

**BELGRADE CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**COUNCIL CHAMBERS**  
**February 1, 2016**  
**7:00 PM**

Mayor Russell Nelson called the meeting to order. Council Members in attendance were: Brad Cooper, Anne Koentopp, Jim Simon, Kristine Menicucci, Mark Criner, and Ken Smith.

Others in attendance were: City Manager Ted Barkley, City Attorney Rick Ramler, Finance Director Diane Eagleson, Police Chief Clark, Jena Reno, Jason Guffey and Michael Tucker.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Mayor Nelson called for public comment.

Jena Reno, residing at 604 Montana Street, discussed the property near her home that belongs to Holly and Dan Redd. She asked if any of the Council has looked at the property in the past 6 months and if not, she asked they would take the time to review the way it looks. Ms. Reno stated that she is frightened to live so close to it. She stated that kids party there, several feral cats live there, and she felt it was a safety hazard being right next to a park where kids could get into things. She saw a man crawling down the fence with a bag in his hand and there has been someone in the house the last two nights. She stated that electric wires are hanging out, nails are hanging out, it is full of vermiculite in the white house, including shingles made of asbestos. Ms. Reno felt it should be considered a contamination site. She spoke of her continued calls to Police Chief Clark and Mayor Nelson in the past about her concerns, but she felt the conditions had not changed and were not being addressed. She asked if someone should call Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to see if there is a state program to get the building properly demolished and bill the Redd's for the costs.

City Manager Barkley advised that this property has been a matter of great concern. He noted that Planning Director Karp was tasked with the enforcement process, which has proven to be fairly extensive and has been ongoing over the past year. He has been working with the City Attorney and Police Chief, along with at least one financial institution involved in property ownership disputes. Barkley stated he would review the current status of where we are in the process of getting these structures properly demolished including special handling of hazardous material. Barkley noted that additional police patrols in the area had been implemented by Police Chief Clark. Additional discussion with city staff would enable Barkley to bring a clearer report back the next council meeting.

City Attorney Ramler also confirmed that he knew Jason had started the process but he would have to review the current status with Jason before saying where we are on this problem.

General discussion among Council followed regarding how to address the safety concerns and if the bank involved would continue the foreclosure process. Asking the bank to deed the property to the City was also discussed. Barkley confirmed that the Fire Department declined to use these structures as a "training burn" so this was not an option. There are

ordinances in place to deal with such abandoned and hazardous buildings, however, the process requires time and allowance for private property rights.

Police Chief Clark reviewed the history of the property and its owners, along with the various issues spanning about 30 years. He also noted the Community Service Officer's efforts in contacting owners of the property, including financial institutions. It was his understanding that Citi Bank was initially going to foreclose, however, upon further inspection, they decided to stop the process due to the added expense of remediation. It was noted that this property includes 4 city lots.

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.

### **Library Director Report**

Library Director Gale Bacon reviewed recent Library activities and accomplishments. She noted formal receptions and conferences related to receiving the Best Small Library award. She also reviewed the number of patrons visiting the library this fiscal year, 10,000, and the increase youth and children programs. Registered borrowers had dropped because they were now purging records every 3 years so they can report a fresh, clean number. Bacon noted that the Belgrade News had used the Library's award on the Year in Review page and they were very happy to be recognized as such. She reported that on New Year's Eve, a couple came in and donated \$1500 just because of the award.

Regarding the use of the Library's wireless services, and with the grant from the Best Small Library award, they were able to get a lot of tech services. She explained a graph showing wireless tie-ins recorded each week. The software system requires patrons to read and agree to a policy and then they can sign on. It compiles a weekly report, both inside and outside the building. The report included band width usage, high use hours, streaming movies or loading a lot of data. It also showed demographics of clients including use of i-phones and i-pads, windows, laptops, mac users, as well as androids. Bacon noted bandwidth had to be expanded to allow for the heavy usage times.

Bacon reviewed the Library Newsletter and several new youth programs. She reported plans to meet with two deans from Montana State University to partner with students who want to help out with awareness with engineering, math, and science projects. She noted that NW Energy is helping to sponsor programs again this year. She also thanked the Barnard Company for gifts and grants over the last several years. She also noted that Toastmasters hasn't been in

Belgrade for about 10 years, but they are now at the Library on Mondays. The Library is also hosting Income tax filing assistance, and will continue to provide paper tax forms.

Bacon reported on the ongoing progress of the work being done by Tom McNabb and the MSU Design Center. Regular meetings are being held and she invited the council members to attend the meeting to be held in April when their ideas will be presented. The original loan used to purchase the property next door to the Library is drawing near to its payoff date. One option includes converting that property from being a rental house and making it usable parking for the Library patrons.

Council members inquired if the Belgrade Library had ever applied for the "One Class at a Time" grant awarded periodically in the amount of \$250 by First Interstate Bank. Bacon confirmed that they have applied and received this grant in the past. Council inquired about the breakdown of how many patrons actually live within city limits. Bacon confirmed about 52% of the patrons living inside city limits at this time.

### **City Manager Report**

City Manager Barkley reported that the City had a surprise audit from the Montana Department of Labor for a safety inspection. They advised us that there are a number of items to be addressed and/or corrected. The City will also need to update the Safety program and manual in order to bring things into compliance.

Barkley reported that the City had received 7 responses in regard to the recent Request for Proposal (RFP) for out water/sewer planning study. Due to several unforeseen injuries and deaths in families of staff, Barkley noted the review of these proposals had been a bit delayed. He expected to have a staff recommendation back to the Council.

Barkley reported on progress related to the grant awarded to Bacterin Inc. All the documentation has been completed up to this point and Bacterin has already hired 4 new employees. Additional positions are in process and should be fulfilled within the next 3 months.

Barkley reported receiving a few complaints regarding the speed limit on Airway Blvd. It starts at 35MPH, then rises to 45MPH just past Cameron, the in barely 200 yards, it jumps up to 70MPH. Barkley noted that MDOT was asked to review the speed limits, and they had responded that this would be reviewed after Ryen Glenn had built out. Barkley said he has put in another request to review the 70MPH limit because it seems too fast around that turning area. It would make more sense to extend the 45MPH limit up to 300 yards North of Cruiser.

Barkley reported that the new full-page utility bill was implemented on Friday, January 29<sup>th</sup>. He noted that next month's bill will look slightly different due to how the bills need to be folded. A new envelope with the words "Utility Bill Enclosed" will also be used next month. Advantages include more room for messages and a 13 month history of usage. Barkley clarified that although the new bill said "ACH is now available" that option is actually not active yet. Barkley noted collections might be down at first.

Barkley reported on the upcoming Executive Academy for Mayors and City Managers scheduled for March 2-4 to be held in Bozeman. They will be providing a tour of the golden triangle ending in Belgrade. The tour will include Bacterin's facility and the Madison River Brewery where a representative from BNSF will be present to talk with mayors and managers.

Council inquired about a recent article implying that Belgrade's storm water was improperly running right into the river system. Barkley noted that Belgrade storm water currently goes into the ground, not the river. Storm water management will be a component of the upcoming water/sewer plan. Barkley noted that as our population grows, the Clean Water Act requirements that apply to how storm water is processed will no doubt affect Belgrade in the future.

## **DISCUSSION AGENDA**

**No items on the Discussion agenda**

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### **Payroll for January 2016**

**ACTION: Council Member Smith moved to approve Payroll for January 2016. Council Member Menicucci seconded the motion. All voted aye, motion carried unanimously.**

## **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

Mayor Nelson asked about the progress on filling the role of Engineering Consultant for the City in view of Doug Daniels retirement. Barkley noted that an advertisement would be placed in the next week to start the search.

Council Member Cooper talked about the ice softening up and inquired if the grader could hit some side streets and remove the rough spots.

Council Member Koentopp had nothing to report.

Council Member Simon reported attending the Regional Training presented by the Local Government Center and Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority on January 28<sup>th</sup>. He felt it was very good training. The presenters had discussed many infrastructure issues facing large and rural communities. He noted their efforts to get stakeholders together to get some bills going to the legislature and their efforts to identify priorities. They also talked about liabilities within cities, their roles as council members and how the city executive government works. Simon noted that there was a good variety of small and large community represented and he recommended others to attend.

Council Member Menicucci had nothing to report.

Council Member Criner had nothing to report.

Council Member Smith had nothing to report.

**ADJOURN**

Council Member Criner moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

  
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Russell C. Nelson, Mayor

  
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Susan Caldwell, City Clerk