

City Council Meeting
March 14, 2023

Present: Mayor John Williams, Councilmembers Rose Hanser, Mike Esser, Greg Koczur and Wayne Dudley

Also Present: Police Chief Cory Hert, Fire Chief Tony Reda, 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 Esser moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Dudley seconded the motion. Discussion. No comments from the public received. Motion carried with all in favor.

- Minutes of 2/28/23 Regular Meeting
- Claims #29189-29241 \$95,093.95
- Payroll Summary 3/3/23 \$98,904.17

Department Reports:

Reports were presented by Police Chief Hert, Fire Chief Reda, City Attorney Sullivan, Public Works Director Zent and Clerk/Treasurer Richards.

Mayor's Communications:

Mayor Williams reported on the meeting with the Rosebud County Commissioners last week regarding the Colstrip Cemetery and Law Enforcement Center. Rosebud County has a mill levy dedicated to all cemeteries in the county. Mayor Williams roughly estimated that based on the current fiscal year's mill levy, Colstrip taxpayers are paying \$45,000 to the county's cemetery fund. The total current year budget for the county's cemetery fund is \$151,000, which is for the operation and maintenance of the Forsyth and Colstrip cemeteries. The commissioners reported an annual expense of about \$4,500-\$5,000 per year for the Colstrip cemetery that includes an \$800 per month contract with Total Asphalt Repair for six months of groundskeeping. Attorney Sullivan did some investigation regarding Montana's laws related to cemeteries and her findings were distributed to council members. Rosebud County does not have a Cemetery Board although most all other counties have a Cemetery Board. It appears the majority of the property taxes levied for the cemetery fund has gone to the cemetery in Forsyth. Rosebud County employees a dedicated grounds keeper and seasonal workers to maintain Forsyth's cemetery along with detailed record keeping and policies and procedures. This is not being provided for the Colstrip cemetery. Options discussed included 1) the county give the cemetery to the city with or without the county agreeing to sharing the taxes levied via the county's cemetery mill levy; 2) the county keeps ownership and an interlocal agreement is developed between the two governments stating the county would pay the city for records management and grounds maintenance or 3) leave everything as is.

The meeting with the county commissioners also included discussion of the law enforcement center in Colstrip. The commissioners stated they are not interested in transferring the facility to the City of Colstrip even though Rosebud County's Coal Board grant application that was submitted to construct the facility included information stating the facility would be transferred to an incorporated city or town. A special improvement district and grant funds paid for construction of the building. During Councilmember Hanser's term as Mayor back in 2012, a preliminary design was developed for construction of our own building for our police department on city property adjacent to City Hall. Since last week's meeting, the commissioners have suggested instead of the city paying a lease to the county, the city could pay for utility services at the facility. However, the cost of propane, electricity and water/sewer is more than the current lease payment.

Mayor Williams testified today in the Senate Appropriations Hearing on the Coal Board funding bill.

Public Comment & Participation: None received.

Unfinished Business: None.

New Business:

Councilmember Hanser moved to approve a Special Event Permit for the 100 Year Centennial/Colstrip Days Celebration June 21-25, 2023.

Councilmember Koczur seconded the motion.

Discussion: None.

Public Comment: Glen Logan, member of the Centennial Celebration Committee, addressed the City Council regarding this event and noted the parade route is changed this year. Road closures are being requested due to the amount of food vendors expected. A lack of food vendors during previous years Colstrip Days celebrations has been an issue so this year the committee worked hard to bring in several food vendors.

Motion carried with all in favor.

Councilmember Koczur moved to approve the replacement of the HVAC system at City Hall in the amount of \$78,500.

Councilmember Dudley seconded the motion.

Discussion: None.

Public Comment: None received.

Motion carried with all in favor.

Mayor Williams adjourned the meeting at 7:45 pm.

Michelle Richards, City Clerk/Treasurer