

North Powder City Council Meeting
February 7, 2022
7PM
Wolf Creek Grange

Attendance: Mayor John Frieboes, Councilors Joyce Lawyer, Jeff Grende, Logan McCrae and Justin Wright, City Recorder Beth Wendt, Public Works Director Rick Lawyer, Librarian Maggie Guthrie. Councilors Vicki Townsend and Mike Morse were absent.

Others: Barbara Weeks, Tony Lasich, Lindsey Thompson, Wynn & Jeff Nielson, Dave Rose, Fauna Ferenbach, Lonny Runyon.

Mayor Fireboes called the meeting to order and the Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Public Comment: Beth read a letter from Barbara Weeks concerning plans for a new Library. She didn't feel the Council understood the needs of the Library and that it needs to grow with the City. The Library can get grants to add a bathroom. The council was elected to represent the citizens. She claimed to have been all over town and didn't see a single notice of special meetings and thought it was a ploy to "shove" an agenda through quietly. Barbara, herself, added that she thought the "L" shaped plan would be more expensive. She wondered why not bring the front of the building out toward E Street. She asked what plan was submitted to the County. Logan noted that we submitted the plan for City Hall to be in the front part of the rural side of the building. So far, nobody has agreed on how to use the remaining portion of the building. Barbara wondered if anybody had been into the Library to see what is there and what is in storage. She didn't think there was going to be enough space for Maggie to spread out. She needs at least twice the space of what she has now. Jeff added that the council had proposed to offer use of the whole of one side plus the back side of City Hall and the loft area. The conference room would be able to be accessed for Library use. Jeff suggested the discussion be held until later in the meeting.

Agenda: Jeff moved to accept the agenda. Logan seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes: Logan made a motion to accept the minutes from the January 10th Council meeting and the two special meetings from January 24th and January 25th. Joyce seconded. All were in favor.

Accounts Payable: Beth noted there were two additions to the AP; the Baker Co. Health Department for \$126.95 for the first round of Hepatitis shots for David and Office Depot for office supplies in the amount of \$164.89. The total AP came to \$15,069.20. Beth pointed out some of the bigger bills such as CIS that had premiums for David's health insurance for both February and March and Cummins Sales & Services for annual service of the generator and heater at Well #4. Bingham's was also a bit larger than normal because it included the final audit review. Logan made a motion to pay the bills. Jeff seconded. All were in favor.

Library Report: Maggie had a sample of the new and old Library cards to show the difference. The new cards have a barcode.

Maggie noted she has received 2 new telescopes, purchased with Leo Adler funds. They still need to be entered into the Sage system so they can be checked out. There are also some charging ports on order which will be paid for with Leo Adler Grant money.

The Library has received a grant of \$3000 from Union County.

Maggie contacted the Test Proctor Site to get more information. It will require a 3 hour Zoom meeting.

The Library is working on a Saturday reading hour where kids can come in and read with Suzie from 12:30PM to 1:30PM during the winter.

The Library will be closed on President's Day.

Public Works: Rick is still trying to catch up on snow removal to open drains on 2nd street. Traffic has been really bad so he has to watch really close.

With the cold weather there has been 8" to 12" inches of ice on the sewer pond. Rick broke thru it in a few spots to try to get air circulating. There is also ice in the chambers so chlorine is not moving thru like it should.

Ralph ordered the testing machine. It should be here any day. Rick wants to set up a lab in the shop. There was a water leak in the alley behind the Motel. Rick had to locate several valves to stop the water flow. Rick wants to try to locate valves this summer then spend some time working them to loosen them up. David has been working on the computer creating spreadsheets to map the valves.

Rick noted that the backhoe had a flat tire and the dump truck is still down.

John appreciated all the time Rick and David put in to fix the water leak in the alley and keeping the streets cleared.

Ordinance Enforcement: Beth reported that Shawn has been here 3 times. She gave him a list of places that she knew about that had things in right-of-ways and RV issues. Some of them have already been taken care of but he has a few more to look into. In the meantime Shawn sent Beth a list of places to send letters. Beth was ready to send a few letters but needed to do some research and clarify what the other violations are. Rusty Aldrich called about the 2 RV hook-ups behind the Powder Club. He thought he had an agreement with the City to be able to rent them out. There is somebody living in one of the spaces now. Jeff thought if there was a prior agreement, we should honor it. Beth didn't know what the original agreement was, but in 2009 the Council agreed to let him use the RV spots but he had to pay extra for water & sewer. Logan felt if we were going to honor the agreement, we should keep in mind that water and sewer rates have gone up since 2009. Logan wondered if it should be considered like a Conditional Use Permit and would change every time a new person moved in and should follow the current RV ordinance. Beth thought it was only a verbal agreement and there wasn't an expiration date. Logan clarified that the RV Ordinance covers every zone. John felt we should visit with Rusty but it should be covered under the RV ordinance. Logan felt if Rusty objected to the current RV Ordinance, he should come to the Council.

Recorder Report: Beth noted that water overages in January were \$375.95 and \$95.13 was applied in freeze credits. We used approximately 1,285,741 gallons of water.

We haven't heard from the Baker County Road Department yet regarding the SCA Grant. Beth will try to touch base with them later this week.

Jeff asked if the project list had been submitted to the County. Beth said yes.

Mayor's Message: John reiterated that he appreciated everything Rick did to fix the water leak. He spent a lot of his weekend working on it. It helped a lot of people.

John will try to get in touch with the Sheriff to see if we can get their speed trailer put up on 2nd Street and see if we can get some additional patrols.

When we talked with Commissioner Donna Beverage, she mentioned that there is money for different zoning things for industrial land development. Scott Hartell is willing to come to a council meeting to explain further.

John noted that the County Commissioners will review the project funding requests and should have an answer later in the month about how they will distribute funds.

New Business: None

Old Business:

Playground: Beth reported that the boundary parts should be here soon.

We are still waiting on an estimate for an appreciation plaque.

City Hall and Library: Logan thought JBK Construction was shooting for no later than next week to get started on City Hall. The doors and windows were ordered about 3 weeks ago and are expected to take 10 to 12 weeks for delivery.

John noted that we talked a little bit earlier in the meeting about the Library. He felt we should get the City Hall office done first. Then we can get together and walk it out and make a final decision. In the meantime, he encouraged everybody to think about it and if they have time, they should go check out the Library. Jeff asked Maggie what she had in mind for the Library. Maggie thought the "L" shape plan and meeting room would make the Library 1 foot narrower than what we have now. It was hard for her to envision a short hallway space. Jeff noted that using the area behind the new City Hall office for a Council chamber would only seat about 10 people comfortably. He wanted to give the Library all the space they need but we don't want to cut other needs short. Maggie wondered if there would be room to expand off the right side of the building. Beth remarked that the last meeting (January 25th) ended with the suggestion that people bring alternative ideas to the Council. She wondered if it might work better to put the council chamber in the middle, next to City Hall, and put the Library on the opposite end. That way, maybe the building could be expanded toward 3rd Street. The council chamber could still be used by the Library. The City wants to meet the needs and wants of the Library but we also have to consider the needs of the City. The new City Hall will actually be less than double the size it is now. Barbara thought City Hall should take the whole side of the building and the Library could have the other side. Beth interjected that City Hall itself doesn't need to be that big. But we do need a meeting area and there really isn't enough room behind City Hall to accommodate more than 10 or 12 people in the audience. She reiterated there shouldn't be any reason why the Library couldn't utilize the council chamber when it is not in use. Maggie wondered if we could add on to the end for a conference room. Anything shared with the Library could be covered with Library grants. Rick suggested maybe refurbishing the current City Hall and Library for a council chamber. John didn't like that idea. He felt it made sense to keep it all in one spot. He suggested for the next meeting, Maggie should do some research on how much money might be available and where it would come from and when it might be available. Everybody could also think about and draw up some alternative plans and bring them to the next meeting. He estimated that an addition would cost about \$2000 per square foot. Maggie will check on what is available, but this is why she would like to have a grant writer. Barbara suggested advertising to ask people if they have extra money they would be willing to donate. Logan asked if Maggie was okay with the Council taking more time to nail down a foot print for the Library. Wynn wondered why we didn't just continue to meet at the Grange. John said that wasn't the purpose for buying the building. Beth added that the Grange doesn't have the capability for doing virtual meetings, and even if it did, there is no place to store our equipment between meetings. Logan noted that the area behind City Hall is the same size as the Grange. There isn't enough room for traffic flow. Part of the purpose of the new building was to be able to house meetings at City Hall.

Jeff G. wanted to address Barbara's letter regarding meetings not being posted beforehand so we have a hidden agenda. He wondered what the hidden agenda was supposed to be. All of the meetings are open to the public and posted ahead of time. Barbara said didn't know but not everybody knew about meetings. She added that Maggie brought plans and showed them at 2 or 3 meetings. Now all of a sudden, plans have been submitted to the County. Logan interjected that the building committee recommended a plan for City Hall and the Council voted to accept it. Jeff N. wondered what Jeff G. was so upset about. Jeff G. was bothered by the accusation of a hidden agenda. He didn't understand what he was being accused of. Ferna thought there was a public perception about posting of special meetings. Maggie put a lot of effort into her plans and the move to the new building was supposed to be to the benefit of the Library and City Hall. Now it seems the plans have changed. Jeff G. interjected

that the plans for City Hall have not changed. There has been no decision made for the Library. There has been some discussion of what would work for both the Library and the City. We are not trying to cheat the library. Barbara insisted that the decision had been made and submitted. The Council hasn't seen the whole story. Jeff reiterated that a decision has not been made about the Library. We are still working on it. It has been suggested that the Library could have the use of the whole area. Wynn understood that it would be 1' less than what the Library has now. Logan interjected that one of the proposals was the "L" shape and it would more than double the space the Library has now. But that is only one design. Maggie brought one well thought out design but it doesn't allow for a place for the Council to meet. Since it doesn't work for what we need the Council is simply asking for other suggestions.

Logan thought Barbara's letter was very heated. Barbara agreed. Part of her issue was that the City didn't want to buy the fire station in the first place so she felt that the Council wasn't going to accept Maggie's plans either. Logan reiterated that the first plan Maggie proposed didn't meet the goals of everybody involved. Barbara added that the Library has enough stuff to fill all that space and then some. Jeff G. wondered what the utility cost would be to keep the current Library open. John estimated about \$200 per month. Jeff asked what the Council was doing wrong with trying to work with people. Barbara felt the Council was going over the heads of what the citizens want. Logan noted that the survey was about 53% to 47%. The Council voted 4 to 2 in favor of the fire station.

As for meeting notifications, Barbara suggested people could be notified by email. John noted that regular meetings were put in the newsletter that is included in the water bill along with other things that are going on in the City. They are posted in the Post Office and at City Hall. Beth added that extra copies of the newsletter are available at City Hall and the Post Office. She can also post meetings at the Library if it would help. We have to post meetings at least 48 hours ahead of time but we try to give as much notice as possible. The last 2 special council meetings were posted for more than a week ahead of time. Barbara thought there were a lot of people who don't go to City Hall, the Post Office or the Library. She suggested it could be on the website. Beth will try to post them on the website from here on. John suggested people could call City Hall to ask if there is anything going on. We can't do everything for everybody. Logan suggested the decision regarding the Library be tabled for now. John thought we should get more done on City Hall. In the meantime, people can come up with more ideas of how to make the City Hall and Library work together.

ARPA Funds/Project List: Beth noted the project list was submitted to the County. First priority was \$15,000 for a study on the sewer problem at the end of 2nd Street. Second was \$15,000 for the clay valve situation at Well #5. Third priority was \$150,000 for the Library and City Hall building, which includes some work on the outside. Fourth priority was \$50,000 for filling pot holes. They should let us know later in the month what they decide. Joyce wondered if the City didn't use all of our ARPA funds, could we use them to help small businesses. John added that Union County has money for Economic Development. Beth thought it might be possible but we would have to come up with an application process to determine guidelines. However, our \$100,000 isn't going to go very far. Joyce noted that we turned back some of the CARES ACT money.

Wastewater Project: Beth reported that we are waiting on the CDBG contract and the combined notice comment period for the Environmental Review. We got approval to sign the Anderson Perry contract and are still hoping to have the CDBG contract by March 1st.

Council Comments:

Logan thanked Rick for everything. Justin agreed.

Logan commented that he was sorry that Barbara didn't see eye to eye with the Council. We are trying to work people, including the Library. He didn't think that was the case with past Councils. We are

trying to get out of the old building and meet the needs of everyone. He understood that everybody probably wouldn't get everything they wanted but we should get at least 50% to 80% more than what we have now. He appreciated that she came to the meetings and participated. But to accuse the Council of going behind someone's back, gets backs up. Meetings are public. Councilors are elected. We listen to the voices of people who show up to meetings and try to talk to people around town. A lot of people who come to meetings are brought to push a specific point of view. He encouraged everybody to come to Council meetings. We are trying to find win/win solutions that will work for everybody. He felt there were some people trying to drive wedges. He hoped the Library Board and Maggie would be willing to sit down and talk. The last proposed plan would give the Library more than double the space. He wanted to work with the Library to find a solution so they have a safe building. Joyce noted that she has been on the council for a long time and she didn't feel the Council was always fighting with everybody. The only time she disagreed was when she felt the City was being taken advantage of. She wanted to work with everybody. She thought Maggie was trying to point out that the proposed space would be narrower. If we could add on, the Library could have one big room. She didn't think it would cost the City a lot. We need to figure out what everybody needs. John interjected that is why the subject was tabled for now. In the meantime, once we get the trucks moved out of the fire station building and get something done on City Hall, we should be able to see a lot better what space is available.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest;

Beth Wendt
City Recorder