

**MINUTES  
COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
MAY 31, 2016 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 May 31, 2016.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emelie Eaton	<input 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  
Irv Wilke  
Todd and Debi Meling

**Public Input**

Irv Wilke reported on the Laurel Rod and Gun Club's appreciation party that was held on May 25<sup>th</sup>.

Debi Meling, 233 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue West, and her husband, Todd, wanted to make everyone aware of an event planned for August. After their son, Sam, committed suicide in November, an organization was formed to help local youth deal with depression and mental illness and to hopefully prevent suicides in the community. The group includes three school district members, people from churches and businesses, and a lot of community members. The organization wants to make a difference, mostly for our youth, but for anybody that is struggling. Debi explained that Sam was a cross country runner, and the cross country team wants to do a run/walk in August. Since everyone does not want to participate in run/walks, they are also planning a pancake breakfast at the high school on the practice field. The route for the run/walk will go up First Avenue to Valley Drive and then on Cove back to First Avenue. Debi is working with the city to get all the permits. She distributed information regarding the organization's vision and mission statement and the upcoming event.

**General items**

- Appointment:
  - Laurel Urban Renewal Agency

Mayor Mace read the letter of interest from Jerry Pavelec. The appointment will be on the June 7<sup>th</sup> council agenda.

**Executive Review**

- Resolution - Change Order No. 2 to South Washington Avenue Storm Drain Project

Heidi explained that this actually closes out this project with a refund of \$340 in the change order. The project went really well and the public works director was pleased with the completion. The property owners on Washington Avenue want an SID to completely redo the road, but that has to come from the property owners. Dean Rankin is chairing the effort to get the property owners on board to redo the road, since the storm sewer project is done.

- Resolution - Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch Fire District Contract

Heidi stated that the fire chief sent the YBGR a letter with a 2 percent increase in services for this year. The contract was signed and returned to the city.

- Resolution - Laurel Airport Authority Fire District Contract

Heidi stated that the fire chief sent the Laurel Airport Authority a letter with a 2 percent increase for services this year. The contract was signed and returned to the city.

- Resolution - Cemetery Commission's recommendation to change the Policy and Procedures for the City of Laurel Cemetery

Heidi referred to the attachment to the draft resolution that explained the requested verbiage change. She asked Vice-President Nelson to explain the change.

Tom explained that the main thrust of the change of section 5.c. in the policy is for eligibility for burial. The Cemetery Commission determined that the Veterans' Administration has an eligibility for burial in veterans' cemeteries, both federal and state, and the Commission wants the city's veterans' cemetery to comply with that to keep some uniformity with the Veterans Administration. The change allows for uniformity in procedure for the burial of a veteran's spouse prior to the veteran's passing and specifies what kind of headstone should be supplied, which is the same language the Veterans Administration has on its website concerning the burial of a spouse and eligibility. It was the Cemetery Commission's intent to bring that into alignment.

There was a question regarding why the second burial on any grave plot must be a cremation.

Tom explained that, in the veterans' cemetery, if the first burial of a veteran or a spouse is a full burial, the second burial must be a cremation in order to not disturb the full burial and the plot. If the first interment is a cremation, the second burial should also be cremation so as to not disturb it.

- Resolution - Renewal agreements with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana, Delta Dental and VSP

Heidi explained that Blue Cross Blue Shield originally presented a 16.29 percent increase for health insurance and she asked the agent to see if BCBS could do better. The city is a high risk group, as it had a 92 percent loss ratio last year, which is very high. Blue Cross Blue Shield came back with a 9.9 percent increase with some changes to the plan. The changes include a \$500 increase on deductible, \$500 increase on out-of-pocket maximum and a \$50 increase on non-generic prescriptions up to \$100. There was some disagreement in the Health Insurance Committee, but the council made the final decision not to go out for quotes. Delta Dental had a decrease in premium and VSP stayed the same.

Heidi stated that open enrollment will start tomorrow, June 1<sup>st</sup>, and continue through June 10<sup>th</sup>. Since the council cannot let health insurance lapse, open enrollment will start before the council approves the plan so the payroll clerk can make the necessary changes in the payroll deductions.

- Resolution - Declaring certain items of the City as surplus available for sale to the public  
Heidi referred to the list of city surplus items for the June 18<sup>th</sup> auction at the city shop. The list does not include numerous impounded items that the police department has collected. The impounded items, including cars and bicycles, will be in the auction but are not city surplus since the city did not originally own them. The auction will be advertised in the newspaper.

- Council Issues:

- Report of the community cleanup day (Emelie Eaton)

Emelie stated that the city does not host the cleanup day, but the city supports the event with staff efforts. She asked if there is a report regarding the success of the cleanup day.

Heidi will talk to the public works director and get something back to Emelie.

- Lease Task Force update

There was nothing new to report.

- Update on 2011 Yellowstone River flooding event

Heidi stated that the council chambers was full for the pre-bid meeting last Thursday. Contractors from Dick Anderson, Sletten, COP Construction, Western Municipal, and others showed interest in this huge project. The project is scheduled to start in July and the contractors were advised to be out of the river by November. Since a lot of the contractors had some concern about that, Great West Engineering is reviewing that date in the bid packet. It was encouraging that this project is being taken seriously and will continue to move forward. The contractors toured the site, starting at the water treatment plant and the three miles up the river. Bids close in advance of the next council workshop so there is time for the engineering firm to review them.

Heidi stated that the city ran into a bit of a snag with one of the easements. The city purchased .2 of an acre from the Howreys for property for a large easement at the same time that the Howreys accepted money for a buy/sell, which cannot be done. The new owner has been working with the city and understands that this project cannot stop. The city attorney is involved and will pursue any legal action necessary against the property owners. The city might have to purchase the easement a second time and then recoup the costs from the previous owners. Heidi has written a letter offering the new owner the same amount that the city paid the Howreys for the acre. The attorneys and the realtor involved in the buy/sell agreements did not know about the situation at the time it happened.

Heidi stated that the city's 404 permit with the Army Corps should be issued soon. That is the last big permit the city needs in order to start construction.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the easement, the issues with the Howreys selling the property simultaneously, the new owner's discussion with the city planner about subdividing, the new owner's surprise that the city had purchased the acre from the Howreys, the city staff's recent discussion with the new property owner, and the need for the city to have this easement.

Other items

Mayor Mace asked Heidi if the council members received a copy of the attorney's letter regarding the committees.

Heidi had distributed copies of the letter at the previous council workshop. Heidi and the attorney recently discussed committee consolidation. He plans to work on an ordinance change for the Human Relations Committee first. Then he will work on the Board of Appeals to figure out how to change the power from the Board of Appeals to the city council.

Mayor Mace brought it up because it is a council issue that will show up several times in work sessions until there is some kind of resolution or ordinance.

Richard stated that Itch-Kep-Pe Park in Columbus was loaded when he passed it this weekend. He asked if the city is closer to getting camping going at Riverside Park.

Heidi stated that the Public Works Director has talked with the Park Board and the Public Works Committee. There is no money allocated for vault toilets until the Management Budget is passed for July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Chuck stated that providing restrooms is the main issue to get camping in Riverside Park and the Park Board is working on that. Kurt was going to ask Great West Engineering to start work on a cost estimate. Once the cost estimate is received, it will be presented to the Budget/Finance Committee to approve use of the Riverside Park restricted funds. Council approval will then be needed.

Heidi stated that the public works director asked for money for two vault toilets in the CIP in the Management Budget. The council will see the request for funding on June 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>.

Tom told Council Member McGee that he would attend this week's Park Board meeting to discuss consolidation of the Cemetery Commission and the Park Board.

There was a brief discussion regarding having four or five council members present at the Park Board meeting.

Tom stated that his opinion might be different than the executive branch of the city, as there is nothing that says you cannot have six or seven council people at any one place at any one time. It has always been perceived that having a quorum of council people together at one time could be perceived by the community as a meeting for discussing business, voting and moving business forward without public notice.

Mayor Mace stated that, as far as he is concerned, if all of the council members go to a football game, they should not sit together. He thinks it is the appearance that is important.

Review of draft council agenda for June 7, 2016

There was no discussion.

Attendance at the June 7, 2016 council meeting

All council members present will attend.

Announcements

There were none.

The council workshop adjourned at 7:06 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.**