

Town of Farmington
Regular Council Meeting
January 16th, 2023
Telephone Dial in Available

ROLL CALL:

Mayor Pro-Tem: Blanche Rhea and Council Members; Lavon Waiser, Haleigh Varney, Diana Oliver, Ben Smith.

GUESTS:

Mike Erickson, Mark Hellinger, Joan Smith and Brian Oliver.

OPEN REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING:

Mayor Pro-Tem Rhea opened Farmington's January 16th, Regular Town Council Meeting and was called to order at 6:00 pm.

Mayor Pro-Tem Rhea started the meeting introducing Beth Anderson as the new town Clerk. She said she is doing a wonderful job and is happy to have her. Beth's hours will be Mon, Tue, Thurs, and Fri tentatively from 10am-6pm. She will be taking an unpaid lunch, time to be determined, and the office will be closed at that time. Haleigh Varney asked about updating the town website with those hours.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA:

- Approval of the December 27, 2022 Public Hearing and Regular Town Council Minutes
- Approval of the December 28 thru December 31, 2022 (13th Month) check register.
- Approval of the January 1 thru January 16, 2023 check register.
- Approval of the November and December 2022 Treasurer's Report

Mayor Pro-Tem Rhea asked council members if they were able to review the consent agenda and if so, can she hear a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Haleigh Varney **MOVED** to approve the consent agenda and minutes from the December 27st, 2022, Public Hearing and Regular Town Council meeting minutes as presented. Diana Oliver **seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

OLD BUSINESS:

David Birge made a request for a variance last month. Cody did communicate with the town's attorney, Eric Hanson, and he concluded that if there is no Planning and Zoning Group, then the council would be responsible for determining decisions in place of the Planning and Zoning Committee.

Typically, variances can only be granted with limited conditions. It cannot be used to grant special privileges inconsistent with other properties within the same zoning.

Eric had not received the planning and zoning ordinance to date so was unable to review exact circumstances.

Mayor Pro-Tem Rhea asked for thoughts about the 20ft set back variance.

There is concern about building so close to the road that it becomes a hazard. Right now, C Street is not that busy. Haleigh Varney noted that it is also very narrow. If the variance is allowed, you would be setting precedence for future requests.

Ben Smith went out and looked at the property and doesn't think the requested variance should be allowed. The set back should be left the way it is. Council agreed. Lavon Walser **MOVED** to deny the variance request. Ben Smith **seconded the motion and the motion was carried unanimously.**

The new water and sewer rate Resolution #412-23 for a 6% increase to accommodate rising costs was signed and the rates will be updated and applied to the Feb 1, 2023 utility bill.

Mayor Pro-Tem Rhea asked if there were any more letters of interest regarding filling the position of Mayor of Farmington, other than hers. There have not been. Ben Smith **MOVED** to accept Blanche Rhea as the Mayor designate. Diana Oliver **seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

NEW BUSINESS:

Mayor Rhea suggested moving next month's meeting as it's schedule date falls on President's Day. There are only 2 holidays in the year that fall on the same day as town council meetings. The other is Martin Luther King day in January. She asked for thoughts on when to reschedule next month's meeting. Ben Smith asked to move meetings to Tuesdays, but Beth mentioned that she is not available on Tuesdays to attend the town council meeting. Mayor Rhea suggested later that week, a week before or a week after the regularly scheduled date. After some discussion, Ben Smith **MOVED** to reschedule the February meeting to the 13th. Diana Oliver **seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

Diana Oliver mentioned Juneteenth is now a federal holiday and will also land on a town council meeting day. Mayor Rhea asked if all future holidays that happen to land on a town council meeting day be rescheduled to the week prior and all agreed. Haleigh Varney **MOVED** to reschedule all future Federal holidays that conflict with regular town council meetings to the Monday prior. Diana Olive **seconded the motion. Motion carried.**

Mayor Rhea asked how things were going for Lavon Walsler with regard to the maintenance position. Lavon said she's changed about 10 lightbulbs so far. Ben Smith asked what the issue was with the water at the lift station. Lavon explained that a ball valve broke and the gate will not go down. Jacob will be coming in tomorrow to replace it. She said he will meet her at 11am and also wants to do the water samples for the month of January.

Cody Lord mentioned that there will be a new courier fee will be charged by Annatek to send in samples. He also said the budget looked good and the town was \$39,000 in the black. He explained the current status of expenditures and reminded the council that there is Covid Relief money that needs to be spent or it gets sent back. Ben Smith asked what it needs to be spent on and Cody said infrastructure for the water and sewer systems.

Mayor Rhea asked about the hydrants and Brian Oliver explained his past issues with them not having enough water pressure to hook up to with the fire trucks. He doesn't even bother because his trucks hold 8000 gallons of water. He suggested replacing water lines/meters and taps. He also mentioned upgrading the pumps. Keltic would be able to advise on the sewer pumps. The SLFRF monies can be used to buy new pumps, hookups and copper fittings. Cody thinks the funding may be extended up to 4 years from the original 2 years.

Ben Smith said the pumps are essential and the water meters should be secondary. Diana suggested looking back at an old study done on homes with low flow pressure about 7-8 years ago. They were only getting 3-4 gallons per minute. Brian also suggested setting up a bucket under an outdoor spigot and using a stopwatch to get more current stats.

Mayor Rhea said it was time to get serious about a new lawn mower. Brian Oliver stated that PBS just put an order in for a dozen new mowers. The most expensive commercially rated model will be about \$12,000. And he can get all the attachments that could or would be needed. Thatcher included. Mayor Rhea asked if there would be a discount for the town, then asked him if he could let us know when they come in. Diana asked if a thatcher would take care of leaves and Brian said it would be better to use a sweeper behind it.

Lavon Walsler was asked how the white truck was running. She said the tailgate wouldn't go down and ordered a new latch for it. She cleaned all the junk out, but it is running fine and the brakes are good. Otherwise, she is just playing catchup.

Mayor Rhea would like to take inventory of all the tools and equipment in the fix it shop. Maybe get an engraver to mark everything with "Town of Farmington." Ben Smith says he has one that could be used.

Also, there are 2 old mowers in there. Mayor Rhea asked if they should be surplused? There is a Zero-Turn and a John Deere. Diana Oliver asked about keeping one as a back up? Brian Oliver said maybe the Zero-Turn, but it's not meant for commercial use. He said that either \$2-400 could be spent on it to fix it up, or surplus it for \$2-400. Ben Smith asked what was wrong with the John Deere? Lavon Walser said a bolt went through the engine and the U-joint broke in the steering system. She also said she'd rather use her own mower as back up over either of these two. You could put a new engine in it for \$3000. Someone may want it. Comes with the mower, street sweeper, deck and blade. Mark Hellinger expressed interest in the John Deere for the attachments. Mayor Rhea suggested getting them evaluated and setting a sale price. She would like to have a new mower without worrying about it breaking down and comes with a warranty.

CLERK/ TREASURER COMMENTS:

There were no comments.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Mayor Rhea asked for citizen comments. Mark Hellinger wanted to confirm that Blanche Rhea was voted in as the new Mayor. All council members confirmed that she was. He asked if he could see her be sworn-in. Cody Lord said we could conduct that at next month's meeting when the Oath of Office form was present.

Mike Erickson wanted to add an addendum to the minutes for November 21, 2022. He asked if he could read a statement. It reads as follows:

"Jan 16, 2023

To: Town of Farmington City Council, Farmington Town Clerk
Re: Request for Addendum to Town of Farmington November Town Council Meeting Minutes
Fr: Mike Erickson, Town Resident

I would like town council to consider the following addendum to the Town Council meeting minutes for November 21, 2022 and take swift action to correct the record:

Strike sentence 15 under Citizen Comments that reads "Mike then brought numerous pictures and comments from Gavins personal Facebook page and proceeded to slander Gavin personally."

Replace this sentence with:

"Mike then presented to council, pages containing numerous comments and pictures from Gavin's personal Facebook pages demonstrating his personal character. These comments and pictures were copied directly from Gavin's Facebook page on to a word document with no manipulation/editing to the words or pictures. Since Gavin's Facebook page is a matter of public record and statements made on his Facebook page are assumed to be truthful as written by him, slander by definition did not occur."

Merriam Webster

Slander

Noun

1

:the utterance of false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation

2

:a false and defamatory oral statement about a person compare LIBEL

The bias in Gavin's recording of the minutes in stating that I slandered him is evident."

Brian Oliver asked them not to be stricken, that it is basically a wash. Mayor Rhea said that Eric Hanson indicated Mike Erickson's statement tonight would reference back to the November meeting.

Mike Erickson mentioned his reasons for attending city council meetings, that he wanted to educate himself. He then relayed the situation concerning recent events involving the previous town clerk. He expressed his concerns and frustrations wondering if the council members weren't just there as rubber stampers for the title. Diana Oliver stated they were there to make a difference and that there was now going to be an open position he could apply for. He said he may consider it. He then asked Haleigh Varney why she hadn't honored his request for an audience with her. She explained her situation and said that she had texted him but hadn't heard back. He then gave his opinions on how he thinks council should operate and hope they could bring some positivity. Mayor Rhea reminded him that seat #5 was vacant if he was interested.

Brian Oliver offered to burn the slash pile down again and restripe the roads. Maybe even get the bell tower repainted. Diana Oliver mentioned some downed signs that needed replacing. Lavon Walser said she has replaced 2 so far.

Mark Hellinger thanked the council members for the report on the John Deere mower and said he would like to bid on it if they put it out for bid.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Ben Smith offered his assistance wherever needed this summer. Brian Oliver said the fire trucks will be out needing a good wash. Probably take about 2-3 hours. Brian Oliver said the fireman's picnic is planned for July 12th, but there won't be a pancake feed until November. Not enough volunteers right now. The Fire Department will supply burgers, hotdogs and icecream sandwiches.

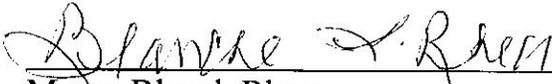
Lavon Walsler asked about taking water samples to Moscow. Cody said yes, but the chain of custody needs to be updated. Brian Oliver said the cost right now is \$25 to send to Spokane, but it would cost her \$50 in time and gas to take to Moscow. She said she'd take it when she was already driving over to Moscow Building Supply. That reminded Brian Oliver to tell Blanche Rhea and Lavon Walsler to take his name of the authorized signers list and add themselves to it to not cause an issue with the state auditors.

MAYOR COMMENTS:

New Mayor Rhea thanked the council members for appointing her tonight and for their support. She hopes to bring forth a good council and better community spirit, more volunteers, and a happy town. She wants everyone to think about items, issues and other things that they would like to see addressed. It's always a good thing to have working communication.

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

Ben Smith **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 6:59pm. Diana Oliver **seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.**



Mayor Blanch Rhea

Attest: 

Beth Anderson Clerk-Treasurer

Town of Farmington – Regular Town Council Meeting
Monday, January 16th, 2023 - Farmington Community Center
6:00 PM – 6:59 PM