

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

ROLL CALL:

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

GUESTS: Joan Smith, Mike Erickson, and Kurt Bartelheimer

OPEN REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING:

Farmington's April 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 March 18th, 2024, Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes
- Approval of the March 19th through April 15th, 2024, Check Register.
- Approval of the March 2024 Treasurer's Report

Jason Brausen **MOVED** to approve the consent agenda for April 15th, 2024. Haleigh Varney **seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.**

NEW BUSINESS:

Pond Leveler Placement:

LaVon Walser provided an update on the installation of the pond leveler that went in between Bill Hansen's and bridge. A modified version went in without the culvert because the water was too high at the time. It is expected to work just fine, but if it doesn't, changes will be made.

Critical Area Ordinance Info:

Mayor Rhea was informed that the Town's current CAO, Ordinance 192-07, is outdated and should be updated every 10 years. She brought Whitman County's CAO to refer to as an example. Garret from Dept. of Ecology will come for a visit and help us get the ordinance update, hopefully sometime in June.

Mayor Rhea also explained what residents are and are not allowed to do in and around the creeks without a permit. Wildlife Fish and Game said a permit is required before any work can be done on the banks of or in the creek. Anything that falls onto private property, however, can be taken care of by the homeowner.

Resolution 421-24 for Excess Levies:

Based on the local regular values for Farmington established in 2023, two propositions were presented to council concerning the Current Expense and Street Funds. The biggest reasons for the levies is to cover the regular operating costs of everything that is not water and sewer related.

These funds would cover payroll; fuel for equipment; replacement of parts that wear out on a regular basis and supplies, especially for the park, playground and grounds work around town; annual fees associated with running town hall; increasing rates for electricity usage, etc. The town is asking for \$18,000 at an estimated \$2.88/\$1000 of assessed value to be collected in 2025 for Current Expense, and \$10,000 at an estimated \$1.60/\$1000 of assessed value to also be collected in 2025 for Streets. Haleigh Varney **MADE A MOTION to approve Resolution 421-24 Excess Levy Propositions 1 and 2 for the August 6th, 2024, Primary Election.** Jason Brausen **seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.**

OLD BUSINESS:

Keltic/TIB Bid Award:

Lisa and Eric were present to disclose the bids received from 4 contracting companies to complete the TIB OTTA Seal Road construction project. They ranged from \$645k to \$850k. Sierra Santa Fe, out of Ridgefield, WA, won the bid, so now we are waiting for approval from TIB for the adjusted funding increase to roughly \$720k. Now Keltic will issue a notice of Award to Sierra Santa Fe. Lisa asked council to give Mayor Rhea permission to sign the contract when it comes back. LaVon Walser **MADE A MOTION to allow Mayor Rhea to sign the contract with Sierra Santa Fe to complete the upcoming roadwork.** Jason Brausen **seconded the motion and was unanimously passed.**

Eric added more information regarding OTTA Seal. He said it is fairly new to the US, but has been being used in Norway since 1964. The oil is much thinner than chip seal, but kneads better into the rock so it all sticks together. It takes 30 days to cure and will still look much like gravel and have a spongy feel. There is the concern of heavy vehicles taking sharp turns or cutting corners, as well as tractors/cats that will cause damage to the material if care is not taken. He said we can put signs up in areas of concern and remind residents to travel at slower speeds to keep the material in place during the curing process. Mayor Rhea asked about using the town tractor and dump truck. Eric said to monitor it and limit driving on it as needed. He said it can be costly to repair damage done, but it can be repaired. Eric also mentioned that the work moves pretty quickly so no road should be closed off for more than half an hour at a time.

Lisa said she would let us know when everything is ready and send a letter out.

Lisa also looked into the WA State Public Works grants and low-interest loans that became available. She said it was a good funding source for 'pre-construction and construction' work. They mostly give out loans, though, and where as Farmington could be considered 'distressed', it isn't considered 'severely distressed' to get qualify for a grant. Everything else would qualify for a loan. She also mentioned that she has a list of resources of options for water and wastewater assistance. She will send that along.

They both explained that the Town could qualify for a grant if there was an emergency, but something like dredging the sewer ponds is regular maintenance and would not qualify for funding. Eric suggested getting an economic analysis to see if we can afford to hire a crew to get that done.

And finally, he said Keltic can assist with updating the Critical Area Ordinance, if we need it. Mayor Rhea thanked them very much on behalf of the Town for coming.

TextMyGov:

Council members had more questions as to what to use the remaining \$1600 balance of the SLFRF funds. Jason Brausen thought it should go toward the fire hydrants that need work. Haleigh Varney asked how many people showed interest in the alert system and Beth said she'd received 12 names so far. She really likes the idea of TextMyGov, but can see the need for working hydrants being more important. LaVon Walser thought that was a lot of money to use on something that might get used a couple of times. After more discussion on whether or not to go forward with signing up for TextMyGov, Mayor Rhea asked for a motion to approve or decline signing up for the service. Jason Brausen **MOVED to DECLINE signing up for TextMyGov**. LaVon Walser **seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Dog and Cat Ordinance:

Mayor Rhea took the notes from last month's town council meeting to the Town's attorney. He said he thought the dog ordinance we had in place was sufficient. She relayed more of their conversation and then asked council for direction on what to do next. Keep the old one or move forward with updating it. Every council member felt the need to update it, so Jason Brausen **MOVED to continue with the updating of the Dog and Cat Ordinance**. Haleigh Varney **seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

Livestock and Fowl Ordinance:

Haleigh Varney thought that we should be looking at the ordinances of other comparable towns in Whitman County to help make changes, if need be, on required square footage of pasture and living spaces for animals. She had examples from St. John, Tekoa and Oakesdale. She also thought it would be a good idea to keep a log of the required 'written consent' of neighbors to keep animals within the 50' and 100' of property lines filed at Town Hall. No one seemed to have a problem with keeping a rooster, and up to 10 hens was appropriate. Lavon Walser suggested tabling this until the Dog and Cat Ordinance was completed. Everyone agreed to discuss it more in June.

MAINTENANCE COMMENTS

There were no maintenance comments.

CLERK COMMENTS

There were no clerk comments.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Mike Erickson asked for more details of what kind of expenses would the Excess Levy be used for. Mayor Rhea informed him that a more inclusive list of expenses is in the process of being put together to present to the community.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

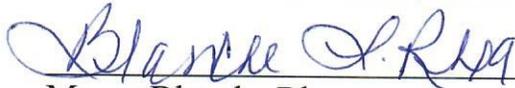
Haleigh Varney asked if a Courtesy sign up sheet can be created for events using the park. To let the public know when family events are being held. LaVon Walser shared the logbook idea that is used up at the cemetery.

MAYOR COMMENTS

Mayor Rhea received a complaint about someone burning trash. She wanted to remind everyone that only yard debris and tree limbs can be burned within the 4x4x3' allotted space.

She called the County Elections office about the vacant #3 seat and asked what the process was if we could not get it filled. According to RCW 42.12.070, someone can be drawn from the County, but the Elections office explained we can only pick from within the town limits. If the state must get involved, it will contact the County and then the County would select whomever they wanted.

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. Haleigh Varney **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. Jason Brausen **seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.** The regular town council meeting was adjourned at 7:28pm.



Mayor Blanche Rhea

Attest: 

Beth Anderson Clerk-Treasurer

Town of Farmington – Public Regular Town Council Meeting
Monday, April 15, 2024 - Farmington Community Center
6:00PM – 7:28PM