

CITY OF THREE FORKS, MONTANA, APRIL 9TH, 2024

APRIL 9TH, 2024, The Three Forks City Council met at the Three Forks City Hall (Council Chambers), 206 Main Street and via Zoom. (Zoom is a virtual meeting tool which the City began using due to COVID-19 and social distancing guidelines and continues to use to encourage participation from the safety of one's home.) The meeting was presided over by Mayor Randy Johnston. Mayor Johnston called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL: City Council members George Chancellor, Roxi McDermott, (Warren) Garret Buchanan, Gene Townsend, Reagan Hooton, and Ed Tharp. City Treasurer Kelly Smith was present at City Hall. City Attorney Susan Swimley, City Planning Consultant Jerry Grebenc, City Engineer Jessica Salo, and City Clerk Crystal Turner was present via Zoom.

The record reflected a quorum with the attendance of six (6) Council members and the meeting was held.

The **Pledge of Allegiance** to the American Flag was led by Mayor Johnston. Mayor Johnston reminded the audience this meeting was recorded and may be streamed via Zoom and on our Facebook page.

GUESTS: Gloria Howland, Christina Cavanaugh, Dane Hancock of Rudd & Company, PLLC, and Kira Gifford. Bret Robinson attended via Zoom.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/CONCERNS (For items not on the agenda)

There was no public comment.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Johnston read the Consent Agenda into the record as follows:

- a. Claims Paid Electronically for VISA and WEX on 3/22/2024
Totaling \$3,726.28
- b. Claim Paid due to Timeliness to Mail Utility Bills (\$201.96) and
Other Claims on 3/29/2024 Totaling \$64,877.74
- c. City Claims to be Paid
- d. Three Forks Rodeo Arena Board Claims to be Paid
- e. Council Minutes of 3/12/2024
- f. Board of Adjustments Minutes from December 1, 2022
- g. Water Project Draw #17 Request for \$2,942.05 of the ARPA Minimum
Allocation Grant (MAG), \$4,154.75 of ARPA Local Fiscal Recovery
(LFR), and \$974.00 of ARPA Competitive Grant Funds
- h. Underground Electric Easement between Northwestern Energy and
the City of Three Forks at the Water Tank on Colter Trail

Councilwoman McDermott moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilman Chancellor seconded the motion.

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There was no discussion.

Motion Passed Unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public Hearing, Comment and Input on Working Draft of Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)

Jerry Grebenc asked, "We are here today to discuss what is the Council's initial impression, what should be edited, added? I doubt you'll get through it all tonight, but I would love any and all feedback from the Council as well as the public. We are open to your suggestions."

Mayor Johnston said regarding the lift station and forced mains on page 21, he would like to put anodes to protect from electrolysis on the list for the lift station because the structure is 40 years old now, and he would like to put replacement of the lift station pumps on the list as well. "I did see in there, my question is on page 23, in the third paragraph, is a City-owned RV dump station for an approximate \$250,000. That'd be a pretty nice dump station and can you explain it more because that sounds like a pretty nice dump station." Jessica Salo replied they conversed internally and that is how she came up to that number. "This was something that Public Works potentially wanted." Reagan Hooton asked, "Where was it planned on going in?" Kelly Smith said Steve had thought the Rodeo Grounds would be a good location. The Mayor asked how the RV station would be run? "Would someone have to be there all the time?" Kelly asked Jessica if there would be a pay station installed, like for credit cards so it could be an unmanned station? Jessica said she had not put that level of detail into this project. Gene Townsend thought it would be a good addition, but wondered about the impact on our current [wastewater] system. Jessica will put more specifics into it.

Reagan Hooton asked about the sludge removal project on the list. Randy Johnston explained the old lagoon facility, "We had facultative lagoons previously and you could go out in a boat and push a rod into it and see the level of sludge. With these covered, aerated lagoons we have now I don't know you would even get it out of there? That's something for the engineers to figure out." Susan Swimley commented that she is not an expert and the engineers could probably explain better, but she gave a brief explanation of effluent and sludge removal. She added that she believed there is different permitting required for sludge removal and disposing it in another location.

Gene Townsend asked about the paving projects for the city, "Will we have to have a stormwater system in place in order to pave?" Jessica said she typically works on the development side of paving requirements, but did not believe the City will be required to have a stormwater system in place prior to paving streets. Gene said, "If you lived here for a while, or been on the Council, you should have had plenty of complaints by now when someone says '*my drain isn't draining*' and that's because people say this

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was a swamp historically. If you go towards 7th Avenue East, those drains work really well because you get close to the gravel. But Main Street is terrible. If you have a day of rain, you almost have water running into the buildings." He referenced other poor drainage locations like near the carwash and the old root beer stand. "I don't think we should be looking at this like *'Oh gosh that is going to be \$250,000'*. This needs to be thought of as what are the needs of the City as the town grows. What could Three Forks be in 2030? Well easily 3,000 people, and in 2040 could easily be 6,000-7,000 people. If the flood thing gets done and we get several acres opened in town, and then south of town we are told could be about 400 homes. If we have available lots and they are more reasonable than Belgrade or Bozeman, we are going to get growth. It is not unreal to think that Three Forks will no longer be 3,000 people max. It makes you think about what we are going to have to do to stay ahead of the ballgame. We've already been there with *'Wow our sewer lagoon is not doing good and we are going to need to fix it'* but we are looking forward to what Three Forks is going to need to do. Not everything on this list is going to be done, and not everything is going to be able to be charged to new development. But we could budget for some of these things and maybe we don't budget for the ones we don't feel are necessary," Gene stressed to the other Council members.

Garret Buchanan asked about impact fees as a way to fund some of these projects, more specifically about lots already in city limits and developed vs. those that have not annexed into the City. Jerry Grebenc replied that this would be a good conversation to have with Lee Nellis, "But I think you can do graduated impact fees for those already in city limits and partially developed lots using some of the existing facilities." Gene said, "The one we consider the "Buttelman Property" has been in city limits and paying city taxes since the City was first developed," in trying to provide an example of undeveloped yet in city limits.

Gene commented the City does not elect Council members by wards any more. Also on page 26 under sidewalks and trails, "I want to dispute the fact that there are only sidewalks one block east and west of Main Street. There are sidewalks all the way to 5th Avenue East, and even on Front Street, Adams and Jefferson on one side. The total for all the street projects listed is where I came up with the \$3.5 million or so, just for repaving the existing paved roads. I didn't see anything in here for paving the entire town." Jerry stated streets and roads are really hard to fund because unless you are a county and get money for bridges and roads, grant opportunities are really competitive, and the project lists are long across the state. Gene also disputed the comment that the caboose is the Visitor Information Center for the Three Forks Chamber. "That paragraph about Milwaukee Park needs to be updated. Also, out at Bellach Park in about a month or so we will be adding the exercise equipment for seniors which was purchased from an AARP grant. That should be added to the list."

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Reagan Hooton asked if there is a reason why paving the west side of town is not on the list? Randy Johnston said he saw on the map that Ivy Street, 3rd, 4th, 5th West for the future should have a plan to pave, although he does not have a recommendation on how to fund it. Jessica said the list in Table 10 is just the priorities that our engineer talked with Public Works and these were the immediate needs.

Reagan questioned equipment (page 32), "Would the fire truck be appropriate for that?" Jessica thought the Fire Department was included in the Municipal Buildings section. Reagan thought we should consider adding a ladder truck because if we start growing and having structures denser and higher than 36-feet, we would not be able to allow them unless we have a fire equipment to address that height capacity. Kelly Smith commented that the City does collect impact fees for fire currently, so that would make sense to have something like that to the CIP. Jerry thought "emergency services" should be a separate section and that could be ladder truck, SCBA's, facility, etc. "We definitely need impact of what the Fire Department's needs are, and that will help to what Kelly said about collecting impact fees for fire protection," Jerry added.

Garret Buchanan questioned the Municipal Buildings section on page 31, architectural evaluations are listed, but then not much else. "A lot of these buildings in their current state can serve the needs of the town, but if we grow like what we have seen, every one of these buildings are going to have to help at a higher demand. Is just the first step being the architectural design, or I feel like this is a giant umbrella and not catching the level of detail of each of the departments' needs. The needs of the Library are going to vastly different than the needs of the Fire Department or Sheriff." Jerry said if they could get a list of each of the department's needs for those things, but we will still want to do an architectural assessment report on each one of these so we can put a detailed cost to each of those buildings. Almost 100% of the time, the architectural part will be the first step before you can do any grant applications."

Public Comment: Christina Cavanaugh stated she liked Reagan's comment about Emergency Services. She said, "It's undebatable, but our emergency services are so dependent on volunteers and equipment. There was a reference in the document about Broadwater County - and I live in this part but would consider it "town" because I come to Three Forks for everything and go to Broadwater County maybe two times a year. I know it's not technically town. I use Three Forks to do my shopping, the library, the school, everything. Is there a way to tax the services or get Broadwater County to help pay for some of the impacts?" Gene said he has been before the Broadwater County Commissioners several times. "The school gets something because the district covers over to Broadwater County, but for anything else the Broadwater County Commissioners are not interested. One thing we have noticed, with the bridges being closed in

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Old Town we have seen a number of impacts to just Railway Avenue when people come in to get the mail. You're going to get the answer, 'We don't have enough of our own funds to fix our own roads, we aren't going to give away any of our money to help Three Forks'." Christina understands it probably will not be an easy yes, but thinks there should be some sort of stipend or impact fee to those Broadwater County residents. Kelly Smith said, "Just to give you an idea, for all the houses out there in the Fire District, they contribute about \$14,000 a year to the Fire District and Magris alone contributes more than that." Christina also asked if there is there a way to do a waterway systems analysis that does not go into doing a separate PER for each of those? Jessica answered, most projects are based on state funding or grants, and each funding agency will require a PER for each specific project. She added, "You can do an update [to a PER] which is less intensive, but then you do those more frequently and you apply for grants more frequently." Garret added that with his limited knowledge with water and then gravity fed effluent, he would imagine they need a separate focused engineering on the specifics - it is all flowing water but each kind of water is very different.

Jerry talked about the cross jurisdictional cost of services, "These are issues across the state. North Jefferson County comes into town and uses the parks the streets, the swimming pool. There's not a whole lot you can do unless you start charging fees for non-residents and then you have to figure out how you are going to do that."

Kelly Smith reminded the Council that whatever is put into the Capital Improvement Plan is what the impact fees can be based on. "Once the CIP is finalized, then you will work with Lee Nellis to discuss impact fees along with the Impact Fee Advisory Committee to set those for what projects are based on growth and could be charges a fee," she said.

Gene asked if the CIP is approved and done or is a living document? Jerry said that is a great question, and yes it is a living document and should be used annually for budgeting and updated as needed.

The Mayor suggested everyone review the document again, and then sit down with the engineers and staff to fine tune the draft.

Garret said he has some projects to still discuss that he did not see in the document yet. "I have a list of things that I noticed were not on the list and weren't sure if they would be applicable? For instance, if we had more people on our roads, more frequent line crossing/painting would be needed. More funding for City employees as they handle the increase of workload. Increase the capacity of City Hall and the other municipal buildings. Services - as everything in the town grows, we will need to funnel a little more [funding] to each. Even the basketball courts will be used more as we grow and will need to budget for that."

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Crystal Turner read James Hennessy's email as public comment into the record, which was mostly about the school's growth. Crystal questioned to Great West, "Even if the project is not a City funding responsibility, it could still be within the City's document thought right? Because then they could apply to various funding agencies if the school is listed as a growth impact?" Jerry Grebenc said absolutely, that even in the Growth Policy if the City includes these other entities in your growth plan you just need to be clear that you are including the project to help the school, but that it is not City responsibility to fund the school. Garrett thinks that adding language like that would make a whole lot of sense to include. Gene asked if the School District is notified on all developments or annexations they can come in, so they can comment on it? Kelly Smith replied that the notices are published in the newspaper, but they are not notified directly to the School unless they are an adjacent property owner (per the ordinance).

Jessica Salo said, "We wanted your feedback and sounds to me like everyone is in agreement with the current projects in the list and we will not take anything off. We will continue to work on this with costs, and refine the draft with the comments provided today, and come back to the City."

REPORT OF OFFICERS

City Treasurer Kelly Smith reported MMIA sent the final health insurance premium increase, which will be 9%. She reported MMIA is also removing one of the available plans; no one in Three Forks is currently using that plan though so it will not affect our employees.

Crystal Turner reported on the following topics: she apologized because she had this information but did not report these first two things at the last meeting. "I found them in my packet after the meeting. First, was the Big Sky Passenger Rail renewal. They have sent a request for payment and since it wasn't unanimously approved last year I thought we better ask before inputting the bill." Councilman Buchanan and Reagan Hooton are supportive to pay this \$400 bill. Gene Townsend reminded everyone that a passenger rail is not coming to Three Forks. "It's not going to hit Whitehall and Three Forks. I think it's still a good thing but if there was a statement about it going through Three Forks, that is untrue. It would probably go through Logan and Bozeman and Butte - and if you had to go to Bozeman to catch a train that isn't that far really. I am in favor of it. Councilman Townsend moved to approve the \$400 invoice.

Councilwoman Hooton seconded the motion. **Motion Passed Unanimously.**

Next, Bina Peters with River and Range Law (the firm Dana Pepper is with and who is working on our water rights) just wanted to touch base and let the City know that the deadline for adjudication of Basin 41F deadline is set for April 20th. "Once the deadline passes, the Water Court will set a notice of intent to appear. She'll touch base then," Crystal relayed.

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Crystal then reported for those newer Council members - the City is required to file a Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) annually. "This is a compilation of the City's previous years of water test results. It was published in the Three Forks Voice and sent out to our email subscribers, was also posted on Facebook and our website, as well as noted on last month's water bills that went out," she said.

The Regional Housing Coalition was wondering if it would be helpful to attend a Council meeting. "Garret has offered to serve as the City's representative, and has a meeting scheduled with Mark - but would the rest of the Council find it beneficial to have One Valley come and explain what this coalition is, and what they would like Three Forks to contribute?" After a little discussion it was agreed to invite Mark Bond to attend the May 14th Council meeting.

"Tomorrow night is the Headwaters State Park fundraiser at Sawdust & Steel Brewery here in town if anyone would like to attend and play trivia and help generate funds towards the cleanup of the new 29-acre parcel acquired," Crystal reported.

Crystal continued, "The Municipal Summit schedule is available and I've forwarded the email onto you all. The closest one would be in Butte on May 31 if anyone wishes to attend. These are trainings tailored to expand your knowledge, enhance your skills and provide valuable insights into the intricacies of effective governance,"

The City has been invited to the Chamber's annual dinner. "It'll be held on May 11th at 5PM at the Rodeo Grounds. If any of you wish to attend, again, please let us know so we can purchase the appropriate number of tickets. Tickets are \$50/each."

"Last few things I promise - MMIA announced a board vacancy. I emailed this out to you all last week too - but if you wish to throw your name in the hat for this administrative board, please let us know by April 19th. Also, remember Randy and I announced at last month's meeting about the school parking? Well, the School Board hasn't had another public meeting since they received that letter, but they were wondering if any of you Council members wanted to meet with them on site?" (There was a little discussion about this not fitting everyone's schedule so was left to Randy, Crystal and Sgt. Doonan to continue.)

"Last, I use clipart and pictures found in Microsoft word all the time for our website and Facebook posts. Since I typically find these in Microsoft software, I never thought anything of being legally allowed to use these. I assumed we paid for the Microsoft license so we could use the pictures within the program. Reading posts online with just words doesn't typically catch the reader's eye, so like for the time change I found an old clock that looked like it was ringing and said "time change". I was sent a notice from a group called Pixsy that looked pretty legitimate

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stating we had violated copyright for this picture. I forwarded it to Susan Swimley, who reached out to Toni Tease, a copyright attorney. She has investigated and found the claim to be legitimate. It's a \$900 fine which she recommends we just pay and be done with it. What would you guys like to do? I don't know what to do in the future - buy a program?" Crystal asked. Gene said he likes the posts, so we should pay it and fix this for future use.

City Attorney Susan Swimley did not have anything to report. Mayor Johnston asked that she draft a letter to give to Bret Robinson of RCREI regarding the City's stance of the debated 35-foot right-of-way width on Jefferson Street.

REPORT OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES (if any)

Ed Tharp reported the Streets & Alleys Committee met with the engineers with the School last week. "They have a parking lot project on Neal & 2nd Avenue East where the student parking is. There will be no more access off of 2nd Avenue East as a curb and gutter will be installed there. The only access into/out of the parking lot will be via the alley which will be accessed off Neal Street or from Ash Street. They already have everything budgeted for. All parking spaces have been reconfigured to allow for more spaces. We were discussing if the City could contribute something towards the project like removing the concrete, or paying for some repavement, or the crosswalk flashing signs. The School project manager said it would probably be more cost effective to keep the School's contractor as planned to remove the existing concrete. The Budget Committee can look into the cost of the flashing crosswalk signs for next fiscal year."

Gene Townsend questioned, "So everything will filter in from Neal Street or Ash?" Reagan Hooton replied that the School does not really want people turning right from the parking lot down the alley, but that they cannot legally make it a one-way traffic alley. She said, "They won't be able to control all the teenagers in cars, but they will have signage to attached to the parking lot encouraging left turns to Neal Street to exit the parking lot. They also are providing four additional feet to allow for 2-way traffic adjacent to the parking lot."

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Flood Mitigation Project - Kelly Smith said the biological assessment was submitted to Fish, Wildlife and Parks and is awaiting response.

Water Project Update - Kelly Smith reported that the encroachment permit for Kyd Road has been approved by Gallatin County so the City can build the new access road to the drilling sites on Three Forks Development, LLC's property. Crystal Turner added that the encroachment permit is not 100% complete as the County is waiting for a certificate of insurance

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right now and MMIA has questioned the need since the permit does not state it is required to provide one naming Gallatin County as an additional insured. It will be resolved shortly.

NEW BUSINESS

Presentation of Historic Preservation Grant for the Henslee Auditorium Building by Kira and Sean Gifford, and Discussion on Any Environmental Opposition to the Project

Kira Gifford introduced herself to the Council and reported she and her husband have applied for Historic Preservation Grant funding. "Those hotel fees you pay when you go spend the night at a hotel go to great things! We have requested \$500,000 because there are original beams, original Birdseye maple flooring, but the building still needs a lot of love. We will be phasing it in, working on the bottom portion's rehabilitation soon. Any equity we put into the project can be counted so far. We have to put 20% in minimum towards any grant funding. The gym would be in the downstairs portion, we own the gym across the street. The upstairs would be a community event center. The biggest boxes for the historic preservation grant application is the history of the building, and creating a place for people to come into the building to educate the public and preserve history. Can anyone think of a negative environmental impact? We've already done an environmental study on this building and can tell you so far none have been found. There used to be an interior wall which is now an exterior wall. For those of you newer council members, we had 3-4 feet of snow on the roof that used to be over the livery stable. The snow load broke the weight limit and came crashing down. We cleaned all that up and what used to be an interior wall is now an exterior wall. A few tiles that are now exposed may have been asbestos that we will need to address," Kira explained.

Gene asked if there is still a large boiler? Kira said yes. Gene asked if that would have any asbestos in that? She said no.

Mayor Johnston asked if Kira needed a letter from the City. Kira said no, the minutes of this meeting could be submitted. None of the Council members had any objections and wished her luck on the rehabilitation of this historic structure to Three Forks.

Presentation of FY2023-2024 Audit Report by Rudd & Company

Dane Hancock of Rudd & Company introduced himself and stated the City has received a clean audit opinion overall. "We have one [opinion] that we qualify because there is an actuarial study that has not been conducted. This is because the Council has decided it is money spent better on the retirees than spending to prove there is money available for all the retirees. It's the same write-up we have had for a few years. There are no adverse findings." He informed the Council there is a MD&A (management discussion and analysis) section in the audit report that goes over the overall health of the City. "And then you can read the footnotes that

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detail more specifically, or you can read the other 80-something pages of all the details. There is a letter of governance - we got this to Kelly and Crystal late today. This letter would say if we had any significant differences with Kelly or Crystal or the Mayor, we would have to state that here, but do not have any of those issues. I will speak with Susan Swimley as well and then once we have that complete we can submit the audit to the State."

Gene Townsend asked if the newer Council would like an explanation on the fireman's fund? Reagan said yes. Gene explained, "The Rural and City fire departments offer retirement to those who volunteer for so many years. That retirement money goes into a special fund. We have to pay a firm to do the actuarial study to say how much we have in the fund, how much to we put in annually, how much do we pay out annually and do you have enough to fund it? There are firms that can do this, but there are none in Montana anymore - so the firm in Colorado wanted like \$15-20,000 to conduct the study. The Council agreed we could better spend that money by taking this finding in our audit and leave the funds for the retirees." Kelly Smith added the City has a voter-approved mill that allows up to 10 mills which the City is taxing 2 mills currently, "Because we keep track of how many volunteers there are, their age, when someone becomes eligible, etc. You now have to conduct an actuarial study every two years." Dane Hancock said, "We have to write this us in our audit because we don't have access to, or any audit notes done, on that fund, but we don't have any major hangups on that."

Councilman Townsend moved to accept the audit report. Councilman Chancellor seconded the motion.

Motion Passed Unanimously.

Request to Deviate from the Approval Granted June 14, 2022, for RCREI, Inc. Regarding City Subdivision Regulation Section VII.C.2(c) Landscaping, More Specifically Condition #7

Bret Robinson said the original plan was to plant trees along the Buttelman's side. "It's a what if on whether they are going to develop. If they do not put a development in, you really don't want trees along there because when you are looking out the windows from my project they will block the view. But we are happy to put the trees in at a later date, or the Buttelman's can put them in if the subdivision ever develops. Make sense?" he asked the Council.

George Chancellor said it is reasonably certain the Buttelman's will someday develop, but he is comfortable to not require planting trees at this time.

Bret asked if "reasonably certain" could be defined. He added, "You never want to put a big tree out a picture window, but do we really need trees when you are looking at pasture land? I agree they will most likely develop, but I don't think we need to do it at this time."

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Susan Swimley asked Kelly Smith for clarification, "This is a CUP, approved with the conditions right?" Kelly replied, "This part was in the subdivision approval." Susan asked if this item was properly noticed as a change in condition of the subdivision regulations. Kelly replied that this is an exemption from the subdivision regulation review because it is stated so in the "Travel Trailer/RV Parks" section, as stated in Randy Carpenter's staff report. Randy's staff report said, "preliminary plan for a travel trailer park to contain four pads, first minor subdivision of Section VII which does not require a public hearing."

Gene Townsend said he is looking on the page with the word "proposed" written on it, compared to trees in the document marked "original". He asked, "Is he wanting to eliminate some of them? In the original hearing, at that time, did Mr. Robinson protest the number of trees required?" Kelly Smith replied no, no one attended that meeting. Garret Buchanan asked Mr. Robinson what mechanism the Council may use in the future, if they allow him today to deviate from the original requirement, to ensure he would plant trees in the future if needed? Mr. Robinson said that is why he is here tonight, he will not fight if it does not make sense to fight for this request. "The *how to?*, I don't know." He said.

Susan Swimley stated that "deviations" are allowed by Montana law in certain situations. "It doesn't cause a detriment to deviate from the landscaping requirement. Your code on camping/mobile home parks in Zoning #11-D-13 *landscaping may be required to cause a buffer for recreational camping and residential properties*. The trees that were originally discussed are providing a buffer from the recreational camp sites and the future residential development next door. Part of the Council's analysis "do you really think the 4 required trees were a sufficient buffer"? I would like to hear the conversation by the Council on that in terms of landscaping. The language in your regulations that says trees/landscaping are a buffer, tell me how you can deviate that buffer between the properties." Gene Townsend, "To be honest, I'm a tree nut. If you look at my house I have 3 large pine trees and 2 apples trees looking out my windows. I don't think they deter my view, and I'm going to say mine are a lot closer than yours will be. The buffer part, I will agree with Susan, that these conversations have come up a lot in the past and we need to consider that. I agree that 4 trees will not create the forest to help buffer, but I would like to see it remain the same." Ed Tharp agreed to keeping the requirement of trees at every 50 feet.

Public Comment: Gloria Howland stated she likes trees at her house so that no one can see inside.

Councilman Buchanan moved to stick the original tree planting plan.
Councilman Townsend seconded the motion.

Motion Passed Unanimously.

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Board Appointment: Board of Adjustments

Mayor Johnston read the board appointment memo into the record.

Councilman Townsend moved to accept Michele McLeod for the Board of Adjustments for a 3-year term. Councilwoman McDermott seconded the motion.

Motion Passed Unanimously.

Adopt of Fire Department Fuel Reimbursement Program Policy

Mayor Johnston read the proposed policy into the record, and asked for a motion to approve it. Gene Townsend asked to first discuss this before we moved to a motion.

Roxi McDermott said she was supportive of this program. She said it seems cheaper than per diem mileage the bank pays employees when one must use their own vehicle. Gene Townsend stated he is not disputing the policy, but does anyone have an approximate cost if all the firefighters met Tier 1? Kelly Smith said they budgeted \$2,000 in the current fiscal year. "Currently, the top 2 people attending calls would meet the \$250 reimbursement. They are the only two whom have met the requirements. There are only about 10 active [firefighters] so even if they all hit Tier #1, the budget could cover it." She added the Fire Department decreased some of the other budget line items so they could implement this program. Mayor Johnston said maybe it will help round up more volunteers. Kelly explained that January 2025 would be the first payout for those meeting the program in 2024 calls/responses attended. "The firefighters came up with the chart, so they are willing to live with it," she said. Kelly reminded the Council Tier 1 of this program requires 10 more hours of training over the minimum 30 hour requirement so they are incentivizing training attendance as well. Garret Buchanan clarified, "They will not be receiving the funds until January 2025 if they met the requirements in 2024 as per this policy?" Kelly answered yes. Gene also said yes, "Basically they are going to be fuel cards so all they can do is buy fuel - that is what we are reimbursing them for."

Councilman Buchanan moved to accept this firefighter fuel reimbursement program as written. Councilwoman McDermott seconded the motion.

Motion Passed Unanimously.

Gloria Howland asked if Public Comment could be stated. The Mayor apologized. Gloria said, "If they are willing to donate \$400 to a railroad that may not come through here, just give it to the fire department."

PUBLIC COMMENTS/CONCERNS (for items not on the agenda)

There was no public comment on items not on the agenda.

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MAYOR & COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Johnston said he would like to begin employee evaluations for the Council for budget considerations; he will start in May. Also, an Earth Day celebration is scheduled on 4/18/2024 from 1-5PM to clean up garbage on trails and parks.

George Chancellor read the Three Forks Area Ambulance monthly update.

Gene Townsend reported he had submitted an \$100,000 grant application for trail maintenance and received word today the Headwaters Trail System ranked #2. His application will be forwarded on to Gallatin County Commission for final decision next Tuesday at 9AM. "After that email, I got another one from the Montana Trail Stewardship Program, which I submitted for in January. I am excited to inform you that you have been selected for full funding and I requested \$87,000. That has match money going to it so will be close to \$100,000 total as well. I hope to finish the pedestrian bridge on the west end of the Madison River, we will crack seal, seal coat and replace any bad pavement. Then come towards town from Droulliard toward Kansas Street, and the small section on Main Street that leads to the Magris ball fields will also be maintained! It was like Christmas for me today! I am a poor loser when it comes to grants, because I wasn't awarded one I really wanted. We have one outstanding \$85,000 grant that the Highway Department is stalling me on to build towards Rae Creek. The contractor has agreed to come back and pave that at the price he bid last year even though the State Department of Transportation has held this up."

Gene said he started thinking about where else in town we can take the trail system through. "I think trails are cheaper than sidewalks. Can we come off of Kansas Street at the Rodeo Grounds and hook into the proposed development south of town? I hope the developer will come forward with some trail proposals so the folks on the hill could walk to town as well. That is a really narrow road," Gene said.

Mayor Johnston offered to give Roxi, Garret and Reagan a tour of our water and wastewater systems. They all agreed they would like to have a tour and asked him to call them to schedule it.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT COUNCIL MEETING: April 23, 2024

Discussion on agendas for April and May so that we do not have three and four hour meetings by just holding one per month.

- April 23 will be a continuation of the CIP discussion, and Awarding the contract to Hollow Contracting Inc. to Chip Seal in Street Maintenance District #1.
- May 14 will be the Regional Housing Coalition, the Fire Chief feels his report/participation at the Joint meeting in January is current so that item will not be heard. Also on the 14th will be the letter to Gallatin County requesting them to adopt the City's Growth

CITY OF THREE FORKS, MONTANA, APRIL 9TH, 2024

Policy, and a Public Hearing on the Zoning and Planning Board's Recommendation of Conditional Use Permit Request for Multifamily by Kenneth Gibson and Barrett Synder for Lots 1 and 2, Block 4, Northwest Townsite, commonly referred to as 623 E. Neal Street.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilman Chancellor. Councilwoman McDermott seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 8:40P.M.

Randy Johnston, Mayor

Crystal Turner, City Clerk