

**Stevensville Town Council Meeting Minutes
for THURSDAY, AUGUST 26, 2021, 7:30 PM**

CONDENSED MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Dewey called the meeting to order, Councilmembers Allen, Devlin, Ludington and Wandler were all 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. April 22, 2021, Meeting Minutes Closed Session

b. June 28, 2021, Meeting Minutes Closed Session

c. June 28, 2021, Meeting Minutes

d. July 08, 2021, Meeting Minutes

e. July 22, 2021, Meeting Minutes

Mayor Dewey: introduced approval of minutes as listed above.

Councilmember Devlin: I will make a motion to approve.

Councilmember Wandler: I will 2nd.

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Ms. Devlin and 2nd by Ms. Wandler to approve the minutes.

Councilmember Ludington: clarification all minutes of closed session minutes?

Mayor Dewey: please restate you motion.

Councilmember Delvin: I will make a motion to approve April 22, 2021, June 28, 2021, Meeting Minutes Closed Session.

Councilmember Ludington: 2nd.

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Ms. Devlin and 2nd by Mr. Ludington to approve the closed session minutes.

Councilmember Allen: I would like to recuse myself from voting I was not at the April 22 meeting and there is no audio available.

Mayor Dewey: no problem, any further council comments? Any public comment on the approval of the closed session minutes? Okay, hearing none we will call for the vote.

Councilmember Allen: abstained.

Councilmember Devlin: aye.

Councilmember Ludington: aye.

Councilmember Wandler: abstained.

Mayor Dewey: that motion passes with two aye's and two abstained. Move on to the rest of your minutes.

Councilmember Allen: I will make a motion to approve.

Councilmember Ludington: 2nd

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Ms. Allen and 2nd by Mr. Ludington. Council discussion? Public comment. Hearing none we will call for the vote.

Councilmember Allen: aye.

Councilmember Devlin: aye.

Councilmember Ludington: aye.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

5. Approval of Bi-Weekly Claims

a. Claim #16437

b. Claims #16940-16991

Mayor Dewey: introduced claims #16437 and #16940-#16991. Council asked that they consider this claim after the investigation to that specific matter, the results of that investigation have been provided with that claim in your packet. I will turn the chair over to council president Mr. Ludington.

Councilmember Ludington: is there a motion on claim number #16437?

Councilmember Devlin: I will make a motion to approve claim #16437.

Councilmember Allen: 2nd.

Councilmember Ludington: it has been moved and 2nd to approve claim #16437. Council discussion.

Councilmember Devlin: this is a hot topic. We are revisiting it after we had an investigation done. We discussed that we did not believe that there was any criminal activity. Ms. Devlin resighted what was stated by the investigator. This all comes out to zero, an approval of this was approving that it is a zero claim.

Councilmember Ludington: further discussion? Public comment?

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Vickie Motley: 318 9th Street, just clarification, if you vote for this are you paying Brandon back those fees.

Councilmember Devlin: this is not asking for indemnifications.

Vickie Motley: so, you are approving a claim that is at a zero balance now?

Councilmember Devlin: correct.

Victoria Howell: I think that it would be helpful for the public to know what the investigation cost.

Leanna Rodabaugh: me again. to my knowledge the attorney spoke with, Mr. Dewey, town hall employees and Robert Underwood. Fact of the matter is, and this is fact, Mr. Dewey had the check written to himself and that was a bobo. There was no reason for the check to be written out to Mr. Dewey.

Councilmember Ludington: additional public comment. Hearing none we will call for the vote, Ms. Berthoud.

Councilmember Allen: aye.

Councilmember Devlin: aye.

Councilmember Ludington: no

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

b. Claims #16940-16991

Mayor Dewey: introduced claims #16940-16991. That includes claim number 16982 to a question in public comment in reference to the investigation fees. The amount was \$3260.00

Councilmember Ludington: so, moved.

Councilmember Devlin: 2nd

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Mr. Ludington and 2nd by Ms. Devlin. Council discussion?

Councilmember Allen: #16974, big bear sign? Police RAM, correct? #16978 Miller Law Office?

Mayor Dewey: correct. Mr. Miller is specifically our attorney to handle the water rights. Twin Creeks well field. This is a couple of hours of his work.

Councilmember Ludington: there is also \$1900.00 to HDR engineering for that same thing #16986?

Mayor Dewey: good news is we are looking good and moving forward with water rights. Any further council comment? Public comment?

PUBLIC COMMENT

Stacie Barker: 104 Winslett Ave. #16965 for Facebook for \$20.00 what is that?

Mayor Dewey: it would either be for a job announcement or swimming pool. Any further public comment on the claims, Ms. Berthoud.

Councilmember Allen: aye.

Councilmember Devlin: aye.

Councilmember Ludington: aye.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

Mayor Dewey: Motion passes unanimously.

6. Administrative Reports

None

7. Guests

None

8. Correspondence

a. Stevensville Civic Club

Victoria Howell; read a letter written by the Stevensville Civic Club to the mayor and the council. (Letter will be attached to the minutes of this meeting). The event was very successful we netted about \$18,000.00 which most of that will go towards the splash pad.

9. Public Hearings

a. FY2021-2022 Preliminary Budget

Mayor Dewey: introduced the public hearing item (a) also under agenda item 11 c.

Councilmember Ludington: so, point of order we discovered last night that the projector does not work we probably should have had the other one.

Mayor Dewey: is there any public comment?

PUBLIC COMMENT

Stacie Barker: 104 Winslett Ave. seeing this it is hard to read. As a citizen of the town, I want to see what my tax dollars are going to. it needs to be broke down so we can see it. General Government line item, nothing in that line item how do we know?

Mayor Dewey: any further public comment? Hearing none we will close the public hearing.

10. Unfinished Business

11. New Business

a. Discussion/Decision: Consent to the Mayor's Appointment of Susan Devlin to the Park Board

Mayor Dewey: introduced new business item (a)

Councilmember Allen: I will make a motion to consent.

Councilmember Wandler: 2nd.

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Ms. Allen and 2nd by Ms. Wandler. Council discussion?

Councilmember Allen: thank you for volunteering for the park board.

Mayor Dewey: any further council comment? Public comment? Hearing none we will call for the vote, Ms. Berthoud.

Councilmember Allen: aye.

Councilmember Devlin: abstained.

Councilmember Ludington: aye.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

Mayor Dewey: the motion passes, three with one abstention.

b. Discussion/Decision: Painting of Yellowjacket Bees on Stevensville Side Streets

Mayor Dewey: introduced new business item (b)

Stevensville Booster Club: introduced the plan behind item (b). School is doing a rebranding, we are trying to do public involvement, a new plan is to paint the bees down 3rd Street. From 3rd to Park. Introduced the stencil of the bee to the council. We would like to propose the idea to paint it on city sidewalks also.

Councilmember Allen: as it stands now there are two bees one on 3rd street and one on Park?

Booster Club: no, we would like to paint one on each block and maybe a swarm of them in areas.

Councilmember Ludington: it is probably going to be chip sealed but probably not until spring.

Mayor Dewey: there are no plans to chip seal it. It would be nice, but we are waiting to see what that costs.

Councilmember Ludington: so, you are maybe looking at 8, 10, 12?

Booster Club: I should have done some research, how many blocks? Each intersection would be cool and then one in between. Maybe up to 18. On Park we will have a discussion with the school.

Councilmember Devlin: are you asking about streets and the sidewalks?

Booster Club: if you have a different idea about approval of the sidewalks we can wait.

Mayor Dewey: we remember a conversation about the sidewalks, right Fran?

Fran: you left that open ended for us, so we will have to wash the old ones off and apply the new ones. It will be the same size.

Mayor Dewey: the question is for the council is non uniform painting on the streets.

Councilmember Devlin: make a motion to approve.

Councilmember Wandler: 2nd.

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Ms. Devlin and 2nd by Ms. Wandler. Council discussion?

Councilmember Ludington: I would ask that you would meet with public works.

Booster Club: we would not mind finding a spot to do a practice painting.

Councilmember Ludington: I would suggest that.

Mayor Dewey: I do have a question, what color?

Booster Club: black and gold, we will have to do a mock paint up to see what works with the street being black.

Mayor Dewey: what is the intent/concept of the council. They do a mock up and then come back?

Councilmember Devlin: I am not interested in them coming back.

Councilmember Allen: I would say just meet with public works.

Councilmember Wandler: is there plans for maintenance of these.

Booster Club: we will have to take that one and address it.

Mayor Dewey: Any public comment?

Vickie Motley: in the intersections, what size will these be?

Booster Club: sidewalk size around 2 feet. 3 foot in size for the street.

Mayor Dewey: any further public comment? Hearing none we will call for the vote, Ms. Berthoud.

Councilmember Allen: aye.

Councilmember Devlin: aye.

Councilmember Ludington: aye.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

Mayor Dewey: motion passes we will coordinate with public works department.

c. Discussion/Decision: Resolution No. 490 - Adopting a Budget, Establishing Mill Levies, and Adopting Wages and Salaries for the Fiscal Year 2021-2022

Mayor Dewey: introduced new business item (c) I will address a couple of things, there was a comment about general government addressing salaries. There are a couple of places that you can reference that. The narrative does not give specific numbers. In the budget detail it is broken down. Follow the columns across and it shows what we are spending. The document has a yellow line through it, we updated the general fund we did not get the other lines updated since last night's meetings. How would you like to proceed?

Councilmember Ludington: I am looking at the resolution, I don't see mills in the fireman's disability fund?

Mayor Dewey: we no longer set aside mills for the fireman's disability fund, we are just a pass through for that money. Discussed the general fund.

Councilmember Ludington: one of the things that we did not talk about last night was the lighting district.

Mayor Dewey: right, rates have gone up more than we expected so there was some spending down. What you see here is going to catch us back up. We experienced that last year, in one specific district we had to increase. We have established that we will have a cushion of 25%.

Councilmember Allen: we had a public comment earlier about how hard this is to read. As a community member I want to know how much the town is paying its employees. We budgeted in the fire department for one amount last year and we spent over that. What are personal services?

Mayor Dewey: it is salaries or a benefit. It is the entire cost of having a human being work for you. pay roll, health insurance, workman's compensation.

Councilmember Allen: operating and maintenance, the cost of having.

Mayor Dewey: that is the stuff that we buy, not capitalized, things that cost less than \$5000. It is consumables, heating bills, operating costs.

Councilmember Allen: fire prevention, last year budgeted for \$800, and we spent \$500, who came up with the \$500 number?

Mayor Dewey: the fire chief. Anything else from council? You will probably notice that investments in the capital improvement are pretty low we are not actually using capital improvement fund in this proposed budget and the reason for that is. Our utility is well taken care of, and we pay engineers to take care of that and make sure that they are up to date. We plan for basic functions, fire trucks, police cars, city hall. Need to update that capital improvement plan, the fund has a hard time staying funded. Would like to hold a council workshop to discuss that plan. There are some projects coming up that we will more specifically address with the council, you do not see the Park Ave sewer main in the budget so that the council can have say in that plan.

Councilmember Allen: I have a question I don't think that we discussed this last night, ARPA funding, I want to go back to our discussion about ending the declaration and FEWMA funding. That money is not in the budget we are not including that funding in the budget.

Mayor Dewey: correct, we are not anticipating FEMA funding.

Councilmember Ludington: lets talk about city court, this is a significant increase, are we behind in prosecution or is there a back log.

Mayor Dewey: we are anticipating more because the police department has increased. We do anticipate an increased case load in the court. The judge usually gives us case numbers on a calendar year we are asking that they give us a count on a fiscal year to help with projections. The increase in police officers and the number of staffed shifts there is a natural increase in tickets and a possible increase in revenue numbers. Also, can depend on the type of cases some take more time and money and others do not.

Councilmember Ludington: I will speak to that this has been a little different to what I am used to, I am proud of this council for the decisions that we have made. We want to make sure that we retain the people that work for us. This is the best work force that I have seen in the last several years, so we need to retain that. Not a single employee came to us and asked for this, the council came up with this decision. I am proud of you guys (council) for doing that. It is costing us a little money, but it is making a way for us to continue moving forward.

Councilmember Allen: what we said yesterday when we walked away was that zero was not an option. I am proud to lead by example and I am proud of the employees that we have.

Councilmember Devlin: I want to thank you again; wages have been discussed before; I am glad that we went down the path that we did. I am proud of the works that work for us. This is for our community. While I thank you all I thank the town employees.

Councilmember Wandler: I agree with everyone on the council. These are our people, and we want to keep them. I think that it is important that we pay a living wage.

Mayor Dewey: is there a direction that you would like to take this evening.

Councilmember Allen: you went to a lot of work to get to that wage; can you speak to that.

Mayor Dewey: we started with 1% and the council asked that we come back with a better percentage. When we determined target rates, East Helena, Columbus, looked at regional towns, Darby, Hamilton. We knew we could not compete with Missoula. We know that we have to market to a living wage. We know that we have to market to a small community. We know that we are going to lose to a larger town. But if they are happy with where they are then we want to treat these people well. The target rate we found was some wages were in 1-3 % and then we found some that were 11%. I approached this preliminary budget not knowing what to expect from all of you. So, I started on the lower end. I appreciate the staff and what they do.

Councilmember Ludington: I ran into three staff members today and they said thank you stepping up and taking care of us.

Mayor Dewey: whether it is good or bad, it is unique. This group of people will step up to the plate and continue to work hard.

Councilmember Allen: make a motion to approve.

Councilmember Devlin: 2nd.

Mayor Dewey: it has been moved by Ms. Allen and 2nd by Ms. Devlin. Council discussion? Public comment?

PUBLIC COMMENT

Stacie Barker: 104 Winslett Ave. it would be nice to see the break down of the wages, I think that it should be public. I work for the public and you make more than I do. I would like to see what those numbers are.

Sue Devlin: 305 6th Street, employee retention was on the biggest things that I talked about with my employer. We have had a lot of turnover some due to poor behavior and some due to low wages. The employees are valuable.

Vickie Motley: one of my questions is how much of the ARPA funds are being used to balance the budget? ARPA funds are a one-time thing. Just want to make sure that what you are using ARPA funds for is a onetime thing. My other thing Paul is for information about the fireman's relief fund. We have not had to come to you in a while but will have to in the future. If it is a stipend, is it coming from that department?

Councilmember Ludington: I will say Vickie that there is some ARPA funding that are being used in this case, but we are looking at other places to find additional funding, like annexation and expanding the tax base. We are told that we are getting this much I anticipate that there is going to be something coming forth to rain that in. We are facing the challenges, what do we do if the pandemic upswings or the housing market drops.

Mayor Dewey: regarding taxes, when your property value increases so do your taxes, but the amount that the town is allowed to collect in mills off of your property is capped every year. We can't collect taxes further than half the rate of inflation. What ever the inflation rate is for the year you can cut that in half and that is the value of the mill. It can't increase more than .97%. all of the things increase but not our mills.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Leanna Rodabaugh: most of the time I just say silly things why is it necessary that we spend every last piece of income that we have. What happens if we put money back what happens if there is an emergency? We don't need new computers; we don't need this stuff. We don't want more people here; you have to spend money to have them here. You don't have to annex.

Mayor Dewey: further comment? Hearing none, we will call for the vote, Ms. Berthoud.

Councilmember Allen: aye.

Councilmember Devlin: aye.

Councilmember Ludington: aye.

Councilmember Wandler: aye.

Mayor Dewey: motion passes unanimously.

12. Executive Report

Mayor Dewey: I want to address some notes that I have here there is a lot of mis information at the podium, you take time to research so bear with me. There was not a check written to Brandon Dewey it was written to the attorney. The investigation was more than just a phone call there were documents provided I spent more than an hour with the investigator at one point in a follow up. I appreciate that those of you that read the report I appreciate that. As it hurts to spend that money. Mr. Underwood was not fired and that is all that I will say on that matter. In regard to the budget if you actually look at the numbers, we have plenty to fix the water leaks, we have been very responsible with our funds. You did not have anyone at the budget workshops to watch you through that process. We don't spend more than we have. We can't have more than 50% in our general fund. The building code enforcement fund is another example of that.

13. Town Council Comments

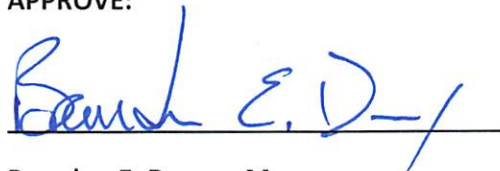
None.

14. Board Reports

Councilmember Ludington: The Planning and Zoning Board met for about an hour last night. Going over subdivision regulations that we have sliced and diced to try to find something that works for us. We will bring that document forward to the council soon.


15. Adjournment

APPROVE:



Brandon E. Dewey, Mayor

ATTEST:



Jenelle S. Berthoud, Town Clerk



Stevensville Civic Club
P.O. Box 676
Stevensville MT 59870

August 17, 2021

Mayor & Town Council
206 Buck
Stevensville MT 59870

Dear Mayor Dewey & Town Council members:

On behalf of the Stevensville Civic Club, I would like to express my appreciation for all the help we received from the Town of Stevensville in putting on the 108th Creamery Picnic. By all accounts, this was one of the biggest Picnics in terms of attendance, certainly in recent memory. To my knowledge, there were no major negative incidents of any kind.

An event of this size requires a lot of physical labor, from moving stages and erecting tents, mowing the park lawns and hooking up extra electricity and hoses, placing traffic barricades and signs, to providing extra police and fire security. Town staff did all this and much more.

In fact, there is absolutely no way we could have staged such an excellent and successful event without the Town's help. From the very moment that planning started, I was able to call on Mayor Dewey for advice and suggestions and general problem-solving. His response to my concerns was most often, "How can we help?" I talked numerous times with council members, the police chief, the town clerk, members of the fire department, public works and the parks and recreation department, and every time each person was so positive and helpful. And as the event grew closer, so many Town personnel pitched in and helped with the "heavy lifting" that was required and that some of us older folks just can't do anymore. It was a real pleasure to work with such an accommodating crew. I am so grateful.

The Town of Stevensville is a community within a community. The person in the leadership role sets the tone for that "micro" community. Mayor Dewey set a tone of positivity and exhibited a "can do" attitude that certainly contributed to this year's Creamery Picnic success. For that I thank the Mayor and the Town Council and I look forward to more partnerships like this in the future.

With deepest appreciation,

Victoria Howell, Chair
108th Creamery Picnic