

Stevensville Town Council Meeting Minutes

for THURSDAY, JULY 27, 2023, 6:00 PM 206 Buck Street, Town Hall

**CONDENSED MINUTES**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Gibson called the meeting to order, Councilmembers Barker, Brown, Lowell, Michalson were all present.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

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

Vicki Motley, I want to say thank you to Colette for mowing the bike path. Another comment is on the code of conduct resolution that you dissolved, you said that you were going to bring that back with the revised wording.

Mayor Gibson: after the budget is completed, I will meet with Mr. Michalson, and we will work on this.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Town Council Meeting Minutes for 06/22/2023

Mayor Gibson: introduced approval of meeting minutes 06/22/2023.

Councilmember Michalson: make a motion to approve the meeting minutes for 06/22/2023.

Councilmember Barker: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Gibson: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. Public comment? Seeing none, further discussion? Seeing none, Jenelle please take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Lowell: aye.

Councilmember Michalson: aye.

Mayor Gibson: passes 4-0

b. Town Council Meeting Minutes for 07/13/2023

Mayor Gibson: introduced approval of meeting minutes 07/13/2023.

Councilmember Michalson: make a motion to approve meeting minutes 07/13/2023.

Councilmember Barker: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Gibson: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. Public comment? Seeing none, further discussion? Seeing none, Jenelle please take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Lowell: aye.

Councilmember Michalson: aye.

Mayor Gibson: passes 4-0

5. Approval of Bi-Weekly Claims

a. Claims #18461, #18471, #18473-#, 18477#18479, #18481-#18487

Mayor Gibson: introduced the approval of bi-weekly claims.

Councilmember Michalson: I have a question; we are approving these ones now and not these ones?

Gina Crowe: those are the ones that I tried to get in before Tuesday, pretty new to this role, I wanted to make sure that we got late claims paid.

Councilmember Michalson: There is one on the online claim, #18481 for Don Scott Finley, medical exam for \$170.00 and now it is not on here.

Gina Crowe: that one was removed because it was a duplicate charge

Councilmember Michalson: make a motion to approve #18461, #18471, #18473-#, 18477#18479, #18481-#18487.

Councilmember Barker: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Gibson: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>, any questions on the claims?

Councilmember Brown: we need to add 18443, 188472 18489,18491 and 18492 to our motion.

Councilmember Michalson: claim 18477 construction, exceeded budget. What is that about?

Gina Crowe: that was the concrete for the pool.

Councilmember Michalson: did they exceed their budget or did it exceed the budget line.

Robert Underwood: if was an object line, we are still under in total.

Councilmember Lowell: 18443, Mr. Asphalt, \$2268.00

Gina Crowe: street repairs, potholes.

Mayor Gibson: anything else, seeing none, Jenelle please take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Lowell: aye.

Councilmember Michalson: aye.

Mayor Gibson: passes 4-0

6. New Business

a. Discussion: Proposing of Park Land Being Gifted to the North Valley Public Library

Mayor Gibson: This is just a preliminary discussion. I will have Mr. Overstreet give a presentation. This would take a long time, would have to go out for the public vote.

Mr. Overstreet: Town Attorney, cited MCA code about the sale, lease, or gift of property that is held in trust by the municipality, and the park is held in trust. That sale release or gift must be approved by the voters, the voters get to make that decision. this is not as if this is a done deal it would have to be passed by the voters, and that is why this is a discussion.

Mayor Gibson: a lot of people to go through, the Park Board, the Council and the community. Bozeman is doing something similar. If this was to go through, they would have their own parking which would alleviate the parking on Main Street.

PUBLIC COMMENT

(Name not given or written down) First name is Penny: I am an outlander and if this thing goes through, we don't have a vote on it, but we do have to pay for the new building. We are going looking at a taxation without representation. We all know that the building is bad, but this is not the time to be asking for money. We already have people that are going to lose their houses because of the tax increases.

Victoria Howell: I have been the chair of the library board for quiet a while, we just had an election, and we have a new chair, the library board has been trying to deal with a building that is deteriorating for a long time, we have done everything that we can to fix what we have and now we are at a point that it doesn't make sense economically to put any more money into that building. It is not big enough, no parking and there are a lot of problems with it. It is not the best location for the library, but everyone loves that it is downtown. Over the past years we have been looking at the possibilities and we have a preliminary architectural review done to show us what we have now and what we need going forward, in that process we looked at a number of potential sites in the community and none of them are quiet right. This idea came up about Lewis & Clark Park, when it was brought up that sounds like a really great location, the library is owned by the taxpayers in our district. The land that is being proposed is not being used as much anymore. The sports have been moved to the athletic fields. Those are just some things that we have thought about, as the mayor said this is so preliminary. I am really interested to find out what the public thinks about the idea. It seems like a great idea to me; a library is a treasured resource. As far as running the bond we also have a library foundation, the library board handles the budget and make decisions about policy the foundation was set up to bring in additional money for something like this. They are looking at running a capital campaign and they would be

looking at sources other than taxes and the library board is the entity that would make the decision on whether to run the bond or not. At this time, we are not looking favorably at running a bond. The places that the foundation would look would be private donors, we already have people that have left donations to the library when they die. It seems like a good idea, the town would not be turning it over to a private entity, they would be turning it over to another public entity. When I heard about this idea, we need to explore every part of this because it could be a win for the whole community.

Vicki Motley: I am going to start by saying that I am not against the library at all, but I have a lot of concerns with the agenda item and how it was placed on the agenda. I tried to email the town but did not get an email back and through other sources I found out that it was Lewis & Clark Park. I am disappointed that this was not presented to the park board, I found the deed for the park. States that the 2<sup>nd</sup> party should hold this property for public use or a public playground. I am against using Lewis & Clark Park.

Mayor Gibson: just to follow up, this is just a discussion. This is very preliminary.

Craig Thomas: airport board chair, there are currently space at the airport to put the library. The board has thought about expansion and the library could work up there. If you have thought about this, I have a building partially designed.

(Name not given or written down) Is there an average usage of the library? Per day, per week, per month, per year.

Denise Ard: between 100-200 a day.

Leslie Tadvick: I am not against the library, gave history about being at the library, but I have kids that played in the park and now we have been shifted to park for Creamery Picnic. I would ask that you look at remodeling the building, or the building next door. i would hate to see the park used, the kids use the park for soccer. I think that it would be a poor use of land and it is a public park, and everyone likes to use it.

Penny: I am also a number of the county park board and Councilmember Barker and I have talked about this; we are trying to put together a list of stake holders for recreation, if we have baseball fields that are not being used that is one of the biggest things that the county needs. If we have a park here that has baseball fields, we need to know.

Kathy Cook: I just want to clarify that soccer has not been at the park since 2019, it has been at the fields, the nicest thing about that we did not have to pay the town anymore. The baseball fields were there, and they are not there anymore either. There is some infield left but those have been gone for 15 years. I am not against it, but I would not want to see using that land for that and taking away the green grass.

Mayor Gibson: the park is about 7.5 acres, and this would be around 2 acres.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Barker: read a letter from a citizen. (the letter was not provided to the town clerk for public record) I am saddened also that it was not in our packet. The letter discussed the

mayor proposing the land and having the attorney look over the process. The letter stated that the town attorney presented this idea at the library meeting before discussion here at town hall. The letter talked about what was discussed at the library meeting. The letter stated that if you have questions reach out to the library board.

Mayor Gibson: do you have any comments Mr. Overstreet?

Greg Overstreet: I will say that the July 19<sup>th</sup> library board meeting was an open public meeting, I understand that there is some concern that the meeting was a closed meeting, it was an open meeting which would be the opposite of a closed meeting.

Mayor Gibson: my personal opinion is that it is a good idea, it is not that I am promoting it, or Mr. Overstreet is promoting it. It is up to the park board, the council and the citizens, it is a long road.

Councilmember Michalson: when I saw this deed it brought back a memory from 2015 when they wanted to put a bike camp in that location. They read the deed and they saw that they could not do anything with how the deed is written. I have an email from Susan Kardaras, at the read a letter from her where she stated that she was against it, and I also had two phone calls.

Councilmember Brown: I wanted to thank Vicki for doing her homework and bringing this deed to the public. This would have to be addressed. I would have problems with the town using the land for anything that it was not intended for.

#### b. Discussion/Decision: Reduction of the Mayor's Salary

Mayor Gibson: introduced new business item b. last year I proposed a \$4,000 reduction and now I am reducing it again by \$4,000 to help with employee salaries.

Councilmember Michalson: I make a motion to approve the reduction of the mayor's salary.

Councilmember Barker: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Gibson: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. Public comment? Further discussion?

Councilmember Michalson: I think that it is very noble of you what you did last year, and I think that it is very noble of you this year. One we don't even know what we have in the budget yet and two I don't think that it would even be fair to the incoming mayor, who ever the mayor is replacing you and step in with a reduced salary, to me that shows that the council does not have a lot of faith in who ever that would be, that is just my opinion.

Mayor Gibson: I forgot to mention it would be reduced Monday while I am still here.

Councilmember Michalson: I don't think that it would be fair for the next mayor to come in on a reduced salary.

Councilmember Brown: you say that it is a reduction in the mayor's salary, so that employees can have a raise what if even reducing your salary cant give the employees a raise.

Mayor Gibson: just trying to do the best that I can.

Councilmember Brown: what if it doesn't work.

Mayor Gibson: it is just not raises, it is going to be a pretty tight budget, right Robert. I hope that it can be used for raises but there are other things. A lot of people want a lot of things.

Councilmember Brown: I just thought if it is going to be a tight budget and they can't, is it still going to be a reduction in the mayor salary, if you are earmarking it.

Mayor Gibson: I am not earmarking it we still don't know what the numbers are, it is to help with the budget. Property taxes going up, everything going up and it is going to be a tough budget so that is why I am proposing it.

Councilmember Lowell: any idea when the budget is going to be prepared. I am sure that it is confusing closing out June and working into July.

Mayor Gibson: we are going to start the next meeting with the levies and lighting districts, Regina wants those in.

Councilmember Lowell: it is making me nervous not getting this budget done.

Councilmember Barker: I guess my question would be what are our wages right now for our town employees, I am not saying that they are not worth it, trying to find it there is not anything showing what those wages are.

Mayor Gibson: we can give it to you, there was something done a time ago with the aggregate, based on number of years. Example would be the last police officer that Mac hired was \$20.00, it is about recruitment.

Councilmember Barker: it is just hard not having it here in front of us to see it.

Mayor Gibson: any further discussion, Jenelle please take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: no

Councilmember Brown: aye

Councilmember Lowell: no

Councilmember Michalson: no

Mayor Gibson: motion fails. 3-1

c. Discussion/Decision: Emergency Mowing of the Stevensville Airport

Mayor Gibson: introduced new business item c. Robert and I were up there, it is a fire hazard, there are weeds. We have to get it done.

Councilmember Michalson: make a motion to approve the Emergency Mowing of the Stevensville Airport.

Councilmember Lowell: 2<sup>nd</sup>

Mayor Gibson: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. Public comment? Further discussion?

Councilmember Michalson: Councilmember Brown and I went up to the airport today and Craig Thomas gave us a tour, and it is bad. And it needs to be done.

Councilmember Brown: Bob and I did run up there today. Some of the weeds are so high you can't see the runway lights or the markers. With the fire season exploding, we could have the Forest Service not use our property, that is a good contract to keep.

Mayor Gibson: I talked to Mr. Thomas that he might want to have a fire truck present for fire issues. Jenelle, please take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Lowell: aye.

Councilmember Michalson: aye.

Mayor Gibson: passes 4-0

7. Board Reports

NONE

8. Town Council Comments

Councilmember Lowell: I just have a question about the program that Gina presented, has anything been done.

Mayor Gibson: we are still looking into it; we need to get through this budget. Gina and I need to meet on this, she has been busy.

Councilmember Michalson: are you going to start the process of advertising for your position here soon?

Mayor Gibson: I will let you know when my decision is I went through the process with Mr. Overstreet it is both in statute and in the rules, I hope to get through the budget and what it says in council rules and in statute that if I give 30 days' notice, and the effective date is the 30 days after I give notice. And the council would have the choice to either make a decision to take applications, appoint the council president or depending on the timing it could go to the next general election. And when that time comes you will certainly know.

Councilmember Barker: I had a citizen actually send me an email to see if we have a cat ordinance about selling cats. Do they have to hold a business license. Is there also an ordinance on how many cats you can have in the home?



Jenelle Berthoud: I have never come across anything in town ordinance that states how many you can have.

Councilmember Barker: she is selling them for \$75.00 apiece.

Jenelle Berthoud: she would then need to look at a transient business license through the town and then she could have permission to sell them in front of a business downtown, but she would still need to have a transient business license.

9. Executive Report

Mayor Gibson: I mentioned that we are going to start with the lighting districts and levies. Robert talked about starting the process on the 24<sup>th</sup>, I think it should be in by September 15<sup>th</sup>.

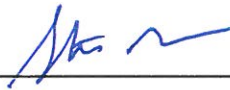
Councilmember Michalson: does it have to be in by September 30<sup>th</sup> ?

Robert Underwood: she would like it in as soon as possible.

Mayor Gibson: with all of the mix up with the taxes we will see.

10. Adjournment

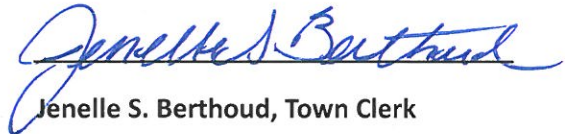
APPROVE:



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Steve Gibson, Mayor

ATTEST:



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Jenelle S. Berthoud, Town Clerk