

Town of Oakesdale
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
March 16, 2020

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Dennis Palmer called the council meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** Mayor Dennis Palmer, Dolores Haley, Al Evans, Tom Johnson, Tom Crooks and Randy Robinson. Also present was Mary DeGon, Clerk/Treasurer.
- III. **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:** None
- IV. **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:** Council members reviewed February 18, 2020 minutes. There were no minutes to review for March 2, 2020 since there was no quorum. Randy Robinson made the motion to approve the minutes as written. Tom Crooks seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed**.
- V. **TOWN MARSHAL REPORT:** Keith Cooper submitted his department’s report for February 2020 consisting of ten cases ranging from fraud, animal problems, suspicious, traffic offense, 9-1-1 hang-ups and warrant arrest.
- VI. **PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:** Mary gave the Public Works Report for February 2020. The generator at the well is being serviced and the soft start on the well. We finally had an actual power outage for more than five hours a few weeks ago and the new generator that was installed in 2014 did not come on as it should have. We are having both pieces of equipment serviced to fix the problem. Pam has started sweeping the streets of all the gravel and sanding chips that were used through winter. The old white sweeper is not picking up the gravel but leaving berms instead. The hydraulic pump is not working amongst other problems with the sweeper. Pam asked if they want to put more money into the sweeper to be fixed. It’s old enough that it might not be able to be fixed. Council members said no to fixing it. Pam will continue to use the orange sweeper and keep the gravel to the edge of the streets. If we need to rent a sweeper for picking up the excess gravel, we can look into that too.
- VII. **OLD BUSINESS:**
 - A. **TENNIS COURTS** – Council members reviewed an email from Eric Hanson, Town Attorney, that he will be contacting Allison from RCO to get some more clarity on the tennis courts. He will also contact Jake Dingman, Oakesdale Schools, to see what his thoughts are on this situation.
 - B. **BUSINESS INCUBATOR LEASE** – We have received no response from Meghan Doneen since sending her an email allowing her to rent the space for \$250 per month or to decline our offer. Council members said by her not responding to our email speaks volumes of her decision to not pursue the lease.

- C. **DOH APPLICATION – WATER RATES** – We received a phone call from Dennis Hewitt with Department of Health informing us we were given 100% loan forgiveness on \$2.666 million. We will have 4 years to complete our water system upgrade project. We will only be responsible for the interest on the money we receive to pay the bills on the project. The principal and loan fees are also forgiven. In the contract we will be getting in June or July, it will state that we need to raise our monthly water rates to be able to put funds into our reserve account for our water system. DOH will not dictate how much that should be but leave that decision up to our council. The increase needs to be a fair projection of what is needed to replenish our reserves. Steve Marsh from TD&H Engineering sent an email showing the EPA guidelines on the average water rate of the Median Household Income. Oakesdale’s Median Household Income is \$57,500. Our water rates should be around \$47.92 per month according to the EPA guidelines. We are currently at \$29.80 per month. Council members discussed a \$15.00 per month increase on water rates and to possibly spread the increase over 2 years...\$7.50 in 2020 and another \$7.50 in 2021. This was tabled for more discussion at our next meeting.

VIII. **NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. **ENGINEERING SERVICES 2020-2021** – We received two SOQ’s for engineering services for 2020-2021. The two engineer firms were TD&H Engineering and Varela & Associates, Inc. Council members reviewed the two Statement of Qualifications. Tom Crooks made the motion to select TD&H Engineering as the Town’s engineer for 2020-2021. Al Evans seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed**.
- B. **COVID-19** – Council members received a fact sheet on COVID-19 that will also be mailed to all our customers with their utility bill. Mary discussed working behind lock doors at City Hall for social distancing and protection against the virus. Council members left it up to Mary when to lock the doors during City Hall operation hours.
- C. **.09 FUNDING APPLICATION** – Council members reviewed the completed .09 funding application that was submitted by Kristie Kirkpatrick from Whitman County Rural Library District for our library upgrades. The total cost of the project is \$20,000 to upgrade the front entrance of the library to meet ADA standards and accessibility,
- D. **FLAGS** – The flags and poles we have on our decorative light poles on Steptoe Avenue have taken a beating this past year. The flags are tattered and the poles are broken or bent. They were less than a year old. We need to come up with another idea of how to display our American flags. Tom Crooks will take on this project and see what options he can find for us and report back to council at the next meeting.
- E. **CELL TOWER** – Council members reviewed an email from Tami Drew who was a consultant for Verizon Wireless regarding the possible placement of a cell tower in Oakesdale. They had considered a cell tower up by our water tower or placing a cell tower at the cemetery. Verizon has chosen to go with a cell tower placement up at the cemetery. If that site does not work out for whatever reason, then the water tower location will be the backup site.

IX. COUNCIL MEMBER'S BUSINESS:

DOLORES – None

AL – He wants to make sure we are looking into repairing the welcome sign at the south end of our Town. Mary has been in contact with Traffic Signs who made the decal of the old mill on our signs. The company is searching their files for the design that was created back in 2008. Once they find the artwork, then we can have another decal made for the sign.

TOM J. – None

TOM C. – None

RANDY – He would like to see our council meetings go to once a month during the summer months. Council members discussed considering May, June July & August for monthly meetings and twice a month for all the other months. It would take an Ordinance to make those changes. Al Evans made the motion to change the current Ordinance from twice a month council meeting to once a month council meeting during May – August. Randy Robinson seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed.**

X. TREASURER'S REPORT/APPROVAL OF CHECKS: Council members reviewed the Treasurer's Report, Check Register and Receipt Register for February 2020. Al Evans made the motion to approve paid checks #26860 - #26887 in the amount of \$10,469.88 for claims and \$14,712.10 for payroll totaling \$25,181.98 from February 20, 2020 through March 13, 2020. Randy Robinson seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed.**

XI. ADJOURNMENT: Dolores Haley made the motion to adjourn the council meeting at 7:50 p.m. Randy Robinson seconded the motion, all council members voted yes – **motion passed.**

DENNIS PALMER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

MARY DEGON, CLERK/TREASURER