

## **February 10, 2025, Regular Council Meeting (210 Crofoot, Sheridan, MT)**

Council members in attendance were Jan Bowey, Diane Kaatz, Tammy Todd, and Curtis Green. Also in attendance were Mayor Robert Stump and Clerk/Treasurer Kristi Millhouse.

**Guests via Zoom:** Jim Kaatz, Ross Heupel (American Legal Publishing), Bonnie O'Neill, Mati Bishop (Madisonian)

**Guests:** Doris Fischer (Library and Study Commission), Mike Zelinski, Scott Holbrook, Corey Theis, Chris and Dee Noon, Rahn Abbott, Jeff Gerth, Stephanie and David Haag, Kaylie Theis, Lon Seidel, Mike O'Neill, Dave Blank, Cat McRae, Debby Wesselius, Ted Woirhaye, Michael Douglas, Penn Spell (Representative Madison County Planning Board), Daniel Gil (Madison County Sheriff's Department)

Mayor Stump opened the meeting at 6:06 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Comment (Non-Agenda Items):** Ted Woirhaye stated that he looked at the Town budget and there are fourteen structures in the Town that are tax exempt. As past chief, he knows the job and it is very time-consuming. With society today you cannot get any volunteers. What is happening today is not right and everyone needs to work together and produce a plan.

**Consent Agenda:** Tammy asked for clarification on a couple of the claims. Jan made a motion to approve the claims as submitted. Diane seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion passed with a unanimous vote.

**Minutes:** Tammy made a motion to approve the minutes for January 13, 2025, regular council meeting. Curtis seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion passed with a unanimous vote.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**Fire Truck (Intercap Loan):** Mayor Stump explained to the public that this is not approval for purchasing a specific truck but approval to move forward with an intercap loan for the purchase of a new truck. Jan Bowey asked the mayor to read the section of the minutes from January that applied to this topic that was tabled last month so everyone was reminded of last month's discussion. Mayor Stump read the minutes.

Chris asked if Bob would like to clarify why the Town is buying the truck and not the fire department. Bob explained because the fire department cannot own anything as it is a volunteer fire department. Chris then asked why the Rural board is not purchasing the truck. Bob responded that he cannot speak on behalf of the Rural Fire Board. Jan explained to the public that there is a Sheridan Volunteer Fire Department and there is a Rural Volunteer Fire Department. The Town had a fire truck that was sold last year. The Council was told that the

truck was inoperable. The truck was then sold without the Council Approval. Mike Zeliniski stated that they would not have sold the truck if it did not belong to the Rural Fire Department. Bob stated that there was a duplicate title created for the sale of the truck. Mayor Stump asked Mike if he would show proof in the minutes that the truck belonged to the Rural Fire Board. Mike asked if there was proof of a duplicate title. Yes, there is proof. Mike asked why the Town had not filed charges if there was a duplicate title obtained and there was proof of this. Cat asked if Bob could describe how the MCA that was listed on the agenda applies to the meeting and the role of the council in the fire department, if they had legal consultation and if he could tell them who the legal counsel was. Clerk/Treasurer Kristi Millhouse commented that the discussion is getting off topic. Mayor Stump moved the conversation back to the intercap loan and answered Cat McRae's question in the appropriate section.

There was no further discussion regarding the town moving forward with an intercap loan for the purchase of a fire truck. Curtis made a motion to approve moving forward with an intercap loan up to \$125,000 for the purchase of a fire truck. Jan seconded that motion. No further comments. Motion passed with a unanimous vote.

**Codification/Revision of Town Ordinances:** Kristi presented the two bids she received for codification of the Town Ordinances from Civic Plus and American Legal Publishing. Civic Plus is \$9,250 for the recodification and gender neutralization. American Publishing is \$4,000 and can be paid over two years. Mayor Stump asked for public comments. None received. Jan made a motion to proceed with the process of codification through American Publishing for a cost of \$4,000 that can be spread over two years. Diane seconded the motion. Motion passed with a unanimous vote.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Resolution 2025-03 to amend the fiscal year 2023-2024 budget:** Mayor Stump read the resolution aloud. The resolution increases the general fund budget by \$4,675 to cover costs in July of 2024 that should have been paid in June 2024. Mayor Stump asked for comments from the public. No comments. Tammy made a motion to accept resolution 2025-03 A resolution to amend the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 budget. Curtis seconded the motion. No further comments. Motion passed with a unanimous vote.

**Fire Chief Approval per MCA 7-33-4106:** Mayor Stump reported that a Rural Board member contacted him two weeks ago and stated that the Fire Department nominated Jeff Gerth as the fire chief for 2025. Cat asked if the Town had consulted with legal counsel regarding the MCA that is stated on the agenda or if it is the Town's interpretation of the MCA. She also asked who that legal counsel was. The information that she researched and received from other individuals is MCA 7-33-41 Volunteer Companies are not affected by MCA 7-33-4106. Jan explained the

difference between a volunteer fire department and a volunteer company. A volunteer fire company is defined in MCA 7-33-2311. She gave definitions and examples of an unincorporated Town not in a rural fire district. Volunteers are not members of a volunteer company because Sheridan is incorporated. The Rural District surrounds the Town. Since the Town has not been annexed into the rural district, the fire departments are separate entities.

Bob responded yes, the Town sought legal counsel from the Town's attorney, Ed Guza.

Jan made a motion to appoint Jeff Gerth as the Chief of the Sheridan Fire Department for the calendar year 2025. Tammy seconded the motion. Public comment. Scott Holbrook from Twin Bridges Fire Department stated that Jeff does a good job and has been great to work with. No further discussion or comments from the public. Mayor Stump called for a vote. Tammy - No, Curtis -Yes, Jan - No, Diane - Yes. The vote was a tie. Mayor Stump broke the tie with a vote of no. Motion failed.

Mike Zeliniski asked who was in charge. Mayor Stump answered that Mike is the deputy chief, so he is acting Chief at this time (MCA 7-33-4105). Does he need to be approved as the Chief? Mayor Stump answered yes, he needs to be approved as the deputy and/or chief. That is not on the agenda tonight so no decisions will be made at this time. No further discussion.

**Pool Lease:** Corey Theis was present on behalf of the Sheridan/Alder Park and Recreation District. Corey asked if the Town had been provided with a copy of the lease for the pool. Yes, the Town did receive it.

Mayor Stump commented that the pool lease is the same lease we have signed for the last two years. The Town will provide \$4,000 in kind services which include mowing, garbage removal, tree trimming, and providing water/sewer. The Town also provides \$8,000 in financial contribution. No public comments on the pool lease. Tammy asked for clarification on item seven in the lease. It states the Lessee (Park District) will provide insurance necessary to adequately protect themselves and the Lessor (the Town). Diane made a motion to accept the lease between the Town of Sheridan and the Sheridan/Alder Park District for the Ruby Valley Swimming Pool at 206 E. Poppleton for March 2025 to December 2025. Tammy seconded the motion. No further comments. Motion passed with a unanimous vote.

## **BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

**Main Street Improvement Team:** No report from the Main Street Improvement Team. Mayor Stump reported that a representative from Montana Main Street Group is coming for the next council meeting. The Council meeting will need to be changed from the 10<sup>th</sup> of March because the Town does not have a quorum. Kaylie Theis cannot attend on March 17, 2025. Discussion occurred. The next council meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 6:00 pm.

**Park District Committee:** Corey reported on behalf of the Park District. There is no report on the pool as they have not received any reports from the pool club. The Park District is currently taking applications for funding of community projects. The funding is 50/50 or 25/75 match depending on the application. Karen has legal information on the funding application process. Bob asked if the Town could apply. Jan commented on the playground stuff at the park on Hamilton. Corey will ask about the Town applying for the funding and get back to the Town.

Corey Theis was able to answer the Town before the meeting was adjourned. The Town cannot apply because it is in kind service. The purpose of the funding is for community projects that benefit the Town.

**Sheridan Community Charitable Foundation (SCCF):** Kaylie Theis reported on behalf of the SCCF. The SCCF has ordered all the material for the pavilion except for the roofing material because Tezaks are donating the roofing material.

March 17<sup>th</sup> is celebrity bingo night.

SCCF's next project will be the second baseball field. Nothing official yet but they are discussing it at this time.

Kaylie reported that the SCCF has discussed the big tree at the Baseball Complex and that it needs trimmed. Can the SCCF trim the tree? Kaylie is willing to look into the cost. The Town has money in their budget tree trimming and are willing to help with that expense.

**Zoning Committee:** Jan Bowey reported on behalf of the zoning commission. The zoning commission met last week with the contracted engineer. Based on his recommendation they are putting out a survey hopefully by next week. It will be available online and on paper. Please do the survey. It will help the zoning commission gauge how heavy or light the Town's regulations should be. Zoning is not to prevent or promote growth. It is to help with growth when it comes up. There is no meeting in March because the information from the survey needs to be compiled. They are planning to have the draft regulations available in June. Comments on the draft in July. Public meeting in August and approval by October.

Dave Haag asked if out of Town residents who own property in Town can answer the survey. Jan stated that yes, they can answer the survey. A lot of the businesses on Main Street are owned by individuals that live outside of Town.

**Local Government Study Commission:** Doris Fischer reported on behalf of the voter review commission. Citizens voted to review the Town government to determine whether changes are needed. Every 10 years this topic is placed on the ballot per state code.

The study commission has had two meetings. Claire Leonard and Ralph Sand are other members of the commission and Tammy Todd is the Ex-Officio officer. They are receiving

guidance from MSU Local Government Services and went through some training. At the last meeting the study commission adopted a budget of \$18,000 and a timetable to keep the committee and reports on track.

The timetable will be published in The Madisonian by March 30<sup>th</sup>. The committee has also adopted their bylaws which are currently being reviewed by the Town's attorney. There are some changes to the bylaws that the committee is making based on the attorney's comments prior to bringing to the council for final approval. The Study Commission would like to bring the Assistant Director Ashley Kent over to Sheridan and have a community event in April. This would allow everyone to understand what the project is.

The study commissions meeting will be the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month at Town Hall at 6:00 pm. They would like to have those meetings available via zoom for individuals that are unable to attend.

**Madison County Planning Board:** Penn Spell reported on the Madison County Planning Board as the representative for the Town of Sheridan. Penn was appointed last year by Mayor Judy Edwards to be the representative for the Town of Sheridan. Every five years the Madison County Planning Board reviews, evaluates, and changes the subdivision regulations for the County. The planning board and department have been spending time over the past few months updating the subdivision regulations. They have a new draft available for review on the Madison County Planning Board website. They are meeting on February 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm and everyone is invited to the meeting.

Penn also asked the council for clarification on what they would like his role to be for reporting to the Town Council and Mayor. When he was appointed as the Town's representative, he was told they would call him when they wanted him to attend a meeting. He has never heard from anyone. Penn is asking the mayor and the council to tell him what they would like from him. Do you want every quarter, every 60 days, etc. He would like to be on the agenda for the March 18<sup>th</sup> meeting to update the council on the status of the subdivision regulations and whether they were approved or not. Mayor Stump asked, how long after the public hearing will the subdivision regulations be going to the commissioners for review. Penn thought it would be right after the meeting on February 24<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Stump commented that in regard to reporting to the Town, if it is something that applies to the Ruby Valley, Penn should attend the council meetings. Penn and the Council will discuss it further at the next meeting on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

## **REPORTS**

**Sheriff's Report:** Mayor Stump read the report from the Sheriff's office as Deputy Gil left prior the sheriff's department report. The sheriff's department helped with seven transports and forty calls for the month of January.

**Library Report:** Doris reported on behalf of the library. On January 16<sup>th</sup>, the library sponsored a meeting with regional organizations to determine what resources are available in our community for those in need, whether it is food, gas, shelter, etc. Each entity that attended has their own mission for offering services in our community. Approximately forty people attended the meeting and shared what resources they have available for those in need. It was a productive meeting. It reinforced how much people care and what is available. Public Health is compiling a list in conjunction with the Hospital on available resources.

The library also hosted a meeting last week with Women's Resource Center based out of Dillon.

On March 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm at the Sheridan Senior Center a Dark Skies presentation will be held. The dark sky's presentation will be about light pollution and how we can dim it down.

The library employees have begun to tackle the archives room and get the collection of books organized. They are culling out information, dating items, and making the room usable. It will be more accessible to the community.

David Blank notified Doris Fischer that he drives the senior citizen bus. He can be added to her list of resources as he schedules the bus. They have two drivers and run Monday through Friday. If it is an emergency on the weekend they can provide services. The other driver is Dan Rose.

Jan asked about the status of the solar panels. Doris reported that the solar panel project is done, and it is up and running. Bill can look at what they are actually using in power from the solar panel.

Kristi asked if she could get the credit card bill to pay before the council meeting so that the library does not end up with late fees as their bills are usually a month behind.

**Attorney:** No report

**Public Works:** Curtis Green reported on behalf of the Public Works Department. The new well #7 pump was installed by O'Keefe Drilling a couple of weeks ago. It is still not hooked up to the manifold building. That will happen later this spring or summer. There is seventy feet of pipe that needs to be ran along with wires in order to bring it online. The connection will depend on the weather, the emergency generator, wires, etc.

The Town had a water meter on Saturday blow out when a metal plate blew out of the bottom. Curtis believes it is because of rust. The meter was replaced. Curtis asked if we need to give the

homeowner a break on their bill since it was the meter that broke. Mayor Stump will watch the February readings and address at that time.

Curtis commented that Public Works Director Matt Cavalieri has been doing a lot of snow removal the past couple of weeks.

Northwest Energy Power line had a wire bust that damaged approximately eighty-five feet of sidewalk that will need replacement. The Town also had to replace the meter pit. Curtis stated that the Town needs to look for a contractor to replace the sidewalk and get on their list now for the repairs this spring/summer.

There have been issues with ice freezing inside the water storage tank which is causing the pumps to work improperly. Mayor Stump reported he believes he got the issue fixed as they shut off all the pumps, ran the water down, and turned on just well six. The readings are reading correctly now, and the pumps are not flipping on and off at short intervals.

Rahn Abbott commented that the Town has been doing a wonderful job on the snow removal. He asked if the snow on the corner of Main Street and Crofoot in front of the search and rescue building could be moved. It is causing issues with longer vehicles like the school bus. Curtis will take a look in the morning.

**Financial/Clerk Report:** Clerk/Treasurer Kristi Millhouse reported that there is nothing new on the clerk side. She continues to deal with the day-to-day stuff including processing payments, phones, etc.

Kristi reported that on the financial side she has provided the council with a reconciliation report and cash report that shows that the Town is off. This is a continuation of the from FY2023-24 closing transactions. Kristi is going backwards to 2022 to see if she can find it.

Changes to accounts at the bank were made because of the Pledged Securities issue. Instead of increasing the Pledged Securities the Town has switched to an Insured Sweep Account. This ensures all of our money except for \$200,000 which Opportunity Bank covers through FDIC. The other positive is that the Insured Sweep account provides us with interest in all of our funds.

**Council Reports:** Jan Bowey commented that she went in and visited with Kristi about the numbers on the cash report and when she got the reports this month it was easier to understand. She recommends if the rest of the council have not done this that they should.

Diane Kaatz did not have anything to report.

Tammy Todd made a comment on safety by the school. When she came over tonight, she noticed there was a car parked in front of the fire hydrant, and it may cause an issue for fire suppression on Madison and Poppleton. It may cause issues with the stop sign on the corner as

well. The Town will call the Sheriff's Department and report it as an abandoned vehicle. There are also two more vehicles by the log cabin park that have been abandoned.

Curtis Green had no report.

**Mayor's report:** There has been a lot of discussion in the past few months regarding the Town and the Fire Department. The Town has budgeted \$192,500 from Fiscal Year 2028 to present. The Town has purchased \$112,000 in gear and equipment for the fire department over that time period. This year there has been \$25,000 in the budget for the Fire Department. They have only submitted \$5,000 in bills as of today. We have spent hours looking for a fire truck to replace the one that was sold in September. We are working diligently to look for a fire structure truck for the Town.

Jan commented that the Town needs another truck, and we cannot always rely on mutual aid. if the Rural truck is in for repairs or on another call then we cannot respond. We need another truck.

David Blank asked if the fire department is looking at a Quint again. On those trucks you only have a maximum of five hundred gallons of water. A quint is meant to have another truck or helicopter pumping to it. The Wisconsin Truck and the Colorado truck both have 1,000 gallons on.

Dave talked to the chief in Colorado and that the chief prides himself on the upkeep of the trucks. It would have been a good purchase for the Town, especially if you only have two or three firefighters respond to a structure fire. The quint will pump out that water before another truck can get there. If there is foam on the truck, then it can stretch a little further. Twin is still 10 minutes out if you have someone stuck inside.

Last Thursday, Dan Durham sent Mayor Stump a potential truck to buy that was similar to the one in Colorado. This truck was in Northern California. The mayor received the information on Thursday, he called Friday, and it was already sold. Most of the trucks that have been online and going for \$25,000 have a lot of work that needs done. The Town did find another one today in Clinton, MT.

**Adjournment:** Jan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tammy seconded the motion. No further comments. Motion passed with a unanimous vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

ATTEST:

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Kristi Millhouse, Clerk/Treasurer

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Robert Stump, Mayor