

January 10th, 2022
Council Meeting

TOWN OF WHITEHALL
P. O. BOX 529
WHITEHALL, MT 59759
January 10th, 2022

The Whitehall Town Council held their regular meeting in the Council Chambers at 207 East Legion Ave, Monday, January 10th, 2022.

PRESENT: Council Members: Katy James, Bill Lanes, Pat Peterson, Linda Jung, Roy McBride, Clerk/Treasurer Allissa Christensen, and Mayor Mary Janacaro-Hensleigh.

VISITORS: Kory Klapan, Joe Granvold, Bridget and Dale Morse, Liz Pullman, Maxine Samuelson, Cara Sacry, Konni Smith.

Mayor Mary Hensleigh called the Council Meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Roll Call was taken. All members present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Oath of Council members Pat Peterson, Linda Jung, and Bill Lanes. Oath of Mayor Mary. Mayor Mary reads oath of office and swears in the three council members stated above. Allissa Christensen reads oath of office and swears in Mayor Mary Janacaro- Hensleigh.

IV. AGENDA APPROVAL:

Roy motioned to approve with Linda seconding.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Katy motioned to approve with Pat seconding.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

VI. REPORTS:

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Mary: I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year and wanted to let everybody know that Monday is a holiday so the office will be closed for Martin Luther King Day. I'd also like to tell everyone that the streets are very icy and to be very careful. We just got another batch of sand delivered today. The guys have been out Saturday, Sunday and every day for the last 3 weeks taking care of the streets. As soon as they put sand down it just gets gobbled in. I want everyone to please be very careful because Whitehall is a very flat town and it is very, very slick out there so please be careful. We are doing the best we can. I would like to remind everybody that business licenses and dog licenses, so please stop in to Town Hall and renew those, if you would please. Next month for our February meeting, the meeting will be on Tuesday the 15th. Monday is Valentine's Day and I don't want to get in the way of any romance and dinners. I don't want any spouses and significant others mad at me so we will have our meeting on Tuesday. Keeping everything short and sweet tonight, it's the football national championship between Alabama and Georgia and I want to get home and watch the game. Let's keep it short and sweet.

Attorney Report:

No report.

Clerk / Treasurer's Report:

Allissa: Water usage changed last month from average back to actual, so if you notice an increase in your sewer bill, call us and we can take a look at what is going on. You might have a leak. We are still in the process of our up-to-date audit. We've had quite a few requests to find claims and invoices, it is pretty time consuming. Quarterlies are done and have been submitted, W2s and 1099s have been mailed out and sent to the state. Todd has been helping me with bank recs and I hope to get him in here sometime soon to give me a refresher on a few things. I received a few citations over the last few weeks of December but as of last Wednesday I have nothing scheduled on the docket until March.

Public Work's Report:

Kory: I'll start with water; we had a water leak last Friday at 409 E Second. We got it fixed. Sewer, the lift station, I think you guys were aware from last meeting. We ended up changing out that pump and we did get our air bubbler changed. DMR's are done, we did them 1/5/22 and taking water samples tomorrow. The cemetery fence, someone ran through it. We have the gentlemen's insurance information and stuff but I called him today and he is running out to Smith Supply and is going to pay for materials. I told him that would probably be good enough and we can just repair the fence. It was \$160.00 worth of stuff; they are just going to pay and we can pick it up. We dug one grave. We started taking down Christmas today. When it's been cold out, we have gone through and the Kubota zero turn mower that we use we ended up putting new blades on it, fixed some little pieces and parts that were broke, nothing major. Changed the guard that come out, new fuel filter, oil, blades, got it all ready to go. The vacuum had a few things that we needed to fix on it. We got it all ready. The John Deere, the old mower, we had it tore apart for about 2 weeks, changing bearings and different stuff to make it work,

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we got it all done. We've plowed and sanded 20 out of the past 29 days, 5 weekend days. Ordered more sand, it came in today. Fixed the skid steer broom. We were brooming off the sidewalk over by the school and it totally came apart, but we got it back together. We got called out a total of 8 times, Ron got called out 3 times, I got called out 5. We had 3 water shut offs, 8 located tickets. I've been working on that annexation, and the funding for the annexation for the Manor. It's coming along but pretty slow. They asked for a whole bunch more paperwork on Friday, so, I will be getting them that. We have applied for our Pot B money. That was part of the paperwork that I need for the annexation. We resubmitted an application for Pot C Money for the lagoon headworks and the Liberty Place.

Fire Chief's Report:

Joe: Call totaled here for the last meeting, in town we had 1 gas, 1 chimney fire. On the outside of town, we had 5 wildland, 12 semi/car wrecks, 1 chimney fire, 2 structure fires, and 2 car fires. We have 2 new members, I am not sure if that in on the agenda for tonight, Don Burns and Dasan Torgerson, pretty good guys. They have been with us for about a month now, we are happy to have those guys. The radios that we were supposed to get through a grant, through Jefferson Valley, we seldom receive those... inaudible... so hopefully that is coming up soon. That grant I put in for Whitehall for 4 pagers, Stimson is ordering those. He just ordered those last month. It's right at the end of the grant but this is going to cost like \$400.00 just to let you guys know because we have to pay for 10% of it. Pagers are around \$550 a piece. I can't put in an expenditure for it until I know the exact cost so. At some point real soon before this budget year is over, I would like to order a set of turnouts through the city, and I am going to do the same through the Jefferson Valley Rural. They are right around \$4200.00 for a complete set but they are 8 months out. This is the problem that the fire dept is having, and I'm having, is when I order something it can be anywhere from 6 to 9 months out. Everything is a long time out. We have 7 new members and we need to get some turnouts ordered. The SCBA's and masks, I ordered those back in October and they are not due to ship out until 3/18/22. That will give you guys an idea. We are going to start firefighter 1 training on 1/20/22. That will be about a 3 ½ month training. We are having our New Year's Party January 14th, this Friday for all the members and their family, city council, rural board and all the entireties. That will be at 18:00 for drinks and dinner at 19:00. It's going to be Pig out BBQ, they do a really good job. Hopefully you guys can attend. We have a bunch of new covid rapid tests, just for the fire fighters, through the county. There are numerous trainings coming up in Madison County. I see refresher training; they got a new trailer through Madison County for the MADCO's to do training. It's supposed to be a really good training so I would like to get that done. I want to stress to everybody that we have been called out on 5 fires here in the last two weeks because people are not doing burn permits. Every fire needs a burn permit, from now on if you don't have a burn permit, you are going to get a burn ticket. I'm not going to give anymore breaks on it. It takes not only from the firemen but the 5 or six people that respond, the Jefferson County sheriff dispatch and the Jefferson Valley Ambulance respond. You have 15 people responding to an incident that we don't need to respond to. It's getting frustrating, so if you burn without a permit you are going to get a ticket. I want to thank everyone that donated for the wreath auction. You all will be getting; I think we raised (glitch in video) for the fire dept. Everyone will be getting a thankyou card for that. The Christmas parade of lights was a great success that we had around town I think the fire dept did a great job, we had a following of about 50 cars at one point. I think it was a pretty good thing. I want to thank the Whitehall Methodist Church for their donation to the fire dept and there were several other donations that came in over Christmas. You

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guys will all be getting thank yous' from us. This month we are going to have election of officers. So, we will see what happens there.

Sherriff's Report:

No report.

Commissioner Report:

No report.

Committee / Board Reports:

Planning Board:

See minutes.

Recreational Complex Board:

No meeting.

Pool Board:

No meeting.

Trees, Parks and Cemetery:

No meeting.

Water/Sewer/Garbage and Streets/Alley/Sidewalks:

WSG:

Roy: we had 2 adjustments for the period we adjusted approved. We discussed and decided to put the garbage truck, the side lift garbage truck we have, for sale. We need to get that taken care of. We have not used it in 2 years. I think we have set a minimum at \$23,500.00.

SAS:

Roy: Kory is going to get bids from the rail crossing to the museum so we can go to TIFF to see if we can get that approved and taken care of and also the crosswalk from Viella past the food pantry to the rodeo grounds to try and get that done in that same process. Since we didn't get any state money, I think we've got enough funds to figure out how we can get it done. We've got to get the bids; I don't know when they will be back. Do you know Kory?

Kory: He told me sometime this week.

Roy: So, that's what we did on that and that's about all we have.

T.I.F.F.:

No meeting.

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CTAC:

No meeting.

VII. Public Comment :

Liz : The PTSA has asked me to ask you and Allissa, they are interested in helping clean up the graffiti but they are wondering who to contact, or who the person is who owns the building. They want to know what is town owned and what is actually DOT owned. So just a heads up you will be getting a call about that. I guess they talked to Dale about that too, but PTSA is willing to help.

Mayor Mary : So they contact Allissa, she has been in contact with the owner. Ace has ordered us in some product. I don't know if it is in yet, but just have them contact Allissa.

VIII. Consent Agenda :

Planning Board:

1. Jenna McNew Fencing – *Approved*
2. National Affordable Housing Network – *Approved*

Business License:

3. Whitehall Auto and Glass Repair- *Approved*
4. South Construction- *Approved*
5. Austin's Hired Hand – *Approved*
6. Brenda Sue Hartford development permit – *Tabled*

Volunteer Firefighters Dasan Torgerson and Donald Burns – *Approved*

Pat motioned to approve items 1-5 and the firefighters and defer item number 6 with Roy seconding.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

6. Brenda Sue Hartford development permit

Pat motioned to discuss with Roy seconding.

Pat: There are two sheds on the property. One is right on the edge of the property line into the alley. If an ambulance or fire truck had to get down that road they couldn't. We have requested this be addressed for about 3 or 4 months and she keeps promising she's going to do it and get the application in and get them moved but nothing has been done so far.

Mayor Mary: Does this structure have to be moved entirely off the property?

Pat: No, it just needs to be moved to somewhere within the property away from the alley.

Mayor: okay and the second structure?

Pat: It also needs to be moved.

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Linda: There is really no place for her to move that on the property. She can't get both of those on there, legally. When you go on 8 feet on each side, 5 feet from the back, and 25 feet from the front. I do not know how we are going to be able to accommodate.

Mayor: she can keep one structure but the one has to be moved entirely.

Pat: She was supposed to show us a drawing of where they both would go but we have gotten nothing from her, and she is not responding to the Planning Board.

Mayor: It would be my recommendation for the council to make a motion that Ed send a letter to her to address this issue. Unless you have a better idea.

Roy motioned to approve with Pat seconding.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

IX. PRESENTATIONS

None.

X. Unfinished Business

A. Council discussion and determination on employee pay scale. Tabled.

Pat: I recommended we table it until April or May when we start the budget cycle.

Mayor: We just keep having it on so no one forgets.

B. Council discussion and determination on Ordinance revisions chapters 8, 18 & 30 by the Parks Trees and Cemetery Board, second reading.

Mayor: We made the corrections that you requested at the last meeting, are there anymore that you found?

Linda: no, I actually went through the first and the second reading and everything looks really good on the second reading. They did a great job.

Pat motioned to accept ordinances with Bill seconding.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

XI. New Business:

A. Council discussion and determination of appointing Shawn Hoagland to Council seat Ward 3

Pat motioned to approve with Bill seconding.

Roy motioned for Shawn to explain why he wants to be on the board again.

Shawn: I'm Shawn Hoagland, was formally council member ward 3. I had resigned at the end of 2021 due to missing a couple meetings which I don't like doing. And not having a ton of time for this beyond work and family. After talking to a couple people, talking to my wife, and nobody filling the seat, decided

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it would be better to come back and participate and be in the ward 3, to represent them. Does anybody have any questions?

Roy: I guess I would like to say we appreciate you when you are on the board. You do a very good job. You've really helped us out and you've got a good business acumen and we need that. I understand that missing meetings is a tough deal in the line of business that you're in, I guess, I would rather have you here for 7 or 8 meetings vs 0. I guess all I will say is keep in touch with us when you are not going to be able to so we can get you filled up to date. So, we can get your impression of what's going on in happening. I think the council will appreciate it.

Linda: I was going to say, you know, a couple times I've touched base with you, and I think that's really important that we do, if you are not here. I do realize, with your business, you can't be. There is go much going on that we all have to be on top of our game.

Shawn: will do, for sure.

Maxine: I live in ward 3 and I am one of the people that talked to Shawn at the post office one day and told him that he's doing a good job. I understand that he can't always be here but I do appreciate the time that you are here.

Shawn: Thank you. I appreciate that.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Shawn is sworn in as Council Member Ward 3.

B. Council discussion and determination on selling garbage truck/putting out to bid with the reserved recommendation from the water/sewer/garbage board.

Roy motioned to discuss with Pat seconding.

Roy: I think the garbage truck needs to be sold. We haven't used it for 2 years. We have really good service right now. It's just sitting here collecting rust and if we can get it sold for a decent price, we need to get it done. Get it out of here so we don't have to look at it anymore. It will give us some funds to do other things, I think.

Mayor: and now is the time to do it because they are requesting, we update our inventory list, so it's one less thing on our insurance. I agree, it's a very good time to be doing this.

Bill: the rationale to do this makes perfect sense because it's like you said just sitting but if we can get that value out of it rather than just sitting. Plus, the contract that we are in is great. If we ever had to go back, we couldn't use that truck anyway. It's really of no good for that proposed decision.

Linda: I would like to say that if we do sell it, I would like to see those funds directed to something that needs to be taken care of.

Mayor: I believe it has to go back to water, sewer, and garbage fund. Am I correct Allissa?

Allissa: I think we have to put it to resolution, but I need to do more research on that.

Mayor: we will look into that.

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Roy: how long do we have to advertise it, Allissa?

Allissa: I don't think it specifically says but to cover our bases at least 2 weeks. Kory, do you know how many bids? Or people that are interested?

Kory: I marketed it a little bit, right now there is only one company interested in it. If everybody else, I mean I contacted like 5 or 6 people, trying to tell them that it was going to be up for sale. I think there's one, and that one actually approached me. They were driving by and saw it sitting there for the past couple years and they said "hey we would be interested in buying this."

Mary: but we will put it out to bid to cover our bases.

Kory: I think it has to be in the paper for two weeks.

Allissa: I'll look at the MCA's and make sure there isn't something else that we are missing.

Roy motioned to approve with Linda seconding.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

C. Council discussion and determination on granting the Whitehall Food Pantry as discounted rate for water/sewer/garbage utilities.

Roy motioned to discuss with Shawn seconding.

Cara Sacry: Hi, I'm Cara Sacry. I am one of the directors of the Whitehall Food Pantry. I have a little note written up here that I would like to read, then I'll pass one out so each of you can have your own.

"Whitehall Food Pantry would like to petition for suspension of utility charges at our new building located at 110 South Division for the following reasons: The Food Pantry is a non-profit organization with service to Whitehall and the outlying area. We believe that other non-profits, such as the masonic lodge, do not incur utility charges. The food distribution at the party only happens once per month, and the restocking of supplies, which is once a month, also. These are the only times that water or sewage would possibly be used. The Food Pantry would not utilize garbage pick-up as there is little need that is usually taken care of by one of us volunteers. The Food Pantry depends on donations and volunteers to remain a viable resource for the community. We feel that \$87.00 per month far exceeds the time and utilization that water, sewage and garbage is needed. It also takes away from the funds that we could be using to give back to the people in our community that use our services. Respectively submitted"

Mayor: Thank you very much. It is my recommendation to the board that we charge \$1.00 per year for the services. That's what we charge the library and that's what we charge the Country Store. The Food Pantry is a vital part of this community. It is much needed and I think this is well within our means to do this waiver but it is up to the Council.

Katy: I am in agreement with Mary, I think its reasonable for non-profits and if we can do it for others in the community, why not this one?

Mayor: They only have one bathroom, correct? They are only open one day a week, they are not making any kind of dent.

Pat: and if we already do it for other.

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Mayor: We do it for the library, which has a lot more use and we do the \$1.00 a year contract with the country store as well

Cara: I just want to correct; it is just once a month that we are there.

Mayor: Once a month, yes.

Roy: What do we do for the other non-profits other than those two. The churches, all of those.

Mayor: the churches pay but the churches are there on a multi weekly basis whether it be bible study or church services of that.

Maxine: I have a problem with this, and its like what Roy said. The churches don't get a break. When we got the individual trash containers, our church called and tried and tried and tried to get some sort of waiver or whatever on our monthly water, sewer, garbage bill. Nothing, they said no, everybody pays the same. Well, that's not fair, because if you are doing this for one non-profit. You really have to make accommodations for any other non-profit. Not just the Food Pantry, not just the Country Store, not just the library. Our church, we have just taken the trash home ourselves, Linda and Ron take it home, I take it home, Wheelers take it home, everybody in town we just take it home and put it in our own dumpster. We are there once a week for church services and we are there on Tuesdays for bible study and that's very infrequent. And I think a lot of churches, I don't think there's any church in town that has a full-time staff or a secretary that's there like all day or anything like that. I think that needs to be considered as well. Thank you.

Mayor: Thank you Maxine. Any other comments? Bridget?

Bridget: I just wanted to speak for another non-profit, The Saddle Club. We are actually going to disconnect our services this month and we figured we would save \$600.00. Which at \$25.00 a family membership, that would be a lot of memberships we would have to collect to pay that every year. But we did not because we had someone who wanted to rent it this month. So, we had it rented, once, but other than that that's very expensive about it for non-profits but we have paid it. And we only use the building 2 or 3 times a year and we pay year-round. And I am not complaining because I think the Food Pantry is wonderful. I'm just saying for your education and the Masonic Lodge I believe had their water turned off at least 20 years ago and disconnected so they don't pay water or sewer and they don't pay for trash because they have no trash and they meet like 3 or 4 times a year. So, that's what the Masonic Lodge does.

Mayor: Discussion?

Shawn: It's a tough on but it is a slippery slope. They are a lot more non-profits that have that issue and I empathize. I mean, that's a tough one. I was kind of surprised that the library is on that dollar deal. There is only two right now that are?

Mayor: Well, the library and the Country Store are owned by the Town. We own the buildings.

Shawn: Well, that gives it a difference prefinance than anything else.

Pat: So, would we be paying for those bills then? If we charged for water sewer and trash, that would basically be, we would pay it.

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Allissa: we are absorbing it, the cost of the business.

Multiple people: it's in the budget, its budgeted.

Allissa: So, I'm just thinking about other non-profits. The Country Store. They provide a service you pay for things; you buy there but then they take that money and they put it back into the community. The Saddle Club, they take that money and from what I understand it goes back into the Rec Complex. Library, kind of the same thing, they put on those programs and what you are paying for. The Food Pantry, they take donations and food, and they are volunteering, no body is getting paid. They are using that money to get food for those who need it. I'm just thinking out loud, but do you get what I am trying to say? Like if they were making a profit and you know, selling food I would definitely say no, they need to pay the water, sewer, garbage, but in this case, I don't know.

Mayor: Tonight, the only thing on the agenda is the Food Pantry. If you want the others to be put on the agenda in a, next meeting, or whatever, we can address that then. But your decision tonight is strictly the Food Pantry.

Bill: So, some of my thoughts are, its good that we take these by individual cases. What Allissa is saying is really spot on and true. The Food Pantry, I will speak on behalf of our church facility, a lot more use of water and more usage everyday or weekly. So, I could be in favor of granting this just because it is a meniscal amount and I like the idea that adjusting this individually. There may be others in the future but that the purgative that we have, right?

Mayor: Yes, you have the purgative of \$1.00 a year, you have the purgative of ½ price per month, it is totally up to the council of what you want to do with this proposal.

Bill: and then also, Allissa's point is really good because those entities like the Food Pantry, all of that goes back to the community. I see that distinction as very valuable in consideration.

Shawn: Cara, can you tell me your cadence, once a month is all you will be?

Cara: Yeah, once a month usually September through June. We meet once a month or have a distribution. And Connie and I are usually the only ones in there that would use the facilities.

Mayor: so, it's not a public toilet?

Cara: no, it's not a public toilet. And of course, during the summer we are suspended. Of course, if someone is in need of food, they have our number and they can call, and we can make that arrangement.

Shawn: So, its pure distribution, there is no production, prepping, anything, it's just distributions, once a month, not even 12 months a year.

Cara: Correct.

Pat motioned to approve Food Pantry to waive the fee for water/sewer/trash to a dollar a year, the same arrangements that we have with the country store and the library for the food pantry. Bill second.

Mary asks "all those in favor"

Katy, Bill, Shawn, and Pat AYES

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Mary asks for “all those opposed”

Pat: and then the churches can petition is they want the same thing. We could discuss that separately. But we can't vote on them tonight.

Mayor: it would be another agenda item for these other cases. Alright. *Adjourn meeting*

Linda and Roy did not vote on this matter due to an interruption in the voting.

XII. BILL/ CLAIM APPROVAL LIST TO BE SIGNED BY ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Held after executive session.

XIII. Adjourn:

Executive session was held and closed to the public.

Mayor Mary Hensleigh

Date

Town Clerk Treasurer

Date