

City Council Meeting
June 27, 2023

Present: Mayor John Williams, Councilmembers Greg Koczur, Jack Rosander, Rose Hanser and Wayne Dudley

Also Present: Assistant Police Chief Kris Egan, Planning/Building/Zoning Official Kami Egan, City Attorney Michelle Sullivan, Public Works Director Pat Zent and City Clerk/Treasurer Michelle Richards

Mayor Williams called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. City Clerk/Treasurer Richards completed Roll Call.

Consent Agenda:

Councilmember Dudley moved approve the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Hanser seconded the motion. No discussion. No comments from the public received. Motion carried with all in favor.

- Minutes of 6/13/23 Regular Meeting
- Claims #29476, 29521, 29530-29565 \$114,808.34
- Payroll Summary 6/23/23 \$ 98,057.57

Department Reports:

Reports were presented by Assistant Police Chief Egan, Planning/Zoning/Code Official Egan, City Attorney Sullivan, Public Works Director Zent and Clerk/Treasurer Richards.

Mayor's Communications:

Mayor Williams reported on the Colstrip Days Celebration this past weekend and thanked City Employees and the Volunteer Fire Department for their hard work. He also recognized the Quality of Life Corporation and Colstrip Park & Recreation District.

Rosebud County held a Public Hearing today regarding the transfer of the Colstrip Cemetery to the City of Colstrip. We have already taken over maintenance of the cemetery.

BBC News interviewed Mayor Williams and community members regarding coal and Colstrip. The Mayor will be interviewed tomorrow by the New York Times.

The City of Colstrip's appointment to the Rosebud County Conservation District has resigned. Mayor Williams asked if any of the council members wanted to serve on the board. If not, he would advertise for a volunteer in the community to serve as our representative.

Mayor Williams asked Lydia Hesper to address the City Council regarding the lawn and tree damage at City Hall. Lydia took samples of a couple of the trees and soil and sent them for testing. The

testing did not find anything but the report indicated the damage is consistent with synthetic herbicide exposure. One possibility is also the salt that is put on the sidewalks and parking lot at City Hall and then is plowed/shoveled onto the lawn and into the soil. The harsh winter was also hard on the trees especially the lindens, honey locusts and hackberries.

Public Hearing:

Mayor Williams opened the Budget Amendment hearing at 7:30 pm. No objections or comments were received regarding the amendment. Mayor Williams closed the hearing at 7:31 pm.

Public Comment & Participation:

Jolene Verlanic, 6905 Blackhawk Circle, thanked the City for getting the cemetery transferred from the county. She suggested if the City's Public Works Department needs assistance with digging graves they contact Sagebrush Industries as they have done this in the past for the county. Jolene commented on the low-hanging trees and dead trees in the community that need trimmed or removed. She also requested a Planning Board meeting be scheduled.

Unfinished Business:

Councilmember Dudley moved to approve Resolution No. 2023-02, referring a ballot issue to Colstrip voters on whether to prohibit marijuana businesses from operating in city limits.

Councilmember Koczur seconded the motion.

Discussion: Councilmember Hanser asked for clarification if the ballot issue would prohibit all types of marijuana businesses within city limits. Attorney Sullivan confirmed that is correct.

Public Comment: None.

Motion carried with all in favor.

New Business:

Councilmember Koczur moved to approve 2023-R05 amending the 2022-2023 Street Light Assessment Budget. Councilmember Dudley seconded the motion.

Discussion: Councilmember Hanser commented on the increase in electricity for the street lights during the past year.

Public Comment: None.

Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilmember Hanser moved to approve Resolution 2023-R06, creating a Colstrip Cemetery Board. Councilmember Rosander seconded the motion

Discussion: Councilmember Dudley asked if we would advertise for board positions and suggested staggering the terms of the members. Councilmember Hanser asked how many members would be on the board. Councilmember Hanser amended her motion to specify five members will serve on the cemetery board with staggering terms of 2 three-year terms, 2 two-year terms and 1 one-year term. Councilmember Rosander seconded the amendment. Amendment carried with all in favor.

Public Comment: Jolene Verlanic commented on the problem of getting a quorum with too many members on the board.

Motion carried as amended with all in favor.

Councilmember Koczur feels the Mayor's position should also receive a compensation increase in addition to the non-union employees and council members. Councilmember Koczur moved to approve non-union and council member compensation adjustments as recommended by Mayor Williams and to also include a 6% increase for the Mayor.

Councilmember Rosander seconded the motion.

Discussion: None.

Public Comment: Jim Atchison, Southeastern Montana Development Corporation, concurs with the compensation increase for the Mayor.

Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilmember Dudley moved to approve the Comtech Quote of \$61,562 for audio and visual systems for the Courtroom/Council Meeting room at City Hall. Councilmember Koczur seconded the motion.

Discussion: Mayor Williams is planning to apply for a Coal Board Grant for these improvements. Councilmember Koczur asked if the Business Innovation Center will have the same type of system. Jim Atchison responded the BIC will have similar types of systems.

Public Comment: Jolene Verlanic thanked the City for allowing the community to use the courtroom/council meeting room and is in favor of the audio/visual system upgrades.

Motion carried with all in favor.

Mayor Williams adjourned the meeting at 7:55 pm.

Michelle Richards, City Clerk/Treasurer