

City Council Minutes
February 22, 2021

The meeting was called to order in the Council meeting room at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor JD Hegwood. Present were Lance DeLissa, Armando Gonzalez, Roberto Holguin, Brian Kroth and George Lucas. Also present were City Administrator Dean Cordes, City Attorney Clay Kuhns and City Clerk Janet Gleason. Visitors were Bobbi Allison, Tom Kuhns, Jamie Boese and Michael Inlow.

There was no public comment.

Jamie Boese introduced herself to the council. Motion by Gonzalez, second by DeLissa to hire Jamie Boese for the position of Utility Billing Clerk at \$14.89/hour. Motion carried with all in favor.

Council reviewed the police report with Inlow. The USD 226 School Board reviewed the proposed no-phone ordinance said they would like enforcement all year and to also include the high school parking lot and Road 19. DeLissa asked if “distracted driving” was illegal and Kuhn stated, “currently not”. There are 8 exceptions to the STO which makes it hard to enforce. DeLissa asked about enforcement and Kuhns said this ordinance would enable officers to ticket anyone in a school zone with phone in hand unless they were calling 911 or parked. Council discussed their concerns regarding the ordinance and Kuhns asked to know if council was in consensus of moving forward on. DeLissa, Holguin and Kroth- no, Gonzalez and Lucas- yes.

DeLissa asked about the Tahoe damage and if insurance covered it. Inlow stated the repairs had been completed and insurance had made payment. The total in invoices received was \$4,202.12 and there would be \$1000.00 deductible. Kroth asked Inlow where he thought improvements could be made for the police department to stay within the budget this year. Inlow feels salaries are the cause and he feels they were not accounted for when the budget was set. Attorney Kuhns explained that municipal court costs are hard to budget for. Every attempt is made to settle cases without the need for attorneys. Kroth said if labor was the issue for being over budget then there should be less hours worked. Inlow said that hours worked depend on the casework and caseload. If they go over it has nothing to do with scheduling. Kroth reminded Inlow that the council had asked last September if he were going to stay in budget and he had indicated he would but was over budget again in 2020. Inlow reviewed expenditures from 2020 and requested a budget of \$349,000.00 for 2021. Cordes said the auditor increased the police budget from \$325,000.00 to \$350,000.00 for this year. The police budget has been increased every year based on the auditor’s predictions. Attorney Kuhns did not have all the numbers but did state that the police budget was \$245,000.00 in 2011, \$290,000.00 in 2016, \$350,000.00 for 2021.

Inlow informed council that Officer Schmidt would be attending police academy from March 8 to June 11. Officer Inlow and Officer Wondra will be covering for him and Officer Mather will also fill in. Inlow has met with Sheriff Ritter and they are working well together. Inlow left the meeting.

Minutes of the February 8 meeting were approved as written.

There were no building permits.

Due to extreme weather and need to run the power plant 24/7, Cordes was unable to have information prepared regarding stoplight repairs. Gonzalez asked about the reports of discolored water. Cordes stated that they were not able to identify the exact reason. City crews flushed the hydrants until the water was clean. Chlorine residuals were checked and ok, so there was no need for water to be boiled. DeLissa suggested that if it happened again maybe a sample should be sent out for testing.

Cordes reported to the council regarding the severe cold weather. KMEA contacted him on Sunday, February 15 and asked him to start the plant on Monday. Sunday at 9 p.m. they called and asked to start the plant ASAP and to avoid running on natural gas. From Sunday to Thursday evening the plant burned 12,347 gallons of diesel fuel running the plant 24/7. Friday the city was back on KMEA. It is all regulated by the Southwest Power Pool. Everyone present stated they were grateful the city has the power plant and residents did not endure multiple or extended outages in the extreme cold.

Cordes explained to Council several issues that occurred at the plant and will be pricing repairs. The 1280 engine generator was shaking, and a pole probably needs to be replaced. It was installed in 1952. The 1600 engine and 2880 had plugged catalytic converters. Estimated cost to clean these is \$300 each (there are 8 on each of the two engines). Another engine had a seal come loose and the leaking oil ignited a small fire. Mather was able to put the fire out while Cordes shut the engine down. Council agreed it will be worth the cost of repairs to maintain the power plant. Natural gas price increased as much as 50 times but was back to regular pricing on Thursday. Cordes said the city did have to purchase some power at the high rate and he thought the additional diesel cost would be around \$24,000.00. DeLissa asked if the city would be able to cover the additional costs. Cordes stated he would like to finalize the costs first and is hopeful that there are enough reserve funds to cover the addition costs. He suggested that if necessary, Council could increase the fuel adjustment.

Cordes said the exhaust blanket purchased before 2001 has become saturated with oil over time and cannot be cleaned. Replacement cost was estimated at around \$2000.00. Council agreed that it should be replaced.

Attorney Kuhns asked what it would have cost if we did not have the power plant. DeLissa estimated it would have been \$200,000.00 for 2 days IF power had been available to purchase. Attorney Kuhns and DeLissa both stated how

fortunate the city was to have the plant. Cordes said it would be hard to estimate what the City would have paid for power, if it were even available, without the plant but likely hundreds of thousands of dollars. Council all agreed the power plant proved its value to the community last week. DeLissa expressed his gratitude to Dean and the city crew for keeping everything running for the citizens of Meade.

Gleason presented quotes for two renewing CD's. Fowler State Bank did not quote. Meade State Bank 6 months @.45%APY, 12 months @ .55 APY. Plains State Bank 6 month .20%APY, 12 month .30%. Motion by DeLissa, second by Holguin to renew CD # 23227 and CD #23226 for 12 months @ .55 APY with Meade Sate Bank. Motion carried with all in favor.

Motion by DeLissa to pay \$280.04 to Complete Payment Recovery Services for a check that had a stop pay issued and was cashed. Second by Lucas. Motion carried. DeLissa suggested the next checks that are printed have a message added that the check is void after 90 days.

DeLissa told Cordes there is a utility pole at the park in need of repair.

Gonzales asked where the public hearing regarding COOP property would be and Cordes said it would be in the Council room during the regular council meeting on March 8. If needed it could be moved to the library meeting room. Gonzalez also inquired about SB87. Attorney Kuhns feels that it will not pass.

Kroth asked Council for their opinion if a department were over budget the previous year all purchases over \$500.00 would need council approval, in advance, for the next year. He asked the council if they felt this would be a method for council to assist the department in staying within the budget. Gonzalez said all departments are entrusted with taxpayer funds to provide services and Council is responsible to oversee those budgets. Cordes said in some cases, such as the stoplight, it can be difficult to get bids and that sometimes there are expenses that cannot be predicted. Council understood this. Kuhns said it would need to be a policy and will explore the best way to approach this.

Council requested the clerk provide departmental comp-time/overtime totals at each council meeting.

Motion by Gonzales, second by DeLissa to enter executive session for attorney client privilege to meet back in this same room in 5 minutes. Motion carried with all in favor. After executive session, no action taken.

Motion by Kroth, second by Lucas to adjourn. Motion carried with all in favor.

ATTEST:

J.D. Hegwood, Mayor

Janet Gleason, Clerk