

Town of Farmington
Regular Council Meeting
Onsite Town Hall
January 15th, 2024

ROLL CALL:

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

GUESTS: Jeana Goodwin, Doug Bruce and Joan Smith

OPEN REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING:

Farmington's January 15th, 2024, Regular Town Council Meeting was called to order at 6:00pm. This was an onsite meeting.

APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA:

- Approval of the December 18th, 2023, Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes
- Approval of the December 19th to December 31st, 2023, Check Register.
- Approval of the January 1st to January 15th, 2024, Check Register
- Approval of the December 2023 Treasurer's Report

Haleigh Varney **MOVED** to approve the consent agenda for January 15th, 2024, consent agenda. Ben Smith **seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.**

NEW BUSINESS:

Port of Whitman: Economic Development Informational Meeting by Haleigh Varney:

Haleigh Varney said going to these Port of Whitman meetings is a good way to meet a lot of people and open doors for future endeavors. There are lots of projects going on in the county, like the re-opening of the Town of Malden, the restructuring of downtown Pullman, the new round-a-bout in Colfax at the hwy 26 junction. She said there were some surprised and confused faces at seeing a council member from Farmington attend. When introducing herself, Haleigh told them that Farmington is on schedule to get most of the town's roads redone this year and is looking for ways to bring businesses back. Farmington does not want to end up like Belmont. The Port members said they can help locations get ready for new businesses. Juan Garcia is a good point of contact for assistance, as well. Haleigh said the meetings are every month, and Mayor Rhea mentioned that they are open to anyone that would like to attend, if council would like to.

Mayor Rhea said there is a meeting with Broadband Action Team she is planning to attend in a week on broadband and fiber optic internet service. She said all the other towns around Farmington received access to fiber optic, but we got skipped because the town was not accessible. The Port of Whitman sold the contract for installing fiber optic in Farmington to Zippy, and they in turn were supposed to bring fiber optic to Farmington by the end of 2024. She is going to ask about the possibility of putting in an antenna for wireless access.

Water Utility Policy Fee Structure: Mayor Rhea would like to update the policy in a couple of areas and explained some of the changes it has had over the years. She then read the current water status change form, which includes a \$200 water turn on fee. Clerk Beth explained where this dollar amount derived from and it isn't consistent with other fees currently in place. She also noted that the Standby rate should be 60% of the current water and sewer rates, not just set at \$19.72. This has not been changed in the accounting software over many years. Mayor Rhea suggested an additional \$25 fee to the \$25 water shut-off fee for turning water back on in a delinquent water shut-off case, with a total of \$50 to be billed each time. This will be consistent with the \$50 charged when someone requests their water to be shut off for an extended period and opts not to use the Standby rate. Jason Brausen asked about considerations for hardship cases and Beth said those cases are already taken into account.

A few nearby towns were contacted to find out what the going charge is for new builds tying into city water and sewer, as Farmington currently does not charge a fee for this. The range was from a few hundred to \$1000. After much discussion with council both Haleigh Varney and LaVon Walser agreed that \$350 is a more reasonable amount for this town. Jason Brausen suggested offering locals the service of digging for the \$1000.

Mayor Rhea asked for a motion to approve the changes to the Water and Sewer Policy for 2024 starting with the February bill. Jason Brausen **MOVED** to approve the updates to the Water and Sewer Policy, and Haleigh Varney **seconded the motion and the motion was carried unanimously**. Beth will make those changes and have a new Resolution ready for the February meeting to be signed.

Holidays vs Town Council Meetings: With Martin Luther King Jr, Day and Presidents Day always landing on the 3rd Monday of the January and February, a reconsideration of when to move Farmington's Town Council meeting in those months is required, as Clerk Beth is not available on Tuesday evenings. Mayor Rhea asked if anyone had a preference for Wednesday, Thursday or Friday. Haleigh Varney said sometime Wednesdays can be difficult for her, and everyone agreed not to use Friday, but Wednesday would be the next best day.

Mayor Rhea asked for a motion to set the new back up Town Council Meeting day to Wednesdays, if a Federal Holiday falls on the 3rd Monday of the month. Ben Smith **MOVED** to approve setting the back up Town Council Meeting day to Wednesday, if needed, and LaVon Walser **seconded the motion and the motion was carried unanimously**.

Community Center Usage Insurance Coverage: Clerk Beth read a portion of the Community Center Rental Agreement which states:

Insurance. FACILITY USER shall procure and maintain in force, without cost or expense to Town of Farmington on or before the commencement date of this Agreement and throughout the Agreement term or as long as Facility User remains in possession of the Facility, a broad form comprehensive general liability policy of insurance covering bodily injury and property damage, with respect to the use and occupancy of the Facility. All such policies, which policies shall in addition provide that they may not be canceled or modified for any reason without fifteen (15) days prior written notice to Town of Farmington FACILITY USER shall provide Town of Farmington with a certificate or certificates of such insurance within ten (10) days of the execution of this Agreement.

This prompted some questions to AWC RMSA about whether something was already in place to accommodate this. Currently, there is nothing in place but there is a service called GatherGuard through National League of Cities that they partner with that can be utilized for event coverage at no cost to the Town and a small cost to the renter of the Community Center. Jason Brausen asked how much time is provided in case of a cancellation and Beth did not have the answer to that question. She will find out and report back at the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

Keltic/TIB Update: Mayor Rhea said everything is going as planned, just waiting for the final decision on the grant. She should hear back by February 1st.

LaVon Walser mentioned that there were discrepancies with 1st Street between Pine St. and Alder St, and all of Whitman Street. Those will not be done.

MAINTENANCE COMMENTS

Lavon Walser talked about the Mission Alert System at the lift station and the night the power went out. The pumps stopped and levels reached too high, so she got the generator started to get the pumps going again. Everything worked out well.

She has also been moving last year's slash pile from the beaver dam to the dump. Haleigh Varney asked about installing the culvert and Mayor Rhea said most likely not until next year when the weather gets better.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Jeana Goodwin was visiting with her father Doug Bruce concerning the lots behind the Post Office. She has a business idea to present to the town council members. If she acquires all 3 parcels that run between 1st St and 2nd St, which is zoned commercial, she would like to put in an RV Park. She asked about permits, zoning, water usage, variances, and what the road work coming up would entail. Mayor Rhea and the council members answered as many questions as time would allow.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

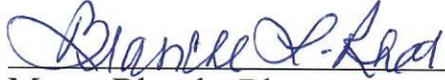
Jason Brausen asked about the status of planning a game night. Haleigh Varney said to talk to Diana Oliver and Ruth Lowley, as they would be the organizers.

MAYOR COMMENTS

Mayor Rhea mentioned that the Pro-Tem position, held by LaVon currently, is just about up and is appointed for 6 months at a time. She asked everyone to think about who would like to step in for the next 2 terms. Haleigh Varney said she can from February through July and Jason Brausen volunteered for August through January.

She also reiterated the town's leash laws. Letters will be sent out to those not abiding by them. She is also considering reviewing and updating the Dog Ordinance 167-97.

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. Jason Brausen **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. Haleigh Varney **seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned.** The regular town council meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.



Mayor Blanche Rhea

Attest: _____

Beth Anderson Clerk-Treasurer

Town of Farmington – Public Regular Town Council Meeting
Monday, January 15, 2024 - Farmington Community Center
6:00PM – 7:30PM