

**MINUTES
COUNCIL WORKSHOP
NOVEMBER 25, 2014 6:30 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

A Council Workshop was held in the Council Chambers and called to order by Mayor Mark Mace at 6:30 p.m. on November 25, 2014.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emelie Eaton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Doug Poehls
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bruce McGee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Herr
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chuck Dickerson	<input type="checkbox"/> Scot Stokes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tom Nelson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bill Mountsier

OTHERS PRESENT:

Heidi Jensen, CAO
Rick Musson, Police Chief
Brent Peters, Fire Chief
Mark Guy, Police Sergeant
Norm and Zada Stamper, American Legion Baseball

Public Input (three-minute limit):

There was no public input.

General items

There were none.

Executive Review:

- Resolution – Laurel Police Department Policy

Chief Musson stated that Sgt. Guy started revamping the Police Policy over five years ago and he is proud of Sgt. Guy's work. The Emergency Services Committee reviewed the policy.

There was discussion regarding the length of the policy, the CD copies of the policy, the alphabetical organization of the policy, the Emergency Services Committee's review of the policy, and the major changes in the policy.

Sgt. Guy explained some of the new policies, including social media, bomb calls, procedural issues, shooting policy, etc. The policy is reviewed and evaluated every two years to make sure it is current.

- Resolution – American Legion Baseball Lease

Heidi mentioned that Norm and Zada Stamper attended the meeting to talk about the lease. The amount of the lease was the only change made since she visited with the Stampers last week. According to the Public Works Director, it costs the city about \$300/month to maintain the American Legion fields for a season, which would be \$1,200 for four months. The lease requires the American Legion Baseball and the Laurel Little League to have a joint concession board so separate leases are not needed and recordkeeping will be streamlined. The insurance requirements were also updated in

the lease. The five-year lease includes an option to renew for an additional five years, after which the lease would need to be renewed via council action.

Chuck asked about some discussion he remembered from a previous Park Board meeting regarding the need for fencing or netting in the back area by the tennis courts and pool.

Norm stated that he was on the council when that discussion came up and his memory is that the netting or protection would be required if the splash park was built. Norm stated that the board would be willing to discuss that if and when the splash park is built. He will take the lease back to the board. He stated that they are asking for exclusive use of the baseball field, but the parents put time and money into the field. The city mows and does the watering, but in the last two years the Laurel Dodgers has put about \$20,000 into the field for the infield, bleachers, painting, repairs, two major field cleanups a year, new dugouts, a new roof on the shed, permanent lines for the field, and plan to spend \$13,000 to cover the infield. They already invest a lot of money in the field, but he understands there the city has maintenance costs. The board is attempting to get the regional and state tournament in Laurel.

Chuck asked Norm and Zada to attend the next Park Board meeting on December 4th at 5:30 p.m. at the FAP building for further discussion.

Norm agreed to do so. He stated that the board will meet on Sunday.

Heidi asked them to let her know the board's decision on Monday.

- Council Issues:

- Discussion regarding two watercraft purchases (Emelie Eaton)

Emelie stated that she did not want to bring up justification for the purchases as much as she would like to know why the purchases were made and the council was not advised before the public started talking to council members about it.

Heidi stated that purchases are made on a daily basis that affect the day-to-day operations of the city, so a purchase of a watercraft is no different than a purchase of a vehicle or any other motorized piece of equipment that would be used to operate or facilitate the day-to-day operations of the city. It was not seen as different than any other piece of equipment.

Bill asked what the watercraft cost.

Heidi stated that the motorized watercraft that is currently being used to survey the bottom of the river cost \$29,500 and the Jon Boat that was budgeted for the fire department cost less than \$1,000.

Chuck asked regarding the requirement for purchases over \$5,000 to be submitted to the Budget/Finance Committee as a purchase requisition. He recalls that the last pickup that was bought was done on a purchase requisition because it was in excess of \$5,000.

Heidi explained that the purchase of the motorized watercraft was done very quickly. Staff has purchased many items in the past that have exceeded \$5,000 and then asked the Budget/Finance Committee to retroactively approve them when they are needed in a short amount of time. Staff was advised via the project worksheet letter from FEMA that the city could start the intake project and

FEMA would pay for the intake, which leaves a tight timeframe to get the intake completed and the permitting done by next fall. The engineers had to get into the river as quickly as possible to start working on surveying, permitting, and underwater mapping. If the city purchased the watercraft, the watercraft could be leased by the engineering firm, which would then get reimbursed back to the city through FEMA. This is the only opportunity the city would have for something like that to be reimbursed for decades of future use. It was a very quick and emerging purchase that had to be done to get the intake under control.

Chuck stated that he understood that it had to be done quickly, but he would like to be informed about things in order to answer questions from the public.

Tom stated that, from what he read, the city believes it will be reimbursed for the cost of the watercraft over a period of time.

Heidi stated that the city purchased the watercraft and is leasing it, with the city driver that is boat certified, to our engineering firm who will then submit the bills to the Federal government for reimbursement for the activity. It is the only opportunity that the city would have to receive some sort of reimbursement for that use. The city does not know what the total bill will be, but anything contributing to it is more than would have been received any other way.

There was discussion regarding the necessity for a watercraft for the city to inspect and maintain the new intake, which will only be accessible by watercraft.

Mayor Mace mentioned that a city employee's boat was used to place a candle on the intake as an emergency measure. Using an employee's equipment is not ideal, so it makes sense for the city to have a boat. The need for the fire department to have a Jon Boat for rescue equipment has been discussed for years.

Emelie stated that she does not question the justification for the boat. She stated that, in an effort to keep communication open between city hall and the council members, it would be nice to have notification in advance of getting asked by a constituent and not having an answer. She even looked back through Budget/Finance Committee minutes and City Council minutes because she had missed meetings and thought something happened while she was gone, but there was no mention of the watercraft. She asked that communication be more open.

Mayor Mace thanked her.

- Update on 2011 Yellowstone River flooding event

Heidi explained that Great West Engineering has been surveying the bottom of the river and where the new intake will go. They have done 11,000 survey points so far. This is the first time the bottom of the river has been surveyed since 2012. There was a really large hole next to the intake at that time. The hole has filled in but the whole river has gotten deeper, which is part of the reason for the significant problem at the intake last week. There was so much slush ice and so many ice jams upstream that it sucked in slush ice to the intake, which then caused the pumps to cavitate. The plant lost water production for about six hours, which caused the reservoir to draw down two feet. Staff got everything back online and the reservoir has been filled back up. The city applied for some emergency permits through the State and the Army Corps. In the last week, we dug a large 8-foot hole that has some garbage cans at the bottom of it to stop rocks from coming through and has a little

arm that goes out into the river. A diesel John Deer pump with a push start has been purchased in case things got dire and it was necessary to divert the water into the hole and move it through the channels of the original 1950's concrete intake, and then pump it out the top to be able to keep the refinery online. The city has informed FEMA again that this is just a very sticky situation for the city.

There was discussion regarding the old intake, which is a fair weather intake and not useable in the winter.

Other items

Rick stated concerns regarding issues he observed today with the railroad crossings and trains blocking access to the south side of Laurel.

Doug stated that he contacted the yardmaster once regarding train issues and their attorney in Missoula told him that the city does not own the crossings, does not have an easement for the crossings, the railroad allows crossing of their property, and can block crossings for a year if they choose to do so.

Mayor Mace stated the need to actively pursue an overpass for the city.

Rick spoke regarding the need to provide more information and communication with the citizens of Laurel.

Tom asked that the city look at ways to utilize the work release program that was presented to the council earlier this year.

Tom mentioned that the underpass will be closed for reconstruction next summer, which will put a tremendous amount of traffic on the arterials. One of those will be East Railroad, which has a dilapidated rail crossing (by Fox Lumber) that is tough on vehicles. He would like to see something done about that.

Chuck suggested the need to provide fire apparatus for the south side during the time that the underpass is closed next summer.

Doug stated concerns about brush fires and access to Hwy 212 and the issues that will be involved with the closing of the underpass.

Mayor Mace asked Doug, as the Emergency Services Committee chairman, to start reviewing the issues.

Doug will have the item on the Emergency Services Committee's agenda in January.

Review of draft council agenda for December 2, 2014

The Emergency Services Committee will not meet in December.

LURA will meet on Monday, December 15th, at 11:00 a.m.

Attendance at the December 2, 2014 council meeting

All council members present will be present.

Announcements

Tom stated that the Cemetery Commission is trying to find a new date to meet that serves everybody on the committee. The Cemetery Commission will not meet in December but will meet in January.

Emelie wished everyone a wonderful and safe Thanksgiving holiday.

Doug stated that the Emergency Services Committee toured the FAP last night and discussed each department's monetary issues for a safety mill levy for next spring.

The council workshop adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Allen
Council Secretary

NOTE: This meeting is open to the public. This meeting is for information and discussion of the Council for the listed workshop agenda items.