

# MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL

November 2, 2004

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana, was held in the Council Chambers and called to order by Mayor Ken Olson at 6:30 p.m. on November 2, 2004.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:            Dick Fritzler            Doug Poehls  
   Kate Stevenson        Mark Mace  
   Gay Easton            Daniel Dart  
   Jennifer Johnson      John Oakes

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:            None

Mayor Olson led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

Mayor Olson asked the council to observe a moment of silence.

## **MINUTES:**

Motion by Alderman Oakes to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of October 19, 2004, as presented, seconded by Alderman Dart. A roll call vote was taken on the motion. All eight aldermen/women voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

## **CORRESPONDENCE:**

Cable Montana – Service Reports for August 2004 (Park City)

Montana Department of Transportation: Letter of October 14, 2004 regarding notification of accounting procedure change related to indirect cost recovery

Beartooth Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc.: Letter of October 19, 2004 regarding final report and resultant product of USDA Rural Development's Rural Business Opportunity Grant to Beartooth RC&D Area, Inc.

Yellowstone City-County Board of Health Members, October 2004.

## **PUBLIC HEARING: Intent to increase sewer rates in the City of Laurel.**

Mayor Olson introduced Erl Tufte to present an overview of the intent to increase the sewer rates for the City of Laurel.

Using the overhead projector, Erl presented an overview of the key points of a previous council presentation on the sewer rates. He explained the following common goals to ratemaking: cost recovery; fund capital projects; fairness; legal; simplicity; administrative costs; rate comparisons; and political factors.

A lot of research was done in the rate study. Revenues generated with the existing rate structure do not meet the financial goals of the city. A minimum of 3.5 percent is required just to keep operation and maintenance and debt service requirements, without any projects at all. The base rates the city currently charges are only recovering about 50 percent of fixed costs, whether or not any wastewater flows through the system or it is treated. Unless something is done soon, the reserves will be depleted and the city will have nothing to operate with to meet increasing expenses or to do capital programs. Erl explained that EDU is a term that is associated with the size of the water service line, which is a typical measure of what base charges are for water and for sewer. EDU, equivalent dwelling units, is a way of comparing with a common standard, usually a ¾-inch meter. A 2-inch meter is the equivalent of "x" number of ¾-inch meters. The City of Laurel is currently not doing that, as the base charge is held level regardless of the size of water meter that is used.

Erl presented the following recommendations: 1) implement the recommended annual increases over a five-year period; 2) target a reserve level of \$500,000, which is a reasonable amount for a community the size of Laurel, and could be used for emergencies and as matching funds for grants for the sewer system; 3) size meters appropriate for service line or demand; if not bill as separate

minimum bills. His research shows that a number of accounts in the City of Laurel have undersized service lines; therefore, they have undersized water meters and undersized base charges on the wastewater because the base charge is associated with water meter size. He suggested that those should be looked at seriously, with the most serious implication being that they should be retrofitted, the service lines increased, the meter sizes increased, or in a sense of fairness that a base charge should be assigned to each of the units in those particular complexes.

Erl showed a chart of the distribution of meter sizes. A ¾-inch meter would be one EDU. As the line size increases, the multiplier also increases. A three-inch line is the equivalent of seven and one-half ¾-inch meters. That is used in rate-making methodology for determining distribution of base charges on water and wastewater. There is some argument that there is not a direct correlation between water and wastewater, but it is a pretty well researched fact that there is enough of a correlation to make these EDU's the rational, reasonable link to make that correlation. The Proposed Rates column on the chart showed a dramatic increase, which is the real impact of correlation between meter size and EDU's.

Erl explained that the utility starts out with \$890,000, which is a credit to the community, the ratepayers, and the council in having that amount available. He has reviewed many different scenarios for the five-year period and looked at what is necessary to build capital projects, to deal with inflation and other issues. The \$890,000 could disappear in two years or establish a goal that after five years, in year six, the ending balance would be just about \$250,000. With the proposed rate increases, that is the best that could be done. We started out with \$890,000 and are trying to get this to cash flow over five years.

Erl projects population growth of one percent per year, which would generate some additional revenue. He mentioned the inflation figures over the five-year rate study. The figures for the capital improvement program were lowered with the intent to keep the rate scenario as conservative as possible and yet try to get something done. That represents a meager \$24,000 increasing to \$300,000 per year for capital projects, of which \$50,000 would go to the equipment reserves. From his experience, \$200,000 to \$300,000 is needed to rehabilitate or replace three blocks of streets. Erl stated that we are still asking the system in Laurel to last on the average of 100 years, and he questioned how much of what we have can reasonably be expected to offer that sort of a useful life. The reality is that some sort of program is needed to continually replace and upgrade.

The annual surplus or ending balance continues to drop until year six, when it starts to move the other direction. Although it is not the half million dollars needed, at least it is starting to trend the other way. Erl said not to push the rate thing any further, but to accept the fact that it is moving in the right direction. The proposed rate increases based on the ¾-inch EDU multiplier would increase by \$1.00 in January 2005, \$2.00 in July 2005, \$2.50 in 2006, \$3.00 in 2007, \$3.50 in 2008, and \$4.00 in 2009. At the end of year six, the council could say the city is trending the right way with reserves and with annual surplus shortfall.

Mayor Olson stated that this was an abbreviated overview of what has been previously presented on the need to increase sewer rates.

Mayor Olson opened the public hearing for the intent to increase the sewer rates in the City of Laurel. He explained that the format would allow those who wish to participate three minutes to speak, and he asked them to state their name and address for the record. Mayor Olson opened the public hearing and asked if there were any opponents.

Tom Sayre, 119 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, stated that he figures it is about a 250 percent increase over five or six years, and that is a big chunk for people to swallow. He said he did not necessarily criticize the city council or the city fathers. He questioned why some of this has not been addressed in previous years. He works in construction and has an idea of what goes on. He assumes that a lot of these improvements are going to projects such as the one that was just completed on Alder Avenue. He worked on that project indirectly a little bit, and he stated that it was one of the poorest projects he has ever seen. Putting in the sewer pipes was a good thing, but most of the storm drains are still above grade and do not drain anything. The pipe was slapped back down where it was above grade before. It seems like a waste of his money. He knows the city needs to grow and residents need to pay a little bit, but this is a big chunk to swallow.

Gene Albert, who lives between Laurel and Park City, owns some rentals in Laurel. He built a duplex last year and is building another one this year. He rents one unit to a single man with a couple dogs, and his water bill is an average of \$70 per month. He waters the yard, which has a bare

minimum of grass. Gene thinks \$70 is unbelievable for sewer, water and garbage. He has a triplex in Billings, and he does not think he ever paid \$70, unless the sprinklers were left on day and night once or twice. There are seven or eight people in the triplex. He said that people talk about this, and he knows some people that moved to Billings because of the water rates in Laurel. Gene stated that the price of water in Laurel is totally ridiculous. He suggested that, if another sewer system is needed, it should come out of a city tax, not out of somebody's water bill. The property owner will end up paying it through a property tax, but he is having a tough time renting some of these because he does not want to pay the water bill. In the other end of his duplex, there are three children and a man and wife, and he would hate to see their water bill. Gene asked questions regarding a unit, how a unit works, and the increases listed on the information that was mailed to utility customers. Gene again stated that it seems to him that maintaining a sewer system in a city should be a city tax and should not be on the water bill.

Sundy Sayre, 119 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, asked Mayor Olson to explain a unit and what it is per household.

Mayor Olson stated that the public hearing allows the public to give input to the council. He stated that it would be best to ask questions of the staff during regular working hours. This is a public hearing where public input is given to the council, but it is really not a time for the public to question staff. The opportunity to speak to the staff is every day from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sundy again asked Mayor Olson if he knew the answer to the question. She works at the school, and today a child asked her who the mayor of Laurel is. She did not know what to say then, but tomorrow she will tell that child. She again asked why the question could not be answered.

Mayor Olson stated that he hoped that we could show process here. The process is not for a question and answer period. This is an opportunity for public input. Again he suggested that the public go to city hall and ask questions of the city's knowledgeable staff on a one-on-one basis.

Rich Helterbran, 508 Cottonwood, stated that today's paper talked about the cost of paying people who had damages in houses where the sewers backed up. In the last six weeks, his sewer has backed up twice and it has been the city's responsibility. The first time he called about three times before he could get a response, and this was after he had Roto-Rooter determine that it was not his problem. City staff informed him that they would check it in the alley, but otherwise it was his problem. While he was waiting for the city to come, his neighbor across the alley had plumbers working in his flooded basement. Gene had four inches of sewage in his basement that time. After it was cleaned up, he was concerned about the odor in the house. They found out that it would cost about \$500 to remedy it with an ozone machine. They called the city and they said to make a claim, so they filed a claim. On Monday or Tuesday this week, the sewer was backed up again in his basement and the blockage was at the same place. He called five times to city hall and left messages each time, and he never got a call back. After about forty-five minutes or an hour, he called the shop. Gene told the city worker about the problem in the sewer at the same place it was a few weeks before. Within fifteen minutes, Guy Rolison and two other employees were there and found the blockage at the same place. This time they talked to the city's insurance company were told that the city is not liable because the city just has to document that the lines have been checked once in the last five years. The insurance company told them that the city had not responded to the inquiry about the first complaint. Gene explained the urgency of the matter with a basement full of bacteria and a wife that currently has an open wound and is fighting an infection. The insurance company said they could file another claim, but the thing for them to do is to take care of themselves and not expect the insurance company to take care of them. Gene called the city and left messages to have them call so they could file another claim. That was Monday and he still has not received a call from the city. Gene commented that the mayor encouraged the public to call the staff, but the staff does not return calls. He asked how to file a complaint. He is not asking for damages, but he is asking to get the basement sanitized.

Mayor Olson mentioned that today was a holiday for the city staff.

Gene stated that he was informed that remodeling was being done that day and the phones were probably off, and it was not today.

Mayor Olson asked if there were any other opponents who wished to speak.

Marvin Carter, 307 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, stated that 500 cubic feet is the answer to the previous question. Residents pay a base of \$9.57 plus \$2.56 for every 100 cubic feet, so the bill comes out to \$15.00 plus. He read in the paper that the bill is going to be about \$30.00. His last month's bill was \$22.00,

and he recently asked Larry if that meant that he would not pay more when it reached \$25.00 or \$30.00, but that is not the case. It is \$2.56 per 100 cubic feet plus the rates proposed. His comment was to look at the consumption rate and maybe consider breaking that down as you put up the base rate. Marv stated that the city charges \$1.28 to get the water in his house and \$2.56 to flush it and put it down the drain. His bills average \$100 or more a month because they water the lawn. Marvin said that the city is going to force the people to do what they did when the water rates were raised. He does not know if the council knows that Laurel is number one in the state for water rates, and he does not know about the sewer rates. Marv urged the council to look at the consumption rate. He questioned why \$2.57 is needed to take water out of the house if only \$1.28 is needed to put water in the house. He asked the council to make that a consideration as the base rates are raised. He thinks you need to be fair to the people. If the city needs to spend \$8 million for a new plant in the future, he suggested that it be put in the paper so the public can see it. He asked the council to inform the public about the five-year plan. Laurel recently approved \$17 million for schools, and now the city increases the sewer rates. He supposes that the water rates will increase again soon. While he was working at the polling booth today, he heard a comment regarding the city's pickups. He hopes the \$500,000 does not buy more new pickups.

Dick Metzger, 315 West Avenue, is concerned about the effect of the rate increases on the elderly people on fixed incomes and the young people that are trying to make a home in the City of Laurel. He does not draw \$40,000 a year and does not get a pickup to drive around in either. He has to pay for all of these things, and that is why he says these rates are really going to hurt the young people that are trying to start out and also the elderly. He saw in the paper that the city is going to raise the garbage rates for the commercial units. He thinks that the residential garbage rates will be increased after the commercial rates are done. Dick mentioned Mr. Helderbran's remarks about sewer backups. He asked who to call in case of a backup. When Dick worked for the city for many years, the motto was, if the sewer was backing up, call the city before calling the plumber. He would like to know how many sewer claims the City of Laurel has paid in the last year. He would also like to see that the people that are proposing these big increases move into the City of Laurel and help pay for those costs. The street project has been going on for a month and it still is not finished. He asked if that is the way the sewer projects would work. He does not think this is right.

Landy Leep, a Billings' resident, works for Alder Ridge Estates, which owns 176 lots. He told the council to count him as 176 no's for the increase in sewer rates. Alder Ridge owns other communities in the northwest. Laurel's base rates are the highest they have seen in any of our communities to the point where people are leaving Alder Ridge and Laurel and moving to Billings. The main reasons are the water and sewer rates. He was surprised to hear the condition is as bad as it is with the amount of money the city is already collecting, and he stated that, obviously, there is a problem. He proposed that the solution is not to throw more money at it as it comes out of hardworking people's pockets that are already maxed out. It looks to him like the city has a problem with how the money is being spent now. They work hard with their people, since they rent only the lot to the residents, who pay their own water and sewer. They like the community to look nice with green grass, but that is over. People are not, especially on a rented lot, watering the grass at all or very little and the water and sewer bills are still \$70 to \$100. It is very hard for them to attract people into the community in Laurel. It is not competitive and to see it go up is a very bad thing. Alder Ridge just got their tax bill and the 176 lots went up over \$16,000 in one year. The majority of that is in road repair and maintenance, and the roads are horrible. They pay their bill, but there are potholes everywhere. So to see a proposal to increase the sewer rates, their confidence level on how that money is going to be spent is just zero. Landy stated that he had 176 no's.

Mayor Olson asked twice if there were any other opponents.

Gene Albert, Park City, has rental property here and has another lot in Laurel. He is seriously thinking of selling the lot and not developing it because of this. Gene just received a \$2,000 tax bill for the first duplex. He said that the city has to get a good portion of the \$2,000. When he went to hook up the water, he paid over \$5,000 to get the permit fee and to hook up the sewer and water for the duplex. He had to purchase two meter loops, at \$75 each, pay a \$60 deposit for each unit, and pay a \$15 charge per unit to start the billing cycle. Gene stated that most of the permit cost was water and sewer hookup. He said that if the city needs money for the systems, they should not keep digging people on the taxes and on the sewer lines. If every water line is worth \$4,000, the city should see how many it can get in a year, not how many it can turn away. He is not going to build anything next year on the other lot, and that is \$4,000 plus out of the city's pocket. Other developers are looking, and Montana is going to explode. Montana is a neat retirement state with bar none beauty of any other state in the world. He cannot figure out why Laurel does not have signs on either side of the freeway for an exit to Yellowstone Park. Laurel is a gateway to Yellowstone Park.

Livingston has signs and they are just as far away from Yellowstone Park as Laurel. We have a highway that is the most scenic highway this side of the Mississippi, and the city has not taken advantage of that. Gene told the council not to dig the young people. People are moving to Billings because of the water, and nobody is used to paying these kinds of rates.

Dick Metzger asked who to call during off hours for a sewer backup. He asked if the police department should be called, and they would refer the call to another department. He was at his aunt's place one night and it took an hour and a half before anybody came out. He called the police department, and they said they would contact the mayor. Finally after an hour and a half, two people showed up. When Dick worked for the city, people would call him regarding a sewer backup. He would check it out and call the right person if it was the city sewer. If it was not, he would tell the resident that the city's sewer was not the problem. If you have to wait for a call to come from Park City or Billings and then wait for city employees to come from outside Laurel, he can see why people would want to sue the city for backup because that's the key point. It's almost like having a heart attack. Get there within the few minutes and get that sewer open. Don't wait for the guy to come from Park City or the guy to come from Billings. You should have somebody so the police station would know exactly who to call. The people working there should have enough knowledge to be able to take on some of that responsibility to go and check a sewer and call out the appropriate people to take care of it.

Mayor Olson asked three times if there were any other opponents.

Rich Helterbran stated that the sewer backup happened last week, and he still has not received a return call.

Mayor Olson asked three times if there were any other opponents. There were none.

Mayor Olson asked twice if there were any proponents.

Sue Carter, 307 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, spoke in favor of the raise if there is some positive planning and spending with this plan. She does not know if there was even a competitive bid estimate on the sewer that was recently rebuilt. If so, there were cost overruns and it was horrendous. So we are not going anywhere if we spend twice the amount of what is allowed for a project. Sue thinks there needs to be more positive addressing of the situations and getting out better communications to the people. To say that all of the rate increases come from fixing people's basements and the sewer backups is really very negative, and she does not know if the city has ever paid for one. The city always says it is not their problem. Sue said not to put that in the paper as the cost increase. The cost increase is because the city needs the money to address the old sewer system. Sue suggested addressing it in stages with competitive bidding.

Mayor Olson asked three times if there were any other proponents. There were none.

Mayor Olson closed the public hearing for the intent to increase sewer rates in the City of Laurel.

#### **CONSENT ITEMS:**

- **Claims for the month of October 2004 in the amount of \$474,981.25.**  
A complete listing of the claims and their amounts is on file in the Clerk-Treasurer's Office.
- **Approval of Payroll Register for PPE 10/24/04 totaling \$99,240.77.**
- **Receiving the Committee Reports into the Record.**
  - Budget/Finance Committee minutes of October 5, 2004 were presented.
  - City-County Planning Board minutes of October 7, 2004 were presented.
  - Special Council Workshop minutes of October 19, 2004 were presented.
  - Council Workshop minutes of October 26, 2004 were presented.

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

Motion by Alderman Mace to approve the consent items as presented, seconded by Alderman Poehls. A roll call vote was taken on the motion. All eight aldermen/women present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

**CEREMONIAL CALENDAR:** None.

**REPORTS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:** None.

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

**SCHEDULED MATTERS:**

- **Confirmation of Appointments.**

**Insurance and Benefit Committee:**

Mayor Olson stated that Mike Zuhoski is the new non-union representative on the Insurance and Benefit Committee. Chris Shay, who was the representative, is now a member of the union.

**Park and Recreation Committee:**

Mayor Olson appointed Kate Stevenson as chairman, Dan Dart, Mark Mace, and Jennifer Johnson to the Park and Recreation Committee.

Motion by Alderman Poehls to approve the appointments of Kate Stevenson as chairman, Dan Dart, Mark Mace, and Jennifer Johnson to the Park and Recreation Committee, seconded by Alderman Easton. A roll call vote was taken on the motion. All eight aldermen/women present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Resolution No. R04-112: A resolution to authorize the Mayor to execute all documents necessary to accept a grant from the Montana Department of Transportation for monies to purchase or acquire a patrol car for the City of Laurel.**

Motion by Alderwoman Johnson to approve Resolution No. R04-112, seconded by Alderman Dart. A roll call vote was taken on the motion. All eight aldermen/women present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Resolution No. R04-113: Resolution accepting a grant from the Montana Department of Transportation for monies to be spent on the Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) and authorizing the Mayor to sign said grant.**

Motion by Alderwoman Stevenson to approve Resolution No. R04-113, seconded by Alderman Oakes. A roll call vote was taken on the motion. All eight aldermen/women present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Resolution No. R04-114: Resolution authorizing the Mayor to sign an agreement with Interstate Engineering for professional services regarding the development of an aquatic complex.**

Motion by Alderman Dart to approve Resolution No. R04-114, seconded by Alderman Mace. A roll call vote was taken on the motion. All eight aldermen/women present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Resolution No. R04-115: Resolution authorizing the Mayor to sign a contract with COP Construction to replace the Laurel Drain Pipe where it crosses the Billings Bench Water Association canal. [A cooperative project with Cenex Refinery]**

Motion by Alderman Fritzler to approve Resolution No. R04-115, seconded by Alderwoman Stevenson.

Alderman Poehls asked regarding the cost.

Cenex Refinery has agreed to pay half the cost, up to \$12,500 maximum, for the replacement and/or installation of the drain pipe on the Laurel Drain crossing to the Billings Bench Water Association irrigation ditch.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion. All eight aldermen/women present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

- **Resolution No. R04-116: Resolution of annexation of Lots 6 through 15, Block 2 of Mathis Subdivision, Yellowstone County.**

Motion by Alderman Oakes to approve Resolution No. R04-116, seconded by Alderman Fritzler. A roll call vote was taken on the motion. All eight aldermen/women present voted aye. Motion carried 8-0.

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

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (THREE-MINUTE LIMIT):** None.

**COUNCIL DISCUSSION:**

Alderman Mace mentioned that he appreciated the opportunity to vote in the election today.

Alderman Mace stated that it continues to frustrate him at public meetings when no one can answer a question. He understands the process, but he wonders why questions cannot be answered at the council meeting. He realizes that not everybody knows the answer, but it seems that the questions raised at public meetings do not get answered properly. He realizes that the same people come to the same meetings and complain about the same things, and a lot of generalizations were stated that may not be totally true. It bothers him that the questions are not answered during the meetings, and he does not know if there is a fix for it. He suggested that there may be a better way to communicate for the next rate structure study.

Alderman Dart stated his appreciation for Alderman Mace's comments. A general uneasiness is sensed with the public relations perception. The public certainly does not have the understanding of projects like the council does. They do not have an understanding of the money that it takes for the infrastructure needs of the city. Sometimes it comes across as being very heavy handed, and government is like that. He thinks the council should explore better ways to finesse this in terms of public relations because there is a general frustration out there. The reason he came on the council was because he was upset about the water rates. Sitting at the council level, he understands the process.

Alderman Oakes agreed with Aldermen Mace and Dart. He said that it boils down to public relations. The jet rodding truck is out working in the lower end of the fourth ward often. People do not realize that that part of town is not old, it is ancient.

Alderwoman Johnson stated that Laurel will end up like Miles City if something is not done. In order to get approval from the people to do what needs to be done, better public relations need to be developed. Phone calls need to be returned. We have to build public relations or we are going to be fighting an uphill battle. It needs to be done and we have to prove to people that we are going to be there for them if they are going to pay higher bills.

Alderman Easton agreed with everything that was said. He thinks that the council could answer the questions that were asked, but a public hearing is not an argumentative thing. If anything, perhaps the public hearing should be restructured so the public is informed about the process at the beginning. The process of a public hearing is to take in information, review the information, and then make the decision.

Alderwoman Stevenson mentioned that there are 6,500 people in this community and only fifteen people showed up and complained. She looks at that as a huge success as to the paper and the information that was given.

The Swimming Pool Committee meeting is next Wednesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, at 5:00 p.m. in the council chambers. The engineering firm will be there and the information is very interesting.

Alderwoman Stevenson recently attended her first Board of Health meeting. At the meeting, Jim Reno mentioned that he would like to have one of the Board of Health meetings held in Laurel.

Alderman Fritzler stated that the Cemetery Commission has appointed a task force, which met today. He thinks that the task force will make progress on the installation of a sprinkler system and the long-term study for the cemetery.

Alderman Fritzler commented that Alderwoman Stevenson's comments were a great service to the council. He thinks that a public hearing is not the place to answer questions. If we had answered any of those questions, we would have been put on the defensive. So however we decide to improve our communications with the citizens of this town, it certainly is not by allowing questions in a public hearing.

Alderman Poehls stated that it is very uncomfortable to sit through a public hearing when questions are asked. But he feels that sitting through a public hearing that ends up being a debate is even more uncomfortable. The problem he sees is that once a citizen decides they do not like something, they will find almost any excuse in the world to defend their position of not liking what is happening. Out of 6,500 people, only fifteen showed up. Even if 176 Alder Ridge residents were included, it would still not be a majority, and he wondered if all those residents would complain. Alderman Poehls feels that the public hearing was handled correctly. He suggested that a personal letter could be written to the individuals to answer their questions and provide a phone number for further questions.

Alderwoman Stevenson stated that part of the problem arises because people do not understand why and how a public meeting runs. She suggested preparing a poster with the procedure of a public hearing for the public to read when a public hearing is held so it is clear that it is not a question and answer time.

Mayor Olson stated that the poster is a good idea. He agrees with the consensus of the council that it is important to uphold the integrity of a public hearing. This also gives the opportunity for those who are interested enough to come to complain to talk to the staff during daytime hours. The public hearing is for the council's opportunity to receive input from the community, and it is that integrity which should be held high, not debate. He agreed that the council's comments were good.

- Review of Monthly Reports: Police, Fire, Ambulance, and Code Enforcement: None.

**UNSCHEDULED MATTERS:**

Alderman Oakes stated that he would like to give a presentation on the conditions in Village Subdivision at the next council workshop.

Alderman Mace mentioned that he brought a card for everyone to sign for Dan Mears.

Mayor Olson mentioned that Jan Faught is going through some tough times.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Alderman Mace to adjourn the council meeting, seconded by Alderman Poehls. Motion carried 8-0.

There being no further business to come before the council at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cindy Allen, Secretary

Approved by the Mayor and passed by the City Council of the City of Laurel, Montana, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2004.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kenneth E. Olson, Jr., Mayor

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary K. Embleton, Clerk-Treasurer