



The Mayor stated that at the most recent workshop meeting; there was discussion on how to proceed with the sign code. The council requested that we continue this so they can devote two workshops to go through it on a line by line basis and decide the process from there.

Motion by Alderman Mears to continue the public hearing on the City of Laurel Municipal Sign Code to September 2, 2003, seconded by Alderman Dart. Motion carried 7-0.

- **Public hearing on Resolution No. R03-76:** Resolution of intent to create Park Maintenance District Number 1 in the City of Laurel for the purpose of maintaining the park areas dedicated in the city limits of the City of Laurel.

Mayor Johnson opened the public hearing.

The Mayor stated Mary Embleton, City Clerk-Treasurer, would give a presentation on the creation of the Park District. After that anyone wishing to speak can approach the podium and state their name and address and they will be given three minutes to speak.

Mary Embleton spoke on behalf of the creation of the Park District. This would take the parks out of the General Fund and place it in its own fund. By doing this, only the costs necessary to develop, maintain, and improve the parks and pool would be spent from this fund. It would no longer have to compete with other departments in the General Fund, where parks are generally considered low priority. If there were available funds at the end of the year, they would carry over to the next year and also allow the city to start building a reserve for future needs of the parks and pool.

Once created, the district will always be a part of the city's budget. The assessment method chosen is based on the square footage of lots within the city limits. It will affect all property owners with an assessment of one cent per square foot. In the preliminary General Fund budget for 2003-2004, the parks and pool have projected appropriations of \$191,219. In addition, in the CIP Fund, a request has been made for a Parks Plan, which would cost between \$50,000 and \$65,000. This plan would include a comprehensive review of our existing parks, identify needs, and require community input. This plan will be essential in applications for grants for park and pool improvements.

The parks and pool generate limited revenue and cannot sustain themselves as an enterprise fund. Over the last four years, they have generated less than \$17,000 per year and the expenses far surpass this figure.

Mary stated that Laurel has an abundance of parks, numbering 17. Whenever a subdivision was created, a certain amount of land was required to be dedicated as a public park. The City of Laurel has developed two park locations in the past few years: Laurel Lions Park and Ponderosa Park. Both projects were completed with the cooperation of community members, who helped with labor and matching funds.

In closing, Mary stated the Park Maintenance District will accomplish two things for the City of Laurel: Help maintain the General Fund by providing relief; and provide a stable funding source for the parks and pool. The entire city will benefit by improved parks, by providing for an attractive community that will bring newcomers into our community.

(A handout was presented as part of the minutes.)

Bud stated that the question has been raised about putting this on the ballot, but it has not been resolved so we will proceed with this hearing. The public was invited to comment.

- *Dave Siljestrom, 702 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue* - Dave feels the tax money should be collected but it should be used for sewer, water, and street repair. This would free up additional money in the General Fund to be used in the parks when it's available.
- *Janet Johnson, 201 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue* – She doesn't feel the council has shown a need and she wants to know where the money is coming from now. Creating a Park District just gives the council a new avenue to raise taxes. As she understands, once you create a maintenance district, you can raise the taxes whenever you want. She mentioned there is a Street Maintenance District and they do not see any street maintenance or repairs anywhere. She was interested in the letter in the newspaper regarding 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and the secondary street. She said this street is designated an urban route. When she worked for the state, she surveyed this street and the city has minimal money going into it. She stated that the last

time we were asked to participate, we didn't. When First Avenue was done from here out to the interstate, the city agreed to do the sidewalks on the west side and the state would do the east side. Where is our participation? She feels our money is mismanaged, and she would like to go the route of California and recall everyone sitting here. She is looking at relocating since she can't see where the money is going. How much money did you save when you moved Larry McCann over to the water department, since he is not qualified or certified? She submitted two pictures showing a personal motor home plugged into the fire department over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and feels this person owes an apology.

The Mayor clarified that the council is currently looking at the Street Maintenance District to allow for some maintenance to take place. The funding that is available is not keeping up with the decay that we have to address.

- *Laurel Haggart, 806 Wyoming* – She said she was shocked when she got the letter. She went back to her tax statement and she has the Street Maintenance District. The council can get the money they want and they don't have to ask us. As for the park district, why do we have two soccer fields? She called and Billings does not do anything to help the YMCA so apparently we are hiring them to do the swimming pool. She doesn't understand why? She calculated that there would be a surplus of money and wants to know if it will go for the new trails along the Big Ditch. It very difficult when you can't vote and people in Helena are checking it out for the next legislative session, to go back to the law that would allow us to vote.
- *Susan Carter, 307 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue* - Sue stated we have 17 parks but there are only 11 active parks so let's look and see which ones even have money spent on them. She doubted that several of the parks even have lawn mowing done on them. She served on the Park Committee about 20 years ago, so she does know there is a need for the parks. She questions the YMCA's involvement since they are private and funded by participation of members. If you want to consolidate, then consolidate everything. Yes, we need a swimming pool and the money donated by Billie Riddle will help but it will never get it off the ground since it will cost millions of dollars. We need to start addressing some of our administrative people who don't live in the city and are taking tax dollars out of the city, yet are telling us we need to raise the cost of everything in the city. They need to learn what these taxes are costing the people who live here.

Mayor Johnson clarified that the last two years the city has contracted with the YMCA to provide management of the pool and it is a fixed amount. The Mayor said they hear a lot about the number of employees who live outside of the city and currently it is 44%. In today's world, you are not able to dismiss employees just because they do not live in the city limits. In checking with other communities, we are not unique in that regard.

- *Dan Currier, 206 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue* – Dan questioned the statement in Mary's presentation, which states that each year, the city must reevaluate the needs of the district and set the assessment accordingly, to cover the cost. He understands that costs will go up but he wondered if he would get a letter each year with an itemized list of expenses.

Mayor Johnson said that the Street Maintenance District is not done in this fashion but he feels we could come up with the information so we could share it with others.

- *Phyllis Bromgard, 216 Yellowstone* – Phyllis said that the editorial in last week's newspaper says it all. We don't need our parks maintained. There is a small park on the south side and hardly anyone knows it's over there. Her streets are a disaster and she has trouble getting her camping trailer into her driveway because it drags. We need more street work done.
- *Loretta Jutz, 615 Juniper* – Loretta stated that she loves the parks like everybody but maybe people wouldn't be so against it if we knew exactly what the YMCA is doing with the swimming pool or what the agreement was. They take in the money and they don't maintain it, the city does that in the spring. Maybe we could save money on the vehicles the city drives. There are quit a few pickups that employees drive home and she questioned whether it is necessary? If the public had more information, maybe they would understand it better.
- *Marvin Carter, 307 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue* – Marvin said that when he first heard about the district, he thought it had real merit. Now he sees the money floating around and nothing earmarked. He sits on the pool task force and he would like to have seen \$ 50,000 to \$75,000 earmarked for a new pool, but this was not done. He would ask the council to put it on the ballot and let the people choose.

- *Dick Metzger, 315 West Avenue* – Dick said that you can't fire anyone who lives outside the city limits but when it comes to hiring, why can't you take into consideration where they live since they drive city vehicles home. He agrees that work needs to be done on the parks but he thinks this amount is too much and that it will be worked in with the street department. Is this amount going to be for both streets and parks or is there going to be another \$84 for the streets?

The Mayor clarified that the Street District and Park District are going to be two separate districts. At this time, the only thing the council is considering is one cent for the Park Maintenance District.

- Dick asked if we are going to continue to farm everything out like we are doing with our street department now? Why did the city sell all of our street equipment? This is the stuff that should go in the newspaper so our public knows what is going on. Dick said that when he calls councilmen and leaves a message, they say they will return the call but they don't.
- *Elliott VanBuren, 517 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue* – Elliott said he has lived here for 10 years and has watched the street in front of his house erode year by year. He feels our priorities should be the water and streets situations.
  - *Gerald Barker, 705 West 14<sup>th</sup> St.* – Gerald moved here over a year ago and the first thing he noticed was not the parks, but how terrible the roads are. The idea of a park district is not the problem but if you want the support of the public, there needs to be more thought into it. You need to look at the parks and establish what you want to do with them. He cleans the sand out of his gutters and he spends money on weed spray so the roads do not deteriorate. He's trying to prevent having an SID in his neighborhood. You have an increase in water and streets and he feels people are behind those, but you can't bring all these increases at once.
  - *Fran Schweigert, 402 Forrest* – Fran wants to know where the money is going. Over the years he has seen so much money disappear that is said to be somewhere, but it's not there. Garbage rates went up and we were told we would get a new truck and a half time employee. He's seen the truck but not the employee. We went to one day a week pickup and were told that is the way it's going to be and now we're taking cans out of the alleys. We're losing services again. In the Mayor's letter, he said it saves seven times the amount of money to maintain a street rather than rebuild it. Why did the city sell the oil distributor and chipper machine? You need these to fix streets and we only got \$500 for the distributor so now we have to contract the work out and we have to clean up after they do it. In Cherry Hills, you can't walk off the street without getting oil on the sidewalk. What about the raise the Utility Director got when he got the job, a double-digit percentage raise. Public Works Director got an even larger one. Your utility bill went up and the Utility Director got a new pickup to drive to Park City and you want more money for the parks. How much money went down the drain in the river, mismanagement? Just like last fall, we spent thousands of dollars because the winter line wasn't put in. He thinks money needs to be managed, not like it is being done now.
  - *Steven Gray, 607 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue* – He has lived in the same house for 33 years and has seen lots of tax increases and lots of fees assessed. He now has to work two jobs to maintain his lifestyle, which isn't much. If he is going to have fees assessed, there should be some consideration of putting this to the vote of the people.
  - *Dan Lowell, 1115 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue* – Dan asked what it would take to get an audit on the city? What about the wages of some of your top people? He saw a water main break and he saw five city employees, maybe it was because of safety, but then a private contractor came in and in one day one person did the job. He would also like the city pickups to stay in the city limits where they belong. You say it is a benefit, but the public did not okay that benefit. He's sorry to say we are living in a society that rewards failure.

Mayor Johnson stated that an annual audit is done of the city books. In response to the wages, he said they are working on providing this information.

- *Kathryn Staudinger, 804 Wyoming Avenue* – Kathryn spoke for the retired people of Laurel. Gas, electricity, and water have all gone up along with cost of medicine. They are on fixed income and if this keeps up retired people will not be able to own their own homes.
- *Robert Bares, 406 W. 12<sup>th</sup> St.* – Bob spoke regarding people on fixed incomes and the taxable reevaluation. He called the county and figured that with the parks and streets, his assessment could go up by 75%.

- *Deanna Riesinger, 201 West Avenue* – Deanna said her husband has lived here for 60 years and about five years ago their taxes were \$310, now they are over \$1,000. If they go any higher, you are going to force them to move out of here.
- *Dan Currier, 206 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue* – Dan referenced several parks that have open space and he asked why we are maintaining them. Why don't we just sell them and use this money to put into other parks.

Mayor Johnson stated one of the things included in the parks plan is to look at the parks that are not doing us any good and get rid of them. Currently, we have no basis for selling a park but the plan would give us a process to proceed if that was the conclusion.

- *Phyllis Bromgard, 216 Yellowstone*- Phyllis stated that when Billie Riddle donated the money for the pool, it was her dream to see an indoor pool for the use of older people and someplace for them to go. Is her dream going to go down the drain?
- *Curtis Riemann, 702 W. Maryland* – Curt would like to see this go to the vote of the people. He can't see the council passing all these tax increases. He feels this is like an open cash account that can be raised whenever you want.
- *Carol VanBuren, 517 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue* – Carol wondered if it was possible to approve a parks plan without approving the money, therefore allowing the city to sell these open park spaces. Then set it up so if you want money in the future, it would have to be with the vote of the people.

The Mayor stated that part of the dilemma is that we need to try to identify some revenue to do the parks plan. That is why the council proceeded as they did and brought it forward as a maintenance district. In regard to the council having free power to access, the Street Maintenance District has been in place for some time and this is the first time any change in the funding level has even been considered. It is the one that is lagging considerably.

- *Thelma Shay, 511 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue* – Thelma noticed that in the newspaper, all councilmen voted for it. Won't it go through regardless of what the people say? Thelma said that when the water rate went through, it didn't make any difference what the people said, it was all cut and dried.

The Mayor explained that what the council voted on was the beginning of a process to bring it forward, a resolution of intent. The Mayor said he can't speak for the individual councilmen, but he does not feel a decision has been made.

- *Curt Riemann, 702 W. Maryland* – Curt asked for a count of the number of signatures against the plan.

Mary Embleton stated there were 2,657 notices mailed and we received, legitimize, and verified 460 letters of protest, which is 17.3%. It was clarified that the petition signatures counted individually.

- *Dan Lowell, 1115 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue* - said they have been told there is no money set aside for the parks. He wanted clarification of where their tax dollars go. If always used to pay for the parks, why doesn't it anymore?

Mayor Johnson clarified that there is no revenue attached to the parks plan. By creating a Park Maintenance District, it gives the ability to dedicate a revenue stream directly to the parks. Currently it competes with all other General Fund Revenue.

- *Lisa Currier, 206 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue* – Lisa wondered if other avenues have been explored to help maintain the parks, such as adopt-a-park or have a committee help out with the parks. You have a street district, are you going to maintain the parks the way you do the streets, throw a little bit of asphalt in a hole? Lisa questioned whether the intention of this is to get a water park and if so, she feels you need to be more honest with the public and tell them what your intentions are.

The Mayor said he doesn't think anyone has any intentions with regard to a water park. If the community decided, it could be considered in a parks plan.

- *Ed, Jutz, 615 Juniper* – Ed said that if you get this money, it would free up what you're currently spending on the parks right now. What are you going to do with this money? How

much is the Street Maintenance going to raise our taxes? He feels the Street Maintenance should have been decided before bringing this parks issue forward.

Mayor Johnson said the General Fund budget is using cash reserves of around \$150,000 to balance the budget this year. We're being forced to look at a cut or additional source of revenue. In regard to the Street Maintenance increase, nothing has been decided and the council is considering what might be done and at what level.

- *Phyllis Bromgard, 216 Yellowstone* – Phyllis wanted to know what happened to our sewer system when Chuck Rodgers was in here. He had it going but now it's dead.

*Alderman Dart* stated that he has been up nights thinking about this very issue, what the city does with the monies, what the will of the voters is, and what the taxpayers' voices are saying. One of his bigger struggles is to put common sense to this whole thing. We're trying to do something and turn this around in a short period of time. If we're going to dedicate to the improvement of parks, he personally feels there has to be a plan in place that encompasses a bit of time and some personal representation with our taxpayers so they know what we are doing, what we are trying to accomplish, and give ample time for public feedback. He feels this whole process has been rushed and he is not comfortable with it. What he does on a daily basis, especially in Laurel, is visit with people on fixed incomes. Some folks scarcely have enough money to afford their prescription drugs or buy their next week's worth of food. He struggles with what the council's priorities are, he understands what they have to do with the general budget and that is difficult too. This is not an easy task, sitting up here. A lot of people would prefer to name call or point fingers but this is not an easy job either. But again, he wonders how we do things, in the public's perception, and what is right. For the voters in Ward 3, which he represents, he can't support this at this time. Perhaps it's unpopular here but that's the way he feels. It's in a very logical manner that he says that he doesn't feel it has been developed properly, we are going out with a wild guess as to how much money we need. He feels that if it is put to a vote, he believes it will be defeated.

*Alderman Poehls* said he would like to address some of the issues. Truthfully, he said he has not made up his mind yet but he is not as adamant as Dan. He would like to address issues that were brought up that have nothing to do with Park Maintenance District. Everyone is talking about streets and earlier this year we discussed it and if we wanted to replace our streets and make them all new, it would cost nine million dollars. So what can we do with what we have? We are trying to do the best we can with what we have. For half a cent per square foot or about \$30 a year, you get half a pothole fixed. If we raise it to a penny, maybe we can fill a pothole and get some streets drivable, but he's not saying they are going to be fixed because we do not have millions of dollars. The lady who did the survey could probably tell you what it cost for a block of asphalt, all the way down to the base and everything. It's not cheap.

What we are working toward, as a council, is to get the whole ball working in one place. We've gone this way and that way but now we have to get it all encompassed. Yes, we're working on water infrastructure; the water plant will be on line within the month. We've got a \$400,000 or \$ 500,000 grant we're working on to start working on the sewer system. We're trying to develop a way to do a little better street maintenance than we are doing now, but \$130,000 does not maintain very many streets. On top of that, we are looking at an economic development person who could go out and entice new business into Laurel. Hopefully it would work, but we have not made a decision on it yet. It's one of those balls in the air that we are thinking about. But if this happens and someone starts promoting this town, what are they going to look at. Sure, they are going to look at streets. They expect water and sewer. They look at the streets, then the schools, and finally your amenities such as the parks, pool and things like that. He has not made a decision yet and it depends on the direction the community gives the council. If you don't want parks, fine, we can save \$193,000 by cutting parks out of the budget. What do the Billings parks look like this year because they did not water them? That's what our parks will look like. You have to do the whole ball at once.

- *Jackson Parker, 711 Wyoming Avenue* – Jackson stated he has sat as an alderman and knows some of the problems the council is facing. What he has to say is reiteration. He has lived here 83 years and he thinks the city needs priorities. There are too many things that we can't put a handle on. What is our reevaluation going to be when this is finished? Until we get answers, we need to establish priorities. Number one is water and then our deplorable streets. He recalls when the Mayor was contemplating running for office, that he said the streets are bad. He is not saying that the Mayor is not concerned about them now, but he is appealing to the Mayor to get our priorities back, water first and then the streets.

- *Janet Johnson, 201 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue* – She agrees that the streets cost money. The way the streets have been done for the last 20 years or not done, has been a disservice. There is a reason the state has maintenance and it is to maintain. We have no maintenance. A gentleman said we sold all the equipment to the tune of pennies on the dollar. This does not make good business sense. We are not utilizing the people. She offered videotapes of how to chip seal, how to use a distributor, how to run a roller and paver. Know what, they did not want them or need them, they knew it all. Now you see how things are fixed. We turn around and contract this stuff out for lots of money and no one inspects it. The road behind the fire station is out of grade already. No one inspected it. If you can't drive to the dang parks, what are you going to do with them?
- *Curt Riemann, 702 W. Maryland* - Curt responded to Alderman Poehls' comment that if they don't like that, they'll take the \$193,000 away and not spend anything on parks. He said we are not being factious.
- *Wally Shay, 511 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue* – Wally said he agrees with most everything that has been said but he did want to compliment the council on the fact that we have the best looking cemetery in the state. The people taking care of it are doing an excellent job. He wishes the parks could go right along with it.

Mayor Johnson asked three times for any further comments. There were none.

Mayor Johnson closed the public hearing.

**CONSENT ITEMS:**

- **Claims for the month of July 2003 in the amount of \$ 400,608.71.**  
A complete listing of the claims and their amounts is on file in the Clerk-Treasurer's Office.
- **Approval of Payroll Register for PPE 07/20/03 totaling \$ 120,937.32.**
- **Receiving the Committee Reports into the Record.**  
  
--Budget/Finance Committee minutes of July 1, 2003 were presented.  
  
--Council Workshop minutes of July 29, 2003 were presented.
- **Resolutions.**  
  
**Resolution No. R03-78: Authorizing the Mayor to sign a resolution form for the State and Federal Surplus Programs.**  
  
**Resolution No. R03-79: A resolution approving agreements between the City of Laurel and Laurel Urban Fire Service Area (LUFSA), said agreements relating to fire protection.**  
  
**Resolution No. R03-80: A resolution authorizing the Mayor to sign Amendment No. 2 for the Professional Services Agreement with HKM Engineering, Inc., for the new water intake.**  
  
**Resolution No. R03-81: Resolution authorizing the Mayor to sign a Tower Lease Agreement with ICELAND for a police repeater site.**

The mayor asked if there was any separation of consent items. There was none.

Motion by Alderman Olson to approve the consent items as presented, seconded by Alderman Poehls. Motion carried 7-0.

**CEREMONIAL CALENDAR:** None.

**REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:** Senior Helping Hand – Christiana Sikora

Mayor Johnson introduced Christiana Sikora, the Executive Director of Senior Helping Hand of Billings.

Christiana stated Senior Helping Hands is a licensed home health agency that serves individuals over 60 years of age in their homes. The people they serve have lost a lot of their ability to care for themselves, mostly physical but also they have no family members around to help care for them. The only thing they have left is their home and this is really where they want to stay. Unfortunately in-home care is very expensive and Senior Helping Hands is the only organization in several counties who serves seniors based on their ability to pay. One and one half years ago, 50% of the clients they served were still able pay full price for the services they offer. That has changed to where 50% of their clients pay nothing at all. This is due in part to higher energy cost, rent, and higher taxes. They are trying to live on \$600 to \$700 per month. Laurel currently has about 10 elderly people on a waiting list who have had their needs assessed, but Senior Helping Hands is unable to serve them at the moment. In addition to drastic reduction of program income, they have been cut \$15,000 by the state. In the past Laurel has been donating \$700 to the program and she was going to ask for an increase in the contribution in order to get one or two of the most urgent folks off the waiting list. She said the organization is very frugal. They have a 13% administration and fund raising budget and the rest all goes to client services. They do a lot of lot of fund raising and grant writing in order to try and secure additional funds. The Scott Foundation has promised them a grant of \$5,000 if, by the end of December, they can raise \$15,000 in matching funds. If the City of Laurel would consent to give an additional \$300, this would count toward the match. In reference to a question, Christiana stated that approximately \$6,000 was spent in Laurel last year.

**COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS (ONE-MINUTE LIMIT):** None.

**SCHEDULED MATTERS:**

- **Confirmation of Appointments.**

**City Clerk-Treasurer:**

Mayor Johnson appointed Mary Embleton as clerk-treasurer for the City of Laurel through December 31, 2003.

Motion by Alderman Dart to approve the appointment of Mary Embleton as clerk-treasurer for the City of Laurel to run through December 31, 2003, seconded by Alderman Olson.

Alderman Olson stated that Mary has been on the Budget/Finance Committee as long as he has and she has been very pleasant to work with. She shows extreme professionalism and she is an asset to the city.

Motion carried 7-0.

**Yellowstone Conservation District Board:**

Mayor Johnson appointed Marieanne Hanser to a three-year term, ending June 30, 2006, on the Yellowstone Conservation District Board.

Motion by Alderman Dart to approve the appointment of Marieanne Hanser to a three-year term, ending June 30, 2006, on the Yellowstone Conservation District Board, seconded by Alderman Mace. Motion carried 7-0.

**Ambulance Attendant:**

Mayor Johnson appointed Elliott Grayson as an ambulance attendant.

Motion by Alderman Dart to approve the appointment of Elliott Grayson as an ambulance attendant, secondary by Alderman Poehls. Motion carried 7-0.

- **Request from Monty and Terri Cherry for approval to proceed with the annexation process for less than the required amount of land – 403 Laurmac Lane.**

Motion by Alderman Poehls to approve the request from Monty and Terri Cherry to proceed with the annexation process for less than the required amount of land at 403 Laurmac Lane, seconded by Alderman Olson. Motion carried 7-0.



- **Ordinance No. O03-04: Ordinance amending Chapter 17.62 of the Laurel Municipal Code relating to Conditional Use Permit.** Second reading.

Motion by Alderman Oakes to adopt Ordinance No. O03-04, seconded by Alderman Mears. A roll call vote was taken on the motion. All seven aldermen in attendance voted aye. Motion carried 7-0.

**ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA:** None.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (THREE-MINUTE LIMIT):**

- Deanna Riesinger, 201 West Avenue, stated her concern is with Schessler's. Three years ago she took a picture of the dirt in the air by her home, into the EPA and they immediately had Schessler's permit revoked from doing any business on this premise. Three days later, Mayor Rodgers reinstated their permit, called the EPA and said that any businesses in the state of Montana supercede the health and welfare of any residential community. She said they have really suffered at the hands of this man. He comes in at all hours of the night, he wakes them up and their children can't sleep at night. It has been a horrible situation and she has called Bob Schessler and told him he is a bad neighbor and he needs to get his act together so they can live in peace. Her husband has been on their property 65 years, which is 25 years longer than what this business has been in operation. She is asking the council to either uphold the EPA's findings, or if you choose Mayor Rodgers' action, she wants a city noise ordinance enforced so he can't come in at 6 a.m. and start his equipment.
- Jean Kerr provided a handout for all councilmen, asking for a pay increase. She pointed out that she tried to stretch the court dollars, order restitutions, and she returned money to the General Fund at years end. She did not receive a wage increase last year and it is not in the budget for the upcoming year, neither has she received a cost of living increase. By ordinance, she is dictated to live within the city limits, which means she pays her taxes and supports the other taxes. Many of the other top wage earners do not live in the city and do not pay what she pays to support this town. The federal government started issuing tax refund checks two weeks ago and she does not qualify because she makes under \$25,000 and does not pay enough taxes but she does qualify for reduced hot lunches at the school. She is full time, has the education, and makes the commitment to the city and feels she deserves a decent wage, a cost of living increase and a longevity increase. The court will never be a part-time position again due to the increase in population. She presented statistics and stated the difference between the cost of the court and the revenues was to the plus of \$40,172.59. She feels this would cover the cost of a wage increase for herself.

**COUNCIL DISCUSSION:**

The Mayor reported the Board of Health is contemplating a joint project with Saint John's Lutheran Home to establish a hospice facility on the Saint John's property in west Billings. He also reported touring the Horizon Hospice Home in Billings Heights and was pleased to find Wade King, who has roots in Laurel, part of the management staff. The Health Department is very good at matching revenues with needs.

- Review of Committee Minutes: None

**UNSCHEDULED MATTERS:** None

There being no further business to come before the council at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

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Cathy Gabrian, Deputy Clerk

Approved by the Mayor and passed by the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana, this 19<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2003.

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John E. Johnson, Jr., Mayor

Attest:

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Mary K. Embleton, Clerk-Treasurer