

Town of Farmington  
Regular Council Meeting  
Onsite Town Hall  
December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**ROLL CALL:**

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

**GUESTS:** Brian Oliver and Joan Smith

**FINAL 2024 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING:**

Mayor Rhea opened the public hearing portion of the meeting to discuss the 2024 final budget at 6:00pm. She asked if there were any questions or concerns. Council did not have any. Mayor Rhea asked for a motion to adopt the 2024 Final Operating Budget. Jason Brausen **MOVED** to adopt the 2024 Final Operating Budget. Ben Smith **seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.**

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:01pm.

**OPEN REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING:**

Farmington's December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Regular Town Council Meeting was called to order at 6:02pm. This was an onsite meeting.

**APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA:**

- Approval of the November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes
- Approval of the November 21<sup>st</sup> to December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Check Register.
- Approval of the November 21<sup>st</sup> to December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Receipt Register
- Approval of the November 2023 Treasurer's Report

Haleigh Varney **MOVED** to approve the consent agenda for December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, consent agenda. Diana Oliver **seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Ordinance and Resolutions:** Mayor Rhea and Clerk Beth Anderson explained the option to only increase rates of the regular 6% for the sewer portion of the W/S utility bill and leave the water portion the same. The reason for doing this is to create more of a backup for sewer expenses and keep the fund solvent. The water fund is currently at a good solvent status. Another option is to increase the water usage overage rate of \$.75 per 3740 gallons over the base of 7480 gallons for residential and 1496 gallons over the base of 2992 gallons for non-residential accounts to \$1. Jason Brausen was in favor of the regular 6% on the sewer side only, but not the increase in the overage rate of water usage. Brian Oliver wanted to remind everyone that the reason for the annual 6% increases to both the water and sewer funds was to build a good

cushion for any future expenses, good or bad. Jason Brausen expressed a concern for causing potential hardship to town residents by increasing the overage rate. Ben Smith agreed with the 6% increase to the sewer rate and suggested a 3% increase to the water rate. The rest of Council agreed with the regular 6% increase to the sewer rate.

Resolution 419-23 Setting of Employee Salaries for 2024 did not have any changes over the 2023 salary rates.

Ordinance 258-23 Amending the 2023 Operating Budget was explained by Clerk Beth Anderson to properly show the moving of the SLFRF (Covid-19 Relief Funds) grant from the Sewer Fund to the Water Fund. The amendment presented last month was created incorrectly. The transfer of funds was done correctly in the accounting software.

Mayor Rhea asked for a motion to approve Resolution 418-23 Water & Sewer Rate Changes for 2024 and Resolution 419-23 Setting of Employee Salaries for 2024. Jason Brausen **MOVED** to approve Resolution 418-23 and 419-23 and Haleigh Varney **seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.**

She then asked for a motion to approve Ordinance 258-23 Amendment of the 2023 Operating Budget. Diana Oliver **MOVED** to approve Ordinance 258-23 and Jason Brausen **seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.**

**AWC Training:** Mayor Rhea said the AWC Newly Elected Officials Training in Fairfield on Dec 9<sup>th</sup> was very informative. They had a record attendance from all over the state at the various locations and it was well worth going. She suggested that everyone go at some point. Jason Brausen asked if there was a recording available that can be viewed and Mayor Rhea was unsure.

**Council Seat 3 Resignation:** After 13 years of being on Town Council, Diana Oliver gave her letter of resignation. Everyone was grateful for her years of service and thanked her for her time and interest in the community over the years.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**TIB Update:** Mayor Rhea said we should know by January 25<sup>th</sup> if we get the grant for the roads to be done. Haleigh V. asked which roads will be worked on and Lavon W. stated that all of the gravel roads would be done. Brian Oliver asked what exactly it is that will be done, and Mayor Rhea explained the OTTA Seal and said that it is supposed to last 15 years. If repairs are needed before the 15 years is up, we can apply for a grant to fix it. None of this will cost the town anything. The product is used back east and has great reviews. The roads will be re-established to their original widths. Brian O. suggested locating potential meters that may end up 'in the way' when the rock goes down, and to make sure they are in good working order. Lavon also mentioned that there are some manhole covers that are already buried under the gravel that is down currently. She will be locating them as well.

**Beaver Dams Update:** Pine Creek Conservation District came out and notched the dams. The town has an emergency permit to notch them again as needed. There is a plan to get some pond levelers installed in the spring.

**Code Enforcement:** Mayor Rhea learned that she cannot act as a Code Enforcement Officer and receive payment for those services. It would be a conflict of interest. She can, however, still write citations to uphold ordinances and send letters. Only ordinances that have been uploaded to the state JIS system can have citations written concerning them. Not all of the ordinances that would involve a penalty if violated have been uploaded as of yet.

Haleigh V. asked when we can start reviewing town ordinances again. Mayor Rhea said after the first of the year we will go back to discussing them after the regular town council meeting. She mentioned that all the ones giving a 15 day response time will need to be changed to 33 days for each offense. It will really lengthen the process to reach compliance. Currently, no one is in violation of anything that needs to be cited.

**MAINTENANCE COMMENTS**

Lavon Walser said she has notched the beaver dams again and will continue as needed. The town is lit up for the holidays.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Brian Oliver suggested pouring a cement slab in the park to allow for a much bigger tree for future Christmas Tree lighting events.

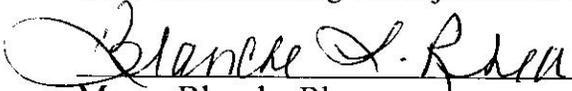
**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

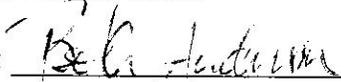
Diana Oliver mentioned the idea of establishing a monthly game night at the Community Center. Brian O. wondered if an exterior staircase could be installed to line up with the upper landing inside the building to meet fire escape requirements to enable the use of the upstairs floor. A lot would need to be looked into as the building is on the National Historical Registry.

**MAYOR COMMENTS**

Mayor Rhea thanked everyone for their insight and work during 2023. She also thanked the town residents and Fire Department for volunteering to plan local festivities and events. She looks forward to 2024 and what is to come.

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. Diana Oliver **seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned.** The regular town council meeting was adjourned at 7:19pm.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Blanche Rhea

Attest:   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Beth Anderson Clerk-Treasurer

Town of Farmington – Public Hearing & Regular Town Council Meeting  
Monday, December 18, 2023 - Farmington Community Center  
6:00PM – 7:19PM