

Unofficial Minutes of the July 13, 2023 Public Hearing and Bearcreek Council Meeting

Due to not having a quorum present at the July 6th public hearing and regular meeting of the Town of Bearcreek Council, both were rescheduled for July 13, 2023 at 7:30 p.m.

The public hearing on the preliminary '23-'24 budget was called to order by Mayor Surwill at 7:30 p.m. All council members were present, as was Loni Hanson, zoning administrator; Rob Surwill, animal control officer; and Dean Webb, public works director. Public in attendance was John Coutu. The clerk addressed the changes in both the revenue and expenditures, but the majority of the budget stayed the same as '22-'23. The Mayor asked what the abatement line item was, and the clerk explained that was when the town had a nuisance that they needed to abate and after contacting the owner and giving them so many days to destroy the nuisance themselves; if they didn't comply the town pays a contractor to do the work, then bills the owner, and therefore it needs to be budgeted. The lawyer is concerned about one property in town that may be a liability for abatement. With no further discussion, the public hearing was closed.

The regular meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. All persons present at the hearing joined the regular meeting.

Harold moved to accept the minutes, the financial report, and the budget vs. actual report. Betty seconded said motion which passed 4-0.

Claims were presented for payment and approved.

The clerk read a letter from the Election office verifying the candidates of Debbie Surwill for Mayor; and Harold Jenkins, and Danell Boos for councilmembers. An email was presented from Cyrina Allen advising that the State DES Mitigation team had advised there was a potential for extra mitigation funding toward the application that had been submitted last September, therefore she was requesting the engineers to explore an opportunity to update and secure the town's water system (the transmission lines and spring boxes).

There were no public comments.

Dean started department head reports by advising that he was calling the DNRC for a S10 permit to get into the creek tomorrow as though the Town had reached out and they were to call him, no call had been received. The spring box erosion has changed three times since the May flooding. He has cleaned up most of the BLM right of way easement from some of the debris with a mini track hoe so bigger equipment can get to the location easier. He will probably need to do more. He had eliminated one household that he thought may be the source of the town leak, but still hasn't located the problem so may have to start pot holing to find it. Loni reported that Dave Schneider was requesting a variance for the shed, therefore a public hearing with the board of adjustment will need to be held. Dave is going to be gone so the clerk will find out the dates of his absence and work from there with the board of adjustment members and advertising to get the date set for the hearing. Rob reported that all was quiet with the dogs in town right now.

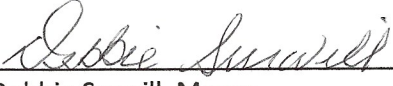
Under unfinished business (1) the clerk explained that the auditing firm had completed the financial review and she needed to have an exit review with 2 council members present. She had asked Harold and Betty to sit in on it. All was good except the local study commission fund had been closed in 2015, but it still showed tax receivables. The money had been collected as delinquent taxes and gone into the general fund after the local study commission fund had been closed. An internal journal voucher needed to be done to completely close the account. The clerk rolls over budget balances from the previous year to start a new fiscal year and then plugs the new budgeted amounts in when the budget is set. The general fund had been done, but the other funds hadn't been completed at the same time, and when the clerk realized she corrected her error. It looked like to the auditors that there had been budget amendments and those are to be done by Resolution, so the recommendation was to complete all budget input at the same time, and if

there were budget amendments to do so by Resolutions. The financial review is available for the public to see by requesting such from the clerk. Betty moved to accept the Resolution to accept the financial review findings from Denning, Downey and Associates, CPA for the fiscal year ending in 2022; doing the internal journal voucher; and transferring \$5,000.00 from the water and sewer operating funds to the capital funds. Harold seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. (2) There wasn't any council input on the '23-'24 budget. (3) The engineer wasn't present to discuss progress on the water springs erosion.


The Mayor asked if all subcontractors were willing to renew their contracts that expired June 30, 2023. All were agreeable, therefore Harold moved to renew the following contracts: Animal control, clerk, public works director and zoning administrator. Paul seconded the motion, which passed 4-0. (2) Carl Hanson was scheduled to speak about a petition to the council for creation of special improvement district for the water/sewer main extensions, but he wasn't present.

Under clerks items: (1) The clerk advised the council that the Town had carried workmen's comp for 7 volunteers for the last 10 years, but she had received a notice that this could no longer be done as the town didn't have a full time employee. This was concerning as this leaves the cemetery cleanup volunteers uninsured. (2) the clerk reported that Pat Cenis had given the town a blue print map of the underground mines that was really neat, a huge old map of the mines from Red Lodge to Bearcreek, which was approximately 6' long, files that Bill had kept on the history of Bearcreek, and some dishes that had come out of town hall before the renovation. (3) Jane mentioned that there had been no public comment received on Dave Schneider's flood plain application, so it had been approved. (4) The clerk advised that Mary Fitzgerald from Billings had her uncle help her and they had translated the Cyrillic language on the tombstones in the south eastern section of the cemetery. She had provided the clerk with the translations. The council was very appreciative of her work and agreed to give her a lot in the cemetery with her family members for free.

With no further business Harold moved to adjourn the meeting. Paul seconded said motion, which passed unanimously.



Debbie Surwill, Mayor



Jane Swanson-Webb, Clerk