

Town of Farmington  
Public Hearing Final Budget  
December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Telephone Dial in Available  
Telephone: 1-662-532-5431 / PIN: 939536297

**ROLL CALL:**

Mayor Brian Oliver, Council Members; Lavon Walser, Haleigh Varney, Diana Oliver, Ben Smith (present via google meets) and Blanche Rhea.

**GUESTS:**

Video Conferencing Link attendees were David Birge and Realtor Connie Neuman. Mike and Lonnie Erickson, Hal and Annette Lisenbee, former Clerk/Treasurer Gavin Dewer and wife Ayla, Whitman County Deputy, Officer Cox.

**OPEN PUBLIC HEARING TOWN COUNCIL MEETING:**

Mayor Oliver opened the Public Hearing for the 2023 Final Operating Budget at 6:00 pm.

Mayor Oliver opened the Public Hearing portion of the postponed December 19<sup>th</sup> Town Council Meeting. He asked the council if they had all had an opportunity to review the 2023 proposed budget. Blanche Rhea had a couple of questions about the proposed budget including the Methodist Church income, street budget including oiling and recrowning the roads and as Mayor Pro-tem capacity, should she be in contact with the county to get these projects done this year. (Due to loss of the current clerk/treasurer, Cody Lord was the stand-in clerk/treasurer for this meeting and Public Hearing for the proposed 2023 budget). He suggested that the town be in contact with Whitman County early in 2023 as they are already booking up with projects for the 2023 project season. He also reminded council that the Federal Covid Relief Funds were still unused and needed to be tied to an infrastructure project soon. No other budget questions were asked. Blanche Rhea **MOVED** to approve Ordinance number 252-22 adopting the 2023 operating budget. Haleigh Varney **seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.**

**CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING TOWN COUNCIL MEETING:**

Mayor Oliver closed the Public Hearing for the 2023 Final Operating Budget at 6:12 pm.

**OPEN REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING:**

Farmington's December 27<sup>th</sup>, Regular Town Council Meeting was called to order at 6:12 pm.

**APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA:**

- Approval of the November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022, Public Hearing & Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes
- Approval of the November 22, 2022, thru Dec 17<sup>th</sup>, 2022, check register.
- Approval of the November 2022 Treasurer's Report

Mayor Oliver asked council members if they were able to review the consent agenda and if so, did he hear a motion to approve the consent agenda. Blanche Rhea said that she had some corrections that needed to be made to the minutes of the last town council meeting. Mayor Oliver recalls the minutes accurately reflected the actions of the meeting. Blanche addressed some comments made between her and former clerk/treasurer Gavin Dewmer and addressed the comments about her starting and spreading rumors about town and that they are untrue. Blanche asked that those comments be stricken from the minutes.

Diana Oliver said she wasn't present for the meeting, so she had nothing to add. Haleigh Varney felt the meeting minutes accurately conveyed the discussion at the meeting and for the sake of capturing the summary of the meeting, she thinks the minutes should stay as written. Diana reminded the council that minutes are used to capture the actions and summary of a meeting and she was inclined not to change the contents of the meeting minutes as well. Blanche talked about Lonnie Erickson's complaints about town hall office hours and the complaint that was made at a prior meeting, Haleigh acknowledged that the meeting escalated quickly but was still unwilling to make changes to the minutes as they were written. Diana Oliver **MOVED** to approve the consent agenda and minutes from the November 21st, 2022, meeting minutes as presented. Lavon Walser **seconded the motion**. Haleigh Varney and Ben Smith were yea votes and Blanche Rhea was a nay vote. **The motion carried.**

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

##### **Resolution 411-22 Employee Salaries for 2023**

Mayor Oliver said Resolution 411-22 is the notification of pay rates to be paid to employees in 2023. The maintenance position is \$17.00 an hour, clerk/treasurer is \$18.00 hour, the building inspector get 75% of each building permit issued, the snowplow operator is \$17.00 to \$20.00 an hour and the water and sewer consultant will get \$450 per month with an emergency call out rate of \$30.00 hour. Blanche questioned the pay scale rate for the snowplow operator and why there was a range for this position, Mayor Oliver explained it depended on experience and if the driver has a CDL or not. Tim Hokenson has been driving the snowplow truck and doing a great job, Lavon estimated his hours worked and the town will issue a check at the end of the season for his assistance. So far Lavon estimates he has about 50 hours in the truck for snow removal. Haleigh Varney **MOVED** to approve Resolution 411-22 to set the salaries for 2023. Diana Oliver **seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.**

Mayor Oliver said that last year at this time, the council had discussed continuing to reevaluate the water and sewer rates each year and make rate adjustments as needed. The council elected to implement a 6% increase each year until the rate was at a place where it was keeping up with inflation and was able to pay all the operating expenses it was incurring. Mayor Oliver said the 6% increase this year would add \$.48 to the water rate and \$1.63 to the sewer rate bringing the new bill to an estimated \$95.60 for a standard monthly utility rate. Mayor Oliver said it is important to make this

adjustment to keep in pace with expenses and to have funds available to match when looking at future infrastructure granting projects. The council was in support of drafting the 6% rate increase and this resolution will be made available at the next council meeting.

Mayor Oliver introduced the guests on the video conference; Realtor Connie Neuman and client David Birge. Mayor Oliver forwarded council the plans and a request for variance to change a setback in the commercial zone so that more of a property footprint could be used for development at Washington St between B and C streets. This would be for a residence with a shop on the back lot. Utilities and width of the road were discussed with concern about how wide A, B and Main Streets currently are making the property line 30 feet from the center of the road.

Mayor Oliver informed everyone that the Planning and Zoning had been disbanded due to inactivity, two meetings ago. Cody suggested taking a little time to talk with the town's legal council since the council is not currently operating as the official planning and zoning department and making sure they have the capacity to make a change such as this and what the correct procedure would be for making said change if approved. There was discussion about what exactly the setback for a residence in the commercial zone would be and Mayor Oliver read those terms. Diana reminded everyone that if a variance was used in such a scenario, then what was changed for one would likely become a change for all and thinks this may require some more exploring before moving forward. The subject will be tabled until Bishop's Law Office can provide some support in how to handle the situation. Council will attempt to have some new information for David Birge by the next meeting.

Mayor Oliver said he has hired a new clerk/treasurer, Beth Anderson and that the training for her has commenced. She is currently the clerk for the Garfield Fire District and will be working with Cody on getting trained for this position. She will be working Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Fridays from 10-6. This may change once the training is completed and the workload has changed. Blanche asked if there was an official job description for the position and currently there is not. However, Mayor Oliver said he could come up with a quick one for reference. She is hired at \$18.00 an hour, but once she is competent in the duties of the position, he would suggest the council move her up to \$20.00 an hour.

**CLERK/ TREASURER COMMENTS:**

Cody Lord wanted to have it officially reflected that he is only here for the one meeting and will be assisting with the training of Beth Anderson however, this is only temporary and should not be considered anything other than a stand in to help the town get through the final meeting of the year and complete their 2023 budget requirements. He will work with Beth mostly in Garfield and said there will be responsibilities that she will not encounter until she is further along in the position so training from time to time over the next year will be needed.

Concerning the current 2022 budget position, everything is looking nice and the expenditures for the year were much lower than anticipated. Some things to keep in mind next budget season is the Covid Relief funds should be utilized on some infrastructure projects, so they don't have to be returned. Salaries will be a bit higher due to adding the position of the water and sewer operator, which is a requirement from the State of Washington. There is money set aside for the purchase of a new town mower and both levies passed for collection in 2023, the Current Expense will receive \$8,000 in tax revenue and the Street Fund will receive \$15,000 in tax revenue. Because the levies were passed Cody strongly encourages using the funds on street related projects, so citizens see their tax money put to good use.

#### **MAYOR COMMENTS:**

Jacob Billington is the building inspector now and has been doing a great job of keeping up on projects and dropping in to check on progress. Jacob is the water and sewer operator at the Town of Rosalia and will be working now as the water and sewer operator for the Town of Farmington. He is fully licensed for the system in Farmington and will be taking care of the Dept of Health and Dept of Ecology needs for the town. Concerning the project on Chestnut Street, there has been no activity recently.

Mayor Oliver said now that Beth Anderson is hired for the clerk/treasurer position, council will need to authorize her to have access to the town's accounts as a signature authority at Farmington State Bank and will also need to give her approval to get a credit card at First Interstate Bank. Lavon Walser **MOVED** to give authority to Beth Anderson to be a designated signer on the Farmington State Bank accounts and First Interstate Bank credit card account. Diana Oliver **seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.**

#### **CITIZEN COMMENTS:**

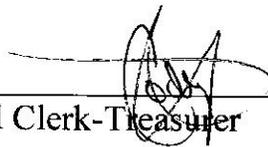
Mayor Oliver said the comments this evening will be kept brief due to the length of the meeting, and everyone will be treating each other with respect. He opened the floor to citizen comments. Lonnie Erickson asked about the current Mayor position and how the position will conclude and what are the details of the Pro-tem position. Mayor Oliver said he consulted with MRSC, he will be done as Mayor on December 31st and will be turning the day-to-day responsibilities over to the Mayor Pro-tem. There is one letter of interest for the mayor position at this time and that is Blanche Rhea. Mayor Oliver said that at the next meeting if the council is happy with the interested party, they can move to appoint the mayor position after he has fully vacated the mayor position. The next meeting is January 16th, and the town has 90 days to fill the vacancy. Blanche will receive the keys on the 1st of January and should prepare to have her signature added to the bank account for the day-to-day transactions.

Gavin Dewmer said he didn't have comments just a record to drop off to a couple of people. He provided Mayor Oliver and council member Blanche Rhea with a public records request. There were no other comments from the community.

The council thanked Mayor Oliver for his service to the community and Mayor Oliver said he has enjoyed working with and for the community in several different capacities and was excited for someone else to be stepping up.

Lavon Walser **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 7:24 pm. Diana Oliver **seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.**

  
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Mayor Brian Oliver *BLANCHE L RHEA*  
*PRO TEM*

Attest:   
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Cody Lord Clerk-Treasurer

Town of Farmington – Public Hearing & Regular Town Council Meeting  
Tuesday, December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022 - Farmington Community Center  
6:00 PM – 7:24 PM