

Minutes of Sweetser Town Council

April 24, 2020

Held via ZOOM

I. The meeting was called to order by Dave Fox at 7:00 pm; the roll was called as follows:

Rich Gamble—present
Matt Stewart—present
Travis LeMaster—present
Dave Fox—present
Chuck Briede—present

The roll was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer offered by Matt Stewart

Travis remarked that the clerk should note the prior two meetings were cancelled due to covid-19. Clerk shall do so.

II. **Minutes**

Matt Stewart made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2020 meeting. Travis LeMaster seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

Rich Gamble-Aye
Matt Stewart-Aye
Travis LeMaster-Aye
Dave Fox-Aye
Chuck Briede-Aye

III. **Bills**

After discussion (see department reports), Chuck Briede made a motion to approve the paying of the bills as written. Travis LeMaster seconded the motion.

Rich Gamble-Aye
Matt Stewart-Aye
Travis LeMaster-Aye
Dave Fox-Aye
Chuck Briede-Aye

IV. **Public Forum**

No comments.

V. **Department Reports**

Maintenance Dept.—Superintendent Devin Cole was present at the meeting.

- During discussion of the bills, Chuck asked Devin to address the repairs of the treatment plant UV system. Devin said BL Anderson company rep diagnosed the issue as possibly a power surge or surges that occurred when the telephone poles were being replaced. The surge or surges took out 4 ballasts and possibly also the screen transformer. Devin suggested that the loss may be insurable. The clerk will gather documents to submit for a possible insurance claim. There ensued a discussion of the merits and possible pitfalls of filing a claim for these losses. Matter tabled until next meeting.
- The CCMG project will probably start the second week of May. Devin said he had run across a couple of options to address a long-running stormwater issue related to the Burge Ditch that runs from the corner of Main and Davis east at a slight angle back towards the Davis and Osborne Streets area and into the adjacent field. There is a large section between Main and Meridian that holds a lot of water as the pipe is probably 2/3 full of silt. Devin spoke with Sullivan Excavating about replacing that before we paved Meridian. In order to fit that in the budget, we would need to remove the wedge & leveling on the three streets in the project (they would still be blacktopped). This would free-up approximately \$23,780. The Sullivan estimate is approximately \$27,000. The difference would come from the stormwater fund. Would also be installing

two 4' diameter catch basins on both sides of Meridian Street. A discussion ensued about possible partial reimbursement of this ditch repair from the ditch fund and the process for applying for reimbursement. Chuck will contact the drainage board and inquire about the process.

Chuck Briede made a motion to remove the wedge & level from the CCMG project on Craven, Broadway, and Meridian at an approximate savings of \$23,780, and redirect those funds to replace a section of storm sewer line and install two catch basins at Meridian and Davis at an approximate cost of \$27,000, the difference to come from the stormwater fund and possibly a reimbursement from the ditch fund.

Roll Call:

Rich Gamble-Aye

Matt Stewart-Aye

Travis LeMaster-Aye

Dave Fox-Aye

Chuck Briede-Aye

- Devin has scheduled the town clean-up for June 6.
- Travis inquired about the stop sign repair at Main & Eagle. Devin said we just need to rent the air compressor and will be doing several at once.
- Chuck asked about the high electric bill at the Short Street (Kuch) lift station. Devin said AEP had been out and performed some diagnostics that did not point to an issue with AEP equipment. Devin said American Pump reps will also be looking into the issue in the next week or so.
- Chuck said some people have been digging at the dirt pile by the lake. Devin said it was Mitch Cook using it. A discussion ensued as to whether the town should try to sell some of the dirt. No action at this time.

Parks Dept.—Parks President Steve Kelley was present at the meeting.

- The drinking fountain that was approved for purchase was not suitable for outdoor use according to the seller. The fountain suitable for outdoor use is \$1,539 versus \$1,007 that was approved. Clerk indicated the Parks department budget is committed and additional spending is questionable. Travis suggested we could try to do some fund raising for the difference. Matter tabled until next meeting.
- Steve spoke with school superintendent Joel Martin about placing the town sign on school property. Mr. Martin didn't think it will be an issue but he will have to verify with the school board.
- Steve will probably start on the new trail kiosk this week or next week. Devin will have utility locates performed for the area.
- Parking meters have all been repaired and reinstalled. The poles were getting water in them, the water was freezing, causing the meters to be pushed out of the top. Devin drilled holes at the base of the poles so the water can drain in the future.
- Steve ask the clerk to provide him copies of the bills for the new bulletin boards (for the kiosk) so he can submit to the DNR for reimbursement of approximately \$600.
- Steve said in the burn pile we have some very good soil. Suggested we could do something with it, such as offering it to the people of the town. There are some weeds in it that would need to be remediated. Devin agreed that it is probably valuable. Devin suggested we have Derek Middlesworth test the soil so we would know what it's worth and what we could do with it.

Police Dept.—Marshall Ryan Hornback was not present at the meeting.

- Dave said Ryan reported that things are slow at the present.
- Chuck said he spoke with Ryan about the security camera situation. Appears we need a way to get power to them and that is the hold-up at this point.
- Travis asked if there was any update on the abandoned vehicle ordinance and possible citations.
- Clerk reported that Ryan has shelved plans for additional hiring at this point as two of the current deputies have more availability for the time being.

VI. Continuing Business – town counsel Michael Hotz was present at the meeting

- Regarding the Church Street property, Michael said he had Grant County Abstract pull out a plot map of the subdivision. He asked them to go back and ascertain that the property had not been transferred at some point, as for the quiet title process we need to try and name all parties who may possibly have an interest in the property. It appears it belonged to the Church of the Brethren of Northern Middle Indiana. Michael tried to determine if that entity still exists. Was not able to find an entity that ties back to Grant County or Sweetser. He was not able to find a legal description for the specific area (the “park”). There is a legal description for the entire parcel. Michael recommends that we obtain a good legal description of the “park” itself so the town can obtain a good deed to the property. We will need to engage a surveyor to perform the work and develop a legal description. Michael will obtain some quotes from surveyors. Once we have the survey results and the legal description has been recorded, we can file for quiet title.

VII. New Business

- It has been determined that the town should pursue the installation of a new electrical pole at Pawadise Park. Matt said the Harmony Music Festival is still scheduled for September 19. We will need to have a new pole, box, and meter for that event. It could also be used for the Sesquicentennial and other future events. Dave will contact AEP to initiate the project, to include the new pole, 110v and 220v, meter, and lock box. As to location within the park, Matt suggested it needs to be where the ground is most level as that is where the vendors and performers are likely to set-up. Matt wondered if we could do some filling and leveling within the park as there are some low areas that are not very usable for events. Devin said we have the dirt and could rent a skid loader to accomplish the task. We need to have a way to get the dirt to the location and probably something to till the dirt to break-it up. Devin suggested the areas to be leveled could be pre-marked. Steve suggested we could purchase and have delivered a tandem load of top-soil. Devin suggested we could rent a Harley rake to attach to a skid loader. Matter tabled for now.
- Devin suggested we also inquire of AEP of having LED streetlights installed along Main Street. Dave will inquire of AEP about this as well.
- Matt suggested that we consider having our garbage contract include a curbside recycle pick-up, as the current town bins fill very quickly. Matt said maybe we could poll the residents. Chuck and Travis said that the town looked into this a couple of years ago.
- Travis recommended that when we have a new trash contract, we implement any increases scheduled over the life of the contract all in the first year, so we are not hitting people with annual increase. Chuck agreed.
- Chuck floated the idea of creating a separate utility for the trash pickup. Travis said it is more of a service than a utility. Chuck said perhaps we could set-up a separate trash fund. Clerk will research SBOA guidelines regarding accounting for contracted trash pick-up services.
- Clerk mentioned that as of May 1, 2020, we are in the final year of our five-year contract with Republic Services for trash pick-up. Matt suggested, and Travis and Chuck agreed, that we should solicit bids for the business. Town will ask for quotes to include recycle services. Devin recommended that we ask them to quote the treatment plant sludge removal in the contract. Michael asked if the current contract has an auto-renewal provision. Clerk responded it does contain a one-year auto-renewal at a defined rate.
- Steve asked if we were still going to get extra garbage cans, to be stored at town hall, so we could quickly replace lost and damaged containers. Chuck responded that he had not heard back from Republic as of yet.
- Dave said that Patrick wants to come back full-time (40 hours) but is not seeking benefits. Clerk will research the possibility of benefits being waived. A discussion ensued about the possibility of adding a retirement plan in addition to PERF. The new plan would be available to new hires. Clerk will research.
- Chuck reported that the 2020 Oak Hill graduation ceremony is cancelled and he received a phone call about a group of parents organizing to obtain and display banners for each graduate. They would like to display the banners in the various places in the local towns. Dave said we would be able to help out.
- Chuck had distributed the 2019 report. Rich discovered a typo and Chuck corrected the report. Chuck said there is a TIF budget for this year. He thinks we intended it for back-up to all the projects we have coming up this year. A discussion ensued of the possible impact of the current crisis on the State’s ability to maintain current distribution levels, the possible negative consequences to the town budget, and possible actions the town could pursue.
- Matt initiated a discussion of the town’s reopening plan: have our own plan or follow State guidance? Dave suggested we follow the State guidelines.

- Next meeting is 7pm, May 24, 2020.

VIII. Adjournment

A motion was made by Travis LeMaster to adjourn the meeting and passed by voice acclimation. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
John Potter