

Stevensville Town Council Meeting Minutes

for THURSDAY, AUGUST 10, 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 and Michalson were all present.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

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

Dianne Snedgier, North Valley Public Library (NVPL): gave public comment from the library trustees, gave background information on the NVPL. A timeline was introduced about locations and tax levies in the past. Spoke to the importance of libraries in communities for youth and adults. Talked about library programs and the Animal Wonders Program that is a success at the library and having a larger space like the park they could host even more people for this event. In the 50's and the 60's the park was leased out to a rodeo and saddle club, the question is now how was the dead navigated at that time. Touched base on the Creamery Picnic and the businesses in town and merging together. The park would still be able to be used for events. The library board is open to all suggestions, we would like to schedule an open house soon and invite all of you to join us. This event will be scheduled in the next few weeks. The choice to make this happen is the voters.

Denise Ard, Library Director: my team librarian said something to me today and I wanted to share it. She is with the teen programs, and she said that many teens when they go to the park are harassed, bullied and some of the girls get cat calls. Many teens feel like they can only go in groups to the park. I believe that the presents of the park in the library would increase safety in the park and anyone can go to the library for safety.

Mark Adams: I agree with these two people that the building should have been condemned in the 50's. Yes, there needs to be a better facility, but my question is who is going to pay, the answer to that is it is a public facility, and we all get to pay. I got a letter from the state about our property taxes, our property taxes would go up double. My wife and I will not vote yes to this. This is Stevensville, like I say the property tax situation at the moment is untenable. The library board is going to have to come up with an alternative funding source.

Mayor Gibson: just for your information Mark, last week the library talked about that they would not be doing a bond; it would be by private donations. You might want to look at our website in regards to questions about the property taxes.

Mark Adams: concerning your point about the private donations, the Stevensville Community Foundation has been trying for three decades to try and build a community center, it aint there.

Victoria Howell: I think that there is some confusion about a vote, the vote is for the people to decide if they want to gift the land to the library, it has nothing to do with town taxes. As far as

private donations and grants go, a library is quite a bit different than a private community center. We are tax funded, you are already paying a tax for the library, both in town and outside. A library I believe has quite a few opportunities for funding that the community center just did not have. Grants, and private donations from foundations and libraries are pretty well-known institution that people feel is pretty important.

Jim Battisti: gave public comment on the proposed library in Lewis & Clark Park. (Mr. Battisti's public comment is included in the meeting minutes.)

Sean Doyle, Civic Club President: I want to give some thank you, Creamery Picnic was a pretty good success this year and there are some town employees that we can not do it without. Chief Motely and the fire department. Chief Sosa and your three officers, Steve Lassiter from the parks department, Steve Kruse from public works are a huge help to the town and last but not least for all the information on town protocol and all the information on rules and keeps me out of trouble is Jenelle Berthoud. I just want to say thank you because without those groups of people in the town we would not be able to do this.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Town Council Meeting Minutes 07/27/2023

Mayor Gibson: introduced town council meeting minutes for 07/27/2023.

Councilmember Michalson: I make a motion to approve town council meeting minutes for 07/27/2023.

Councilmember Lowell: 2nd.

Mayor Gibson: motion and a 2nd. Comments on the minutes? Further discussion on the minutes? 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 #18470, #18493-#18498, #18500-#18512

Mayor Gibson: introduced bi-weekly claims #18470, #18493-#18498, #18500-#18512.

Councilmember Brown: they actually go to claim #18521.

Councilmember Michalson: make a motion to approve claims, #18470, #18493-#18498, #18500-#18521.

Councilmember Brown: 2nd.

Mayor Gibson: motion and a 2nd. Any comment on the claims? Further discussion on the claims?

Councilmember Michalson: #18504, HDR review for Pine Street Review #2. We bill them and they pay us back?

Mayor Gibson: we have done this before, we pay HDR and then Spire pays us back.

Councilmember Michalson: the reason that I bring this up is because back in May there were two claims for Twin Creeks, did we ever get paid back for that?

Mayor Gibson: yes, we did.

Councilmember Michalson: that would not show up here then?

Mayor Gibson: when that happens, the engineer is paid, and the private property owner pays us back.

Councilmember Brown: #18470, I see that we have a Verizon charge for the airport, where is the phone?

Jenelle Berthoud, Town Clerk: sitting at town hall.

Gina Crowe, Finance Officer: I have been working on getting the credit card caught up this one is from June.

Councilmember Brown: #18493, radio that was ordered by Tim Smead, I am wondering where the radio is.

Gina Crowe: I do not know.

Councilmember Brown: do we know what the Amazon order was for \$22.00?

Gina Crowe: we have the actual what was ordered, but because everyone was using a different Amazon account, we can't return it without a receipt. I have created a Town of Stevensville Amazon account so that we can track it. I will be doing all of the ordering for Amazon at this time.

Councilmember Brown: so, we are trying to figure out where the radio is, I also see that we have Firstcall and Godaddy.

Gina Crowe: Firstcall we have a monthly bill, and it is broken out between the departments. You will see the same thing like in Spectrum.

Jenelle Berthoud: we had to reschedule and had to reenter everything at .gov with the new finance officer's name. Firstcall is on it as well, just waiting on .gov.

Council member Brwon: #18517, Optical Service Inc. services at the airport?

Gina Crowe: I just saw this, it is a yearly maintenance at the airport, we have been paying for it every year.

Councilmember Michalson: Visa interest and late fee, does that have to do with the reconciliations?

Gina Crowe: yes, that has to do with the reconciliations. Trying to get caught up. The goal is to get them entered as the receipts come in.

Councilmember Barker: Stevi Hardware? Is that the receipts that you are talking about?

Gina Crowe: what was happening, that there are a few vendors out there that want to be paid by the statement. I have been talking to the vendors that we do have, and we will be paying them through the "credit card" system within Black Mountain. So, when you enter into the credit card system it will enter it as a claim and then write them one check at the end of the month.

Councilmember Barker: I am seeing that but are we still going to see that in this form, we are going to have questions.

Gina Crowe: yes, that is how the system prints it out.

Councilmember Barker: that is what I want to see.

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. Administrative Reports

a. Airport

b. Building Department

c. Finance

d. Fire Department

Chief Motley: gave his monthly report, the report was provided in the packet. Just a little housekeeping, things to get rid of.

Councilmember Barker: so, the new facility being out at the highway, how often are you responding with the ambulance.

Chief Motley: in general, they are now located across the river, so it is longer for them to respond. We are not going to their facility as often as we were. When they started their phone system was run through Missoula County, and they have that fixed and we are not responding to facility.

Councilmember Barker: I know that you have several people that have been recruited. How is that going?

Chief Motley: we brought on two gals, and they are doing great, and we have two more interviews coming up and possibly one more.

Councilmember Barker: as a council member I would like to see when we do bring on new people, I would like to see them face to face.

e. Police Department

f. Public Works

7. New Business

a. Discussion/Decision: Allowing Inflatable Bounce Houses or Similar Inflatable Apparatuses on Town of Stevensville Property

Mayor Gibson: introduced new business item a. Allowing Inflatable Bounce Houses or Similar Inflatable Apparatuses on Town of Stevensville Property.

Councilmember Michalson: I will make a motion to allow Inflatable Bounce Houses or Similar Inflatable Apparatuses on Town of Stevensville Property.

Councilmember Barker: 2nd.

Mayor Gibson: motion and a 2nd, any public comment?

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sean Doyle: we the Civic Club have insurance to cover anything that potentially could happen, I read the memo in the packet one of the recommendation that I would make would be the owner of the bounce houses make the Town of Stevensville a payee in the event of any accident.

Nicole Sylvester: new owner of Bitterroot Bouncers. We do carry our own insurance. I have copies if anyone wants them. We do provide insurance.

Mayor Gibson: motion and a 2nd. Any further questions? Any further discussion?

Councilmember Michalson: these bounce houses are they for Creamery or will they be down there all the time?

Nicole Sylvester: no, they are rented by private individuals. They pay for the rental purchase. Creamery or events we pay to be a vendor.

Councilmember Michalson: so, they are supervised by you?

Nicole Sylvester: for events we do, but those done by private groups they are required to designate a responsible party and they sign a waiver to do that.

Councilmember Brown: so, we will be adding one of the two paragraphs to our special event.

Mayor Gibson: yes, we will have to or MMIA will not approve this.

Jenelle Berthoud: you will see that there are two samples, the second sample is the same that we use for special event permits. Just a suggestion.

Mayor Gibson: we have a motion and a 2nd.

Councilmember Michalson: do we need to state the language?

Jenelle Berthoud: I would prefer the language that MMIA has given to us.

Mayor Gibson: take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Lowell: aye.

Councilmember Michalson: aye.

Mayor Gibson: passes 4-0.

b. Discussion/Decision: Resolution No. 520 a Resolution Establishing Lighting District Taxes for FY 23/24

Mayor Gibson: introduced new business item b. Resolution No. 520 a Resolution Establishing Lighting District Taxes for FY 23/24.

Councilmember Michalson: make a motion to approve Resolution No. 520 a Resolution Establishing Lighting District Taxes for FY 23/24.

Councilmember Barker: 2nd.

Mayor Gibson: motion and a 2nd. To just point out, there is a 5% increase and there is the reserve. It is up from last year, but down from the previous year. The simple math is the cost of electricity. We don't know if Northwest Energy is going to go up. The levies were late to the counties from the state so we will do that next meeting. Public comment? 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.

8. Board Reports

Councilmember Brown: gave a report from the Airport Board Meeting that was held on 08/08/2023. The gate is back up and running. Items discussed, presentation of the resolution to the council. The volunteers, I would like to thank all of the people that have come together as a

group to take care of things, thank you Craig Thomas. Looking at doing a volunteer task schedule. Had an updated report on the gravel pit. Going to start checking into the fuel prices at the airport.

9. Town Council Comments

Councilmember Michalson: I would like to thank the town staff for Creamery Picnic. Mayor Gibson put out a memo on how nice the town looked.

Sean Doyle: all volunteers.

Mayor Gibson: didn't you have kid's groups that helped out?

Sean Doyle: we went out to the groups that we needed some help, football team, soccer team all done in three hours.

Mayor Gibson: thank you.

Sean Doyle: compared to last year, we only had 6 volunteers.

Councilmember Brown: if we can get the curb line cleaned up at Father Ravalli Park, the weeds are high, and they haven't been mowing along there. The fence is still broken down there and we have one tree that is half dead.

Councilmember Barker: it was nice to have the lighting on main street, very nice.

10. Executive Report

Mayor Gibson: we are trying to get to the point where we can work on the budget, waiting on the levies, we are hoping for the first part of September.

11. Adjournment

APPROVE:



Steve Gibson, Mayor

ATTEST:


Jenelle S. Berthoud, Town Clerk

8.10.2023

Re: Proposal to replace public space with a library

Good evening,

My name is Jim Battisti and I live at 201 Mission Street, is immediately adjacent to the park. Originally bought the house in 2004 so my kids could play in the park. They are grown up and moved out now. But for almost 20 years, I've seen the progress/expansion in the park, first-hand.

I've seen it grow from just a pool, 2 pavilions and an old tractor to now include... Bear Mountain and Cub Cave play areas a Pickleball court, a skate park, and a splash park. It's good to see people having fun. Fun is contagious and it's a positive reason for living next to the park.

However, each new project takes away a little bit more **open space**. With all these Cub cave splash and skate additions/upgrades to the park, public space has been built on. From what I understand, it is the Park Board, with the money of a private donors, in the apparent interest of the public.

The new paintings on outside of public restroom look great! However, the inside of bathroom looks and smells like a NYC subway ramp. With wads of toilet paper and graffiti. Why isn't this a priority (upkeep) before consideration of new building? The private splash park sponsors did not apparently realize that significant time by town of Stevi would be required to maintain the splash park on a daily basis?

So now a public library building is proposed...to take away 2/3 of the remaining open public park space to fill it with another grant- or individual-funded project with unknown responsibility for the result. If this was a good move, just like all the other park expansions, I would not be here speaking to you. But in my opinion, this is a really bad move...

Just to get an idea what the Library was looking to 'upgrade' from I went in there today. No disrespect, but have you been to a Blockbuster video lately? What is in the library? Moldy rugs? DVD's ... you need a dvd player for... Now days most get what they need on the internet.. so the internet is available at library.. on computers as ancient as the St. Mary's Mission. **So I agree, the electronic access capacity at Stevi Public Library could certainly use an upgrade.**

Unfortunately, the cost of publications almost requires electronic subscriptions these days, that are often even too expensive for universities to pay for. So I can't see this new library housing many modern books, because it won't be able to afford them. Hard copy books from local/montana that are good, but only a small percentage are in house compared to the

overwhelming majority of old text. Certainly, the children's books and area is timeless no matter the age of reader.

Is it really worth replacing one of the last open spaces in town with a building to house out-of-date books, and a parking lot for people who think they need them? NO. It is ridiculous!

In my opinion, the downtown public library location is a part of Stevensville's character. The current public library is north of the public health building providing mental, physical health services for the town. It is also directly south of the old Stevi Café location This is a two-story vacant building immediately adjacent to the current library location. The old Café location is also the two-story building described by Library advocates as a solution to their expansion problems.

Lewis and Clark Park was intended to be a park, for public use by the town. This expansion has apparently had the public in mind but how can taking away 2/3 of the current open space, to be a building to house outdated reading material be a good thing? Who's public interest?

What is the result? If 2/3 of remaining open Park space is devoted to a building that houses out of date reading material...no matter the Creamery Picnic.. would there be space for simple activities like baseball? Football? Flying a kite? Taking your dog for a walk, or just enjoying the open space? You know, park stuff!

Next year, all Stevi residents will have to pay 12\$ to access the Stevi Fishing access legally. Maybe there are private donors that would wish to provide free river access to kids in exchange for taking away 2/3 of the free space they have left in the park?

If someone really wants to spend money making a nice library, why not build a new library at the Stevi public land deeded to the town at the River access? It would be magnificent!

Thanks for listening.

Handwritten notes:

- The Airport,
- Softball & soccer fields not being used
- Deeds?
- Creamery?
- "Plenty of space"
- Savings to taxpayers
- Girls tennis court
- Community complex
↳ It already is downtown,
- All → Library
- Property deed ↑