

THE REGULAR BAKER CITY COUNCIL MEETING WAS HELD WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2024, AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE FALLON COUNTY COURTROOM.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor; Steve Zachmann, Councilors; Pat Ehret, Nancy Strain, Randy Morris, Mike Loutzenhiser, City Attorney; Rich Batterman, Fire Chief; Tom Bruha, Police Chief; Justin LaCroix, City Judge; Anna Straub, Director of Public Works; Rod Morris and Clerk Treasurer; Kevin Dukart.

GUESTS: Jason Griffith

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

Motion by Pat Ehret, second by Mike Loutzenhiser to approve the Consent Agenda, the Minutes of January 3, 2024, as presented. Motion Carried. All Aye.

OLD BUSINESS: None

#### NEW BUSINESS

Motion by Mike Loutzenhiser, second by Nancy Strain to adopt Resolution #757 a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Baker Montana calling for an election on the question of conducting a Local Government Review and Establishing a Study Commission to do so. Ehret, Strain, Morris, Loutzenhiser Voted Aye. Motion Carried.

Motion by Nancy Strain, second by Randy Morris to approve Easement and Right of Way Agreement with Denbury Onshore LLC pipeline construction, city of Baker Tract in Lot 3, S18, T7N, R60E. Discussed the payment amount of \$120 per rod, the assignment clause, the 5-year term and clarification on the clause to allow a 50' variance for easement location. Motion Carried. All Aye.

City Judge, Anna Straub, requested to post an ad to hire to fill the vacant Court Clerk position as Jill Hildebrand has resigned. Motion by Mike Loutzenhiser, second by Nancy Strain to approve this request. Motion Carried. All Aye.

Motion by Mike Loutzenhiser, second by Pat Ehret to re-appoint Trish Rost to a 4-year term on the City Zoning Board of Adjustments. Motion Carried. All Aye.

Zoning Commission Appointment: no letters were received.

Motion by Randy Morris, second by Pat Ehret to approve the request from Zoning Commission member Brenda Dietz, to amend the Zoning Board of Adjustments By-Laws to reduce the number of members from 7 to 5. It was noted that it has become difficult to get volunteers to serve on these boards and this amendment would positively affect the quorum number. Ehret, Strain, Morris, Loutzenhiser vote aye. Motion Carried.

#### FIRE DEPT. INPUT:

Tom noted that residents should check to make sure their sewer vents are clear of snow and ice due to the cold weather.

#### PUBLIC WORKS INPUT:

Rod stated that he is back from a vacation. They did respond to a few frozen water meters recently. The city swept the sidewalk adjacent to Baker Lake.

Steve stated that he did talk to one of the County Commissioners on the use of County personnel to sweep this sidewalk and will contact them once again.

#### CLERK TREASURER INPUT:

The December 2023 Financial Report was available as well as the Quarterly Investment Report and Pledge Security Repots.

Clerk Dukart asked the City Council members if it would be acceptable to email the city employee policy manual rather than print paper copy, this was agreed to.

Kevin also stated that Tim Hawkins representing Mikelson Land Company inquired about donating property to the City of Baker. Rich noted that the city could approve a Donation Agreement to the Land Company for this purpose. It was agreed to add this item to the next meeting agenda.

**MAYOR INPUT:**

Steve Stated that with the warmer temperatures there will be a greater chance of snow fall. He stated that he will draft a letter to the downtown businesses regarding a plan to keep the sidewalks clear of snow.

**CITY ATTORNEY INPUT:**

Rich reported that he is working on two Plea Agreements for criminal cases. He also stated that he would like permission to call for Corbit Harrington to prosecute a DUI case as he has a conflict of interest. This was agreed to.

**COUNCIL INPUT:**

Ehret – Apologized for her absence from the previous meeting. Welcome to Nancy and Randy.

Strain – Inquired about the policy for snow plowing? Rod replied that they like to have about a 2”-3” snowpack on the streets before they begin to remove snow. They begin to sand as soon as conditions warrant this.

Morris – None

**RE-DIRECT**

City Judge, Anna Straub stated that although she was unable to attend the City Christmas Party, she appreciates that it was organized. Thank you for the Baker Bucks and Happy New Year.

Loutzenhiser – Thanked all who attended the Christmas Party, it was a very fun time.

The following payroll was approved for payment:

PERD vendor liability \$2,449.21, MPERA vendor liability \$3,073.02, Nationwide Retirement emp w/h \$700.00, Dept. of Treasury IRS emp w/h \$6,047.47, MT Dept. of Revenue emp W/h \$543.73, Unemployment Insurance vendor liability \$333.95, MT State Fund work comp. \$3,539.06, ACH Deposits: Brenda Dietz \$1,665.65, Kevin Dukart \$1,506.60, Blayne Higgins \$1,953.34, Justin LaCroix \$2,201.71, Jaramie McLean \$1,421.71, Rodney Morris \$1,733.28, Bryan Nevers \$1,973.51, Kyle Rogge \$1,594.08, Ashley Rost \$742.92, Cody Strandbakke \$1,466.91, Tyler Travis \$1,533.23, Sheena Veazey \$1,563.42.

Total Payroll: \$36,042.80

There having been no further business to come before the Baker City Council at this time, Motion by Mike Loutzenhiser, second by Randy Morris to adjourn at 7:30 p.m. Motion Carried. All Aye.

\_\_\_\_\_ Mayor \_\_\_\_\_ Clerk Treasurer