

City of White Sulphur Springs

The regular meeting of the City Council was held on June 21, 2022 at 7:00 P.M. Mayor Rick Nelson called the meeting to order with the following members present:

Pattie Berg
Ron Coleman
Rick Ellison
Lee Blanchard

A. Call Regular Meeting to Order

B. Roll Call

C. Pledge of Allegiance to Flag

D. Public Comment: Public comment will be accepted on public matters not listed on this agenda and are within the jurisdiction of the City Council and having a significant interest to the public. During a regular session, there will be time after each agenda item for comment about that item.

1. Step up to the podium and state your name and address for the record.
2. Please limit your comments to THREE (3) minutes.

E. Unfinished Business - Items for Discussion and/or Actions

1. Task Order #2 for Great West: Water System PER

Discussion and/or Action

Continued from May 2nd meeting: Agreement for performing work on PER (Preliminary Engineering Report) which is an update and is needed approximately every 5 years as a means of evaluating the City's needs regarding water projects and to qualify for various grants and loans for the work.

The Mayor said that we are still waiting for the attorney with Great West to get everything together for the contractors for the engineer's contract.

Accept Public Comment

Possible Motion: Move to Approve/Ratify Task Order #2, the Agreement, for services to prepare a Water System PER for the City; OR, Move to authorize Mayor to sign when agreement issues are resolved.

The Mayor said that the Task Order #2 is not ready yet.

2. HRDC Housing Study/Action Plan - Tracey Menez and Meagher County Stewardship

Continued Discussion from April 19th and May 2nd and June 6th and Possible Action

Review Letter from Heather Grenier of HRDC withdrawing proposal for Phase 2 at this time.

Accept Public Comment

** Possible Motion: Accept withdrawal of HRDC Phase 2 of Housing Study Proposal.*

Mayor Nelson said that the HRDC study plan is done since they didn't show up to the meeting. The Council agreed that the County does need to address the housing issue. Mayor Nelson had a call from Rebekah Luchterhand stating that Burt Hurwitz would like the City Council and the mayor to attend the meeting with the Stewardship council, the Habitat for Humanity and one other organization that Burt has reached out to. This will be from 1-2pm in the County Courtroom on Tuesday, July 12th. Councilperson Rick Ellison spoke with one of the higher guys with DA

Davidson and they have assistance and grants they can put toward housing incentives. It was noted that we should invite this gentleman to the meeting on the 12th.

3. Acknowledge SEARCH Grant Fund Allocation/Conditions of Award

Discussion and/or Action – continued from June 6th meeting

Review Letter of Conditions related to Notice of Award of SEARCH grant funds through USDA Rural Development Office. Discuss items of concern from last meeting. Authorize Mayor to move forward with acceptance of funding.

Accept Public Comment

Possible Motion: Move to accept SEARCH grant funds and authorize Mayor to accept conditions and move forward with next steps.

The SEARCH Grant was signed and delivered back. The mayor asked if there was a motion to accept the SEARCH Grant funds and authorize the Mayor and accept conditions and move forward with the next step. The mayor said that the SEARCH Grant is \$30,000 with a City match of up to \$30,000 used for the water system PER.

Councilperson Pattie Berg motioned to accept the SEARCH Grant funds and authorize the Mayor to accept conditions and move forward with the next steps. Councilperson Lee Blanchard seconded. Motion passed.

F. Motion/Vote to Adjourn Business Meeting

The Mayor asked the Council if there is a motion to adjourn the regular meeting. Lee Blanchard motioned to adjourn the regular meeting. Ron Coleman seconded the motion. All said Aye. Meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.

WORK SESSION (Starts directly after Business Meeting adjourns)

A. Call Work Session Meeting to Order 7:06 pm

B. Council Discussion:

1. Begin Planning/Review of 2022-2023 Budget and Process

Discussion as to 2022-2023 Budget, budgeting process, identify any issues of concern or focus. Plan calendar for process, including scheduling dates for formal budget hearing and passage of budget.

The Mayor said that the Fire Chief, Sam Peeler, sent a letter to the City “thanking the council and the mayor for giving them \$2500 last year to use for training, training supplies as well as funds for 2 sets of bunker gear. The training money was used for meals during a basic wild line class that they held in the Spring as well as the smoke machine and smoke solution. The smoke machine will enable them to smoke up a building so that they can realistically train on interior fire attack and search and rescue in a smokey environment. They would like to ask for the \$2500 again for more training this year. They would like to purchase a rescue dummy to use hand in hand for the search and rescue trainings. Also, the fire department has a need for gas detectors and thermal cameras. They currently don’t have gas detectors and they rely on the county’s gas detectors being available when they need one. They would like to purchase 2 but he said if they could get one detector and one camera, that would suffice. The detectors they need would cost between \$900 and \$1,000 each, they detect 4 toxic gasses and are an invaluable tool for the firefighter to have. They are in the same situation with the cameras, since they City doesn’t have them, they rely on the County or Law Enforcement to have one when they need it. Cameras are necessary because they identify heat sources that the eye

cannot as well as areas that are not safe for personnel to access. They use the cameras on chimney fires to determine if the fire has spread outside the chimney on structure fires, heat and debris piles, vehicle fires and other fires so they can find every bit of heat. The cameras are \$700-\$3,000 and can get a good quality one for around \$1,500.” The mayor would like to extend the \$2500 to them since it’s put into training and being put to good use. He would like to review funds once the budget has been figured so we can possibly give them more, aside from the amount for the bunker gear. Mayor Nelson stated that the fire department has the contact information for Great West so that they can find out what grant options they have that they can apply for. They received 10,000 from the Bair grant last year which helped buy equipment. If we have extra funds like last year when we did the reserve, the fire department would like us to keep them in mind for some of their needs.

411200 Facility Administration

Court asked for exterior door emergency exit and steps. The judge has spoken with contractors for a rough price. A metal, solid steel door for brick building without an existing wall with a 3 hour burn time is about \$1,700. It would be cheaper to do prefab steps that you level and set on the ground. Mayor Nelson is guessing \$1500.

The outside door for the Courtroom plus the cost of stairs/hand railing would cost approximately \$6,000-\$7,000 minimum, this is parts plus labor.

GIS Mapping System – Someone would help with mapping of our mains. The homeowner will pay for the survey. Councilperson Berg asked about property lines and pins. The mayor mentioned that the pins are not locatable at this point and are very few and far between. We aren’t surveyors and if we can’t locate a pin, a surveyor must.

Mayor Nelson noted that gas, diesel, oil, propane, and tires will need to be increased from last years budget. Any trainings for clerks, judges, mayors and otherwise will also have a higher reimbursement. This rate is in effect July 1, 2022, through December 2022 and is now .625 per mile because of the price of gas. They just passed this a week ago. The cost of living this year is 5.9 and projected to be 8.6. Mayor Nelson also stated that we are looking at new windows now that we have air conditioning, and we would like to put LED lighting in the courtroom and hallway. It also would be good to move the flagpole 6 feet from the building so flags aren’t resting on the roof. Councilperson Coleman would like to see a state flag as well. Councilperson Berg asked if facilities can be used in the funding of the new City Shop. Mayor Nelson stated that we would take 33% out of water, 33% out of sewer and enterprise funds, and the remaining out of Public Works or facilities maintenance. Rocky is working on bids for a 40X60 addition onto the existing building. The mayor’s guess is \$120-150,000. Councilperson Berg asked if gas tax money can be used on the shop, but Mayor Nelson said it is only for streets, alleys, and bridges. We have a drawing of what we would like the building to be. Mayor Nelson stated that our next two big needs are going to be a better road grater and street roller. The current one’s are functional, but we need a double roller if we want our streets to look nice. A good used roller is about \$22,000. Holes and chip sealing will be starting soon. Councilperson Berg would like to see a press release in the paper that says, “here’s the plan for streets for this Summer,” and explain what the plan is.

C&C will be starting the water project on July 5, 2022, so Rocky will be busy all of July and 2 weeks of August. He can start chip sealing after that.

We can get the name of the federal drug testing place from the County and use that for our CDL Drivers. The minute someone passes their CDL then they go straight to test.

Right now, we have 2 problems happening with testing out of the Lagoons. There was a big test today and those results will take about a week to receive back. Number 1 and 2 are bad and 3 is getting bad. Today they said that the big problem is right across the street where the campers are. The campers are dumping sewage and it's killing the lagoon and it is contaminating everything. The 2nd problem is the meat shop and Rocky will talk about it on Monday. Our water samples are coming back red, so the meat shop isn't putting the plug in. We are unable to do anything about the Campground, but we can do something about the meat shop. We can go in and ask to see their grease trap. A short fix to these situations is to pump water from cell 1 to cell 2 and create an aeration by pump. We are looking to lease one of these for 3 months. Honeybees were donated to us from Belgrade, and they can be used. They float in the lagoons, and they are solar operated but the problem with them is the maintenance and the clogging. If we go through aeration, it will change our permit through DEQ and we don't want to do that. We will probably try the pump. We would have to post every 100 feet that the water is non fishable and non-swimmable, which would meet DEQ standards. We will know more in a week to 10 days. The equivalent to all this sewage going into the Lagoon would be 40 houses.

Mayor Nelson said that Parks is working on a \$50,000 T Mobile grant. The Fall Zone material has been purchased. We have not received anything back on the retaining wall or cement work so Bair Park should be close to getting done. Radar Park should only be routine maintenance at this point. Spikes Park will be developed with a Highway money or grant money. The big one, if they get the T Mobile grant for Springs would be ADA, fall zone and electrical. Facilities money could be an option. The wiring in the Rotary shelter needs to be re-done. Parks will be meeting next week to discuss their budget.

Councilperson Berg would like to know where the CIP is. Mayor Nelson thinks they have been busy trying to get the general engineers contract language done. The owner of the firm and the firm's attorney have coordinated with Susan to hammer out the details of the contract. Other than funding being secure we aren't sure the level of work they are doing on the CIP. Craig is working on grants and the SEARCH Grant. We received 30K out of it, but it was a challenge getting there. Mayor Nelson will shoot Collette an email asking where they are on the CIP. He also believes Great West is trying to work on funds for Phase 4, which is the tank to the new line that was put in 8 to 10 years ago. It won't kick in until we get the PER since the PER is the big tool for the grant. It will likely require some city funds. We won't know what the law enforcement budget is until September so we should budget \$75,000. Councilperson Berg wanted to know about last years budget for law enforcement and why there was leftover money. Mayor Nelson explained that the rest stayed in the general fund versus what was on the expenditure. Mayor Nelson asked City Attorney Wordal if we have to go into negotiations this budget cycle for law enforcement. It is every 2 years from the date so we should have done one in 2021 but we were battling COVID. We should be prepared for this, this year due to everything going up in cost. We won't know what we're getting from the State until the first week in August.

Councilperson Berg thinks that the people of White Sulphur could use a decrease in costs and property taxes. She thinks we shouldn't do anything that increases costs. Mayor Nelson said that we go by what the State gives the county and what the county gives to us. Our budget is set at how many mills we receive. Ms. Berg would like to talk to Great West and thinks our next steps is a master grant for streets. Mayor Nelson said that the only way streets can be done is to finance them into the water/sewer project. Councilperson Berg stated that we continually receive comments that our streets need fixed and mentioned having a street improvement district, locally that voters can choose. There are funding mechanisms under Montana code that we can use. Ms. Berg feels that every time we do something positive, we get slapped with "when are we going to fix our streets." Councilperson Coleman mentioned we should get our main streets done and from there on, find the roughest roads in town and fix them. (Garfield, West End of Lincoln) Councilperson Berg thinks that we should let the community know that we recognize that streets are bad and let them know facts around fixing streets. She also mentioned maybe we should try a committee and have them discuss options and decide whether we want to pursue other funding for streets. Lincoln is getting zipped on Monday, June 27th. and part of 4th. Mayor Nelson stated that they will start on the far East because we have to get it to where we can have the water running on the wells for a limited amount of time because when they start the water, we have to crack the fire hydrants so it's blowing water out. This is to keep pressure down, so we don't start blowing mainlines because there is no way to compensate the pressure. The tanks are about a 110 PSI, if we go to the wells, we will far exceed that. We have to do this in case the power goes out.

C. Comments/Discussion

1. Future Business

2. Mayor's Comments—Rick Nelson

Mayor Nelson asked the council if we want to put out an RFP for an Auditor. Strom and Associates has done it for 4 years and they sent a proposal this week to do 2022, 2023 and 2024. They charge \$10,000 per year. They are proposing \$12,200 a year for the next 3 years. The amended petition for annexation for the hospital needs to be on the next agenda. City Attorney Wordal says that we have to review and store it. It will be on the planning boards July agenda and should be on our July 5th agenda. They originally proposed a track of 9 acres and now they want to annex in 15 acres. The water still comes in the same way. The Mayor and the Council don't remember going through the original annexation. They took it to the Planning Board, then they reviewed, took the public comment and then they would present to the Council and the Council would have said yay or nay to annexing as proposed.

3. Council Comments/Discussion

a. President of the Council—Pattie Berg

Councilperson Berg will be in the Dare to Lead Training for 2 days. It is free for elected officials. Parks will meet Wednesday the 29th to discuss budgets. The Tennis court has all the panels off of it and is ready for full court. The nets have to be adjusted.

b. Council Member—Ron Coleman

c. Council Member—Rick Ellison


He has an appointment with Judge Sorenson regarding helping with community service so he can help Ron.

d. Council Member—Lee Blanchard


Did they figure out how to attach the park mats to the ground? Councilperson Ellison and Berg stated that they use rebar underneath and J hooks.

D. Motion/Vote to Adjourn the Meeting

The Mayor asked the Council if there is a motion to adjourn the meeting. Lee Blanchard motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ron Coleman seconded the motion. All said Aye. Meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.


Michelle Stidham—Clerk-Treasurer


Mayor – Rick Nelson


Heather Harrington-Assistant Clerk