

CUT BANK CITY COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 5, 2024
6:30 P.M. – CITY HALL & ZOOM

THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIA ZOOM & AT CITY HALL

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Kim Winchell called the meeting of the Cut Bank City Council to order at 6:32 PM, Monday, February 5, 2024. The following persons answered roll call: Mayor Winchell, Councilpersons Doug Vermulm, Kacie Fey, Maynard Nygaard, and John Reynolds. Also present were City Superintendent James Suta, Building Inspector Jim Yeagley (via Zoom), City Attorney Smith, Police Chief Schutz, and Clerk Treasurer Burley. All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

VISITORS: Vernon Thomas, Justin Perry, Ian & Melody Karle, LeAnne Kavanagh, Jeff Compton, Pat Compton, Brint Compton, Kari Lewis, Lisa Cline, and Taila Edwards and Pamela Peterson via Zoom)

ABSENT: None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Melody Karle, 237 5th Ave NE, asked if there was an update on the animal control officer position. Mayor Winchell replied that we would be making a public announcement when we hire someone.

Pamela Peterson, 214 1st Ave SW, asked why all the streets are not plowed since we all pay for snow removal. She also asked for an explanation as to why the sewer bills are so high and if they are going to be reduced in the future. The third question she had was regarding broken glass at the Mountain View trailhead. She feels that since we pay for parks this should have been cleaned up. Superintendent Suta responded to her question about the trailhead that this is not a City park and we are not responsible for its upkeep.

Lisa Cline, 137 4th Ave NE, member of Cut Bank Trails, stated that she would look into the broken glass and get it cleaned up. Most hikers pick up the glass while hiking, but since it is property that previously was a dump, the glass still shows up now and then.

CLAIMS: Councilperson Fey moved to approve the claims through February 1, 2024, for \$78,774.72 warrants 61837-61911. Councilperson Reynolds seconded the motion. A vote was called, and motion carried 4-0.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Councilperson Vermulm moved to approve the January 22, 2024, minutes, the payroll from February 1, 2024, for \$97,396.49. Councilperson Fey seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS:

Superintendent Suta presented his report. **Councilperson Reynolds moved to accept the City Superintendent's report and Councilperson Fey seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.**

City Attorney Smith reported that he has been very busy with the absence of Deputy City Attorney Bugni. His secretary resigned so we will be looking for a replacement soon. Councilperson Fey asked if the secretary would be a city employee and was told it is the plan is for the City to hire the employee. **Councilperson Reynolds moved to accept the City Attorney's report and Councilperson Nygaard seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.**

OLD BUSINESS: **None**

NEW BUSINESS:

The City of Cut Bank is a member of the Montana Main Street program. As such, we are allowed to submit an application to the program for a grant. The City can only submit one application

and there are currently two requests for the application. For this reason, the people making these requests were asked to present their projects to the Council so that the Council can choose which project to submit for the grant.

Brint Compton presented his project to the Council. He and Pat Compton are the owners of a 6, 8, and 10 N Central. It is 6,486 square feet and needs to be remodeled to attract businesses to rent the spaces. Currently, they have one renter who has brought a boutique to Cut Bank. The roof and foundation are in decent shape. The rest of the building needs to be totally remodeled. The total project may cost \$500,000 and the owners would like to get a \$500,000 grant so that the cost does not have to be put on the renters.

During public comment on this project, Pamela Peterson of 214 1st Ave SW, asked if the Comptons had done an audit to see how high the rent is currently on commercial property in this area. Mr. Compton responded that they had not.

LeAnne Kavanagh, 405 8th Ave S, stated that she had visited with Micky Zurcher of the Montana Main Street program and that Micky had said that the program only had \$100,000 in total to give out in grants at this time and that most applications were for between \$10,000 and \$20,000.

Kari Lewis, 714 E Main, presented the proposed project for the Reimagining Rural group. They want to install wayfinding signs throughout Cut Bank. This would include the new City of Cut Bank logo to be revealed soon. This is part of the rebranding of Cut Bank. The project is ready to go so all they need to do before submitting their application would be to finalize the cost of the signs. This would be the first phase of the larger project and would fit into the MMS program very well. Other Montana cities have received this grant for the same type of project and have been very successful.

During public comment on this project, Pamela Peterson expressed her support of this project.

Councilperson Fey moved to approve the application of Reimagining Rural to the Montana Main Street Grant. Councilperson Reynolds seconded the motion that passed unanimously.

Mayor Winchell asked the Council to please vote with intent and each Councilperson gave their reasons for voting for this project. Reasons included that the presentation was well put together, the project is ready to go and fit into the mission of the MMS program and would benefit many people and businesses in Cut Bank.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

WORK SESSION:

During the work session, Mayor Winchell addressed the questions raised earlier in the meeting by Pamela Peterson. Superintendent Suta responded to the question about the snow being plowed from the streets. He explained that we do not pay for snow removal in our taxes. We pay for maintenance of the streets, including the patching of holes and the routine resurfacing of all streets. This does not pay for snow plowing. We plow the snow route and would do whatever we can to assure that emergency vehicles can get around.

As far as Ms. Petersons questions about the water and sewer rates, Mayor Winchell invited Ms. Peterson to visit with City Clerk-Treasurer Burley to get clarification on those rates.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Councilperson Nygaard was appointed to be on the Tri-City Interlocal board. His knowledge of equipment will be valuable.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Council, **Mayor Winchell adjourned the meeting at 7:50 PM.** The next regular meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2024, at 6:30 PM.

Attest:

Approve:

Linda Burley, Clerk-Treasurer

Kim Winchell, Mayor

