

Stevensville Town Council Meeting Minutes

for THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2023, 6:30 PM

206 Buck Street, Town Hall

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Gibson called the meeting to order. Councilmember 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)

NONE

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Town Council Meeting Minutes 10/12/2023

Mayor Gibson: introduced Town Council Meeting Minutes 10/12/2023.

Councilmember Barker: make a motion to approve Town Council Meeting Minutes 10/12/2023.

Councilmember Michalson: 2nd.

Mayor Gibson: motion and a 2nd. Public comment? Any 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. Special Town Council Meeting Minutes 10/23/2023

Mayor Gibson: introduced Special Town Council Meeting Minutes 10/23/2023.

Councilmember Barker: make a motion to approve Special Town Council Meeting Minutes 10/23/2023.

Councilmember Michalson: 2nd.

Mayor Gibson: motion and a 2nd. Public comment? Any further comments? 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 #18634-#18650, additional claims #18652 and #186532 were added per the finance officer.

Mayor Gibson: introduced claims #18634-#18650, additional claims #18652 and #186532.

Councilmember Michalson: make a motion to approve claims #18634-#18650, additional claims #18652 and #186532.

Councilmember Lowell: 2nd.

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

Councilmember Barker: I would just like to see that all claims come in at the same time instead of having two adjust at the last minute, especially for the public's knowledge.

Mayor Gibson: Gina, maybe you can explain what has happened.

Gina Crowe, Finance Officer: I try to get as many in as I can, but then there are some that are overdue or they have a specific date on them so in order to not create fines and fees, that is why I have to process claims like that. I am just trying to mediate that; I have tried to work things out where if I get them in time this won't happen.

Councilmember Barker: I just feel that it is very important for the public to see what is put in front of us.

Mayor Gibson: any 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

Mayor Gibson: I would like to suspend town council rules to move new business item a. and b. ahead of unfinished business.

Councilmember Michalson: I make a motion to suspend council rules to move new business item a. and b. ahead of unfinished business.

Councilmember Lowell: 2nd.

Mayor Gibson: motion and a 2nd. Public comment? Any further discussion? Jenelle, please take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Lowell: aye.

Councilmember Michalson: aye.

Mayor Gibson: passes 4-0

7. New Business

a. Discussion/Decision: Confirmation of Police Officer Trevor Frandsen

Mayor Gibson: introduced new business item a. It has been a year, and he is here, doing a great job.

Officer Frandsen: I just want to say that I absolutely love working here, it is amazing, I am so thankful for being here. I enjoy working with everybody here, it is awesome.

Mayor Gibson: public comment? Can we have a motion?

Councilmember Barker: make a motion to approve the confirmation of Police Officer Trevor Frandsen.

Councilmember Lowell: 2nd.

Mayor Gibson: motion and a 2nd. 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. Discussion/Decision: Lighting Funds to be Returned to Donor

Mayor Gibson: introduced new business item b. Mr. Edwards is here, my understanding is that he gave \$10,000.00 he has been working with the county because that strip is in the county you are looking at solar so the town would not have to look at electric bills.

Jimmy Edwards: we are getting real close to getting the lights ordered and the project started, so we thought we would get the money transferred over and get these guys a down payment.

Councilmember Lowell: thank you for that I am very excited that there are going to be some lights, it is going to be a project.

Councilmember Michalson: make a motion to approve the lighting funds to be returned to donor.

Councilmember Lowell: 2nd.

Mayor Gibson: motion and a 2nd. Public comment? Further discussion?

Councilmember Barker: just a question cause I was not familiar with what had actually the lighting was donated.

Mayor Gibson: Jimmy Edwards raised the money from the Brewfest.

Councilmember Barker: so, in other words you had looked at lights like we have now, was that what it was.

Jimmy Edwards: we were looking at it, to have a city do a whatever you call it to have everyone pay a little. When Steve ran for mayor, he said that he was not going add cost, so I thought about that and so I went out and looked at solar and have been working on it for a year and a half.

Councilmember Barker: so is this going to be something that look like the other lights that are higher up or smaller.

Jimmy Edwards: smaller and much nicer looking.

Mayor Gibson: any 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

6. Unfinished Business

a. Discussion/Decision: Resolution No. 524, a Resolution for Adopting a Budget and Adopting Wages and Salaries for the Town of Stevensville, Montana FY 23/24

Mayor Gibson: introduced unfinished business item a. there are a couple additions and how they came to be.

Councilmember Michalson: make a motion to approve Resolution No. 524, a Resolution for Adopting a Budget and Adopting Wages and Salaries for the Town of Stevensville, Montana FY 23/24.

Councilmember Lowell: 2nd

Mayor Gibson: motion and a 2nd. The main change if you recall we were asking .40 per hour for everyone, starting January 1st, with some recent developments we found some additional money basically number one, Steve Kruse is retiring, the person that will take his place will make about

\$5.00 hour less. So, what we are proposing now, and because of the retention issue, especially the police. .50 per hour for all employees and all \$1.00 per hour for the three police officers starting January 1st. Robert, was that the only major change?

Robert Underwood: and the travel for the council.

Councilmember Michalson: \$1.00 for the police officers you said?

Mayor Gibson: and .50 for everyone else, starting January 1st, this is a tight budget, I wish we could do more. Other than the amendment for the council to go to training, everything else is the same Robert.

Robert Underwood: yes.

Councilmember Michalson: if the council does not mind, I have some notes here when I was going through some of the expenditures Robert. Most of them are just questions to satisfy me. First one is on page 1 of 44, executive services 370 and 380 is where the mayor I am assuming. It has nothing in there for travel do we want to wait until the next mayor decides what he wants to do and then amend it then.

Mayor Gibson: I thought we left some, we reduced the mayors travel. The intent before was \$2,000.

Robert Underwood: you left \$50.00 in case you had to go.

Councilmember Michalson: do we want to amend that?

Mayor Gibson: go ahead and I would put \$1,000 in there, go ahead and make an amendment.

Robert Underwood: you do not need an amendment, if you are just adding it.

Councilmember Michalson: page 3 of 44 audit services, \$25,000.00 my question why is it so much when it was around \$14,000 in previous years.

Robert Underwood: when the prior mayor, the auditor dropped us and we became a high-risk audit, and then only one person bid and that was Downing and Associates for the three year.

Mayor Gibson: Strom and Associates and they said that they would not do it anymore. I think that it had to do with those things.

Councilmember Lowell: do we have a contract with Denning, for a couple of years.

Mayor Gibson: three years, we did that before you were here.

Robert Underwood:

Councilmember Michalson: page 4, elections, we are leaving this alone until we hear from Regina. Page 6 of 44, fire department administration, fire fighter recruitment, shouldn't there be something there we had \$250.00 last year.

Mayor Gibson: \$250.00 was for the banner, which I do not think that they are advertising.

Councilmember Michalson: maybe Vicky can answer for Jeff, shouldn't something be in there for recruiting.

Mayor Gibson: we did the banner and I think we had one or two people apply.

Robert Underwood: we had \$250.00 last year and did not spend any and over the past four years we have spent \$40.00.

Councilmember Michalson: page 7 of 44 fire department suppression, clothing and uniforms. You have \$4,000 and we budgeted \$17,000 last year, is there a reason why it is down so much?

Robert Underwood: they are broke. Last year was a big purchase, we are usually about \$4,000.00.

Mayor Gibson: last year was unusual.

Councilmember Michalson: page 8 of 44 road and street services, \$450.00 from \$2500.00 last year, is it because we did not use as much last year.

Mayor Gibson: as far as any streets, we have the bids out for Railroad and Spring. With a combination of leftover BARSSA and senate bill 180 we have like \$400,000.00 and then next year you will have some more.

Robert Underwood: that part right there is utilities, their electric bill for the plant down there. It is just how we broke up the bills, a little differently. You could bump that up, but we have covered it in a different area.

Councilmember Michalson: page 9 of 44 cemetery, utility services we are budgeting more, what is the reason for the increase. Pumps, electricity.

Mayor Gibson: I can't say specifically but it was on the news they approved another electricity increase, whatever is an average home that was like \$10.00 more per month.

Robert Underwood: it is \$1,100 from last year but I think when we redid the whole utilities you saw the streets go down and the cemeteries went up to cover more of their share. They both come out of the general fund.

Councilmember Michalson: page 10 of 44 forestry and nursery, \$6500.00 and it was \$13,000 last year.

Robert Underwood: that is what we budgeted for, we did not spend it all, spent \$8400.00. Talked to Kruse and we brought that down a little bit. I told him we had to cut it by 20% and he said he could do it for \$6500.00.

Mayor Gibson: I did not hear it, I did not hear anything from Steve or Stephen Lassiter, did you Robert.

Robert Underwood: no, I remember that we did cut that one down. In 2021 it was only \$900.00, and it has been all over the place.

Councilmember Michalson: page 10 of 44 administration, \$3045 and it was \$4,121 last year salaries and wages.

Councilmember Lowell: wrong page.

Councilmember Michalson: it is the zoning administrator I am assuming.

Robert Underwood: page 13, that was in the budget last year, part of that money was for the zoning administration position.

Councilmember Michalson: page 15 of 44 TEDD district, \$9500.00 budgeted airport, see resolution. Will this close the account, it shows another \$150.00 after this.

Robert Underwood: this money is the TEDD district for the airport they get that money, and it is set aside in the TEDD account, and we use that money to pay off their loan to Montana Aeronautics. We transfer this money from here to the airport account.

Councilmember Michalson: so, you just leave a little bit in there for seed?

Robert Underwood: yes, we get about that much a year, and they have about 2 years left on that loan.

Councilmember Michalson: page 17 of 44. Building inspections professional services, \$16,999. Last year it was budgeted for \$25,000.00.

Robert Underwood: yep.

Councilmember Michalson: what is that for, I looked at the contract.

Robert Underwood: that is the contract, nobody builds anything anymore, so it has gone down.

Councilmember Michalson: I just wasn't sure. Page 24 of 44 roads and streets, it has to do with the BaRSSA. \$450,000.00. We are moving the BaRSSA money over with the gas tax.

Robert Underwood: yes, we have about \$100,000.00 and then another \$350,000.00 so, we will not use all of this year, we can use it on the bids.

Mayor Gibson: there is a delay in the bids, hopefully next month. Obviously, work isn't going to start until the spring so it will not be all spent down. Kind of like the ARPA.

Councilmember Lowell: on the gas tax is there a stipulation that you are supposed to pay or use so much of that money every year.

Robert Underwood: on the BaRSSA it was, we used to have to fill out a form have a resolution tell them what it was for. As long as you are doing street maintenance, and then the state realized that everyone was using it for that, so they said we are just going to give you the money.

Mayor Gibson: legislation changed it this year so we can just get the money.

Councilmember Michalson: page 28 of 44, Jean Thomas Fund what is the \$10,000 from.

Robert Underwood: that is the \$10,000 that you authorized in June to fix the pool. We did not spend it all last year, some of the bills came in July and it was a carryover of how much money we are going to spend of the Jean Thomas fund.

Councilmember Michalson: we approved last year to spend \$10,000 from the Jean Thomas fund, it did not get all spent so it just carried over.

Robert Underwood: it is just carrying forward.

Councilmember Michalson: we are not taking any more from the Jean Thomas fund?

Robert Underwood: no.

Councilmember Barker: so that is going to leave us back with \$15,000.00 that we originally had. It seems like we just keep pulling and pulling there is money that the Park Board has talked about ding things with and now you guys have taken it out again. It keeps going away.

Mayor Gibson: it seems confusing you approved the \$10,000 that we have explained I have heard for a couple of years that the Park Board wanted to do some things I have not heard what that is with the Jean Thomas fund.

Councilmember Barker: we also had an agreement when we first went in there and specified what we wanted was for the pumps that were in there. We got a grant and part of it was to go back into that fund and then we turn around and it is \$10,000 taken out again. I still have some issue with this because I do not think it was properly brought to the council for that.

Mayor Gibson: I respectfully disagree. You approved it.

Councilmember Michalson: it was approved last year.

Robert Underwood: I have an alibi. Looking at this and after coding it, it looks like \$5,400.00 so there is \$4,700 left to pay. If that is something that you want to do with it, that is a question. The \$10,000.00 I see that there is \$2,700.00 left of that.

Councilmember Barker: we also had some donations that came in for that.

Mayor Gibson: the total bill was around \$20,000.00. it was over that for all of the repairs.

Councilmember Baker: I just think that you guys are double dipping more out of it. And that is not right.

Mayor Gibson: with all due respect, I don't really like that comment. We are not dipping out of anything.

Councilmember Michalson: page 33 of 44, water utilities administration. Just a questions about the help for you. my question is what is the total amount that we have in it now.

Robert Underwood: I do not have that in front of me. It is not a lot. I can get that for you.

Councilmember Michalson: in the past when it got built up, we always suspended it, we did not take the program away.

Robert Underwood: after the budget is passed, we will need to go through the rates and that would be a good time to bring that up.

Councilmember Michalson: bring that up then. Page 44, storage and wells, utility. You have \$1,200.00 budget and it was \$9,200 last year what is the reason for.

Robert Underwood: we spent \$58,000 last year and after talking to Steve he believes that is what he will spend.

Councilmember Michalson: is the Burt Fork well that uses up all the electricity.

Robert Underwood: if you look at facility and grounds that is where a lot that goes to.

Councilmember Michalson:” page 39, wastewater treatment and disposal, last year \$132,625.00 and this year only \$33,000.00 why is it so low.

Robert Underwood: sewer, we budget for \$132,000.00 and only spent \$28,000.00. there was a \$20,000 capital expenditure that they wanted to buy, and they did not spend it.

Mayor Gibson: any other questions on the budget?

Councilmember Brown: I noticed in our agenda package that part of it, where can the general public view it?

Jenelle Berthoud: when it is completed it will be on the towns website.

Councilmember Brown: I thought that the public got to view it before.

Jenelle Berthoud: this was not updated on the packet, because of all of the changes that they were making through the week. You received those in front of you tonight. Anyone could have contacted town hall to look at that document, when you guys finalize it, it goes on the towns website.

Mayor Gibson: we have a motion and a 2nd to approve the budget, any public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Vicky Motley, 318 9th Street: I was not able to follow the budget online. Was the relief association request put into the budget? I also have a problem with the Jean Thomas Fund; the Park Board approved up to \$10,000.00 if the Rapp Family Foundation money did not come through, the Rapp Family Foundation money came through so it should have been a \$5,000 hit to the Jean Thomas fund.

Mayor Gibson: any other public comment? The budget is tight we are leaving a couple of positions open, one in public works and one in police, I think that it is important that again with the raises I wish we could have done more, everyone is struggling to hire and retain people, especially the police officers. With that.

Councilmember Michalson: can you explain it to us the ARPA grant money why the differentials between revenues and expenditures.

Robert Underwood: it appears that we are spending down \$830,000.00 of that we are using our money, \$495,000 for our ARPA project, not all of that will be spent this year, they wanted us to put it into the fund and show where we are spending it, and that we have it. That right there is about \$500,000.00 of that \$830,000.00. The airport is going down about \$47,000 because they have that project, Master Plan about \$17,000.00 and they just do not make enough revenue. Some of the water itself we are losing about \$170,000.00 because we have not raised the water rates in three years so that is huge. That also saying that we are spending down \$455,000.00 in gas and BaRSSA money. there are some big projects, the biggest is the general fund. \$170,000.00 that we have to spend down in the general fund we need to reserve about \$250,000.00 we are going to be at about \$280,000.00 at the end of the year. Next year is going to be tighter, the taxes will be up a bit. Historically we have not spent the whole budget. This is the best budget that we have had, meeting with the department heads and making cuts.

Mayor Gibson: any other questions? Jenelle, please take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: no.

Councilmember Brown: no.

Councilmember Lowell: aye.

Councilmember Michalson: aye.

Mayor Gibson: be my first time, I am going to break the tie, I vote aye we need to get the budget done. Passes 3-2.

8. Board Reports

Councilmember Brown: had a special airport board meeting. The new airport manager is here, they talked about trying to increase revenue and they will be bringing in front of council the possibility of a gravel pit up there that will need to go out for bid. It is in the works. I think that Will is doing an excellent job, he is trying to get things squared away.

Councilmember Lowell: I think that when we decide to increase your rates there is a resolution that the airport has in place that you would have to follow.

Will Rowe, Airport Manager: are you referring to the lease payments on the hangers, that was passed, and it is 10%. It comes out to 1.4 cents per year.

9. Town Council Comments

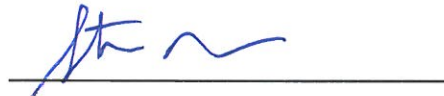
NONE

10. Executive Report

Mayor Gibson: you will be getting an official letter from me with my resignation date of November 30th. You will also receive a memo from the attorney and your choices on how you go through the process. I will attach that to all of you.

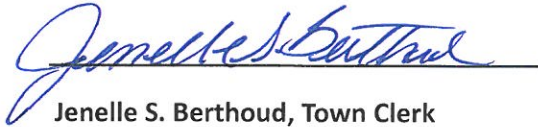
11. Adjournment

APPROVE:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve Gibson", written over a horizontal line.

Steve Gibson, Mayor

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jenelle S. Berthoud", written over a horizontal line.

Jenelle S. Berthoud, Town Clerk