

**A REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING OF THE LEWISTOWN CITY COMMISSION
ON APRIL 19, 2021 WHICH WAS HELD AT THE CENTRAL MONTANA
COMMUNITY CENTER AND STARTED AT 7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Turk called the meeting to order.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

ROLL CALL

Present were Commissioners: Day, Doney, Dunnington, Hewitt, Oldenburg and Turk. Commissioner Loomis participated via Zoom.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Turk stated that without objection and based on the corrections the March 15, 2021 and April 5, 2021 minutes are approved.

COURTESIES

There were none,

PROCLAMATIONS

There were none.

BOARD AND COMMISSION REPORTS

Commissioner Loomis reported that he attended the Park and Recreation Board meeting on April 7th. There was a report on the East Fork Trail improvements. Mr. Brad McCardle is donating his time and Mr. Scott Kirsch is donating his trail machine for the project. It is planned to have two two-mile loops. Mr. Bill Berg will be termed out as a representative on the Fergus County Recreation Board. The Ice-Skating Association had a successful year and there is some talk about creating a women's league. The shade structure did not work as planned and the association will be looking at other options. Commissioner Loomis reported that the Fergus County Recreation Board only meets two times a year and the Park and Recreation Board is hopeful that a member from that board can serve as the representative on the County Board. Commissioner Loomis reported that there was a fire recently at the East Fork Recreation Area in one of the fire pits. Commissioner Loomis reported that Northwestern Energy is working to complete the installation of the underground line at Symmes Park. Commissioner Loomis further explained that unfortunately there is still one overhead line and it is for CenturyLink. There is some concern with the ability to staff the swimming pool this summer.

Commissioner Hewitt reported that she will report on the Airport Board meeting at the next meeting.

Commissioner Doney reported that she was unable to attend the recent Library Board meeting. There is another meeting on April 29th and will be working on interview protocol and the board has received a few

applications. Library Director Dani Buehler reported on the April 15, 2021 meeting. The Library is working to hire a seasonal employee to help during the summer at the Library. The Library is going to have a summer reading program for the kids and there will not be an adult one this summer due to the shortage of staff. Library Director Buehler reported that she applied and received a \$7,500 grant from the Montana History Foundation for the repair and restoration of the stonework on the main street entrance door. Library Director Buehler commented that the Lewistown Library has been chosen as the pilot Library through the Montana State Library for broadband cable access. The State Library is looking at expanding broadband across the state and in order to do this they will probably have to overhaul a lot of the state's internet infrastructure. Commissioner Doney wanted to give kudos for the good job she is doing and how positive is for the upgrade for broadband cabling.

Commissioner Day reported that a Central Montana Health District meeting is being scheduled for next month. Commissioner Day commented that they are continuing to look for a nurse.

Commissioner Turk reported that she attended a 911 Board meeting on April 6th. The old business discussed was that dispatch consolidation is complete and going better than anticipated. Also discussed on old business was computer replacements, homeland security grants, state 911 grants and Zeurcher program. Commissioner Turk reported that on new business there was discussion on pagegate software, since the current software has not been updated in ten years and some computer needs. Mr. Ryan Peterson was appointed as the member at large. The bylaws were reviewed and looked at membership guidelines and if some changes need to be made.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Holly Phelps reported on the following issues:

The Historic Resources Commission will be holding their Annual Awards in May again this year. The month of May is Historic Preservation month and there continues to be a vacancy on the board.

The 2021 Municipal Elected Officials Virtual Institute will be held May 4th through the 6th. If you would like more information regarding the agenda, please talk with the City Manager or City Clerk.

Election season is here. For more information regarding the specific deadlines to apply to be a City Commissioner visit the Secretary of States website or talk with the City Clerk.

Construction on Main Street will be resuming soon. They will be installing signage, adjusting valves, chip sealing and paint the lines this summer. There is also a lot of other construction projects in the downtown area do watch for temporary street closures and other construction related activities happening downtown again this year.

Save the date – The grand opening for Creekside Marketplace and Pavilion will be Saturday, June 26th. The event will feature Kyle Shobe and the Walk Em Boys. As well as other local artists. The event is tentatively planned to started at 4:30 pm and the ribbon cutting at 6 pm.

The City Manager recently received notice that Lewistown was designated as a Tree City once again. We will receive an award at our Arbor Day celebration and we were awarded a small grant to continue working on our urban forest plan. Commissioner Loomis asked what does the City do to become a tree city. City Manager Phelps explained that the City has to provide documentation the we have a tree plan and we continue to work the tree plan. Then showing that we keep track of our tree inventory, dedicating money to replanting trees and maintenance of our tree infrastructure.

Recently, the City Manager has received a lot of interest in the Berg property. The City Manager will continue talking with these groups on possible redevelopment of the site and possible ways to fund the infrastructure for this area. Commissioner Day asked where the Berg property is located. City Manager Phelps explained that the Old Berg Lumber mill site is Brownsfield cleanup project that the City completed several years ago. It is located on the northern boundary of the city limits. City Manager Phelps stated that a feasibility study was done several years ago looking at residential development and hope to see some development in the future.

PUBLIC COMMENT – non agenda items

Mr. Richard Battrick addressed the Commission commented that he attended the Committee of the Whole meeting and understand that due to the recent storm in Texas there is a shortage of PVC pipe, but does support a small increase water and sewer rates.

Mr. Robert Snyder asked if public input was needed regarding the passing motion of the \$50,000 in matching funds for the road and expansion study. City Manager Phelps answered no, that it was approved by the Commission at the last meeting. Mr. Snyder further commented that at the last meeting Commissioner Loomis commented that we really need to explain what we are getting and try to put people's disapproval at rest. Mr. Snyder stated that he just googled a growth chart of Lewistown and in 1980 the population was up to 7,500 and then in 1990 it was at 6,000 and has remained at that level. Mr. Snyder stated that the City is not growing and a \$50,000 match seems like a lot of money to get recommendation on widening roads and where to put curves. Mr. Snyder stated that if it is not too late, he would like to make sure we get a good product for \$50,000 even though it is matched. Commissioner Loomis explained that we do need to be accountable and when he asked the question last week however, he feels very strongly that a City can not go forward with attracting new residents without plans.

Mr. Brandon Beriault stated that \$50,000 might be a bargain since the City spent \$19,000 on the plan for 2nd and Broadway to fix the sidewalk. Mr. Beriault stated that he spoke with a gentleman today regarding the concern of water increase that the water company and City have experienced. Mr. Beriault stated that the gentleman mentioned his concern that the City has dropped the ball over the last decade regarding infrastructure and the piping from the big spring to the City. Mr. Beriault stated there is no savings account going toward infrastructure and wondered where the comment on water and sewer rates were coming from, as he had not heard it discussed and it is difficult for the general public to be able to comment if they do not know. Mr. Beriault asked about where the increases would go to as in labor, infrastructure, pension and where the raises were coming from. City Manager Phelps asked for more detail on the plan referred to on 2nd and Broadway. Mr. Snyder answered the Reid Building had a \$19,000 engineer plan. City Manager Phelps stated that is 3rd and Broadway. City Manager Phelps explained that the City is very early on in the process of looking at raising water and sewer rates. City Manager Phelps explained that the presentation during the Committee of the Whole was looking at all the various components for the water and sewer systems. The rates will be notices and share in a public meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Doney made the motion to approve the consent agenda and Commissioner Hewitt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The consent agenda was the acknowledgement of the claims that have been paid from April 1, 2021 to April 14, 2021 for a total of \$13,731.25.

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

1. Discussion and action on Resolution No. 4048, a resolution approving an application from the Lewistown Public Library for TIF Funds made to the Lewistown Tax Increment Financing District Board

City Manager Phelps reported that at the last TIF board meeting they received an application from the Lewistown Public Library. Library Director Buehler explained that the Library is wanting to update the alley way windows. The windows were installed in the 1950's, don't seal or open and need to be updated. Library Director Buehler was notified that the Library is a part of the TIF district and could apply for a grant. The TIF board did approve the application for half of the cost of the installation. City Manager Phelps explained that the TIF board did award up to \$2,089 which is 50% of the cost and is consistent with the TIF grant program and available to any property located in the TIF district. Mr. Snyder stated that he was glad to hear the estimates and asked if there have been open bids for this project. City Manager Phelps explained that it is not required by the City's purchasing policy so the Library Director was required to solicit bids for the project. Commissioner Oldenburg made the motion to approve Resolution No. 4048, a resolution approving an application from the Lewistown Public Library for TIF Funds made to the Lewistown Tax Increment Financing District Board and Commissioner Doney seconded the motion. Commissioner Turk 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 Resolution No. 4049, a resolution approving an application from Fergus County Federal Credit Union for TIF funds made to the Lewistown Tax Increment Financing District Board

City Manager Phelps explained that the Tax Increment Financing Board did a downtown campaign, where they sent letters to the properties located in the district. The TIF board received an application from Fergus Credit Union to do some landscaping and signage in front of the actual credit union building. It was approved at the TIF board for a grant up to \$10,000 for the project and the total project cost is up to \$50,000 being invested by the Credit Union. Commissioner Oldenburg stated that she thought when the sign ordinance was passed that it limited the number of reader boards on Main Street. City Manager Phelps explained that the limit was in the Historic District and this location is not located in the historic district. Commissioner Doney made the motion to approve Resolution No. 4049, a resolution approving an application from Fergus County Federal Credit Union for TIF funds made to the Lewistown Tax Increment Financing District Board and Commissioner Hewitt seconded the motion. Commissioner Turk asked for comments from the audience and Commission. There being none, the question was called for and the motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Turk asked City Manager Phelps to briefly explain the Tax Increment Finance District. City Manager Phelps explained that back in 2015 the City Commissioner created the TIF district. The district takes in a lot of commercial areas, First Ave and the Truck Bypass, this area was identified as being blighted and in need of improvements. City Manager Phelps further explained that by establishing the district the City set a base rate property tax value year and then have the ability to capture an increment on the improvements in the district. The increment is set aside to be able to be reinvested in the district. The TIF board was created by the Commission, it a five-member board that makes recommendation to the City Commission on how the funds should be spent. State statue does determine how and on what the funds can be spent. Mr. Snyder thanked the City Manager for explaining the TIF board. Commissioner Turk asked if a list of all the improvements made in the TIF district could be put together. City Manager Phelps answered that she will work on it.

CITIZENS' REQUESTS

Mr. Beriault addressed the Commission stating that he is still very discontented about the cops being called on him at the Public Library. Commissioner Turk stated that the Library has a board that is separate from the Commission. Mr. Beriault stated that he is still concerned about Mr. Jim Daniels calling the cops on him while he was at the swimming pool last summer while watching his son practice with the sea lions. City Clerk Nikki Brummond explained that there were state implemented COVID regulations and governor mandates in place. Last summer the Sea Lions asked that due to these restrictions and mandates that no parents or spectators remain in the pool area during swim team practice.

Mr. Snyder stated that he is just glad the Mr. Beriault aired his situation for civil liberties and restrictions and how much we really guard them freely and to make our on personal choices.

COMMISSIONER'S MINUTE

Commissioner Doney read an email from a citizen regarding a fencing issue in the neighborhood. It stated that the fence is being built and it not in compliance. City Manager Phelps is aware of the situation and is working on it. Commissioner Doney asked about the planner position. City Manager Phelps answered that we do have an interested and qualified individual but is struggling to find a place to live.

Commissioner Oldenburg asked questions on some of the confusion and questions that are taking place when making motions. City Clerk Brummond explained that she can clarify the motion and at anytime a Commissioner wants the motion to be more specific then I can repeat it that way. City Clerk Brummond explained that she has been asked by the City Manager that I am to read the motion back and when I ask the question do you understand any Commissioner can ask questions or as to if they vote yes or no.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Hewitt asked that the meeting be adjourned and Commission Oldenburg seconded the motion. Charmain Turk adjourned the meeting.

Dated this 19th, day of April 2021.

Patty Turk, Commission Chairman

ATTEST:

Nikki Brummond, City Clerk