

Mayor David Sims called the regularly scheduled council meeting of February 7, 2017 to order at 7:00 p.m. Present for the meeting were Mayor Sims, Council President Rick Alonzo, Council Members Adam Arthur and Ken Toline, Clerk Kris Larson, City Attorney Andrakay Pluid, Police Chief Vic Watson, Fire Chief Pat Warkentin, and Economic Development Coordinator Dennis Weed. Councilman Ron Smith was gone on personal business. Also present were Gus Diel, Jerry Higgs, Marcia Cossette, and Owen Plato.

Gus Diel, President of Retriever Services, Inc., read a letter to the Mayor and Council Members. He said it is evident in tonight's agenda item number seven with the advertisement for IT/GIS Mapper/Meter Reader position there is a request for authorization to move in a new direction. Gus said Retriever Services, Inc. provides meter reading service to the City and has for the past eight years. No addendum has been included in Retriever Services, Inc. existing contract to include backup meter reader or to provide overlap service for this proposed position. Mr. Diel said in a meeting with Mike Klaus on February 1, 2017 there was a brief discussion, not a contract negotiation or verbal agreement. He said at that time he was not aware of the entire scope of the new position presented tonight. Retriever Services reluctantly gave written notice to terminate the contract with the City of Bonners Ferry.

Jerry Higgs said the street department has done an outstanding job of keeping up with snow removal. He said people may need to shovel their roofs due to the predicted moisture coming later in the week. Jerry said people are plowing snow from private property onto the City right of way, leaving a problem for the City. He said he has been asking for a snow storage and snow removal ordinance to help with this and urged council to consider such an ordinance.

Police Chief Vic Watson said over the past two weeks there have been four felony warrant arrests, one possession with intent to deliver, one felony possession, one aggravated battery, one domestic battery, one petit theft, one under age party, three vehicle accidents, and one attic fire. Vic said the School Resource Officer has recently left to work for Boundary County and he is filling that position with an in-house candidate and hire a patrol officer.

Fire Chief Pat Warkentin said the fire department has been called out 14 times since the first of the year. He said the fire department is prepared for the snow that we have received. Fire engine had problems so it was taken to Keith Fairchild for repairs as the City Mechanic was busy with snow removal equipment repairs. Fire hydrants are buried under the snow so if there is a fire call the street department will be called out to dig out the hydrant. Since the last meeting there have been two calls. One was a CO2 call at Wilson's and the other was an attic fire at Jack and Shelley Yount's house. The address they were given was Chippewa Street but the Yount's are actually outside city limits. Yount's had a fire in the attic where there was blown in cellulose insulation. There are no federal regulations to keep that type of insulation from burning. Four firemen were on scene for an hour and a half. Pat said cellulose insulation fires tunnel and combust at different locations. He said people need to make sure there is not any cellulose insulation against any chimneys or lights. Ken Toline said in the past citizens have been asked to shovel out the hydrants near their property. He also suggested using the Explorer Scouts to help shovel the hydrants. Pat will speak to Star at the Herald to see if she can put an article in the paper regarding citizens shoveling out the hydrants.

Mayor Sims gave an update on the Moyie Dam. He said Mike Klaus is estimating the middle of March before the generators will be operating again. The new grates are built but the intake needs to be cleaned out and Mike has sent out requests for quotes for this.

Economic Development Coordinator Dennis Weed said the Urban Renewal Agency (URA) is fully funded for the 2017 bond payment. The URA voted to pay for the engineering study for the Riverside Project so we can apply for grant funding to complete this project. Dennis said JUB Engineering will be the firm completing the estimate. For Economic Development Dennis went to a SHOT Show in Vegas and there is one manufacturing entity that is interested in Boundary County. Dennis will be following up with this business. Dr. Barker's old building is being renovated for a business center. He said there are many people working out of their homes who would like a space downtown to have an office setting to meet with clients. Dennis said it looks like there will be anchor tenants, and then there will be space for those businesses that need part time office space. He said this should bring an economic benefit to other businesses downtown by the activity the business center will bring. The estimated opening timeframe is mid to end of March.

Rick Alonzo moved to add a late agenda item to adopt Resolution 2017-02-01 City of Bonners Ferry Local Disaster/Emergency Declaration. Ken Toline seconded the motion. The motion passed – Rick Alonzo “yes”, Ken Toline “yes”, Adam Arthur “yes”.

Adam Arthur moved to approve the consent agenda. Rick Alonzo seconded the motion. The motion passed – Rick Alonzo “yes”, Ken Toline “yes”, Adam Arthur “yes”.

Mayor Sims briefly explained the Boundary Area Transportation Team (BATT). He recommended having John Youngwirth represent City of Bonners Ferry with Lisa Ailport named as alternate. Rick Alonzo moved to affirm the Mayor's recommendation to appoint John Youngwirth as BATT Representative with Lisa Ailport as alternate. Ken Toline seconded the motion. The motion passed – Rick Alonzo “yes”, Ken Toline “yes”, Adam Arthur “yes”.

Ken Toline moved to authorize Mayor Sims to sign a new lease agreement with Mail Finance for a postage meter. Rick Alonzo seconded the motion. The motion passed – Rick Alonzo “yes”, Ken Toline “yes”, Adam Arthur “yes”.

Mayor Sims said thanked Gus for attending the meeting tonight. He commented that Gus has done our meter reading for over eight years and has done an exemplary job. He apologized if there were any misunderstandings or disagreement with the memo concerning this position to be advertised. Mayor Sims said we have been contracting for meter reading services, mapping services, and computer services. The thought is to have someone in-house with computer skills for day to day issues that come up but still keep a contractor in case there are more difficult issues. Mayor Sims said he thinks this would help staff be more productive. He said we started contracting with Andrew Price a few years ago to start a mapping system for the City getting our paper maps in a digital format. We are finding that the response time is quick at times, but not at other times. He said our easements need to be mapped and this process is sometimes difficult and time consuming. We need to update the mapping also. Mayor Sims said when looking at the meter reading for the City it would take approximately 50 percent of the time of this position.

He said the past year we paid Retriever Services about \$52,000. We have paid Andrew Price his contract rate, and that has amounted to \$66,000 over the past few years. The thought was to have an employee do these three services to help increase staff productivity.

Rick Alonzo said we have had excellent service with Retriever Services, and it seems odd to him to have an employee do this. He asked if there is a computer problem if the new person will drop the meter reading and come fix the computer. Mayor Sims said if the employee is out reading meters he will not drop meter reading to come fix a computer. He said there will be certain times when the employee will be in the building working. Mayor Sims said it will be difficult to find someone with this mix of skills. He said the mapping is the highest skill level so we need to find someone proficient in this. Rick said finding someone is the tough part. He sees the logic in it, but he also sees a contractor who has done a good job for eight years that we want to replace and consolidate these things. Rick does not like that.

Ken Toline asked if the reasoning is to save money. Mayor Sims said the City will get a better benefit. He said the meter reading cost is over \$50,000 per year and it is approximately half time. Ken has concern of skill set levels for the IT position and GIS/Mapper in relation to the skill set for the meter reading position. He is concerned about the consolidation of these three skills in one position, as we may be limiting the range of scope of qualified individuals. He understands that meter reading needs to be done accurately with attention to detail as it provides necessary revenue for our City. He is concerned about spreading the tasking too thin. Ken proposed an alternative. He said in other cities where he had resided previously, people were granted a discount on their monthly billing for reading their own meters. He thinks this could be a positive concept and submitted this for consideration. Mayor Sims said most systems are electronic and reads are submitted electronically.

Adam Arthur said this position seems like it will be very difficult to fill. Mayor Sims said meter reading and GIS complement each other. He thinks it is important to look at the dollars. The meter reading segment is constant. Mayor Sims said Mike Klaus will be taking over the water system engineering rather than contracting with Welch Comer. He said we need to look at our contracts as somewhat flexible, and when it makes sense to contract we will do it. Ken agreed that the meter reading and GIS go hand in hand. Rick Alonzo asked Gus about the statement in Mike Klaus' memo regarding backup meter reading. Gus said when he met with Mike on February 1st that he was not informed about the job description. Mayor Sims said he thought Gus was considering retirement. Gus said he is of retirement age but even if he retires Retriever Service could continue. Gus said he has spoken with the City Administrator in the past about an alternative proposal to change from per meter price to an hourly rate that is negotiable for the hours actually worked. He said this would be a savings to the City and could still contract with Retriever Services. He is not sure if an employee would be as productive or provide better service than Retriever Services. Mayor Sims said we can change the job description, look at contract meter reading and do a request for proposals, or even go with part-time meter reading but we need to look at the cost of meter reading. He said it would be prudent for the City to reduce that cost.

Rick Alonzo clarified that Gus had submitted his notice to discontinue services and that would be 90 days. Mayor Sims suggested advertising the position and by the next meeting explore other alternatives. Rick said it would be better for the contractor to sit back and see whether anybody applies. Mayor Sims told Gus he can apply for this position. Gus said he does not have expertise in IT. He said GIS would be interesting but his forte is in meter reading. Ken Toline moved to advertise independently for GIS mapper/IT/ meter reader position and also separately for meter reader position as a city employee. Adam Arthur seconded the motion. The motion passed – Rick Alonzo “yes”, Ken Toline “yes”, Adam Arthur “yes”. Rick said he was reluctant to vote in favor, but he did so because Gus put in his notice.

Rick Alonzo moved to purchase the flatbed for the new water/sewer department pickup for \$4,700. Adam Arthur seconded the motion. The motion passed – Rick Alonzo “yes”, Ken Toline “yes”, Adam Arthur “yes”.

Mayor Sims said Olivia Drake at Boundary County has provided excellent service regarding mapping for the City. He said the County has requested a contract for these services at the cost of one and a half time wage rate of Olivia. Rick asked if we hire the new position if this would eliminate the need for using Olivia’s service at the County. Mayor Sims said the City’s data is centered around utilities, and we have need for other data so we would still use Olivia’s data. Adam Arthur moved to authorize the Mayor to sign the contract with Boundary County for mapping assistance. Ken Toline seconded the motion. The motion passed – Rick Alonzo “yes”, Ken Toline “yes”, Adam Arthur “yes”.

Mayor Sims spoke regarding the FLAP Grant and how entities are responsible for cost overruns. He said JUB Engineering has been doing similar work to the Riverside Project and the URA has offered to pay the City’s portion. Rick Alonzo moved to authorize the Mayor to sign the contract with JUB Engineering for the Riverside Street Project engineering. Adam Arthur seconded the motion. The motion passed – Rick Alonzo “yes”, Ken Toline “yes”, Adam Arthur “yes”.

Mayor Sims said it is time to look at our policy for servicing utilities outside city limits. He said Elaine Clegg from Boise has spoken on this topic and she will come give us guidance. Mayor Sims asked that the Clerk get a few dates to bring back to council for consideration.

Dennis Weed spoke regarding the Boise State University (BSU) program to evaluate the Visitor Center. The last discussion he had with BSU was to cost no more than \$3,000 for the program and the intern services. BSU said there is funding available through the Department of Commerce to work on these type of programs. Dennis said originally we thought the students would be coming to Bonners Ferry but that has changed, and they will do the project from Boise. Mayor Sims said we need to get a contract with BSU. Dennis will work on this.

Mayor Sims gave an update on the High Five Grant. He said we are looking at a steering committee who would make funding recommendations to Blue Cross. The City, School, Hospital, and U of I that does the 4-H program are the participants. He is hopeful by the next meeting to have a contract. He said the whole idea of the grant will be to leverage the \$250,000 grant to get more done in the program. The Albertson’s Foundation has grant funding available for the fifth day of the week programs for entities since we only have a four day school week.

Mayor Sims said on Monday morning an emergency disaster was declared. One reason is for help with funding sources from the State and the other reason is for hiring contractors. Mayor Sims said the County has also declared an emergency. The National Guard has no one available to come help shovel the roofs of the schools but there are two groups of inmates coming from Cottonwood. The School District is also advertising at the Job Service for snow shoveling at \$15 per hour. Mayor Sims said we will start shoveling City Hall tomorrow. Rick Alonzo moved to adopt Resolution 2017-02-01 City of Bonners Ferry Local Disaster/Emergency Declaration. Ken Toline seconded the motion. The motion passed – Rick Alonzo “yes”, Ken Toline “yes”, Adam Arthur “yes”.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

David Sims, Mayor

Attest:

Kris Larson, City Clerk