

BELGRADE CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
November 16, 2015
7:00 PM

Mayor Russell Nelson called the meeting to order. Council Members in attendance were: Brad Cooper, Anne Koentopp, Kristine Menicucci, Mark Criner and John Youngberg. Others in attendance were: City Manager Ted Barkley, City Attorney Rick Ramler, Finance Director Diane Eagleson, Jena Nash Reno, Stephen Riggs, Dave Smith, Wade Pehl, Ed Roe and Michael Tucker.

Council Member Youngberg moved to excuse Council Member Smith. Council Member Koentopp seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried unanimously.

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE November 2, 2015 MEETING

Council Member Menicucci moved to approve the minutes of the November 2, 2015 meeting. Council Member Youngberg seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC FORUM

Mayor Nelson called for public comment.

Jenna Nash Reno, residing at 604 Montana, noted that she is disabled, approaching the age of 60 and is on a fixed income. She advised the Council that she is struggling to pay her monthly water bill. After reviewing her water bill, she noted using substantially lower than her monthly allotment. She felt she is paying for a lot of water that she is not using. She felt that when she gets behind on her bill in the summer, after gardening season, she has to scrape to be able to pay in the fall. She noted the administrative fees that are added when you get behind. She requested that a point system be developed for the months when there is less usage, then the points would be credited toward usage when it goes over the minimum usage. She noted having to decide whether to pay \$20 toward her water bill, or pay the \$100 fine for not licensing her new puppy. She felt that a different system should be implemented for elderly or disabled persons. She felt it was critical because every penny counts. She said that she has made every effort to be a good steward of water usage. She said that the telephone company and Power Company did make allowances for her. Ms. Reno expressed her appreciation for the way the City Finance and Utility Billing staff has treated her when she has questions on her bill and/or makes payment arrangements.

City Manager Barkley commented on the way that rates and policies are set for utilities. Costs are allocated between all customers. If it is adjusted for one set of customers, the other rates have to be adjusted. It is not as simple as granting relief. Barkley also noted the Request for Proposals (RFP) that is being sought right now. Hopefully before next summer, Barkley hopes to hold structured meetings about our rates and how the different rate classes are broken down. Administrative fees may also be reviewed. Late fees are not put in place in order to

produce revenue. Late fees encourage compliance with the date the bill is due. It is an incentive to pay your bill on time.

Ms. Nash noted that she felt our rates were fair, but the administrative fees were too high. She asked to be put on the mailing list for future meetings on this issue and thanked the Council for their attention.

Mayor Nelson called 2 more times for public comment. There being none, the public forum was closed.

REPORTS

Mayor Nelson had nothing to report.

City Attorney Ramler had nothing to report.

City Manager Barkley reported discussions with Debe Youngberg at the Belgrade Chamber of Commerce about potentially increasing efforts in regard to the Festival of Lights and more ideas about next year's festivities, including more lights on the streets downtown.

Barkley reported convening a Staff committee meeting on Friday mornings to review our Public Works Standards. A number of issues have come up now that development activity has increased. Barkley noted active subdivisions as Las Campanas, Meadowlark, Ryen Glenn and another application in the works right now. Several policies come into play and they do not all agree in practice. Barkley noted their efforts to clarify specific sections and make it more user friendly. Authority to grant exceptions is not clear which leads to unnecessary friction.

Barkley reported that the Northern Rocky Mountain Economic Development District (NRMEDD) is having their next meeting in Belgrade on November 30th. A couple of Belgrade businesses are scheduled to share their stories with the Board. Barkley noted that he, Mayor Nelson and Debe Youngberg will also be participating as well. Council Members are also invited.

Barkley reported on the issue of Town Pump landscaping and how it was replaced. He noted that we are in the process of working with Town Pump on this issue. MDT is also involved with the right of way and code compliance. They may come before the Council to ask for an exception to the rules, but they are being responsive to us.

Barkley reported that the Big Sky Trust Fund application that we sponsored in behalf of Bacterin was successful for the full \$90,000 and Bacterin is in the process of hiring.

Barkley reported his plan to meet with the new Council Member Elect James Simon to meet next Friday to start the learning curve.

Barkley reported continuing discussions with MDT on long term planning and some winter maintenance issues. The November monthly meeting will take place tomorrow.

Barkley reported on plans for both he and Diane Eagleson, Finance Director, to travel to Helena on Thursday and meet with the Local Government Commerce and CDBG group to learn more about our options to use grant funds we have on hand. Rules have changed.

Barkley reported on the Presentation in Helena last week before the Montana Housing Board for the HRDC project. Results on our grant application probably won't be available until January 2016. Barkley noted the added benefit of the networking opportunity in being able to travel with both HRDC and Bozeman staff that also attended the Helena meeting.

Barkley reported meeting with representatives from MSU and the Economic Development District regarding formation of a free trade zone. The project is not really moving forward at this point, but MSU has a considerable interest in pursuing this.

Barkley reported the successful hiring of a police officer, Paul Wilson, from Westerville Ohio. Wilson has already completed certification through the Ohio Law Enforcement Academy so he was a very strong candidate.

Barkley reported that an analysis of the City's technology systems is in process. Staff is reviewing the options and a reasonable approach to the City's needs.

Barkley reported meeting with Belgrade Sales and Service to look at their drainage and ice issues. We do not have a clear solution, but possible remedies are being reviewed. Snow removal seems to be a major part of the issue.

Barkley reported on the purchase of a fleet of radios for the Public Works Department. They are moving away from cell phone usage and it seems to be working out well. The goal is to raise the level of service in the field and improve group communication.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

Consider Letters of Support for the HRDC Big Sky Villas Affordable Housing Project

City Manager Barkley noted previous approval of the HRDC project. These letters will lend further support to the project and are specific to the home funding source. There is a second letter directed toward designating the Environmental Certifying Officer in order to prepare the environmental review.

ACTION: Council Member Youngberg moved to authorize the City Manager to sign a Letter of Support for the HRDC Big Sky Villas Affordable Housing Project. Council Member Criner seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried unanimously.

Consider a Letter of Support on behalf of the Northern Rocky Mountain Economic Development District (NRMEDD) to the Montana State Office of Tourism and Business Development

City Manager Barkley explained that NRMEDD would thus serve as a Certified Regional Development Corporation in our region.

Stephen Riggs, NRMEDD Project Coordinator for Gallatin and Park Counties, spoke in support of this designation. He noted the application is due by December 3, 2015. Riggs confirmed this is a 27 member board, including a majority of public officials, including Mayor Nelson and City Manager Barkley. The board is currently working with the City of Belgrade and the Belgrade Chamber of Commerce to develop an economic strategy.

Barkley noted that NRMEDD has provided a significant amount of support to the City in this regard over the past 2 years.

ACTION: Council Member Menicucci moved to authorize the City Manager to sign a Letter of Support on behalf of NRMEDD to the Montana State Office of Tourism and Business Development. Council Member Criner seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried unanimously.

Consider Proposed “Temporary Street Obstruction Permit” requirement and related Fee

City Manager Barkley reviewed the need due to construction activity increasing throughout the community. This applies when deliveries are made or dumpsters are placed. We don't want to make it more difficult for contractors to do their work, but sometimes it extends for many days and the placement of items is less than ideal. This process will also help us make sure these contractors are insured as well. The fee would be \$25. This may not be much of an issue for most home owners, but it becomes necessary to be able to direct use of the right-of-way in regard to the commercial aspect and new construction.

Barkley further explained that the placement of the dumpster, gravel or other items is sometimes more important than the amount of time it is left in the spot. When these items are placed on narrower streets, it becomes a great concern for access. The Community Service Officer is responsible for enforce such requirements. If the travel way is clear, it would not be an issue. Barkley noted the need to discuss this issue with Republic Waste Services, as well as educating other vendors so they will know the City's requirements in this regard.

Currently, we are allowing people to use the public right-of-way with little direction. City Staff has requested this new procedure and permit be implemented to resolve access obstruction and liability issues.

Barkley asked the Council for their comments or specific concerns. Council Members Cooper and Youngberg did not see the need to pursue this process at this time. Council Members Koentopp and Menicucci approved of going along with the form suggested by City

staff. Council Member Criner also wanted to go along with implementation on behalf of the Belgrade citizens. Criner specifically noted that he did not like to see long term placement in the right-of-way being abused. Mayor Nelson commented that he felt this was worthwhile to develop an ordinance for consideration. Barkley confirmed that he would bring a final draft to them for approval at a later time.

CONSENT AGENDA

Warrants Payable for October 2015

ACTION: Council Member Youngberg moved to approve Warrants Payable for October 2015. Council Member Menicucci seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried unanimously.

2016 Holiday Closure Dates for Belgrade City Offices

ACTION: Council Member Youngberg moved to approve the 2016 list of Holiday Closure dates for Belgrade City Offices. Council Member Menicucci seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried unanimously.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Council Member Youngberg had nothing to report.

Council Member Criner had nothing to report.

Council Member Menicucci had nothing to report.

Council Member Koentopp inquired about past practice of having a book dedicated when a close relative of council or city staff passed away. She wanted to see this practice continued and felt it meant a lot to those involved.

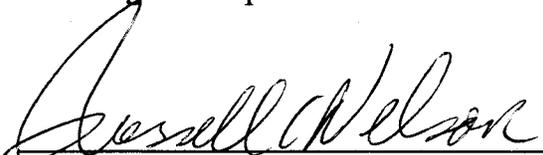
Council Member Cooper had nothing to report.

ADJOURN

Council Member Criner moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:38 p.m.



Susan Caldwell, City Clerk



Russell C. Nelson, Mayor