

Town of Farmington
Regular Council Meeting
Onsite Town Hall
April 17th, 2023

ROLL CALL:

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

GUESTS: Keltic Engineering

OPEN REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING:

Farmington's April 17th, 2023, Regular Town Council Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. This was an onsite meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA:

- Approval of the March 20th, 2023, Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes
- Approval of the March 21st, thru April 17th, 2023, Check Register.
- Approval of the March 2023 Treasurer's Report

Haleigh Varney **MOVED** to approve the consent agenda for April 17, 2023, council meeting. Diana Oliver **seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.**

GUEST SPEAKER:

Lisa and Eric Hasenoehrl of Keltic Engineering introduced themselves and explained what they can do to help with the waterworks in Farmington. Lisa asked what the status was with Liquid Engineering and getting the water reservoir cleaned. Beth said, as of the last phone call, they still did not have a qualified diver for our particular style and age of tank and hoped they could be out sometime during the summer. It requires a specialized diver and they are in high demand and short supply. Lisa said they could help in finding a new company to get the needed work done or contact Liquid Engineering to express the urgency of our need. Eric mentioned they could help get quotes from other firms. Diana Oliver suggested also looking at how soon someone could come out and get the work done. Mayor Rhea agreed on getting new quotes because it's now been almost a year since the agreement was signed with Liquid Engineering.

Regarding the Lift Station, Eric said Nathan Stark of PumpTech would be a good contact to have come check the status of the pumps and get us going onto a regular maintenance program. Jacob Billington said he likes PumpTech and they are good to work with. Regular maintenance can also potentially reduce insurance coverage rates. Brian Oliver mentioned that the pumps were rebuilt in the last 5 years.

Lisa then brought up the new Flood Plain Adjustment the county is looking at doing. All of the council members were aware of the proposed changes. She said there is a list of grants and other funding options for the state of WA specifically for water and sewer systems. Eric said someone

back east did a wide range of possible flood zones in the attempt to get people to correct and provide the details of actual flood zones. Now Google Maps can be used to get good images.

In conclusion, Lisa and Eric are happy to help and we can reach out to them whenever we need to. They are an excellent resource.

Mayor Rhea asked them for their opinion on types of new meters. Eric said anything we look at will be an improvement over what we currently have. They offered to look at the quotes we've received to give guidance on making a decision.

OLD BUSINESS:

Seat #5: Mayor Rhea is doing some research on options to fill the empty council seat. Possibly allow people outside of the town limits to be on council. Giving a quarter mile range, for instance. Brian Oliver recalled that in the past, 2 people had to leave council because they were now outside town limits when it got changed. Mayor Rhea suggested that if they use and pay for water and sewer services, shouldn't that make them eligible? There are a handful of properties that are considered County residents but pay for town services.

Meters: We received the 3rd quote from Ferguson Waterworks, along with HD Fowler and Correct Equipment. Haleigh Varney asked if installation costs were included in the quotes. They are not, but Correct Equipment did mention in a previous email that it would be about \$85/meter to install. There are about 86 meters to initially have replaced. Diana Oliver had some concerns about fragile water lines and breakage during installation. Ben Smith agreed and said that whoever was selected would have to be aware of the delicate pipes. Diana also questioned why new water lines, hydrants or any other repair or replacement of infrastructure between the wells and the meters wasn't being looked at first, before new meters. She said some fire hydrants were not functioning, and that the well and/or sewer pumps could go down, that we should be making sure those are all in good working order. Mayor Rhea commented that those were all very valid concerns and said a decision does not need to be made tonight. We can study the options over the next month. Lavon Walser explained the benefit of time saved, both in cost of labor and reduction of labor. Right now, it would take at least 2 days of either laying on her belly or crawling into the meter spaces, after either digging them out or draining them of water each month to be able to read the actual meter. New meters would only require slowly driving by each one, taking about 20-30 minutes, and can be read year-round. Ben Smith likes the idea of new meters but also thinks the age of the water lines should be taken into consideration. Haleigh Varney asked to table the decision of new water meters until next month. All were in favor of tabling the water meters.

SCADA: There is one bid so far from Correct Equipment, for \$4200, for an emergency system to be installed in the Lift Station using the AWC grant. The system would alert Jacob, Lavon and Mayor Rhea in the event of a power outage and the backup generator failed. It would be a difference of hours to minutes in response time. Brian Oliver mentioned acquiring a system several years ago that was set up in Ron Dugan's home to alert him when he was Mayor. It never

worked. Because a grant was received to cover the costs of this, Beth was asked if 3 bids were still required. She will investigate this and let council know so we can move forward with it.

Pay Rate Increase: After some discussion and reviewing of the budget, and comparing the last 2 years of payroll, it was a unanimous decision to approve the pay rate increases for Beth and Lavon.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resident Cleanup: Kevin Grenz brought in a letter to be read to the town council members about the condition of his property and his request for help to get it cleaned up. He also received an email about potential funding to assist him and is asking if it's possible for the town to apply for it on his behalf, because he doesn't think they will help someone like him. Mayor Rhea mentioned that there might be county funds that can help, but we'd have to look into it. In the meantime, he can contact Whitman County Landfill.

Beaver Dam: East of the bridge there is fresh chewing and a blockage holding water back. Brian Oliver said 3 beavers were trapped last fall and then the dam was dredged out, with the expectation of someone installing a divert pipe? to allow the beavers to do what they do, but not cause a water blockage. He said Chad Hansen has the names and numbers of who to contact to get that done.

Gravel Bids: There are two quotes so far and waiting on the third. They are Palouse Hills Excavators out of Garfield, Palouse River Rock in Colfax, and Whitman County. So far, it looks like Palouse Hills Excavators will be it.

METER Foundation Grant: Mayor Rhea talked about a grant that the library could apply for on behalf of the Community Center. It is a privately funded grant that is available for entities involved in education and community enrichment. It would not cost the town a single penny. The grant would cover all the supplies and all of the work is done by volunteers through the METER Foundation. Cody Allen, director of Whitman County Libraries, will be completing the application for the grant. He has already done this for Colton and Albion over the last couple of years. The grant amount ranges from \$5000-10,000, all depending on what is needed. Diana Oliver asked what would it be used for if it was awarded? Mayor Rhea said the front porch is of main concern as the front edge of the roof is starting to sag, so repairing that is important. Putting lattice around the porch to keep critters out. There would be a fresh coat of paint as well. The back door in the kitchen needs to be replaced, and refinishing the entry way floors is planned for, too. Diana asked about putting in a fire exit/escape upstairs so it can be utilized and Mayor Rhea said that was already on the list for next year.

Resolution 414-23 Excess Levies for Streets and General Fund: Mayor Rhea read the levy proposition and asked for all those in favor of putting it on the ballot in the Primary Election August 1st. It was unanimously approved.

MAINTENANCE COMMENTS

Lavon said the new JD mower is working well. She has used the sweeper and it does Ok. She checked out 5 different websites and found some suitable flags on poles for the light poles. 10 of them will cost about \$650. **Diana Oliver made a motion to approve the purchase of the flags and Haleigh Varney seconded. Motion passed.** She also did some research on saucer swings for the empty space on the swing set in the playground. Everyone loved the idea, so she will get one ordered along with a new tether ball and cord.

CLERK COMMENTS

Beth said things are going smoothly and she is needing less and less training with Cody. Only needing to text or call for assistance occasionally, as new things come up.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Rose Anderson commented about replacing the Lift Station first before water meters and look for grants to replace the meters. She asked about how often the fire hydrants were being flushed to help clean out sediment build up. Brian Oliver said he would get it done in May and October.

Mike Erickson asked about the schedule of work on gravel roads. He's concerned about the use of his property taxes. Mayor Rhea said she has been contacting the County to figure out if and when they can come out to work on them. She said Farmington got re-districted with Rosalia and Oakesdale and they are down to 5 employees each. There are not enough people to get all the required and requested work done. Brian Oliver said he can scrape roads, but not grade them. He doesn't have enough down pressure on the tractor. He also mentioned that when Palouse Hills comes to deliver the gravel, he can lay it down on 5th, 4th, and 2nd streets to be spread out. Mayor Rhea said then we can figure out when to oil the roads after that. The schedule of which roads get oiled each year switches back and forth between North/South roads, then East/West roads, as long as the budget allows it. And that is only if the levies pass. Mike said his road got missed last time. Diana explained that priority has gone to the bus routes in the past and the routes sometimes change.

Mike mentioned there are speeders flying out 5th street. Mayor Rhea said she would check into what can be done to slow people down.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Diana Oliver requested a notice be put in the water bills about the dump. It is an organic dump for yard waste and tree trimmings, etc, not for trash and animal droppings.

Council asked for an update on 302 E. Washington St. Mayor Rhea said a certified letter has been mailed out, but the return card has not arrived yet, so copies of the letter were made and posted to the doors of the house and the travel trailer. It also appears that the utility trailer parked

in the front yard is being used as a trash receptacle. She will send ordinances and enforce fines. A time when there were visitors with children, the kids were left to freely wander into Mayor Rhea's front fenced yard and also around to the neighbor's chicken coop.

Council asked about any other potential violations of ordinances. Mayor Rhea said there are a few properties that are qualifying as a nuisance because of the amount of trash/junk/stuff surrounding the homes. Letters with copies of the ordinances will be sent.

Diana Oliver clarified talking to Shon with Town of Garfield to rent their street sweeper and hire Shon or Monty to clean up the streets. In the meantime, Lavon is trying to get as much of the gravel cleaned out of the gutters as she can. Mayor Rhea confirmed with Brian Oliver that does need done before any painting of stripes can be done.

MAYOR COMMENTS

Mayor Rhea asked two things of the council members. 1) Check around town for things that need attention; and 2) Someone to research and apply for grants would very much be appreciated.

Mayor Rhea asked to put a notice in the water bill about the flushing of the fire hydrants in May and October of this year.

Mayor Rhea asked how the Easter Egg Hunt in the park went. Lavon said it went really well. About 45 kids from the surrounding area, even from Moscow, attended. Mayor Rhea suggested publicizing the event a little earlier next year.

Mayor Rhea informed council that the carpets there in the conference room were getting cleaned on the 19th and, after confirming that the cafeteria tables belonged to Mark Hellinger, he would be coming to pick them up tomorrow, Tuesday the 18th. Then after the carpets are dry, volunteers will be needed to move tables and chairs from upstairs to the conference room.

Mayor Rhea asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Diana Oliver **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. Haleigh Varney **seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously**. The regular town council meeting was closed at 8:01pm.



Mayor Blanche Rhea

Attest: 

Beth Anderson Clerk-Treasurer

Town of Farmington – Regular Town Council Meeting
Monday, April 17, 2023 - Farmington Community Center
6:00 PM – 8:01 PM