes are changing the color of the water and that is not the town responsibility but they are concerned about it and they are wondering if there are any resources that if they could bring a cup or a gallon of their own water from their tap to get it tested to see if it is okay. Also two, I have been doing some thinking about the public hearings from the Burnt Fork Estates things I do like the fact that we are going to have a virtual meeting I personally think we should look at adding one more public hearing for in person so that we can insure maximum participation I know the state law says a minimum of two but I think with a project as large as this that we should be looking at we shouldn't just stop at the bare minimum. And finally some people, actually speaking on the letter that people received for the Burnt Fork Estates thing some people noticed a comment in their about the utility program that we just reenacted the collected of the monies for it said on their that the fee was being reduced from a \$1.52 to .40 cents and they were, people were just looking for some clarity on that.

Mayor Dewey: thanks for reminding me on that because that was one thing I meant to put on my executive report. The council reinstated more or less the Utility Assistants Program onto our water bills. Under an abundance of caution and for the sake of process it was advised by the city attorney that we undertake the same process as if we were raising utility rates or adjusting utility rates. You could be argued that we are simply reinstating a fee at a lesser rate than what it was originally set at but often times we spend more money litigating on those types of issues than we do if we simply engage everyone in the process. So, it was advised by him so that is why we need very quickly put those two public hearing together that while you are considering the Burnt Fork Estates public hearing we will also give people an opportunity to give public comment on the Utility Assistance rate, while it is being reinstated it is being reduced from \$1.52 to .40 cents. So, the original \$1.52 was suspended and taken off your bill it is being reinstated and reduced so, yes, it is confusing we are undertaking that process and precautions so that everyone is aware much to our surprise we prematurely put on the water bill that we were going to go ahead and do this and no one noticed we thought the phones would ring and people would scream and no one really noticed which told us that people don't really care that their bill is going to go up .40 cents or that they didn't notice the language at the bottom of the bill and didn't

know they needed an opportunity to make a comment. That is why we are undertaking that process and so to the point A. the public hearing is required just one public hearing in fact there are no state requirements that more than one hearing is required. One public hearing is necessary for both Burnt Fork Estates and for the water rate issue we are going to reschedule, now if the council determines after those hearings that they need additional hearing we will schedule those and you have the opportunity to hold hearings during the town council meetings as well depending on the volume of people you expect at those hearings but you know our intent was to hold the two hearing and then at your town council meetings you would begin to discuss and elaborate on the action for Burnt Fork Estates so, thank you for reminding me on the utility I apologize that I left that out. You were probably puzzled as well when you saw the letter. No more council comments?

14. Board Reports

Mayor Dewey: none, I don't think any other boards have met except for the airport board. It doesn't sound like you were able to make it Tuesday.

Councilmember Vick: I was not made aware of the meeting on Tuesday.

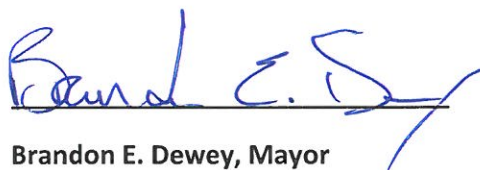
Mayor Dewey: okay we will ensure that you are notified of those, they are generally on the second Tuesday of the month, correct Robert?

Robert: yes.

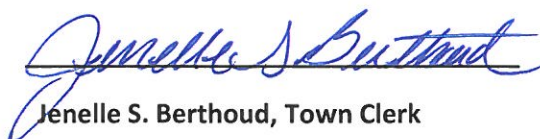
Mayor Dewey: second Tuesday of the month, Airport Board meeting. If there are no more board reports, we will adjourn and we will meet back up on the 25th of February.

15. Adjournment

APPROVE:


Brandon E. Dewey, Mayor

ATTEST:


Jenelle S. Berthoud, Town Clerk