

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 22, 2024 TOWN OF BEARCREEK  
PUBLIC HEARING & COUNCIL MEETING

Mayor Surwill called the public hearing for the State-Local Infrastructure Partnership Act (B355) to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Bearcreek Town Hall. Those present were Dean Webb, Public Works Director; Loni Hanson, Zoning Administrator; Rob Surwill, Animal Control Officer; and Juliane Lore, Town Attorney; all council members; and the clerk. The Mayor apprised those present that the proposal in using the said grant money was to replace the existing heating/cooling system and doing maintenance on the trap door allowing better access to the system. The clerk advised the group that the existing system had been installed in 1999. A member of the audience remarked that she felt it was a good idea. The Mayor questioned whether bids had been received, and the clerk responded that that she had an estimate as the prices of the systems change every week. The one that had been received was \$12,000.00 to \$15,000.00, so that was the basis to be used for the grant application. The Town was eligible to receive \$12,430.00 grant money. There were no further comments therefore the Mayor adjourned the public hearing.

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Mayor Surwill called the Bearcreek council meeting to order following the public hearing. All of the those present at the public hearing were in attendance at the regular meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Council member Jenkins moved to accept the minutes, financial reports, and budget vs actual reports as presented. Council member Cristan seconded the motion which carried 4-0.

Council member Cristan moved to approve the claims as presented. Council member Jenkins seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

The clerk read the January 24, 2024 email from Cynria Allen, Carbon County DES, that the State DES is taking the Bearcreek application and entering into their Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) funding pot to be sent up to FEMA for review. This funding is specifically for applications of projects that are not construction. The clerk remarked that this was being done as FEMA had denied the previous application due to the time of the flooding which didn't happen in FEMA's calendar for flooding.

Under public comments Attorney Lore informed the council that she had a contact, Emelie Eaton, who had recently retired after 17 years on the Laurel Town Council, starting a grant writing business. She specializes in finding grants for small municipalities in Yellowstone and Carbon Counties and as her husband works for the Montana Rural Water Systems, she is familiar with the small water system's needs of grants. She runs her grant writing business on the contingency system. There would be no charge to the Town until she found grant monies, and they were awarded to the Town. Her fee would be included in the grant application. The only cost to the Town would be match dollars. Juliane mentioned that currently there are DOT grants for sidewalks and park playground equipment. She questioned the council if they would be interested in having Emelie speak with them by Zoom at their March meeting. She can introduce herself and talk about her business concept. The council can have project ideas that they may want to throw out. Then later she could have a workshop with the Mayor and council for projects if they decide to proceed. The council felt they would like to hear her presentation at the March meeting.

Dean started dept. head reports by advising that he had Cotters come to get the lower sewer pond flow unplugged. There is now flow to the upper pond. There is still one residence in town with a frozen water line. Loni had nothing to report for zoning. Rob reported that he had received 14 license applications with 20 left to be received. He will send out a reminder letters at the end of February. He had trapped and relocated a racoon for a resident.

There were no council concerns.

Under unfinished business Resolution 2024-1 State-Local Infrastructure Partnership Act (HB355) was presented. Council member Jenkins moved to adopt the Resolution. Council member Hogan seconded the

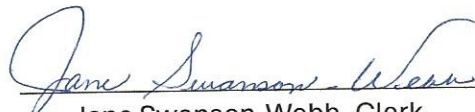
motion which passed 4-0. Resolution 2024-3 Amending the water budget to reflect the basic water charge increase was reviewed. Council member Cristan moved to adopt the Resolution. Council member Jenkins seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Under new business Resolution 2024-2 calling for an election on the question of conducting a local government review and establishing a study commission to do so was discussed. The biggest concern was the cost that would be incurred by the taxpayers should this pass. \$17,000, which is the maximum allowed, would be added to the taxpayers' tax statements. The clerk explained that it goes into a separate fund earmarked for the study commission and when the commission is finished any left-over revenue goes into the general fund. She stressed that the Town must allow the question to be placed on the ballot in June per the State's MCAs leaving it to the taxpayers to decide. Council member Boos moved to adopt the Resolution. Council member Jenkins seconded the motion. Motion passed 3-0 with Council member Hogan dissenting.

The clerk advised the council that Danell had been sworn in by the clerk in January. She questioned the council if sending their agenda, etc. by email was good or should another approach be taken. All council were good with receiving emails.

With no further business, Paul moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion seconded by Betty passed 4-0.

  
Debbie Surwill, Mayor

  
Jane Swanson-Webb, Clerk