

MINUTES OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
March 7, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
TOWN OF VIRGINIA CITY, MONTANA
Elk's Lodge

Council Present: Justin Gatewood, David Bacon, Amy Grice, Kacey Smart, Greg Jorczyk

Absent: None

Staff Present: Timber Pruett Clerk/Treasurer, Eric Barsness HPO, Shane Leach PWD

Absent: None

Public Present: Don Mefford, Tanya Engle, Cathy Leach, Liz Mannarino, Laurie Hansen (via Zoom)

1) Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:00 by Justin Gatewood, Mayor

2) Mayor and Commissioner's Reports/Comments:

a) Councilmember David Bacon mentioned that the Planning Board met last week to review the Action Plan for Virginia City, which they are on schedule with. A review of the Action Plan is done at the beginning of each year.

b) Mayor Gatewood noted that barking dogs and dogs at large remain an issue in Virginia City, and he encouraged the Council to think about a proposal on how to handle this issue.

c) Mayor Gatewood has attended several public hearings and meetings recently. Mayor Gatewood joined the Vigilance Club last month, which was founded in the mid-1930's with the mission of keeping Madison County intact at a point in time where splitting the county was being discussed. The Vigilance Club will hold a seminar, hosted by Dan Clark, on April 9th, likely at the Alder Community Center, though the venue is not cemented. This seminar will cover the Local Government Review Process that takes place every 10 years for each county and municipality in Montana. The Source Water Protection Plan Committee has been meeting recently, and is inching closer to filing a petition for groundwater protection in Virginia City. The SWPP Committee hopes to submit this petition within six weeks, following review from the Town's attorney and the Town Council.

d) Mayor Gatewood mentioned that an Easter Egg Hunt will be held by the Vigilance Club on March 31st at the Thompson Hickman Library.

e) Councilmember Amy Grice mentioned that the Fire Department will be holding the Cake Walk fundraiser on April 6th.

3) Public Comments

a) Tanya Engle informed the public that there will be all-you-can-eat pancakes served at the Elk's Lodge this Saturday. Brunch and Bingo is still happening weekly at the Elk's Lodge.

4) Clerks Report:

Clerk Timber Pruett has been working to prepare for the upcoming Resort Tax season. Business License Applications will be sent to business owners this month. Clerk Pruett has also assisted Lois Stephens in finalizing the HB355 grant application.

5) HPO/HPAC Report:

HPO Barsness has continued to work on the Design Review Guidelines and has worked with potential applicants on sign designs. HPAC and HPO Barsness are looking into various options for the Hangman's Building, which was recently resided, including the possibility of whitewashing. HPO Barsness will be hosting a public meeting with members of various organizations and boards in Virginia City to discuss cooperation and the future of Virginia City. This meeting will take place on March 12th at 6:00PM at the Thompson Hickman Library meeting room. The public is welcome to attend.

6) New Business:

a) Development Permit Application – Leach (Fence)

MOTION: To approve Development Permit Application for Leach (Option 2 – Six Foot Fence with Hogwire and Wooden Posts). Motion made by Amy Grice; Seconded by Kacey Smart. **The question was called.** The motion passed by voice vote, Justin Gatewood, Kacey Smart, David Bacon, Greg Jorczyk, and Amy Grice in favor. None opposed.

b) Development Permit Application – Otto (False Front)

MOTION: To approve the Development Permit Application – Otto (False Front) with the overwhelming preference to extend the false front to cover the exposed roof. Motion made by Justin Gatewood; Seconded by Dave Bacon. **The question was called.** The motion passed by voice vote, Justin Gatewood, Kacey Smart, David Bacon, Greg Jorczyk, and Amy Grice in favor. None opposed.

c) HB355 Application

MOTION: To approve the HB355 Grant Application. Motion made by Amy Grice; Seconded by Dave Bacon. **The question was called.** The motion passed by voice vote, Justin Gatewood, Kacey Smart, David Bacon, Greg Jorczyk, and Amy Grice in favor. None opposed.

d) SHPO Contract for HPO Services

MOTION: To approve the SHPO Contract for HPO Services. Motion made by David Bacon; Seconded by Amy Grice. **The question was called.** The motion passed by voice vote, Justin Gatewood, Kacey Smart, David Bacon, Greg Jorczyk, and Amy Grice in favor. None opposed.

e) Trail Update – Greg Jorczyk

i) Councilmember Greg Jorczyk read aloud a letter of concerns from the Fire Chief regarding the proposed trail. Councilmember Jorczyk addressed the concerns and informed the Council that in order for the project to move forward, Elijah Allen, Executive Director of the Montana

Heritage Commission, would need a letter from the Town stating that no Town ordinances are being violated.

ii) Mayor Gatewood noted that the project would impact a lot of community and that the review process is a healthy part of projects like this. Mayor Gatewood voiced that he thinks more details need to be settled before a letter is written by the Town.

f) Local Government Review Seminar

i) As mentioned in 2-c, a seminar will be held on April 9th, likely at the Alder Community Center, regarding the upcoming Local Government Review Process. The last time a Local Government Review was approved by a vote in Madison County was in 1994, where the review commission recommended four-year terms for County Commissioners.

g) Resort Tax Association Bylaws and Voting Member Designation Form

i) There are twelve Resort Tax communities in Montana, and the Resort Tax Association aims to bring those communities together to speak as a collective, specifically during legislative sessions. Currently, only municipalities with a population less than 5,000 can implement a Resort Tax. Bozeman has tried to change that, and though they have been unsuccessful thus far, the Resort Tax Association wants a united voice to lobby against that happening. Virginia City is currently the only Resort Tax community that hasn't joined the Resort Tax Association. There are still questions to be answered, though, such as fees and if it's possible to rescind our membership at any point.

h) Update on ARPA Water Project

i) The use of contingency funds for extra projects was approved at the last Town Council Meeting, and we are entering into the next phase to use the contingency funding.

7) Public Works Report:

PWD Shane Leach had a meeting with Madison County Interlocal to discuss the potential purchasing of new equipment. PWD Leach will keep the Council updated as that unfolds. PWD Leach will be attending water school at the upcoming MRWS conference, which will take place from March 20th through March 22nd.

8) Consent Agenda:

a) Minutes from February 1, 2024

MOTION: To approve the Minutes from February 1, 2024. Motion made by David Bacon; Seconded by Amy Grice. Mayor Gatewood recused himself from the vote. **The question was called.** **The motion passed by voice vote, Kacey Smart, David Bacon, Amy Grice, and Greg Jorczyk in favor. None opposed.**

b) Invoices and Checks February 2024

MOTION: To approve the Invoices and Checks for February 2024. Motion made by Justin Gatewood; Seconded by David Bacon. **The question was called.** **The motion passed by voice vote, Justin Gatewood, Kacey Smart, David Bacon, Amy Grice, and Greg Jorczyk in favor. None opposed.**

d) Accounts Payable, Receivable, Adjustments, and Electronic Checks February 2024

MOTION: To approve the Accounts Payable, Receivable, Adjustments, and Electronic Checks February 2024. Motion made by Justin Gatewood; Seconded by Amy Grice. **The question was called.** The motion passed by voice vote, Justin Gatewood, Kacey Smart, David Bacon, Amy Grice, and Greg Jorczyk in favor. None opposed.

e) Bank Reconciliation for January 2024

MOTION: To approve the Bank Reconciliation for January 2024. Motion made by David Bacon; Seconded by Amy Grice. **The question was called.** The motion passed by voice vote, Justin Gatewood, Kacey Smart, David Bacon, Amy Grice, and Greg Jorczyk in favor. None opposed.

f) Great West Draw

None.

9) Public Comment:

a) Don Mefford, Fire Chief, encouraged the public to check out the new ladder truck, and mentioned that the Virginia City Rural Fire Department is in need of more members. There are currently 16, 4 of which are only there in the summer.

b) Mayor Gatewood thanked the Vigilante Snowmobilers for taking care of the dump road twice per week, as there is a lot of traffic there.

10) Adjournment

MOTION: To Adjourn. Motion made by David Bacon; Seconded by Amy Grice. **The question was called:** Motion was passed by voice vote, all in favor. None opposed.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted and attested,

Justin Gatewood
Mayor

Timber Pruett
Clerk Treasurer