



NORTH BONNEVILLE CITY COUNCIL
Tuesday, June 14, 2011
Minutes

Meeting Call to Order: 6:30 PM

Roll Call

Present: Mayor Don Stevens, Councilors Tom Herzig, Jim Runkles, Tim Dudley and Jennifer Stratton-Pies
Absent: Councilor BreAnna Porter
Staff Present: Clerk / Treasurer John Spencer, Attorney Ken Woodrich

Guests Present

Approximately 22 guests were present.

Agenda Changes and Additions

None.

Public Hearings

None.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda included 5/24/11 Council Minutes, May Payroll and 6/14/11 Vouchers.

- **Councilor Runkles moved to approve the consent agenda items; 2nd by Councilor Dudley.**

Yes: Councilors Dudley, Runkles, Stratton-Pies and Herzig

No:

Passed 4 – 0

Guest Presentations

None.

Public Comment

Melissa Norris – spoke regarding the high grass, concerns about fire and pest danger, and about the city's grass ordinance.

Cheryl Jermann – spoke on behalf of employee Jim Brown, stating the city owes him more for his many years of service than a simple lay-off.

Mary Armantrout – asked about a variety of issues around the city's budget, staffing, and changes recently made to reduce costs and staff effort.

Bev Charlton – asked about grass mowing and possibility of using jail crews for help.

Sharon Runkles – spoke about the citizens' ability to mow green space and to help the city.

Charles Pace – suggested that volunteerism would help in some areas, but other [sections of open space] are too big, particularly along Hamilton Creek. Expressed concern regarding fire danger.

Carol Sheley – expressed concern about the lack of mowing. Asked why some areas are mowed more thoroughly than others.

Fern Armstrong – provided council with a written letter and a framed collage of pictures of the grass near her home. Expressed particular concern regarding fire danger from fireworks. Suggested that we need a monthly assessment to pay for mowing.

Shelly Pace – asked for specific reasons why the grass hasn't been cut.

Cheryl Jermann – stated that since there isn't money available [for grass mowing], perhaps there should be an assessment.

Melissa Norris – commented that had the city given warning about the lack of mowing, she would have been willing to volunteer to help.

Mary Armantrout – noted that many of her neighbors have been volunteering to mow near their homes and pick up debris.

Sharon Runkles – suggested that restarting the block leader program to organize volunteers could help.

Bev Charlton – noted that she periodically volunteers by doing trim work with a weed-eater.

Council Member Comments

Councilor Runkles – stated that he understands the grass issue, but that the city is facing lower income and is trying to live within its means. The city has over-spent for at least five years and is now in danger of bankruptcy if it continues exceeding its revenues.

Mayor Stevens – noted that the city has avoided asking for volunteer help for fear of union litigation.

Councilor Herzig – noted that the mayor makes decisions on how to allocate funds within the budget provided by the council. He reiterated the fear of an unfair labor practice suit if the city were to seek volunteer help.

Dan Storagee – expressed frustration regarding the ability of the city to perform some duties while claiming inability to perform others.

Mayor Stevens – used the analogy of government being supported by a 3-legged stool of property tax, sales tax and income tax. North Bonneville has no income tax and the remaining legs of property and sales are wobbly!

Charles Pace – noted that the citizens have been provided with notice of the fire danger.

Attorney Woodrich – noted the city has defense from liability under the public duty doctrine.

Mayor Stevens – noted that per MRSC advice, the city has the ability to enforce its grass ordinance while being in violation of that ordinance.

Councilor Herzig – suggested that the message is that the city needs to re-order its priorities.

Shelly Pace – asked for a firework ban.

Bev Charlton – asked what the consequences would be if a fire did occur.

Councilor Runkles – reiterated the fact that the city cannot allow citizens to use its equipment because doing so would violate the collective bargaining agreement.

Pace – asked for just one last grass mowing and stated that volunteers could then maintain the grass themselves.

Clerk/Treasurer's Report

Submitted. John also discussed the 2011 Rainbow Gathering in the Gifford Pinchot Forest near the Swift Reservoir.

Attorney Report

Ken discussed the possibility of passing a donation ordinance in order to allow citizens to contribute to the cost of mowing. The city could also raise property taxes through a voter-approved levy lid lift, but the process would take about one year.

A brief Q&A followed, particularly regarding tax options.

Unfinished Business

Crosswalks

John presented estimates for adding crosswalks at the Hot Springs Resort and at the Heritage Trails Station.

Council Herzig noted that the money could be better spent on grass.

Councilor Runkles asked for a policy on accepting volunteerism.

New Business

Heritage Trails Plan Approval

- **Councilor Herzig moved to approve the Heritage Trails Plan; 2nd by Councilor Stratton-Pies.**

Runkles said it's an outstanding work.

Yes: Councilors Dudley, Runkles, Stratton-Pies and Herzig

No:

Passed 4 – 0

Utility Billing Services Contract Approval

- **Councilor Runkles moved to table pending resolution of a conflict with union work; 2nd by Councilor Stratton-Pies.**

Yes: Councilors Dudley, Runkles, Stratton-Pies and Herzig

No:

Passed 4 – 0

Planning Services Contract Approval

- **Councilor Herzig moved to approve the Planning Services Contract with HDR Engineering, pending approval by Attorney Woodrich; 2nd by Councilor Stratton-Pies.**

Yes: Councilors Dudley, Runkles, Stratton-Pies and Herzig

No:

Passed 4 – 0

Resolution 421 – Gazebo and City Hall Charges

- **Councilor Runkles moved to approve Resolution 421 for purpose of discussion; 2nd by Councilor Dudley.**

Councilor Runkles noted that these fees are reasonable – the Corps of Engineers at Bonneville Dam charges more for their picnic shelter and use of the visitor center.

Councilor Herzig suggested the non-residents should pay more than listed.

Discussion ensued.

Cheryl Jermann – stated she takes offense at renting out the gazebo.

- **Councilor Herzig moved to amend the fees for residents to \$15 for a half day and \$25 for a full day; 2nd by Councilor Stratton-Pies.**

Yes: Councilors Dudley, Runkles, Stratton-Pies and Herzig

No:

Passed 4 – 0

Further discussion ensued concerning the possibility of a resident making reservations for a non-resident.

On the motion as amended:

Yes: Councilors Dudley, Runkles, Stratton-Pies and Herzig

No:

Passed 4 – 0

Resolution 422 – Copy Charges

John provided background. Attorney Woodrich noted that per state law staff must justify any charges greater than \$0.15.

Failed for lack of motion.

Resolution 423 – 1/Month Council Meetings

- **Councilor Dudley moved to table Resolution 423 until the full council is present; 2nd by Councilor Runkles for the purpose of discussion.**

Runkles stated that this proposal probably won't save much money and will poorly serve the citizens.

Yes: Councilors Dudley

No: Councilors Runkles, Stratton-Pies and Herzig

Failed 1 – 3

Failed for lack of motion.

Resolution 424 – Surplus Vehicles

John provided background. Discussion ensued regarding whether proper policy has been followed.

- **Councilor Runkles moved to approve Resolution 424 with the amendment that the 1998 vehicle be valued at \$500; 2nd by Councilor Stratton-Pies.**
- **Councilor Herzig moved to amend by setting the proceeds aside for use on speed bumps; 2nd by Councilor Stratton-Pies.**
Yes: Councilors Dudley, Stratton-Pies and Herzig
No: Councilor Runkles
Passed 3 – 1

On motion as amended:

Yes: Councilors Dudley, Runkles, Stratton-Pies and Herzig

No:

Passed 4 – 0

Closing Comments

Cheryl Jermann – Suggested adding a fee to households. She stated that no one would want a levy increase.

Irene Bitikofer – Asked whether renting the gazebo out created a liability issue.

Charles Pace – Suggested the rainbow gathering may indeed cause difficulties for the city.

Mary Armantrout – Commented that rainbow group members would likely show up in town.

Adjournment

- **Councilor Stratton-Pies moved to Adjourn; 2nd by Councilor Runkles.**
Yes: Councilors Runkles, Dudley, Herzig, and Stratton-Pies
No: None
Adjourned 8:33 PM

Mayor

Clerk