

Town of Garfield
PUBLIC HEARING 2015 PRELIMINARY BUDGET and REVENUE SOURCES
TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES Preliminary Draft
Town Hall – November 12th 2014

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Ray McCown called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

ROLL CALL: Mayor Ray McCown, Mark Young, Daymon Marple, Sharon Schnebly. Staff: Clerk/Treasurer Cody Lord and Public Works Superintendent Robby Johnson. Absent: David Jones and Tim Southern

GUESTS: Kevin Pickron

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. Kevin Pickron here to give his opinions for the 2015 Preliminary Budget hearing. Daymon Marple explains to the council and public the reason for having money in reserves and the need to increase rates in the future. Daymon explains if the town wants to get grants for water or sewer projects, the town would have to have enough in the reserve accounts to show the town could make payments on the grants/loans. Kevin feels we are not looking at real numbers and that the town is not sure why the rates are increasing 6%. He said anyone who does investments in stocks and bonds knows there may be an up year and some down years. He feels the town should look at revenues and expenses yearly to know exactly what the figures are. We have adopted this policy to continue to give employee raises each year, as well as raise utility rates 3% annually. As the person who does his family budget he has to worry about it. Kevin feels the cost of living has reduced in the past year due to the decrease in fuel costs and he would like to have the council take that approach when planning the budget annually.

Mayor McCown thinks the council should vote every year to raise or not raise the utility rates. Kevin said if you say the rates are only going to increase by 2 to 3 dollars, it doesn't seem like much, but as you add up all the years it has increased it starts to add up. In the last 5 years the town has moved up significantly. Sharon Schnebly said you have to think about all of the price increases across the board. As these prices increase so do the costs associated with operating a town. Sharon explains she doesn't want rates to have to continue to go up but the town must keep up with inflation and raising costs the town has to pay.

Kevin explains he is not saying they shouldn't raise, however he wants the council to look at it yearly and decide move up, down or stay the same for charges. He would like the council to be good stewards of the public's money. He says he is not here to complain but he would really like to see the council tackle the numbers as we cross over this \$100 a month mark this next year, think about what the town needs instead of what the town wants. Mayor McCown said in his opinion now that the town has this rate increase ordinance in place he thinks we have to go ahead and do it that way. During the next budget year the council should discuss it.

Mark Young thinks that every year the council needs to look at what we are doing. The council has to look at what we can afford to do and what we can't. Mayor McCown said this year we really need to buy a new mower, and he is guessing that could be about a \$6,000 purchase. The current mower the town owns has been in operation about 20 years. Public Works Superintendent Robby Johnson said the town could be looking at about \$8,000 to \$10,000 to replace the current mower. He has looked at John Deere and Cub Cadets for comparable mowers. Sharon comments about the payroll salaries saying we can't adjust the budget to reflect the 32 hours a week Cody is being paid for, we need to make sure there is enough money there to pay a full time wage in case Cody's position was ever to change.

Mayor McCown explains so much money has been spent on the sewer plant this year and he is hoping that it won't be nearly as expensive as it has been in the past. When the bio-cell aerator

broke down it was a bad thing and cost the town a lot of money to fix. Mark questions what the Department of Ecology will require us to fix in the coming year and he says he knows the water retention pond will be on their agenda. There is a proposed plan to fix the pond without having to spend large sums of money. Robby explains raising the pipe which fills the pond will make it so more surface area is being utilized and correcting the settling issue. Mayor McCown said they may even need to go out and rent a long arm backhoe to dredge the pond, he thinks that the town can fix it for around \$8,000. Robby said those machines will rent for a couple thousand dollars a day. Mark asked once we remove the material from the pond, then the town has to figure out what to do with it. Mayor McCown said the Department of Ecology said we can dump the materials right there on the facility property. Robby feels that altering the pipe would be the best option at this time to see if it would work. He said it would be a whole lot cheaper, less hassle and the engineers and Department of Ecology have given us an okay on raising the water level.

2. 2015 Revenue Sources. Council looked over the numbers which reflected a 1% (\$625.66) increase in the regular levy from the previous year, as well as a banked capacity of 1% (\$620.58) and \$636.55 for new construction. Mayor McCown said if there are no comments then the council will approve to accept the increase in the regular council meeting.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:18 and the regular council meeting reconvened.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Daymon Marple **MOVED** to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting October 22nd, 2014. Mark Young seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT: Officer Joe Merry present.

Officer Merry said the department is working on couple minor investigations from a summer time situation and they were waiting on more information from the State. Other than that everything has been very quiet. There have been a lot of moose sightings. If the moose is by a bus stop then whoever is on duty will watch it. Mark asked is there a violation of the sex offender not living where he is supposed to be. Officer Merry said the last he heard was he was at the location where he is supposed to be but that he can have overnight visits at his sister's house in town. Officer Merry said he will check into it. Officer Merry said the County is the agency who conducts the check to see if the person is in the right place. At this time it is believed that he is a quarterly check, but the local department will look into this from time to time. It is confirmed he is a level 2 offender. Mayor McCown said there are two utility trailers sitting on Main Street and they will need to be moved so the Public Works guys can begin plowing when the snow comes.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT: Robby Johnson present.

Water

- Robby was off much of last week due to a bad back. The water system is operating fine.
- The lead and copper samples will go out next week. Every year we have to take samples from the same location.
- The Telemetry hasn't caused the town any issues since the weather dropped.

Sewer

- The sewer plant pumps were giving them some issues today. Grease collected in the influent chamber and it threw off the electronic eye.
- Specs will be here for the SO2 system in the next couple days.
- The collection of Bio-solids is now gone from the WWTP facility and has been taken to Bar-Tech.
- Robby and Brad will be attending WWTP training on the 19th thru the 21st of November in Spokane.

Garbage

- They have been having an electrical issue with the Curotto Can arm and are working to get it repaired.
- The recycle center is pretty much empty, with most of the products being recycled in Spokane.
- The shed is pretty much cleaned out and the town can now use the space to store equipment.
- A battery charger was stolen when it was hooked up on the town's street sweeper; it has been

reported to Officer Merry.

Parks

- The cord for the mower vacuum busted when they were prepared to clean the leaves out of the park for the winter. The leaves may have to stay on the ground at this time.

Streets

- The snow plow is on the truck. A new cutting bit is needed.
- Robby said that he lined up Larry to haul in the road chips for the winter but Mayor McCown decided it would be cheaper to have Robby or Brad use the town truck to go pick up the chips themselves. Robby said they are crushing at Atlas or Shawnee right now. The last ones the town got were from Atlas. Mayor McCown suggested Robby calling Atlas or Shawnee and seeing which one could give us the better price per yard and get them picked up soon.
- The town facilities have been winterized.

Mark asked about the surveillance that will be getting installed and if it will cover the shop location so we can monitor our equipment stored at the shop. Mayor McCown said he would like to move forward with the surveillance camera in 2015.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Ecology Update. DMRs and the sewer plant daily/weekly log sheets will be sent to Ellie on the 12th of November. More details were provided on this round of log sheets. Also the NPDES permit has been sent to permit manager Ellie Key for review to see if anything was missed on the application. Mayor McCown said we are in much better shape then we were a year ago and we continue to improve, he would like to invite the permit manager back down in January or February so she can see the progress that is being made.
2. Restaurant Building. Mayor McCown said Peggy Ray would like to send a letter out and see if she can get some donations to help get the restaurant started again. She is hoping for 10 people at \$1500.00 to get the space operational again. Daymon explains the PDA group met with the health department and talked about what all was needed to get the space compliant and up to code. They want a four sink station so that one can be dedicated as a rinse sink. In the bar they want better drainage so that mop water can't backflow. They also want some Formica work taken care of. There were about 10 issues but not too much. Peggy Ray would like to make sure the kitchen is usable as a commercial kitchen. Her long range goal is she would like to see a group put together a mini mart and soup/sandwich kitchen. She would like to get volunteers to run the operation. Mayor McCown said she got the preschool going and it has been great, if she wants to work at it he can't see stopping her.

Kevin Pickron asked so she wants about \$15,000.00 to get this going? Mayor McCown said yes and she is hoping that there will also be additional donations. Daymon said the Community Association has \$700 to \$800 for lights and the church has two people that will help install the carpet and possibly pay for it. Sharon clarified these people are putting in the money as a donation and not an investment. Sharon's concern is something like what happened in Palouse; where there were several investors and then something goes wrong creating a mess. Sharon said if the building is attached to the town now, some people may come back to the town looking for money if the business doesn't go. Peggy Ray would need to make it very clear that it is a donation. Mayor McCown also asked how many keys there are for the facility. Daymon thinks besides his there are a couple others out. Mayor McCown thinks that only the Clerk/Treasurer should have the key and he thinks that we should just go ahead and change the locks. It is confirmed we can just have the tumblers changed in the locks. Daymon said the two hot water tanks above are insulated and covered. The pipes in there have an angle, there is a place where the water always sits and has caused issues in the past. Mayor McCown said the Public Works can take an air compressor and blow out the water lines. Currently the water is turned off to the building and the heat pump is

running in the bar area to take the chill off inside.

3. Holiday schedule and council meetings. Mark Young said the fire district is waiting on us to finalize their budget and will only have one more meeting this year on December 10th. Cody explains the fire budget is entered as it was submitted. Mayor McCown said to go ahead and run with the budget that was submitted to the Clerk. Mayor McCown decided to leave the meeting for November 26th the day before Thanksgiving knowing there may be a chance it could be canceled due to no quorum. It is confirmed that Mayor McCown and Sharon won't be able to make this meeting. Mark suggests moving the December 24th meeting to the 17th. People know we do these council meetings on Wednesday evenings so it would be best to keep it on a Wednesday. Sharon Schnebly **MOVED** to change the December 24th meeting to December 17th. Ordinance 448-N will be presented to council for the date change.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Ordinance 446-N adopting property tax increase for collection in 2015. Mayor McCown explains every year we have to adopt this Ordinance for tax collections. Daymon also explained that the town can't go over 1% by law. Sharon Schnebly **MOVED** to adopt Ordinance 446-N adopting the property tax increase for collection in 2015. Daymon Marple seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.
2. Ordinance 447-N setting the regular and special levy amounts for 2015. Mayor McCown said he is in favor of leaving the Street Levy amount at \$57,000. Mayor McCown said that Tim Southern was in favor of slightly raising this levy amount but he doesn't feel the town needs to do that at this time. Sharon Schnebly **MOVED** to set the regular and special levy amounts for the 2015 budget. Daymon Marple seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.
3. Ordinance 448-N. Changing the Town Council meetings to accommodate holiday schedules. The council decided to move the December 24th meeting to December 17th. Sharon Schnebly **MOVED** to change the regular council meeting date from December 24th to December 17th. Mark Young seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

FINANCIAL:

Approval of Checks: Sharon Schnebly **MOVED** to approve the following bills presented to council for payment. Daymon Marple seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Check Register # 11608-11613	Payroll: \$7,929.21
Check Register # 11607, 11614-11631	Claims: \$21,736.65
Check Register EFT DOR	Claims: \$1330.37 Total: \$30,996.23

Mayor McCown said the compost pile is going well, the Whitman County Public Works is taking about a box every two weeks. Mayor McCown talked with David Nails who is the town's contact for the compost boxes and asked him about getting another box dropped off for the scrap metal. The current metal hauling company hasn't been coming and getting their box within a reasonable amount of time. Mayor McCown said they would furnish a box for no charge. The council would like to see this in writing so the town doesn't have to pay to have it hauled. In the past Cody called Pacific Hide and Fur they wanted two dollars a mile to drop off and pick up but then they pay us for the product in the box once recycled. Council agreed that if the County wouldn't charge us for the service it would be a good arrangement.

ADJOURNMENT: Daymon Marple **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 PM. Sharon Schnebly seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Ray McCown, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Cody Lord, Clerk/Treasurer