

Stevensville Town Council Meeting Minutes

for THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 2024, 6:30 PM 206 Buck Street, Town Hall

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Michalson called the meeting to order, Councilmembers Barker, Brown and Smith 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. Special Town Council Meeting Minutes 11/29/23

Mayor Michalson: introduced approval of minutes for 11/29/2023.

Councilmember Barker: make a motion to approve special town council meeting minutes for 11/29/2023.

Councilmember Brown: 2nd.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2nd. Discussion? Public comments? Seeing none, Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 3-0

b. Town Council Meeting Minutes 12/14/2023

Mayor Michalson: introduced approval of minutes for 12/14/2023.

Councilmember Barker: make a motion to approve town council meeting minutes for 12/14/2023.

Councilmember Smith: 2nd

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2nd discussion?

Councilmember Smith: one minor page 18, council president. Showing three to zero should have been 2-0 with one abstention.

Mayor Michalson: further discussion? Public comment? Seeing none, Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 3-0

5. Approval of Bi-Weekly Claims

a. Claims #18732, #18741-#18762 (These Claims were Paid out of Cycle due to the Christmas Holiday)

Mayor Michalson: introduced bi-weekly claims #18732, #18741-#18762.

Councilmember Barker: make a motion to approve claims #18732, #18741-#18762. These Claims were Paid out of Cycle due to the Christmas Holiday

Councilmember Smith: 2nd.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2nd. Discussion? None, any discussion from the public? Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 3-0

b. Claims #18732, #18763-#18778

Mayor Michalson: claims #18732, #18763-#18778

Councilmember Smith: make a motion to accept #18732, #18763-#18778

Councilmember Barker: 2nd

Councilmember Barker: question, we just approved claim #18732 and it is back.

Gina Crowe, Finance Officer: I am waiting the money from the state.

Councilmember Barker: so are you saying we should take this one out.

Gina Crowe: no, we should approve, I am waiting for the state it is a pass through.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2nd. Discussion from the council.

Councilmember Brown: Godaddy? Are we getting closer to going to the .gov.

Jenelle Berthoud, Town Clerk: .gov has closed down since October 2023 and will reopen for acceptance in January 2024, waiting for the email. Never thought it would take this long.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 3-0.

6. Administrative Reports

a. Airport

Will Rowe: Report is in the packet. Will gave a brief breakdown of the airport December report. Working on redoing these old lease applications since 2013. As we are going through this, we have finding issues. Going to try to work through this and make it a little more fluid. Worked with two aids from Testers office on airport infrastructure bill, \$144,000.00. Now we will work with the FAA on what we can use the money for. AWOS system has been a problem for years, did not work in 2008 and doesn't work now. It is a \$3606.00 fix; it is the radio. Nothing that we budgeted for this year, but I will work with Bob to see what we can do.

b. Building Department

In the packet.

c. Finance

NONE

d. Fire Department

Chief Motley: Report provided to the council at tonight's meeting. Chief Motley gave a breakdown of the December report. Year ended pretty much on par. Already at call 34 for the new year. New members coming on.

e. Police Department

In the packet.

f. Public Works

Stephen Lassiter: report in the packet. Backorder of water meters are available, will need to check the budget to make sure that we have it. That is going to keep us going longer than I thought.

7. Unfinished Business

a. Discussion/Decision: Approval of MR Asphalt as the Lowest Bidder for the Spring Street Project Schedules 1`-3

Mayor Michalson: introduced unfinished business Approval of MR Asphalt as the Lowest Bidder for the Spring Street Project Schedules 1`-3.

Councilmember Brown: I move that we approve MR Asphalt as the Lowest Bidder for the Spring Street Project Schedules 1`-3.

Councilmember Barker: 2nd.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2nd. Council discussion?

Councilmember Baker: this is everything that was presented that night?

Mayor Michalson: that is correct, gave it over to them and they gave approved. Traffic control on Spring Street, that is a lot of money.

Councilmember Barker: there are two ends of it, school.

Mayor Michalson: school is out then in June. Public comments? Seeing none, Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 3-0

b. Discussion/Decision: Approval of Spring Street Project Schedules 1-3 as First Priority for HB355

Mayor Michalson: introduced unfinished business approval of Spring Street Project Schedules 1-3 as First Priority for HB355. So, what happened is after that meeting, we got together, and Gina came up with the idea to use these streets as the first priority, best use of our money. everything has been turned in to the state.

Councilmember Barker: are we going to put Railroad Street off.

Mayor Michalson: it will get done, just one at a time.

Councilmember Barker: make a motion to approve Spring Street Project Schedules 1-3 as First Priority for HB355.

Councilmember Brown: 2nd.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2nd. Discussion from the council? Public comment? Seeing none, Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 3-0

8. New Business

a. Discussion/Decision: Consent to the Mayor's Appointment of Levi Weiss as the Assistant Fire Chief

Mayor Michalson: introduced new business a. Consent to the Mayor's Appointment of Levi Weiss as the Assistant Fire Chief.

Councilmember Barker: make a motion to the mayor's appointment of Levi Weiss as the assistant fire chief.

Councilmember Smith: 2nd

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2nd. Council discussion? Public comment?

Chief Motley: Levi is going to be both the towns and the district assistant fire chief. Fill both roles. I think that it is going to be a great move for the town.

Mayor Michalson: any more discussion, seeing none Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 3-0.

b. Discussion/Decision: Consent to the Mayor's Appointment of Craig Thomas to the Airport Board

Mayor Michalson: introduced new business item b. Consent to the Mayor's Appointment of Craig Thomas to the Airport Board.

Councilmember Barker: make a motion for the consent of the Mayor's Appointment of Craig Thomas to the Airport Board.

Councilmember Brown: 2nd.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2nd. Council discussion? Public comment on the appointment of Craig Thomas. Seeing none, Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 3-0

c. Discussion/Decision: Consent to the Mayor's Appointment of John Stratton to the Airport Board

Mayor Michalson: introduced new business item c. Consent to the Mayor's Appointment of John Stratton to the Airport Board.

Councilmember Barker: make a motion to the Consent to the Mayor's Appointment of John Stratton to the Airport Board.

Councilmember Smith: 2nd.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2nd. Council discussion? Public comment? Seeing none, Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 3-0

d. Discussion/Decision: Stevensville Airport Lease for Block 6 Lot 6

Mayor Michalson: introduced new business item d.

Councilmember Brown: I would like to table this item; I do not remember that the airport board approved this lease. So, I would like to have the council table this until it goes to the airport board.

Councilmember Barker: 2nd

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2nd to bring it back to the airport board for approval. Discussion from the public.

Will Rowe: part of that was my fought for not getting that put on their correctly, that also ties back into the resolution coming forth, it makes it hard to keep coming back.

Mayor Michalson: no more discussion from the public? Further discussion from the council. Seeing none, Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 3-0 to take it back to the airport board.

e. Discussion/Decision: Stevensville Airport Land Lease Transfer and Hanger Transfer for Block 2 Lot 10

Mayor Michalson: introduced new business item e. Stevensville Airport Land Lease Transfer and Hanger Transfer for Block 2 Lot 10.

Will Rowe: it is the Museum of Mountain Flying hanger that is currently up their and they have decided to sell the hanger and they have a buyer. The buyer reached out to me, and the bank needs to see a signed lease before he can get the money, this one was in front of the board.

Councilmember Barker: I will make a motion to approve the Stevensville Airport Land Lease Transfer and Hanger Transfer for Block 2 Lot 10.

Councilmember Brown: 2nd

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2nd.

Councilmember Brown: Will please check into the fees on that lease. They were receiving a discount.

Will Rowe: they were receiving a discount. It was a "dark smoke-filled room handshake" between them and the previous airport manager that should not have happened. They were a little upset but that is what it is, you pay to play. This is a new lease, not a transfer. The number of years start over.

Mayor Michalson: anything further? Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 3-0

f. Discussion/Decision: Approval of Matthew Wilkinson as the new Public Works Assistant

Mayor Michalson: introduced new business item f. Approval of Matthew Wilkinson as the new Public Works Assistant. Matthew works at the local hardware store and his dad works for public works. Gina and I and Stephen interviewed him, and we think that he would be a good fit for the town of Stevensville. I would like to point out that it is an \$18.00 hour starting out and after he gets is CDL he will get his \$1.00 hour raise.

Councilmember Barker: make a motion to approve Matthew Wilkinson as the new Public Works Assistant.

Councilmember Smith: 2nd.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2nd. Discussion

Councilmember Brown: did you say that his dad also works for the town? Do we have a nepotism problem here?

Mayor Michalson: that did come up in the interview. He did not feel that there were going to be any issues.

Councilmember Barker: it has gone through HR and Gina knows everything.

Gina Crowe: yes.

Stephen Lassiter: he would not be working directly for Jeff.

Mayor Michalson: any other comments from the council? Public comments? Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 3-0.

g. Discussion/Decision: Approve Contract/Offer Between the Town of Stevensville and Parks Supervisor/Public Works Assistant Position

Mayor Michalson: introduce new business item g. Approve Contract/Offer Between the Town of Stevensville and Parks Supervisor/Public Works Assistant Position. This was on my desk on the first day that I started. This was not brought in front of the council. No employee can hold two job titles. If you were to accept that you would have to rework that also. Received an email from our town attorney, Greg Overstreet, and he said that we were to not approve this there could be a liability issue. Not knowing what that liability issue would be I went looking into our personnel manual and under page 4 section 3 authority for personal action. (Mayor Michalson read from the personnel policy page 4 section 3.) this job was recreated and did not come before the council and the town has the right to create this position and you also have the right to take away this position. You have the right to abolish a job or reduce force so I do not understand what the real liability would be and also the \$4.50 was not in the budget, but Mayor Gibson will probably get up and talk about this, Park Supervisor was in the budget and so was Cody's job. When Steve Kruse resigned and Mr. Lassiter took his position, I think what they did we will combined these two positions and pay Mr. Anderson more to do this and he would be covering both of these jobs.

Councilmember Barker: make a motion to approve the contract /Offer Between the Town of Stevensville and Parks Supervisor/Public Works Assistant Position.

Councilmember Smith: 2nd.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2nd. Discussion from the council.

Councilmember Barker: we approved the budget we approved our wages and to give somebody a \$4.50 per hour raise I feel is very wrong. We are fighting to keep our police officer let alone giving the other town employees something else. I do not feel that it was right not being brought to the council. It was drawn up as a contract and as you said contracts have to be brought in front of the council and it was not until tonight a lot of failure on both parts.

Councilmember Smith: I would like to know as the parks supervisor who would he be supervising.

Mayor Michalson: off the top of my head I could say, please go ahead.

Stephen Lassiter: seasonal workers, lifeguards at the pool. I hear what you are saying on the money part. It was not a contract it was an offer letter and we all got one. When I took Kruse's and Cody took mine, we each took that for less money. So, the money, even though it was not the same people, we took the jobs for less. So, we are saving the town a little bit. Regardless of how he got here or done properly. I ask that you realize that Cody is a valued employee. He is an asset to this town, and I do not think that he should bare any burden for what happened that he did not have any control over and think about that when you take your vote.

Councilmember Barker: I appreciate your input on it we are not giving anyone else an opportunity to fill that parks position by combining it. I understand that you say we are saving money but to give someone else an opportunity to get that position.

Stephen Lassiter: it was advertised in house.

Mayor Michalson: yes, it was advertised in house.

Stephen Lassiter: I will say he has really stepped up since he has had this. He has become more of a leader. Taking time, training others on what he does. I have seen a change in him, and he has really stepped up.

Councilmember Barker: I think that it has caused a lot of contention when we are trying to keep our police officers and then someone comes in and says I just got a \$4.50 raise. It make is tough

Stephen Lassiter: I know, this \$4.50 raise, yes, he is making more money, but he is making a salary for that position. It is not that he is doing the same thing. I disagree with the term raise.

Councilmember Barker: does he have certification that he is going to have to obtain.

Stephen Lassiter: yes, pool operator as well as he is still working on his wastewater. He has a lot of studying to do, he is taking it seriously.

Councilmember Smith: with the certifications and all like the other gentleman that we hired, are their raises like the CDL.

Stephen Lassiter: he has his CDL already.

Councilmember Smith: are there other certificates that have a raise with it.

Stephen Lassiter: I will have to look at his offer letter there maybe after he gets his wastewater. There should be.

Mayor Michalson: if you were to approve this you would have to come back unless you have a new job title, he cannot have two job titles and one employee cannot hold that.

Councilmember Brown: if it gets approved can we go back and recreate the job description. I would like to see it done and I am sure there is grey area here and how each individual reads it. The personnel policy and other parts of the town and the state, but I felt that we should have created the job first and then offered and made a decision. if we can go backwards and recreate it.

Mayor Michalson: I believe as the council you can go back and start over with a new job title, description and wage.

Councilmember Brown: I guess another thing to look at do we have to do a budget amendment to do this.

Gina Crowe: I can get that for you. I think we really need to think about what we are doing and make sure that we are good stewards of the town money.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Steve Gibson: 1517 Creekside Drive. I do not see this as a contract. We draw up an offer letter for every employee. You get benefits, it is a town employee. If this was a contract, there would not be any benefits. It was opened in house, and anyone could have applied. Getting a raise, it was a compensation. The job description went to Mr. Lassiter, and this saved the town money. to do what he did when he was Parks Supervisor. To make the job description be what they really do. When he was Parks Supervisor, he did a lot of these things that were not in the job description, they were not spelled out. Anyone could have applied for this job, and it was not different from when Mr. Kruse left, we posted in-house. Steve Lassiter and Cody applied for that, and Steve Lassiter got it. We went over this last year with Mr. Overstreet about does this need to go to the council, he reviewed it and said that it did not have to come forward. If the town attorney would have said that this was a problem I would have stopped. Personally, when I was mayor, I listened to the licensed legal advice of the town attorney. A lot of people have opinions about statues, this is illegal, or this is illegal, I rely on the town attorney. In regards to salaries being approved, yes, they are all in the budget. The employees that we hired, public works, chief of police, parks supervisor were in the budget and all of them have been hired at less then the previous salary. He did get more money, got more responsibilities. In his offer letter, Councilmember Brown you asked that question, water and wastewater certification certain amount of time. We did consult with the attorney and there were some questions about does this have to go to the council, and it did not. If you wish in the future and want to approve every position that is up to you, I personally do not feel that there was anything done wrong. Out of all of these combinations the job that was approved tonight is making less than what Cody was making. Same thing, as I have always said is I did what was best for Stevensville not just a hand full of people. As in the personnel policy, I think that it is a good job to have your employees apply for a job in-house. And yes, it was a promotion, it was not a separate raise, yes, he got more money. with that I can take questions and if not, that is fine. This contract is confusing to me, it goes in the personnel file. If it was a contract there would be other language, no different.

Mayor Michalson: you are stating that the parks supervisor position before was not a department head?

Steve Gibson: I am saying that it is not a department head, he works for him. Bobby was a department head and we changed all of that, he is not a department head, Mr. Overstreet and I changed all of that.

Mayor Michalson: and you still do not think according the MCA salaries, (quoted this code).

Steve Gibson: the salaries were already in the budget; we did not know that Mr. Kruse was leaving.

Mayor Michalson: you said that you discussed this in August and the offer is signed November 27th. You said that you discussed this in August.

Steve Gibson: Steve Kruse left November 17th. The budget was passed before that. We talked to the attorney about this, and the salaries went down. Went down \$4.00. Chief of police makes less then Mac Sosa did.

Councilmember Smith: Did you say regarding liability, that you had an email from the attorney?

Mayor Michalson: yes.

Councilmember Smith: because it is a contract it is a liability?

Mayor Michalson. Yes, the attorney said that it was a contract in the email. And that there was a chance for liability. Identifying risk was his job.

Greg Overstreet: I am unable to describe what my legal advice was in a public setting. You guys can talk about but so that everybody knows I cannot, so I am being silent.

Mayor Michalson: any other comments from the council? Public.

Councilmember Brown: I could use a little bit more information on this item.

Mayor Michalson: do you want to table this item?

Councilmember Barker: I would like to withdraw my motion for the approval of the contract/offer between the town of Stevensville and the parks supervisor/ public works position.

Councilmember Brown: 2nd.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2nd to withdraw your motion. Jenelle, would you take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: motion passes 3-0

Councilmember Barker: I would like to table this contract/offer between the town of Stevensville and the parks supervisor/ public works position. Until we get more information can we have this ready by the next council meeting?

Mayor Michalson: you are going to have to reword and change the title.

Councilmember Brown: I think that we have to nail down the job description so that it is not confusing to public works. Maybe at the next council meeting we can get the job diction for this. Opinion from MMIA on this, it this is a job offer or a contract

Councilmember Barker: I think that we need more definition of what we have here, we have rules that we have to follow, and I think that it needs to be done properly.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2nd.

Councilmember Smith: what is the motion?

Jenelle Berthoud: motion is to table.

Mayor Michalson: motion to table, bring it back, have it cleared through MMIA, reviewed by Greg our town attorney and make sure that we have the money for that.

Councilmember Brown: and move our agenda items around to do this before because this would be unfinished business. I would like to clean this up a bit. Or whatever the council decides.

Mayor Michalson: any public comment on tabling this?

PUBLIC COMMENT

Steve Gibson: I am going to say one more thing, this is not a contract per say it is the same thing that you do for every position.

Mayor Michalson: I will say in my eight years of local government I have not seen a contract or offer made up this way come forth.

Steve Gibson: I did not put any words in there that said contract.

Mayor Michalson: I am not saying you did I have never seen in my eight years it done this was where there was an offer made to an employee that was never brought to the council. Any more comments from the public or council.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: motion passes 3-0.

h. Discussion/Decision: Schedule a C.O.W. Meeting Date and Time to Review Job Descriptions

Mayor Michalson: introduced new business item h. Schedule a C.O.W. Meeting Date and Time to Review Job Descriptions. At my first staff meeting I asked the employees to review and make changes, my example that I bring up every time is Jenelle has been doing fingerprinting forever and it is a good revenue for the town, and she was doing that when she was a police clerk and carried that over to the clerk now, if she wants to add that to her job description then she needs to do that. If public works would like to add or take away, most of these job descriptions have not been updated since 2018.

Councilmember Barker: make a motion to schedule a C.O.W. meeting date and time review for job descriptions.

Councilmember Smith: 2nd.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2nd.

(Council discussion took place on availability for each other's schedules.)

Councilmember Barker: how much time to do you need for a notice?

Jenelle Berthoud: 72 hours is fine.

Mayor Michalson: we have not done one for a long time, it may take more than one meeting.

(Council discussion took place on availability for each other's schedules.)

Jenelle Berthoud: no airport meeting, or board meetings. are you thinking of proposing something in the late afternoon?

Councilmember Barker: 18th at 3:00 pm?

Jenelle Berthoud: January 18, 3:00 pm COW meeting.

Councilmember Barker: make a motion to schedule a COW meeting on January 18th at 3:00 pm to review job descriptions. And that would include some of the departments.

Mayor Michalson: do we have any comments from the public on this?

Chief Motley: it makes it hard to attend at that time.

Mayor Michalson: the public does not usually weigh in it is between the council and the staff; they can come and attend they really don't discuss.

Vicky Motley: if he has to take time off of work, he loses salary. I am just saying.

Councilmember Barker: then let me rephrase that then, make everybody happy. Is 6:00 pm okay. Withdrawing my motion that I just placed and reschedule the COW meeting for January 18, 2024, 6:00 pm. is that better? Are you okay with that?

Councilmember Brown: 2nd.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2nd. Public comment? Council discussion? Jenelle, would you please take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 3-0

9. Board Reports

NONE

10. Town Council Comments

NONE

11. Executive Report

Mayor Michalson: water meters we have ongoing issues with our meters having zero reading, we had a meeting with public works. we are missing meter readings. We have contacted Harmony and they have suggested to change the routes so we can get a better idea and we are losing money on this; we are at 180-150 unread meters per month, and this has been going on for a long time. We cant continue and this is a high priority of mine. I had a meeting with the school superintendent regarding our SRO office and Cassi that is at academy. I discussed with him that I told him that we are actively searching for a new police chief and there is one from New York City. I will say that a good thing when Gina put all of our CD's into the 4% account and we have the money to change our police department retirement to 20 years. And we are drawing that up now and should be on the February meeting. We think that we have found some money to give our police officers a raise, we have two police officers that have put their applications in Hamilton no fault of theirs and they need to feed their family, we know that this is a revolving door. We give them everything, send them to the academy, they come back and in 6 months they are out of here. It happens in all small towns. We are trying to see if we can keep our officers. When I spoke with the superintendent, he talked about how popular Cassi is. She is only 4-5 years removed from high school, but she has already gained that trust with the students. And that is big as we all know. Trevor was up there the other day taking her place and they like him. They are bringing Mac's expertise into the community. Gina and I and Stephen had a meeting with HDR to discuss the break down of the Mission Street water main project. We tabled that and sent it back to have it rebid because the bids need to be opened in front of the council. We had a meeting with Eli, and we will put it out for rebids, and it will only be Mission Street. Will advertise on the 22nd and then they are due on February 22 and then opened at that meeting. Send it out to HDR to review and bring it back to the March meeting and then Jenelle had a good idea that we should have a special meeting to award so that we can get this project going. My old council seat still has not been filled, it is kind of sad, it is open until the 16th. Do I have a motion to adjourn?

Councilmember Brown: I move that we adjourn.

Councilmember Barker: 2nd.

Mayor Michalson: we have a motion and a 2nd to adjourn, all in favor.

"AYE"

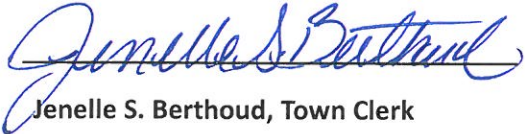
12. Adjournment

APPROVE:



Bob Michalson, Mayor

ATTEST:



Jenelle S. Berthoud, Town Clerk