

A REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING OF THE LEWISTOWN CITY COMMISSION ON MARCH 4, 2024 WHICH WAS HELD AT THE CENTRAL MONTANA COMMUNITY CENTER AND STARTED AT 7:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Terry called the meeting to order.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Terry asked everyone to stand and say the Pledge to the Flag.

ROLL CALL

Present were Commissioners: Buehler, Day, Hewitt, Hrubes, Scotten, and Terry. Commissioners Spika participated virtually.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Terry stated that without objection and based on the corrections the February 20, 2024 minutes are approved.

COURTESIES

There were none.

PROCLAMATIONS

There were none.

BOARD AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Scotten reported that Snowy Mountain Development Corporation will be meeting on April 18th.

Commissioner Scotten reported that Shelter Solutions is shut down for the season.

Commissioner Day reported that the Park and Recreation Board meets this Wednesday, March 6th at 7 pm at the Civic Center.

Commissioner Buehler reported that the Library Board has not met, but there is a board training this Thursday evening at the Library.

Commissioner Terry reported that the Central Montana Foundation Board met on February 27th at 2 pm. The big item is that the financial management software upgrade is completely finished. Commissioner Terry reported that now the Foundation is working to have an audit done. Commissioner Terry commented that one of the grant requests was from the Cub Scouts for their pine wood derby. The Fergus County Commissioners asked for some money for the small-town summit which was awarded. Friendship Lodge No. 37 was awarded a grant for the books for bikes program. The drama department

at Grass Range High School received grant funding for wireless headsets. The next CMF meeting is Tuesday, March 26th at 2 pm.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Holly Phelps reported on the following issues:

The City has already started receiving requests to hold events at City parks and at Creekside. Creekside events are now being scheduled by the Park and Recreation Department. People interested in renting Creekside can call, email or stop by the Civic Center for more information.

The restrooms at Creekside continue to be vandalized. The Park and Recreation Department is working with the Police to address these issues.

The City Manager received notice that the group looking at redeveloping the old Berg Lumber site will not be proceeding with the purchase of this property. The geotechnical report indicated that although all known hazardous material from the property had been removed, there was a significant amount of buried debris located on the property. The large cost required to remove the debris and re-stabilize the soils made the project no longer financially viable. The City Manager has asked to see these reports so that the City can figure out how to move forward with the redevelopment for the property.

The City Manager will be out of the office from March 7th thru 11th, but will be available by phone and email if issues arise.

The City did receive notice from the Montana State Preservation Office and we were awarded \$6,000 for this year's certified local government grant, for the Lewistown Historic Preservation Office.

The Park and Recreation director will be holding a job fair at the high school this week to hire for our season positions. Later this month, they will host a job fair at the Civic Center. More information is available on the Park and Recreation Facebook page.

The Planning department will be hosting their first Open House on the growth policy on March 12th from 6 to 8 pm. at the Central Feed Grilling Company. There will also be two popup events at the grocery stores prior to the event.

The City of Lewistown will also be hosting a public hearing at the next meeting to discuss community needs and priorities in economic development housing, community revitalization, public facilities and infrastructure.

PUBLIC COMMENT – non agenda items

Ms. Angie Wright informed everyone that Community Minded Solutions will be meeting tomorrow March 5th at 6 pm at the Elks. Ms. Wright reported that Ms. Stacy Zinn will be there giving a presentation.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Hewitt made the motion to approve the consent agenda and Commission Hrubes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The consent agenda was the acknowledgment of the claims that have been paid from February 16, 2024 to February 29, 2024 for a total of \$61,520.92

***REGULAR AGENDA – Resolutions, Ordinances & Other Action Items:**

1. Discussion and action on approving an exception to the Cemetery ordinance for veteran's plots for John Nilson

City Manager Phelps explained that in the new cemetery ordinance it is very specific that in the cemetery's veteran section only a veteran and one family member may be interred in the cemetery veteran plot. City Manager Phelps further explained that this is a unique situation, because Mr. Nilson was a vet and there are no cremation plots in the vets 2 section of the cemetery. City Manager Phelps stated that if the Commission does not allow this exception, then he will be moved to the newest vet section. City Manager Phelps stated that if the Commission does approve the exception all the necessary paperwork will be collected and the funeral home will work to have the headstones done properly. Commissioner Hrubes asked if this was doable and City Manager Phelps answered that she does not see how there would be any negative impacts. Commissioner Hewitt made the motion to approve an exception to the Cemetery ordinance for a veteran plot for John Nilson to be allowed to be buried with his parents and Commissioner Scotten seconded the motion. Commissioner Terry asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and the clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

2. Discussion and action on the angled parking in the downtown area

City Manager Phelps explained that back in 2017 the City Commission received a request to change the parking on the 100 block of 3rd Ave N to angle parking on just the west side of the block. The angle parking has been in place for several years and most recently we are receiving a lot of comments or complaints on the challenges it imposes. Some of the complaints are cars pulling up onto the sidewalk to park their vehicles, very difficult to drive down when large vehicles or vans are parked and causes some difficulty with snow removal. The other concern is if cars are parked in the angle parking and there was a fire at the bank it would be very difficult for the Fire Department to place their truck in order to get to the upper levels of the bank. City Manager Phelps commented that she wanted to bring the comments and concerns to the Commission to see if there is something the Commission would like to change. Commissioner Day commented that it does appear that employees of the nearby businesses are using the angled parking for all day parking on a daily basis. Commissioner Terry stated that there was a letter from First Bank with the angle parking was first discussed and has anyone talked to them recently. City Manager Phelps answered that First Bank originally supported the angle parking. Commissioner Hrubes commented that he has brought pictures and concerns regarding this to the Commission and whatever needs to be done to change it let's move forward. Commissioner Terry asked that the City Manager send some letters to surrounding businesses to inform them that the Commission is looking at the angle parking. Commissioner Terry also asked the City Manager get accident information for that area. Commissioner Terry commented that she would like to look to see if a handicap parking spot can be added to the area.

3. Discussion and action on reappointing Doug Day to the Historic Resources Commission for an additional two-year term

Commissioner Phelps stated that Mr. Doug Day's term is almost up and has graciously agreed to serve another two-year term. City Manager Phelps commented that Mr. Day has been very active on the commission and would recommend reappointing him for another two-year term. Commissioner Hewitt made the motion to approve reappointing Doug Day to the Historic Resources Commission for an additional two-year term and Commissioner Buehler seconded the motion. Commissioner Terry asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and the clerk took a roll call vote with all being in favor of the motion.

4. Discussion on the Chairman Terry's creation of a Community Engagement Committee.

Commissioner Terry explained that at the end of the last Commission she appointed the following Commissioners Day, Scotten and Terry to the Community Engagement Committee. Commissioner Terry stated that she would like to change the committee's name from Community Engagement to Public Outreach Committee. Commissioner Terry commented that she would like the public to step up and come to the meetings and meet with the committee. Commissioner Terry further commented that this will be a fact-finding committee and that if a citizen is wanting a public hearing they can meet with this committee first to move forward, work through the process and discuss how to move forward.

5. Discussion on Commissioner Day's comments from her attendance at the Montana Humanities Listen and Learn.

Commissioner Day explained that she attended a grant writing workshop at the Library sponsored by Montana Humanities, as part of the workshop the lunch hour is a listen and learn town hall forum. Commissioner Day further explained that anyone in attendance could comment on what the community needs, lacking, hot topics or anything else. Commissioner Day reported on the different topics. The first topic was the housing concern, but it seemed to focus more on long term housing for adults with mental health needs. Commissioner Day commented that there were citizens in attendance that indicated the community needed some sort of mediation regarding the APR issue. Commissioner Day stated that someone from Farmer in the Dell was present and was complimented for their efforts that have been made. Shelter Solutions was brought up and the contention in the community. Commissioner Day stated that she was unfamiliar with the condition of the art department at the high school and there is some parent representatives trying to get some grant money to help with the conditions for both music and art at the high school for construction and resources. Commissioner Day commented that there is a small hub of the work force and wanted someone to address this, meaning why high schoolers are not working in our community like they used to. Commissioner Day stated that there were some comments about fundraising in our community. As there are fundraising for one event versus long term fundraising for ongoing programs. Commissioner Day reported that the community performing arts center is in great need of repair and updates. Commissioner Day further reported that the community performing art center was built for the community and was to be the reasonability of the community and now has fallen as a Fergus High School responsibility. Commissioner Day stated that the last thing discussed was the general need for town hall meetings. Commissioner Terry commented that she is not sure what else can be done or discussed with regards to housing right now. There was a brief discussion on housing. Commissioner Terry commented that she was really surprised to see the APR concern on this list, she had thought that the everything had been somewhat addressed and it

wasn't such a contentious topic anymore. City Manager Phelps agreed with this comment. Commissioner Terry explained that she talked to the outreach coordinator for American Prairie and she is more than willing to talk to anyone to answer questions. Commissioner Terry commented that she feels the shelter solutions has been the more controversial issue and feels this is the City Commission job to inform the public of where the role the City is with shelter solutions. Commissioner Terry asked if there is a charge to use the community performing art center. Commissioner Day stated that she is not sure about this issue, but wondering if there is some missed revenue. Commissioner Day asked if the City has any ties to performing arts center. City Manager Phelps answered no. Commissioner Day asked if the performing arts center is the responsibility of the high school. Commissioner Terry stated she doesn't think the Commission should be stepping into the school district. City Manager Phelps commented that the funding of the high school district is on all citizens minds. Commissioner Buehler commented that the school district funding is dependent on enrollment and makes it hard to determine how to maintain with an unpredictable revenue. Commissioner Terry commented briefly on the high school work force. Commissioner Buehler gave the following possibilities as to why there is a small high school work force as there are less kids, more involvement in extracurricular activities and more diversified working environment. There was a brief discussion on the skills of the high school work force. Commissioner Buehler commented there is a large population moving to retirement and a smaller population moving into the work force. There is a population difference and the concept of work from both populations are different. Commissioner Terry stated that the concern of fundraising is a interesting comment because of the opportunities available through the Central Montana Foundation. Commissioner Terry commented on the comment regarding the general need for town hall meetings. Commissioner Terry stated that anyone is welcome to the City Commission meetings.

CITIZENS' REQUESTS

Mr. Harley Rounds thanked the Commission for approving the exception to the cemetery ordinance for the burial of John Nilsen.

COMMISSIONER'S MINUTE

Commissioner Hrubes commented that he kind of had fun tonight.

Commissioner Terry reminded everyone of the open house for the growth policy on March 12th.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Terry adjourned the meeting.

Dated this 4th day of March, 2024.

KellyAnne Terry, Commission Chairman

ATTEST:

Nikki Brummond, City Clerk