

Town of Farmington
Regular Council Meeting
Onsite Town Hall
September 18th, 2023

ROLL CALL:

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

VISITORS: Joan Smith and Mark Hellinger

Guest: Jody Opheim

OPEN REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING:

Farmington's September 18th, 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 August 21st, 2023, Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes
- Approval of the August 22nd, thru September 18th, 2023, Check Register.
- Approval of the August 2023 Treasurer's Report

Haleigh Varney **MOVED** to approve the consent agenda for August 21st, 2023, council meeting. Lavon Walser **seconded the motion and the motion was carried unanimously.**

OLD BUSINESS:

Council Seat #5: Mayor Rhea would like to talk with the Elections Office about candidates outside the city limits. She asked Mark Hellinger for insight on the rules for being a town council member and asked if he knew why the town was divided the way it is. Mark Hellinger relayed the history as he's heard it to be: A bridge by the intersection of Bridge Street and 3rd Street and at N. A Street and Main Street were condemned by the county, so the town moved the city limits in to let those bridges become part of the county instead of the town. He also said the state rules are specific about council members must be within the borders of the city limits. He asked about the status of the 3 months being vacated and Mayor Rhea said it was filled and immediately vacated again, so the 3 months starts over. The seat is still empty.

METER Grant: Mayor Rhea explained the status of funding with the METER Foundation for the upgrades on the Community Center. Cody Allen of Whitman County Library said we could start repairs as the library has the funds to cover the grant, but Mayor Rhea would like to hold off until the funds have been received before starting any sizeable projects. We have a year to spend the grant funds.

Lavon has started working on the front porch of the Community Center with pulling the old rain gutter down and painting the cedar shingles. She found only a little bit of rotted wood in the

center behind where the gutter was. She said it needs to be better engineered to make sure a new gutter catches most, if not all, the rain coming off the roof above the walkway.

Ordinance Letters: Mayor Rhea sent letters out 2 weeks ago, but no compliance, yet. Haleigh Varney asked if the complaints coming in have been written and Mayor Rhea said yes.

NEW BUSINESS:

Code Enforcement Officer: Mayor Rhea has called a perspective candidate to fill the position but has not received a call back.

Surplus: Mayor Rhea asked Council if they wanted to set a minimum bid dollar amount. Everyone was unanimous in saying No. The sealed bids received were from Mark Hellinger and Kevin Shindler. After reviewing the bids, Mark Hellinger won the bid for the utility trailer; and Kevin Shindler won the bids for both lawn mowers.

MAINTENANCE COMMENTS

Lavon Walser gave updates on the various tasks she's been getting done over the last month. The Bell Tower is now mostly painted, and she is waiting for some new boards to replace the rotten or ruined ones from Rudy Goossen. She refreshed the speed limit signs and made sure they were all clearly visible by clearing away tree branches and the like. Haleigh Varny asked about painting the speed limits on the road itself. They are county roads, so not sure if that is allowable. She is currently working on getting all the crosswalks painted.

All is well at the Lift Station. The remaining repair work of the concrete on Main Street and 1st Street is waiting when Jessie of Palouse Hills Excavators to be done with harvest.

Haleigh Varney asked about when the fire hydrants will be flushed, and Mayor Rhea and Lavon said they are getting that worked out. Haleigh Varney also commented on the increase in water pressure after getting the new water meters installed.

CLERK COMMENTS

Beth said the budget still looks good. She said that she will be emailing out potential changes for 2024 over the coming weeks. She also has a Request for Waiver from Participation in any 2024 Elections Local Voters' Pamphlet Due to Financial Hardship form for approval and signature.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Mark Hellinger explained his current situation with the neighbor's dogs. Back in December of last year, they brought a dirty diaper over and proceeded to tear it apart in front of his mother while they were sitting on the front porch. The 2nd offense was when they started using his gravel pile as a litter box; 3rd was bringing more garbage over; and 4th is getting into his trash can in his shop. They have scared him and knocked him down, which he then called the Sheriff. They told him there isn't much they can do until there is personal physical injury or property damage but keep a record of it. Recently, Mark pulled his Bentley out of the garage to wash it and went inside

his house for a minute. He came back out to pawprints and scratch marks on the driver side door. He took pictures, but also has the dog's activity recorded on video surveillance. He called the Sheriff again and filed a complaint. He can try to buff out the scratch, but it won't be back to how it was. He gave a breakdown of how the dogs have violated the town's dog ordinance and is hoping that something can be done to make them take care of their animals properly.

Beth did send a letter out to the dog owners along with a copy of the ordinance. Haleigh then shared her experience of interacting with the dogs when she went to get her dog. They also jumped onto her car. Lavon said the owner's property is outside the town limits. Mayor Rhea will talk with the owners.

Mayor Rhea informed Council that she and Beth went and talked with the town's attorney about the dog ordinance to understand what the town can do regarding potentially dangerous dogs. First, a Judge must deem the animal dangerous based on the filed complaints of its actions, etc. Second, the action must take place off the owner's property.

VISITING SPEAKER: Jody Opheim came to discuss and explain the RCO Parks Grant that is being made available. She said there are 2 tiers, and according to the requests already provided, this is where we would fall. Everything is older than 50 years. we would want to disturb the ground for and access path and it's all in one location: the park. Tier 1 is multiple locations, no ground disturbance, and no age restrictions. If the town Council agrees to apply, Jody will send a Resolution for all to sign. Haleigh Varney **made a motion to approve applying for the RCO Parks Grant through the Port of Whitman.** Lavon Walser **seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passed.** There will be more paperwork, etc, to be done.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

There were no Council Comments.

MAYOR COMMENTS

Mayor Rhea asked if there were any other concerns needing to be discussed, and as there were none, she asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ben Smith **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. Haleigh Varney **seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned.** The regular town council meeting was adjourned at 7:40pm.



Mayor/Blanche Rhea

Attest: 

Beth Anderson Clerk-Treasurer

Town of Farmington – Regular Town Council Meeting
Monday, September 18th, 2023 - Farmington Community Center
6:00PM – 7:40PM