

THE LEWISTOWN CITY COMMISSION HELD A VIRTUAL COMMISSION MEETING ON DECEMBER 21, 2020 THOSE IN ATTENDANCE PARTICIPATED BY ZOOM OR TELECONFERENCE. THE VIRTUAL MEETING STARTED AT 7 PM.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Doney called the meeting to order.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Doney asked everyone to stand and join in the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present were Commissioners: Day, Doney, Dunnington, Hewitt, Loomis, Oldenburg and Turk.

Also, in attendance was City Manager Holly Phelps, Finance Officer/City Clerk Nikki Brummond and Park and Recreation Director Jim Daniels. Citizens in attendance were Richard Battrick, and Robert Snyder. Ms. Heidi Weber from KXLO/KLCM also attended.

Chairman Doney stated that because of the Governor's various Emergency Orders implemented to deal with the COVID-19 crisis, and the need to protect members of the public, City Commission members and City Staff from the spread of the Corona Virus, the normal and regular means of conducting our meetings in person are being temporarily modified.

Chairman Doney stated that the format for tonight's meeting has been adopted pursuant to the Letter of Advice from the Montana Attorney General's Guidelines for Conduction Local Public Meetings During COVID-19 Emergency, signed on March 27, 2020. A copy of the MT AG's Letter of Advice has been provided to the Commission and is also available on the City's website.

Chairman Doney explained that pursuant to the AG Guidelines, the City has provided notice by (News Argus, Radio, City website, posting) that tonight's regularly scheduled meeting would be held by audio/video means. The City is using a platform known as Zoom Video whereby Commission members, staff and the public may see and hear each other. If individuals do not have devices with cameras, they can still utilize the audio option, or they can call 253-215-8782 meeting id 848 627 5925 and passcode 59457, where they will be able to listen to the discussions and also be heard. Many of you have sight and sound access, but at a minimum anyone having access to a laptop, telephone or cell phone has sound access to tonight's meeting with the ability to not only listen but participate verbally as well.

Chairman Doney stated that in following the AG's Guidance, we are also limiting the scope of tonight's meeting to a very few agenda items that are necessary to be acted upon in order to continue to operate the City.

Chairman Doney explained that this is a new procedure for all of us. There will be technology challenges and glitches which we will have to work through, so please bear with us. In order to ensure that everyone can participate to the fullest extent possible, we will ask you to mute your own microphone on your device or phone. At such time where you need to speak, or have a question, then take your phone/device off mute to do so. Doing this will minimize the background noise that will have the potential to affect everyone who is attempting to participate tonight. Chairman Doney explained that a roll call vote will be taken for each item that requires action on behalf of the Commission. The City Clerk will call each Commission by name to cast their vote which will be either yeah or nay. City Manager Phelps explained

that if the meeting were to get hacked, she would end the meeting immediately and would then resume the meeting in ten minutes. The meeting access codes are listed at the top of the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Doney stated that without objection and based on the corrections the December 7, 2020 minutes are approved.

COURTESIES

There were none,

PROCLAMATIONS

There were none.

BOARD AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Loomis reported that the Park and Recreation Board will meet in January 6th at 7 pm.

Commissioner Oldenburg reported that the Central Montana Foundation will be meeting virtually tomorrow.

Commissioner Day reported that the Central Montana Health District will be meeting in early January.

Commissioner Hewitt reported that the Airport Board will be meeting on January 6th and will report at the next meeting.

Commissioner Doney reported that the Library Board will be meeting the first part of January.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Holly Phelps reported on the following issues:

City Manager Phelps stated that as this is the last Commission meeting for 2020, she wanted to reflect on the year and take a few minutes to look into the future.

The first three months of 2020 started out like most years. The City worked together with the County to update of the joint contracts. There were lots of construction projects scheduled for the year. The City Commission did see the departure of Commissioner Byerly, which allowed us to welcome Commissioner Day mid-year. The City Commission did do some training and determined that some additional work sessions were necessary. These work sessions were to be held in the months where there was a 5th Monday. As 2020 ends the City will see the retirement of City Attorney Monte Boettger. Mr. Boettger served as a part time City Attorney for the last 30 years.

Within the City limits, we have seen an increase in new home construction, as well as, the continued improvements to several commercial properties. The City Manager believes this trend will continue into the next year.

City Manager Phelps explained that she was going to report on all City departments and what is expected for the new year.

Park and Recreation Department

The Park and Recreation Department had a busy 2020. The Civic Center was closed for about a month this spring due to the pandemic. This gave the Civic Center staff the opportunity to do some maintenance at the Civic Center. Which included painting, minor repairs and refinishing the floors. When the Civic Center was opened back up things looked a little different. Some of the recreational programs were cancelled, others were modified and citizens were required to sign in when entering the Civic Center.

The trails system saw an increase in usage. There was also a lot of construction on the trails system. This included the installation of the Breed Creek Bridge, fencing improvements, and planning for parking area improvements. They also worked hard to prepare an update to the master plan for the trails system.

The construction of Creekside is nearly complete. Unfortunately, the grand opening celebration was postponed until 2021. This gave the Creekside Committee time to put the final pieces of the project together with winter.

Over the summer the Park and Recreation Department and with the assistance of the Public Works Department several irrigation improvements were made with the majority of them at the D'Autremont Complex.

While this year's pool season looked a little different, the pool was very busy. The weather this summer was beautiful and people enjoyed both the pool and waterslides.

Police Department

While the 2020's statistics will show that crimes are down, however, the Police have seen an increase in the severity of many of their calls. This year marks the first full year with the combined dispatch center. This year has been very busy with calls and the upgrade to the Zuercher system. The Police Department acquired it's first K9 Officer, Shark and after an accident he is back to work.

Library

The Library was impacted by COVID and was closed for just over a month. It forced the staff to make some changes very quickly. The Library has been able to circulate the same number of items to people but there have been less patrons in the building. The Library has done this by shifting their programming to virtual programming, offering curbside pickup and promoting e-books. The Library Director has worked to improve technology at the Library by purchasing new laptops, and received a grant to make hotspots available to be checked out by the public. These improvements will continue into the next year as they look to improve the Wi-Fi signal inside the Library.

Public Works

The Public Works Department started the year off with a very ambitious schedule. This included a lot of work at the Cemetery, which included finalizing the Cemetery Ordinance, and continuing the Cemetery expansion. Also, completed in the Cemetery was the removal of dead and dangerous trees and upgrades to the irrigation system.

The Public Works Department also worked to get the 6th Ave watermain replacement done in time for the Main Street paving project. The new water salesman was put into service.

Finance / Human Resources

The City has had to adapt to the policies and laws surrounding COVID very quickly. Finance Officer Nikki Brummond has worked with the City Manager on keeping the City's policies up to date and has worked hard to keep the employees up to date with the ever-changing situation. Finance Officer Brummond continues to work with the City Manager to make sure the technology to host virtual meetings and trainings.

City Manager Phelps stated that she is looking forward to 2021 with a sense of optimism and a new sense of normalcy. The City will continue to make infrastructure improvements a priority and make improvements to the services provided by the City of Lewistown.

PUBLIC COMMENT – non agenda items

Mr. Robert Snyder, 1307 West Broadway, stated that he is asking the City Commissioners put on the agenda for the next meeting to make a proclamation that we oppose mandatory new vaccines for City employees and individuals who interact with City employees. Mr. Snyder commented that there is discussion across the country about mandates. Mr. Robert Snyder reviewed some statistics with regard to COVID. Commissioner Doney stated that she is asking the City Manager to put this issue on the next agenda for discussion only. Commissioner Doney further stated that the reason for putting this as a discussion item on the next agenda is to hear the thoughts of all the Commissioners. Commissioner Doney commented that Mr. Snyder should be aware all the City employees are union and there is an agreement in place that governs these types of situation and the Commission has no direct relationship with the employees regarding their jobs. Mr. Snyder that thanked the Commission that the Creekside restroom was unlocked. City Manager Phelps stated that the restroom is not complete and unsure why it was unlocked.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Hewitt made the motion to approve the consent agenda and Commissioner Loomis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The consent agenda was the acknowledgement of the claims that have been paid from December 1, 2020 to December 16, 2020 for a total of \$87,497.01

REGULAR AGENDA – Resolutions, Ordinance & Other Action Items:

1. Discussion and action on approving the 2020 Trail Master Plan

City Manager Phelps explained that email out to the Commission and shared on her screen are the updates to the Trail Master Plan. These updates were facilitated by the Trails Coordinator Josh Uecker, the Trails committee and the Park and Recreation department. There was a presentation of the plan at the last Park and Recreation Board and asked that it be forwarded to the City Commission for approval. City Manager Phelps explained that the main reason for the updates is to prepare for the upcoming grant cycle which the City could possibly apply for grants for improvements along the trails. Park and Recreation Daniels reviewed the proposed 2020 Trail Master Plan. One of the main changes was the trail name changes and the names were all standardized. Commissioner Oldenburg commended Park and Recreation Director Daniels for remaining the trails and matching them to local landmarks. There was some discussion on funding. Commissioner Loomis made the motion to approve the 2020 Trail Master Plan and Commissioner Oldenburg seconded the motion. Commissioner Doney asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Discussion and action on approving the Partial Release of Reversionary Interest and authorizing the City Manager to sign

City Manager Phelps explained that she has been in communication with a representative from the Montana Realty Program with the State of Montana. The Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge (CMR) is partnering with the Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) to build the new FWP location in Lewistown on the CMR property. City Manager Phelps explained that this agreement would allow a right away to be done. Further discussion followed. Commissioner Turk made the motion to approve the Partial Release of Reversionary Interest and authorizing the City Manager to sign and Commissioner Oldenburg seconded the motion. Commissioner Doney asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Discussion and action on entering into a temporary contract for legal services with Ugrin Alexander Zadick P.C.

City Manager Phelps explained that this is an agreement for civil services giving the City the opportunity to utilize this firm for any questions, human resource issues or any other civil issues. City Manager Phelps further explained that with regards to prosecution issues, Fergus County has agreed to continue working with the City on our criminal issues until January. City Manager Phelps commented that we are continuing to look for an attorney. The contract states that the compensation will be based on an hourly rate dependent on the person assisting with the issue. Commissioner Oldenburg asked if this agreement could be cancelled if an attorney is found in the meantime. City Manager Phelps answered yes, this is an agreement for three months and would cease if someone is hired and the option to renew is covered in the agreement also. Commissioner Turk asked if this needed to be put out for bid. City Manager Phelps answered no the City solicited this service and we have worked with this firm on difference cases. Commissioner Loomis made the motion to approve entering into a temporary contract for legal services with Ugrin Alexander Zadick P.C. and Commissioner Oldenburg seconded the motion. Commissioner Doney asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and the motion passed unanimously.

4. Discussion and action on setting the regular Commission meetings for 2021

City Manager Phelps explained that included in your packets is the Commission meeting calendar for 2021 and proposing the Commission meeting schedule. City Manager Phelps explained that if a holiday falls on a regularly schedule meeting day, the meeting is moved to the next day. Also, marked on the calendar are possible Commission trainings, which is the fifth Monday of a month. Commissioner Doney asked the Commissioners to be thinking about how they would like to move forward with the Commission meetings. If they would like to continue having the second meeting virtually or all meetings in person. Commissioner Dunnington made the motion to approve the enclosed calendar to set the regular Commission meetings for 2021 and Commissioner Day seconded the motion. Commissioner Doney asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and the motion passed unanimously.

CITIZENS' REQUESTS

There were none.

COMMISSIONER’S MINUTE

Commissioner Oldenburg asked if there was still time to talk with Hyalite Engineering regarding ideas for the Boulevards. City Manager Phelps answered that she and the Public Works Director are working on possible funding options. There will be meetings going forward to look at options and ideas.

Commissioner Turk commented that she would like us to keep the meeting processes open for changes if case there are a lot of cases after the holidays. Commissioner Doney stated that as long as there is sufficient legal notice the meeting time could be changed. City Manager Phelps commented that we can continue to offer multiple avenues for people to participate.

Commissioner Doney asked about the status of a fence on Lake Street, she has received some calls. City Manager Phelps commented that she has not heard anything else.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Doney adjourned the meeting.

Dated this 21st day of December 2020.

Gayle Doney, Commission Chairman

ATTEST:

Nikki Brummond, City Clerk