

Town of Farmington
Public Hearing Final Budget
January 17, 2022
Telephone Dial in Available
Telephone: 1-912-712-4359 / PIN: 978 843 985#

ROLL CALL:

Mayor Brian Oliver, Councilmembers: Lavon Walser, Diana Oliver, Shelly Lobdell and Blanche Rhea

GUESTS: Noreen and John Ewing, Haleigh Varney, Monty Rojas, Mark and Elizabeth Hellinger

OPEN REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING:

Farmington's January 17, 2022, Regular Town Council Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. This was an onsite meeting with a phone in option.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA:

- Approval of the November 15, 2021, Public Hearing & Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes
- Approval of the November 16, 2021, thru January 17th, 2022, check register, including 13th month transactions.
- Approval of the November and December 2021 Treasurer's Report

Diana Oliver **MOVED** to approve the consent agenda for January 17, 2022, council meeting. Shelly Lobdell **seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.**

OLD BUSINESS:

The county has provided blank ticket books to the town so they town would not have to make the large ticket book purchase to only have to do it again next year when the State of Washington is scheduled to require new ticket book standards. The code enforcer will be notified that we now have tickets, and she will be provided with the ordinances the are being repeatedly violated. She will be instructed of warnings that need to go out and if the issue isn't resolved, she will then have the authority to issue tickets on behalf of the town.

Mayor Oliver said two trees had to be removed in front of town hall due to branches falling and causing a hazard. The trees on the west side of the building were dropping lots of branches in the storm and were responsible for the three power outages. Blanche Rhea questioned if the town had yet sought money for the grant to remove the additional trees and Mayor Oliver said Cody would be submitting the grant request. Diana Oliver suggested getting multiple tree companies out here to have a look at the ones that still need to be dropped and have them give prices as well as their expert opinion on which ones need to go.

Diana wondered if there were any additional items in the park or around town that would also work for the safety grant in case there was left over funds that weren't used if AWC awards the full \$5,000.00. Shelly Lobdell offered that possibly a privacy fence would fall into an acceptable

use to shield out the barking and aggressive dogs while kids are using the basketball court. Council was in support of moving forward with applying for the safety grant to take down the diseased and dying trees around town hall.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Haleigh Varney asked some questions of the council that consisted of:

- Council position #2, she would be willing to fill this position and Diana Oliver explained she would need to submit a letter of interest to town hall and at the next council meeting, the council will ask her some questions and if she is the best fit, appointed by the council and the mayor.
- She wanted to know about Monty's work hours in town and what his responsibilities were, and if they include snow removal since it is wintertime. Monty explained he has not been trained on the snowplow and has been taking care of sidewalks as the snow comes. Cody explained to Haleigh the budget challenges the town is working through due to the Current Expense levy failing two years in a row. Levies pay for services and if they aren't passed and the fund is not solvent, then services must be cut back.
- Haleigh wanted to know about volunteer projects in town and wonders if the council members are out soliciting residents of Farmington to help with volunteer needs. Council explained the items that need volunteers are online and citizens who are interested in participating to help keep the town looking good, could review this list and volunteer their services.
- Haleigh wanted to know why the county is not dropping their snowblade when passing through town. Mayor Oliver said they had a new driver who wasn't aware that he could do this. The town has contacted the county and given them permission to drop while going through town, so they will likely be doing that from this point forward. Possibly an annual reminder of this need should be passed along to the county at the beginning of each snow season.

Mayor Oliver thinks ideally the town would find funds and have the ability to purchase a one-ton truck with a V blade put on it for snow removal. The old snowplow is too costly to run, and it takes a person that knows how to run it to get the job done. A one-ton anyone could jump in and plow roads. Noreen Ewing also questioned about the snow plowing in town and wonders which is more important, snow plowing or road oiling in the summer. Council explained they have made cuts throughout the budget and if anyone has better suggestions on how to operate the town on a tight budget, there is a council position open, and they are always open to audience suggestions.

CLERK/TREASURER COMMENTS:

Cody said the January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2020 audit is complete. Everything went smooth and there were no material deficiencies during this audit period. The State Auditor's Office would like to see the town adopt official policy on the subjects listed in the exit document. Cody will be working with other local agencies and the Resources Center at the State Auditor's Office to bring these current.

MAYOR COMMENTS

Keltic Engineering will start to look over some granting opportunities for the water and sewer systems. Both systems are aging and the town will need to rely heavily on some granting opportunities to get the systems to a more modern state. No one wants to raise utility rates, but every engineer the town has talked with has suggested starting to move the rates up, otherwise the town will not even be eligible for grants. Repairs and maintenance on the system will become more expensive over time so the town really needs to take the opportunity to start making phasic updates.

This will help in keeping the rates manageable and allow the town to provide a good service at a respectable rate. Council has expressed their goal is to keep rates as economical as possible, while being able to cover the bills and have some funding available for matching grants in the future. The council would like a letter drafted explaining the rate increase so utility users of town know the reason for collecting the fee and the need for the increase.

The mayor reserved a piece of equipment to clear the beaver dam at the southwest side of town. Water is beginning to dam up and it is evident the beaver has been busy doing their work down there. The cost for the equipment will be about \$500 for 48 hours. Council was in support of clearing the debris so the creek doesn't become a flooding hazard.

Mayor Oliver said that Cody will no longer be working Saturdays and would like to start to phasing in a new person for the clerk/treasurer position. Cody said he talked with the Mayor in Garfield and it could be a situation where the new hire could train with Cody in Garfield and be the deputy clerk there, as well as a part time employee for Farmington. The new hire could shadow Cody at the job in Garfield since they have very similar responsibilities. The goal would be to have a good candidate trained by June to make the transition.

Blanche Rhea **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. Diana Oliver **seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously**. The regular town council meeting was closed at 7:24 pm.

Mayor Brian Oliver

Attest: _____
Cody Lord Clerk-Treasurer

Town of Farmington – Public Hearing & Regular Town Council Meeting
Monday, January 17th, 2022 - Farmington Community Center
6:00 PM – 7:24 PM