

Town of Farmington  
Regular Council Meeting  
February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Telephone Dial in Available

**ROLL CALL:**

Mayor: Blanche Rhea and Council Members; Lavon Walser, Haleigh Varney, Diana Oliver, Ben Smith.

**GUESTS:**

Mark Hellinger, Joan Smith, Cody Lord and Whitman County Sheriff JR.

**OPEN REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING:**

Mayor Rhea opened Farmington's February 13<sup>th</sup>, Regular Town Council Meeting and was called to order at 6:00 pm.

Mayor Rhea started the meeting by asking if everyone got a chance to look over everything. Diana Oliver asked if minutes were going to be specific detailed conversation. Mayor Rhea explained that last month was the last time minutes would be recorded in a conversational manner, ie: verbatim.

**APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA:**

- Approval of the January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Regular Town Council Minutes
- Approval of the January 17<sup>th</sup> – February 13, 2023 check register.
- Approval of the January 2023 Treasurer's Report

Mayor Rhea asked council members if she could hear a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Haleigh Varney **MOVED** to approve the consent agenda and minutes from the January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Regular Town Council meeting minutes, Check Register and Treasurer's Report as presented. Ben Smith **seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

Mayor Rhea mentioned that the only concern for the public was the sidewalk on the corner of 102 N. Main. She talked with the town's attorney, Eric Hansen, about liability concerns. He stated that our Sidewalk Ordinance (250-21) covers us if anything were to happen. Now that the building is 100% residential, the property owner is 100% liable for anything. The new owner is putting up reflectors and plants, etc, to prevent people accidentally walking through. Other than that, Jacob is working with Mr. LaChance to do everything he can to meet the requirements of the Certificate of Occupancy. The state

requires hard wired smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Once he has all of this completed, a certificate can be issued.

Diana Oliver mentioned seeing his car there most mornings around 6:45am and is concerned that he may already be living there. Lavon Walser did not think he was, but knows he's been there working on the many things requiring fixing. Mayor Rhea stated that all is good with the electrical and plumbing according to L&I.

Mayor Rhea talked more with Jacob about being our code enforcer. He had talked with Tina Cole who was originally asked about the position for \$50/call. He would like \$100/call for the 1<sup>st</sup> call, then \$25 for each additional, if grouped together in the same trip to Farmington, and 75% of the court fees paid. Diana Oliver asked about taking care of a call if he's already here? Mayor Rhea said it would be the same. He would also go to court. Mayor Rhea reminded everyone that they could counter his offer. She suggested maybe \$75/call plus \$25 per additional and the 75% of court fees received. That sounded good to everyone. Discussion about hiring someone from out of town would be better and that things might start off rough, but would eventually result in a safer feeling and cleaner town. Mayor Rhea asked for a motion to counter Jacob Billington's offer. Haleigh Varney **MOVED** to offer \$75 for the 1<sup>st</sup> call and \$25/additional plus 75% of court fees. Lavon Walser **seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.** Mayor Rhea will talk with Jacob tomorrow.

Next was discussion about replacing the water meters using the SLFRF (Covid) monies received. Correct Equipment was contacted and asked for an estimate on costs of replacing the meters and upgrade of software. A brochure with explanation of the hardware and a quote was provided for council. Cody Lord was available to provide insight on how they work being the clerk for Garfield and Garfield has this system installed. He said they will need extra insulation during the winter because they don't have a frost plate. The hosted software works well. Diana Oliver asked about obligations if there is damage due to freezing temperatures. Cody suggested making sure policies were in place to accommodate that. Beth was asked to check on installation costs as it was not included in the quote. Two more bids are required before making a decision. Cody mentioned that the extra cost of having the company manage the software far outweighs any potential issues that could arise. Both in time and money. He also said that if a plate is located in a driveway, a heavier weight plate should be installed over the meter.

Mayor Rhea talked to Brian Wilson at the County about grading and oiling roads. Rosalia and Oakesdale are ahead of us on the schedule. The county is down from 10 to 5 employees with CDLs to carry out work needed. After we get the Interlocal Agreement signed, we can be worked in on a weekend. Then we can also get our roads plowed in the winter and other needs taken care of.

Resolution 413-23 Amending Water and Sewer Rates for 2023. Last months resolution was mistakenly made for a 3% increase instead of a 6% increase. This resolution updates it to the 6% rate increase.

Lavon Walser **MOVED** to approve Resolution 413-23 Amending Water & Sewer Rates for 2023. Diana Oliver **seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Mayor Rhea asked if there had been any interest shown in filling seat #5 on Town Council. There had been none. She said we have 90 days to get it filled before the County appoints someone. Requirements are a town resident for 1 year and must have voted in the last general election. Beth will post notices at the post office, on the Community board and put a note in the March 1<sup>st</sup> water/sewer bill. Diana Oliver asked if we could continue as is. Cody said no and explained that if we did that, the County could put a County person on Town Council or choose a town resident.

Mayor Rhea said that she asked Jacob to stop by 302 E. Washington to check on the contractors working there to see if they need a building permit.

Mayor Rhea would like to schedule a day for cleaning up around Town Hall. Take out the rest of the juniper bushes and eventually put grass seed down. Spruce things up a bit. Put some pictures on the walls inside the building, maybe small cabinets in the bathrooms. Diana Oliver mentioned some flowerpots. Any ideas to help make things look better. Lavon Walser said she can start working on grounds, but if anyone else wants to volunteer, they need to stop by town hall and sign a Volunteer form. In the meantime, think of ideas until the weather warms up.

#### **MAINTENANCE COMMENTS:**

Lavon would like to purchase a new John Deere mower. She and Mayor Rhea did some research and went to look at a 2023 model. Pros: Can get a government flat rate price because of being in a contract with the State of WA. Saves about \$3k; Can be ordered now with a 4 year/700 hour warranty. Can use all year with various implements we already have. Cons: none. Haleigh Varney said she thinks it's a good idea. Mayor Rhea asked for a motion to approve the purchase of a new 2023 John Deere riding lawnmower. Diana Oliver **MOVED** to approve the purchase. Haleigh Varney **seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### **CLERK/ TREASURER COMMENTS:**

Beth stated that the budget looked good so far.

She contacted Liquid Engineering to ask about progress on their ability to come out and clean out the old water tower. They could not locate a diver for the needs required for our tank so are currently training someone to be able to conduct the work needed.

Beth informed council that the security cameras are down. She has contacted WiFiFiber and they currently have the console to see if they can get into it. Council asked if it is covered under warranty. She will ask.

After updating council positions with the County Elections office, Beth was informed that all council members are up for election this year. They will all need to register in May for the General Election in November.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS:**

Mayor Rhea asked for Citizen Comments. Mark Heilinger had a question about fines for breaking town ordinances. Maybe including an umbrella clause that says infractions are considered a misdemeanor, unless otherwise specified in the ordinance. Diana Oliver says they have been updated.

Cody reminded us about the AWC Safety Grant for \$5000. It could help upgrade the sewer system.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

There were no comments.

**MAYOR COMMENTS:**

Mayor Rhea asked everyone to think about re-establishing a Zoning and Planning Committee again. Town Council can conduct this business, but it is advised to have a separate group. If not, possibly conduct it 15 minutes before the regular meeting.

She asked if there were any further comments or questions. There were none. She asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Haleigh Varney **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 7:14pm. Diana Oliver **seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.**



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Mayor Blanche Rhea

Attest:  \_\_\_\_\_

Beth Anderson Clerk-Treasurer

Town of Farmington – Regular Town Council Meeting  
Monday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023 - Farmington Community Center  
6:00 PM – 7:14 PM