Regular Town Council Meeting August 14, 2023, at Senior Citizen’s Center

In attendance: Tonya Romkema (phoned in), Tammy Todd, Tom Roberts, Mayor Judy Edwards, Ty Gerth (Public Works Director), Jennifer Meacham (clerk, treasurer), Zach Thompson (Public Works).

Other Attendees: Rick Hecker, Steve Dobb, Kate Rose, Landon Dybdal, Mike Zielinski, Bob Stump, Kay Colwell, Kati Stender, Doris Hilliker, Lon Sedel, Mat Nottingham, Susan Nottingham, Gary Hilliker, Anne Wentz, Jan Bowey, Floyd E. Shammel, Kaylie Theis, Kyle Hopstat, Stephanie Kruer, Duncan Hedges

Meeting was called to order at 6:02pm

Pledge was recited.

Public Comment not agenda:

Land use - no comment

Open floor:

Bob Stump wanted to know when the adjustment on water/sewer bill on the sewer base rate. The adjustment probably won’t be made until September because the Town office didn’t know about it till it was brought up the other day. Question about the mayor’s letter talking about being considerate of water usage if the town is being restricted because of there being a water shortage. The response was that we are just being cautious, we are doing fine and will continue to be fine but it’s a recommendation. Which brough up the discussion on watering every other day and turning off your sprinklers when it is raining.

Minutes for July 10, 2023: Tonya Romkema, I move we accept these minutes with corrections, Tom Roberts seconds. All in favor, none opposed, motion passes.

Department Reports:

Sheriff’s Office: Busy summer unsure of the numbers for calls for service but believes June and July are around 1000. June: Citations within the city have increased. Officers have been citing for 35 and 40mph through the town. Multiple 911 hang ups. 1 wildlife complaint. Couple of DUI arrest. Increase in complaints on spam calls. A couple of harassment and stalking cases were started up. There is a Highway Patrol trooper in the area, but he is a crash reconstructionist and that is his priority. Priorities are county roads, calls for service, and reports need to be written up. Until their new people get on the road, it is difficult for much more. No major incidents through the July 4th weekend and fair weekend. Calls for service continue to rise and as the population rises, they will. If you have complaints, speeders etc. please call dispatch not 911. Even if it is just a description. U-turns have been permitted but are not legal. It comes down to time and resources of the Sheriff’s department.

Library: The Board of Trustees would like to have Bill go back to a monthly pay schedule instead of every two weeks. Also, they would like to have Jamie Jenesco to be removed from their banks and add the new treasurer, Sally Shendal. The Ken Stiener car show will be on September 9, 2023.

Attorney: One more signature on the audit contracts with Denning, Downing and associates CPA’s

Fire Department: No update with the building. Also, Jeff Gerth is talking with the owner of the property with fire hydrant behind the fence. There is an international fire code, where there needs to be 3 feet surrounding and no obstruction to be able to get to it.

Public Works: Controls for irrigation pond are fixed. Water, roll and grade the roads have been done. Parks are being upkept by Zach Thompson. Also, the Dodge has been in Butte for service and is now back. Tom Roberts asked if there is a possibility of getting a machine shop to get us a new dummy plate, Ty Gerth is working on getting the old one fixed if not getting a new one.

Finance: Financials were given to the council in a report. The clerk/Treasurer is working hard to balance the monthly budget.

Mayor: Been getting feedback from the community on the mayor’s letter. Looking at alternative ways of sending out. We have been getting help on the budget, payroll, among other office needs, from Kelly Smith. Preliminary budget is being posted in the paper for August 28, 2023, and then will post the final budget hearing in the paper for September. If someone knows anything about why the hydrant is on the private property to get us some feedback on it. Walter’s Ace is looking for funds with the Pickleball courts.

Town Council: Tonya Romkema has nothing to say. Tammy Todd has had complaints and seen dogs off leash also the potholes in the streets. Would like to know what is being done about them. Ty explained that when it rains after the holes are filled, they are back again but he is working on getting something else done. Tom Roberts has an update on the community advisory committee that they are working on GIS mapping and zoning districts.

Boards and Committees:

MSIT: Kay Colwell at the last meeting asked the mayor and council to contact Philly Saxton about removing the pole so the improvements can begin. Judy Edwards has met with Philly, and she is contention that pole is hers and purchased it with building and authorization came with it. Discussion was made about the pole’s location and the legalization of the poll. The concrete the pole sits on is in the way of the new foundation being poured. Tom Roberts would like to ask the property owner to remove the pole and when she can prove that she has a legal right to have the pole there then the town will take it from there. Tammy Todd agrees with the statement from Tom, especially if there is not legal documentation and Tonya Romkema is concerned about the legalization of the sign and what it will cause for the town. There was approval in 2016 with the Town Council with the previous owner Anne. Tom would like to move things forward and ask the council to draft a letter with a deadline for Philly to remove the pole from the town property. For Stephanie Kruer to write the letter she would need a conflict of interest waived from the Town and Philly Saxton. Discussion was made about what to say in the letter. Tom Roberts moves that we direct Stephanie Kruer to resolve potential conflict of interest. Number 2, gather the information by August 28, 2023, regarding the legal documents of the buy/sell. Number 3, depending on the information we would generate a letter to the pole owner to remove the pole within 30 days and explore any disagreement for any long-term plan to erect it. Seconded by Tonya Romkema, Tammy Todd objects. Motion passes.

Park District Board: Was formed for supplemental money to help with the pool. Next meeting in 11 days. Wanted to know what to report for in the future. There hasn’t been reports previously, but what they would like to see is a long-term vision, which parks, annual budget, and how they prioritized.

SCCF: Broke ground on August 12, 2023, equipment will arrive around August 21, 2023, instillation will begin soon after that and the ribbon cutting on August 31, 2023, at 5:30. They would like to say thank you to the Allhands excavation and Denny Lueck for breaking ground. The old equipment is being looked at move to another playground.

Old Business:

Billing for RV/Rental Properties: Concern about the group of RVs at the end of Crofoot from March 2023 minutes. There was a discussion back in March about adding 2 more water/sewer base rates onto the property due to the extra housing units. The Town is losing revenue from duplexes, triplexes, etc. and will be looking into how to define what is permanent and what is semi-permanent. More research needs to be done before anything is considered permanent. Tom Roberts asked to table the subject about the RV water problem and look at possible solutions until the September meeting.

Update on redundant well project and funding: Making progress, there is a bid in for it. Sean Heckly had a recommendation of not drilling a pilot hole. There is a $62,000 difference if the pilot hole was drilled. The bid is being submitted to the state. Charges from the past year will be submitted to the state for reimbursement. Also, charges from here on out will be submitted to the state for reimbursement so the wait won’t be as long.

Interim zoning resolution reading: Tom Roberts read the second reading of Interim Zoning Ordinance No 1-2023, discussion was made about the 1-mile perimeter. Discussion about whether or not a garage can be built on the landowner’s property and how it can be a public health and safety. Exceptions can be made for what the resident is building. The resident is asked to send in a letter and the council will look at it and decide. In section 1 take out additional development and place uses instead of additional development. Amend “and up to one 1 mile beyond the corporate boundaries of the town” in section 2. Section 2 will read as follows: This interim zoning ordinance applies within the town limits shall take effect upon passage and the effective date of this ordinance. Tom Roberts moves that we except this interim zoning ordinance extension as edited, seconded by Tammy Todd, all in favor, none opposed, motion carried.

New Business:

Selection for new Council member: 4 applicants for new council member. Judy Edwards gave a brief synopsis of each applicant: Mike Zielinski, Landon Dybdal, Jan Bowey, and Jacklyn Taylor. The council had no questions, Tammy Todd moved to appoint Jan Bowey as next council member, Tonya Romkema seconded, all in favor, motion carried. Jan will be sworn in on August 28, 2023.

Approval of Hollensteiner Well lease: The well is ready and will be taken forward for signatures. Mayor Edwards read the agreement. There was no further discussion. Tom Roberts moves that the lease be approved as written/read, Tammy Todd seconds, all in favor, motion carried.

Madison Street-Ruby Valley Hospital: Landon Dybdal spoke about the potholes are filled as consistently as possible until new pipes and roads are replaced. Town is looking into solution about the road condition of the road to the hospital. The maintenance of the road is the responsibility of the town, and the hospital is willing to help with funds. Knife River was a suggestion and getting their cold patch. Millings and cold patch were discussed, millings are more permanent than cold patch.

No other business

Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm by Judy Edwards until August 28, 2023, at The Town Office.