

THE LEWISTOWN CITY COMMISSION HELD A VIRTUAL COMMISSION MEETING ON NOVEMBER 16, 2020 THOSE IN ATTENDANCE PARTICIPATED BY ZOOM OR TELECONFERENCE. THE VIRTUAL MEETING STARTED AT 7 PM.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Doney called the meeting to order.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Doney asked everyone to stand and join in the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present were Commissioners: Day, Doney, Dunnington, Hewitt, Loomis, Oldenburg and Turk.

Also, in attendance was City Manager Holly Phelps, Finance Officer/City Clerk Nikki Brummond. Citizens in attendance were Richard Battrick, Robert Snyder and Suzanne Westhoff. Ms. Katherine Spears from the News Argus and Ms. Heidi Weber from KXLO/KLCM also attended.

Chairman Doney stated that because of the Governor's various Emergency Orders implemented to deal with the COVID-19 crisis, and the need to protect members of the public, City Commission members and City Staff from the spread of the Corona Virus, the normal and regular means of conducting our meetings in person are being temporarily modified.

Chairman Doney stated that the format for tonight's meeting has been adopted pursuant to the Letter of Advice from the Montana Attorney General's Guidelines for Conduction Local Public Meetings During COVID-19 Emergency, signed on March 27, 2020. A copy of the MT AG's Letter of Advice has been provided to the Commission and is also available on the City's website.

Chairman Doney explained that pursuant to the AG Guidelines, the City has provided notice by (News Argus, Radio, City website, posting) that tonight's regularly scheduled meeting would be held by audio/video means. The City is using a platform known as Zoom Video whereby Commission members, staff and the public may see and hear each other. If individuals do not have devices with cameras, they can still utilize the audio option, or they can call 978-990-5000 access code 125500, where they will be able to listen to the discussions and also be heard. Many of you have sight and sound access, but at a minimum anyone having access to a laptop, telephone or cell phone has sound access to tonight's meeting with the ability to not only listen but participate verbally as well.

Chairman Doney stated that in following the AG's Guidance, we are also limiting the scope of tonight's meeting to a very few agenda items that are necessary to be acted upon in order to continue to operate the City.

Chairman Doney explained that this is a new procedure for all of us. There will be technology challenges and glitches which we will have to work through, so please bear with us. In order to ensure that everyone can participate to the fullest extent possible, we will ask you to mute your own microphone on your device or phone. At such time where you need to speak, or have a question, then take your phone/device off mute to do so. Doing this will minimize the background noise that will have the potential to affect everyone who is attempting to participate tonight. Chairman Doney explained that a roll call vote will be taken for each item that requires action on behalf of the Commission. The City Clerk will call each Commission by name to cast their vote which will be either yeah or nay. City Manager Phelps explained

that if the meeting were to get hacked, she would end the meeting immediately and would then resume the meeting in ten minutes. The meeting access codes are listed at the top of the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Doney stated that without objection and based on the corrections the November 2, 2020 minutes are approved.

COURTESIES

There were none,

PROCLAMATIONS

There were none.

BOARD AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Loomis reported that he attended the Park and Recreation Board meeting on November 4, 2020. The Ice Skating Association has bought some sheds from COVID funds to help with social distancing for participating and the season will be from December to March.

Commissioner Day reported that the Central Montana Health District Board meeting is this Thursday, November 19th. The meeting will be held virtual through zoom.

Commissioner Hewitt reported that she attended the Airport Board meeting on November 4, 2020. The pilots lounge roof is to be completed in December, weather permitting. The security cameras for the big hangar are to be installed in December and the estimated cost is \$1,500. The hospital has asked to use the Rimby Hangar for drive through COVID testing. It is only used for about two hours each day. There are two possible renters looking at the WTI building.

Commissioner Doney reported that the Library Board will also be meeting this Thursday, November 19th.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Holly Phelps reported on the following issues:

The Lewistown Christmas Stroll will be November 27th from 3 to 8 pm. This year there are several events taking place. These include a gingerbread house contest, Elf Run/Poker Fun Walk beginning at 4 pm and the parade begins at 5:30 pm. Christmas Stroll pins are back this year and don't forget about the Bright Country Nights.

The Ice-Skating Association is working to get the rink ready for this year's season. They are planning to start making ice on the 22nd of November. This year the group has taken some additional steps to ensure players stay safe. This last weekend there was some vandalism at the warming shed and some other places around the City. It is being investigated by the Police Department.

The recent snow has allowed the Civic Center to begin renting snow shoes, cross country skis and ice skates. If interested contact the Civic Center for more details on equipment rentals. There will not be any roller skating this year.

The new water salesman has been up and running for a couple of months. Public Works has made a minor modification to make it more user friendly. The old water salesman is offline and will be removed.

The Library will be opening later than normal on November 17th and 18th for staff training. On these days their hour will be from 1 to 6 pm.

The City of Lewistown will not be hosting an open house. We hope to do this again in the future, but with all the COVID concerns it is not practical to do this year.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – non agenda items

Ms. Suzanne Westhoff asked about the water quality at her home, as it is still bad. Ms. Westhoff stated she is the first house off of the large water tank adjacent to Castle Ridge Acres sub division. Ms. Westhoff further stated that she is not connected to the tank and has nothing but chlorine bleach water coming from her line and are there any plans to correct that problem. City Manager Phelps stated that she would encourage Ms. Westhoff to reach out to Public Works if there are water quality issues. City Manager Phelps explained that the water department continues to test seven different locations throughout the City on a daily basis and thinks they are doing a test in the area regularly. City Manager Phelps further explained that there are plans to do some upgrades to that water pump station and feels that it would improve the water quality in the area. Ms. Westhoff stated that she is not connected to the pump station. City Manager Phelps explained that the project that is being looked at would address the entire water system.

Mr. Robert Snyder briefly shared with the Commission his concern regarding the restrictions that are put in place due to COVID 19. Mr. Robert Snyder stated that he is a voice for reason and reopening. City Manager Phelps stated that the City has not passed any COVID restrictions at the City level however, the City is part of the Central Montana Health District.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Hewitt made the motion to approve the consent agenda and Commissioner Dunnington seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The consent agenda was the acknowledgement of the claims that have been paid from October 29, 2020 to November 13, 2020 for a total of \$157,979.91

***REGULAR AGENDA – Resolutions, Ordinance & Other Action Items:**

1. Discussion and action on awarding the 2021 snow hauling bids

City Manager Phelps explained this is something the Public Works Director advertises annually. This year only one bid was received from Griffith Contracting. City Phelps explained that the per hour cost is \$100 per piece of equipment. City Manager Phelps stated that this is approximately \$25 more per hour than previous years. City Manager Phelps stated that this is advertised as emergency contract and is to assist the Street Department with snow removal and hauling. Commissioner Day asked if this was done in prior years. City Manager Phelps answered that the bid is advertised each year and there have been different contractors in previous years however, this was the only bid received this year. Commissioner Turk made the motion to approve awarding the 2021 snow hauling bid to Griffith Contracting and Commissioner Loomis seconded the motion. Commissioner Doney asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Discussion and action on approving the agreement between the City of Lewistown and the Fergus County Council on Aging

City Manager Phelps explained that this is the lease between the City of Lewistown and the Fergus County Council on Aging. The committee met in June and September to review the agreement. This is the same agreement that has been in place for many years. The first change was parking and parking spaces were identified and the intention is to not encourage long term parking and to help with snow removal when necessary. City Manager Phelps explained that a sentence was added to the contract regarding care of the center. This would allow the City to conduct weekly after hour inspection to identify any issues. This would make sure that the City and the Council on Aging is aware of any issues that need to be rectified. City Manager Phelps explained that the Council on Aging building is City owned and per the previous contract the Council on Aging was depositing \$1,000 per year to a roof repair account. City Manager Phelps stated that it is now identified as a building reserve account and the change is that the \$1,000 would be continue to be put toward the building reserve and then an additional \$1,000 would be given to the City to do some improvements for the Commission chambers. City Manager Phelps further explained the Commission has noticed that we no longer have a lectern, maybe we should install a permanent screen and would like to make some improvements to the sound system. This is a five-year contract and notice to end the contract was included in the new lease. Commissioner Loomis asked what number 8, right of assignment means. City Manager Phelps answered that basically the Council on Aging can't put a lien on the building or alter the building without giving notice to the City. It is a City owned building. Commissioner Loomis made the motion to approve the agreement between the City of Lewistown and the Fergus County Council on Aging for five years and Commissioner Day seconded the motion. Commissioner Doney asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Discussion on City of Lewistown fees for City services and possible new revenue sources.

City Manager Phelps explained that this is one of the items that was discussed during the budget process and potential revenue streams. There is a need to increase revenues. City Manager Phelps reviewed some of the fees that are charged by various departments and when last increased. City Manager Phelps explained that currently the City does not charge any fees for parade or event permits. These items can cost the City up to 8 hours of overtime, which costs the City up to a couple hundred dollars. City Manager Phelps stated that the Commission has revised the Cemetery fees and the Court Fees will change this year. The pasture leases and rents are done by requiring a minimum bid. Commissioner Turk asked about the swim team meets. City Manager Phelps explained that currently there is an agreement for use of the pool during those meets. Commissioner Loomis stated that the Park and Recreation Board has discussed raising fees for some events and they are reluctant to raise rates because the events bring people to town, who eat in our restaurants, stay in hotels and shop in the downtown. Commissioner Doney stated that she is not inclined in the current business climate to do any changes to fees or increase revenue and does not feel it raising enough money to deal with it midterm. Commissioner Day stated that this is awesome to see where the revenue comes from and to look at possible revenue and expenditures. Commissioner Day stated that she does agree with Commissioner Doney and feels that is should be looked at in the upcoming months. City Manager Phelps stated that she realizes we are starting the conversation early but realizes it will be a lengthy process to made any decisions but we are seeing a decrease in revenues. City Manager Phelps further stated that she does not know how long the City can continue to provide the same levels of service without some certainty of revenues. City Manager Phelps explained that the City has not had to lay employees off but it may be something that will need to be looked at if we do not look at a way to fund these services. Commissioner Hewitt stated she feels that the revenues need to be discussed and see what increase or changes can be made but agree not to make any changes at this time. City Manager Phelps stated that she would like this to be looked at in the couple of

months because she expects it to be a lengthy process but would like it in place prior to the budget. Commissioner Oldenburg commented that at some point at future meetings she would like to see what fees are associated with which department. Commissioner Doney stated that maybe the Civic Center fees should be looked at in February. Finance Office Nikki Brummond addressed the Commission explained that all of the fees discussed this evening are general fund revenues. Finance Officer Brummond stated that if you recall during the budget process, she explained in detail her concern of revenues for the general fund. Finance Officer Brummond further explained that the Commission has been approving a budget using reserve funds each year and if everything budgeted is spent 100% the reserves will be at the lowest it has been in twenty years. Finance Officer Brummond stated that part of my job is bringing my concerns of the City finances to the City Manager and make suggests on possible changes. Finance Officer Brummond comments that changes in revenue should not be done to cause hardship but should help to cover some of the expenses. Commissioner Doney stated that she would like to prioritize the departments and maybe gather information to make a good decision. Commissioner Turk asked about all of the City property and would there be any properties that could be sold to bring in revenue. City Manager Phelps answered that the City does not have a surplus of property and any property owned is being rented. City Manager Phelps stated that she and the Finance Officer will work to put together more information to make some informed decisions and bring before the Commission in the upcoming months. Mr. Robert Snyder stated that maybe volunteers can be used for some of this and share the concern of raising fees on events which bring money to the community.

CITIZEN’S REQUESTS

There were none.

COMMISSIONERS’ MINUTE

Commissioner Loomis asked about the funding for the SCBA units for the Fire Department. City Manager Phelps explained that it will be brought before the Commission at the next meeting.

Commissioner Loomis asked about the City Attorney position. City Manager Phelps answered that the position is being advertised and we are accepting applications;

Commissioner Hewitt reported that she drove the Truck Bypass and notices that the new sidewalk was covered with snow and wanted to know who was to clear it. Commissioner Hewitt comment that the sidewalk doesn’t do much good if the snow isn’t cleared.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Doney adjourned the meeting.

Dated this 16th day of November, 2020.

Gayle Doney, Commission Chairman

ATTEST:

Nikki Brummond, City Clerk