

Town of Garfield
TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES Final
Garfield Community Center – December 14, 2016

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Ray McCown called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

ROLL CALL: Mayor Ray McCown, Neal Leon, Mark Young, David Jones, Dave Ulrick and Daymon Marple. Staff: Clerk/Treasurer Cody Lord and Public Works Reuel Klempel Absent: Neal Leon

GUESTS: Donna Poire, Don and Debbie Brown, Jarrod Pfaff, Tim and Tami Southern, Laura Redmond, Jerry Love and Tom Tevlin.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. Increase in the Water, Sewer and Garbage Rates for 2017

Mayor McCown explains the council will allow public comment on the sewer rate increase. The mayor says the town has spent a large amount of money above and beyond normal expenditures operating the plant in the last couple years. It currently is \$22,000 over the projected normal expenditures for this year. Most of the items are to get the plant in compliance with the Department of Ecology, (DOE). The mayor passed the explaining over to Public Works Superintendent Reuel Klempel to talk about the future expenditures at the plant. Reuel said he is automating the plant so it is not as labor intensive and he will be achieving this by adding equipment that is automated and will no longer require someone to come in on the weekends and conduct sewer sampling. They are also working on other issues the plant currently has such as the aeration basin has large dead zones where the material is not being mixed appropriately.

Reuel is still working on perfecting the automated screen blinding so they don't require as much labor to clean all the time. When there is more grease the screens blind quicker and cause the fluids to run all over the floor. Currently the sump runs back to the screens and they need to direct that back to the head works. Reuel said there are also some design flaws concerning the pumps and the lines that should be dedicated to them. Mayor McCown said that DOE is on the town about cleaning out the settling ponds and that project alone would be costly. Another issue they are having right now is the digester is full and there is no place to store the solids so they will need to be doing a trip to Bar-Tech before too long to get rid of the bio-solids. Reuel is trying to figure out how to drain off more fluids from the sludge so it is not lost money when dumping. Mayor McCown said as you can see there is one thing after another at the plant.

Laura Redmond asked how much the proposed rate increase was going to end up being for the residents of Garfield. Mayor McCown said it will go from \$103.35 to \$119.49 for the average user with no overage charges. Laura asked what additional revenue amount was the town expecting to collect from the rate increase and the mayor responded about \$55,000. Mark Young said he understands this is a big step in the increased rate but the council is reluctantly doing it to come into compliance with DOE, otherwise they could bankrupt a town like ours with violations. One of the steps taken was to hire an operator who was able to take care of the plant the way that DOE wants. The council would like to show to DOE that we want to fix the issues. The higher salary is a large chunk of the rate increase. There is also an influx of water coming into the plant that the town can't currently control and they want to start examining why that is happening and prepare to make repairs to the lines. The council can't do these things without raising revenue and their backs are against a wall. If they take care of these situations now, when the plant is paid off in 2022 they will be in a better position to make long term changes to the plant more economically.

Tim Southern said looking at the budget the council wants \$16.00 per household but actually a \$5.00 a household increase would pay for the increased wages paid to Reuel. Mark said it goes beyond just the salary, there are many things that need repaired at the plant and they have asked Reuel to make a list of what it is that needs repaired or replaced out there. Daymon Marple also said they also had the engineers out to talk about lagoons at the plant in the future. If the town was to put in a retention pond, it could catch the overflow I&I problems the town is experiencing. The engineers talked about grants the town could get

to help determine the I&I problems, where they are originating and what can be done to fix them, but these would all be future projects. Tim asked what the I&I problems are. Daymon replied they don't know yet. Tim said he knows because they have already done a study showing the largest issues on 4th Street and on South Hill. Mark said the town knows we have I&I problems and starting in December the public works will start working towards identifying where exactly the problems are located. Mark said he remembers the one on 4th and Adams and Jarrod Pfaff said he remembers the bids coming in between \$11,000 and \$13,000. Tim added they used to have two guys that could do most of the work in house.

Debbie Brown stated you are raising the rates \$16.00, how will the residents of Garfield be guaranteed that it will be used to fix the pond and sewer plant and not used for buying equipment. Mayor McCown stated the town hasn't been buying much equipment and that all the money that comes into the budget to support the sewer system is spent at the sewer plant. Mark said the council wanted to be very transparent on this budget and show the residents of Garfield where the money is needed and exactly what the raise is that is needed in the sewer rate. Tim questioned if the town needs money to cover these items at the plant then why did the council budget to purchase a backhoe in the coming budget. Mayor McCown said they have needed a backhoe 3 times this past year where the current equipment could not dig deep enough and it would be used frequently. Tim said the equipment the town currently owns is used in the industry by all the contractors. Mayor McCown said they are not here to discuss the backhoe. Tim questioned why the backhoe was being purchased in 2016 when it was budgeted in 2017 and questioned the legality of the purchase. Tim said because the backhoe is part of the approved budget it should be something they are able to discuss. Mayor McCown said it doesn't matter, the backhoe was already purchased and completed and the 2016 budget was changed to reflect the purchase.

Mayor McCown said no one at the table wants to pay an increase on water, sewer and garbage rates any more than they do. Tim asked if they consulted any contractors who use both pieces of equipment to see which one they prefer. Mayor McCown said they don't need to do that as they have people on the council who have experience and Mark clarified that Neal has extensive heavy equipment experience. Daymon said the I&I projects will be large projects and if needed they will have secondary equipment now to help backup the backhoe. Reuel said they had a meeting with DOE and the premise of it was the plant has been in violation for many years and getting to the point of receiving monetary violations. DOE really doesn't want to fine the town and instead would rather they stick the money back into their systems. Reuel said he has about half a million dollars of items that are needed out at the plant, but he has cut those items back to the basic and necessary things.

Mayor McCown said in the last 2 months they have accomplished more at the sewer plant than has been accomplished in a long time. Debbie stats she has been in Garfield many years and she is curious with all the problems they are talking about, how many of them could have been taken care of with a little more attention. Reuel said if a person knew what they were doing they could have taken care of it as long as they had the time and the monetary resources to make it happen. Debbie said you are talking about automating things but that has never been an issue for the town until recently. Reuel offered an example, the town had someone out there cleaning the screens on the weekends and holidays and he thought why in the world does the town have someone out there doing this when he could spend about \$500 to alleviate someone having to go out there during those times. Reuel said the engineers could have taken care of this a long time ago and that there are no automated valves out there. Reuel says some of the funds collected will also go to a SCADA system which calls you on your cell phone if there is an issue at the plant. The town is trying to lessen the amount of time and individual is needed at the plant after the normal work week hours are completed.

Donna Poire said there are a lot of people that have to work weekends and that is just part of their duties and wonders if the cost to upgrades will surpass the cost of having an on-call weekend person. Reuel said well the alternative is public works can continue to work 60 hours a week. Donna questioned how much the automation will cost in totality. Reuel said he has spent \$500 on automating the screens. Donna said she gathered that from the conversation so far but she would like to know the total cost of all of the other items Reuel is proposing to automate the plant. Reuel said he didn't have an overall number figured out but some of the money they are asking for in the increase is to cover operating costs. Donna said again

she understands that but if they are asking for additional money for automation and asking the residents of Garfield to cover the cost, then they should have an overall number budgeted and what that is going to buy them. It appears to her that Reuel is making suggestions for changes at the plant but doesn't have an overall idea of what the overall cost to automate is going to run.

Mark asks Reuel to go down the list of items he presented to the council and discuss how much each of those items will cost the town and Mayor McCown said just this list of items will run the town about \$60,000 and that doesn't include the cost of a pump if it goes out. Tim said he would like to know what exactly the additional \$11.00 per household is going to purchase above and beyond the \$5.00 per house increase to cover Reuel's wages. Mayor McCown said the increase will generate about \$55,000 and Tim would like to know how that number was derived. Daymon said his original idea was to spread the cost across the water, sewer and garbage line items but after thinking about it more decided to put it all on the sewer plant rate change so it better reflects where the money is coming from and being spent. Daymon said a spread sheet was created that reflects all of the users and the increase in their rates and that comes to an additional \$56,394 in revenue. Reuel said in actuality he needs much more than that.

Jarrod asked is the sewer fund then going up by the \$16.00. Daymon explained the bill was going up by approximately \$16.00 and the inflation factors that are already in place on the water, sewer and garbage fund will remain in place. Mayor McCown said Garfield will still be paying less for water and sewer than Farmington and Fairfield pay and Fairfield rates automatically go up \$2.00 each year. Reuel said he is not here to spend money and he is trying to do things as frugally as possible for the town for instance he rebuilt the sludge pump that would have cost about \$15,000 to professionally rebuild and he did it for \$1,500. Reuel said he took it apart replaced the necessary parts, cleaned it up and machined some of the parts himself and put it back together and it is now running again. Tim said that is a problem, stating expensive pumps should be rebuilt by a professional company familiar with the pumps as it is an expensive and important piece of equipment at the plant. Tim stated Reuel should not be machining these parts for the pump himself.

Mayor McCown said it was time to close the public input portion of the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: David Jones **MOVED** to approve the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting Dec. 7th, 2016. Daymon Marple seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT: Officer Joe Handley present for this meeting.

Officer Handley said he had a couple family disputes which is normal for the holiday season and a couple dogs issues, other than that all is normal.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:

Mark Young asked how the snow clearing was coming. Mayor McCown said that Mark Phillips has been doing the clearing and unfortunately because of the compact snow coverage it is not going real well yet. David Jones said he had some concerns about the snow removal over the weekend but was told the town's truck was out early in the morning on Monday. Dave Ulrick said he can't get it done in ten minutes it is a process to get everything cleared in town. Mayor McCown also said the roads froze adding to the problem. Tim mentions that Mark plowed California to D Street and left a large berm in front of D Street and never came to clear it out of the way, he asks the mayor to please remind Mark to clear large berms from people's driveways. Mayor McCown also said people leaving their garbage containers next to the road are causing problems. Daymon reminds everyone that is has been awhile since we have had much accumulation of snow and to be patient.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Ordinance 460-N Amending 2016 Budget Ordinance 454-N

Mayor McCown explains that Cody needs to amend the budget so the end of the year expenses can be covered without going over the fund balances and to include the purchase of the backhoe. Mark Young **MOVED** to adopt Ordinance 460N amending the 2016 Budget. Dave Ulrick seconded the motion and the motion carried with Daymon Marple being a Nah vote.


FINANCIAL:

Approval of Checks: David Jones **MOVED** to approve the following bills presented to council for payment. Daymon Marple seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Check Register #12560-12569

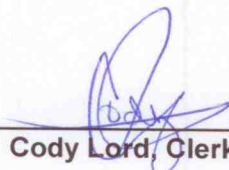
Claims: \$8,056.46
Total: \$8,056.46

ADJOURNMENT: David Jones **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 PM. Daymon Marple seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.



Ray McCown, Mayor

ATTEST:



Cody Lord, Clerk/Treasurer