

Minutes of the Altamont Town Council Meeting
June 10, 2021

Present:

Clyde Watkins
Brent "Ole" Olsen
Glen Jessen
Sommer Arnold
Melba Markham, Town Clerk
Craig Kettle, Town Employee

Public Present:

Serena Brotherson

Clyde Watkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes Approved (7:01 p.m.)

A Motion was made by Sommer Arnold to approve the minutes of May 13, 2021 as written. Motion seconded by Ole Olsen. Motion carried unanimously.

A Motion was made by Glen Jessen to exit the regularly scheduled Town Council meeting and enter the public hearing. Motion seconded by Ole Olsen. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing (7:03 p.m.)

Budget Review: Melba reviewed the proposed 2021-2022 budget with the council. For the revenue portion of the budget, she informed the council that the general property tax is formulated by the state, and they have that at \$15,593.00 on their website now but that could change based on the mill levy. For general taxes, the budget shows \$95,000 which is a little low, but it is difficult to estimate tax income. The budget for business license and permits will remain about the same. Melba stated that there were a couple of new businesses that purchased business licenses from the Town, but they are no longer in business. For animal licenses, the budget shows \$260.00. This past year the Town only made \$240.00 on dog licenses. Melba further stated that there is no animal control officer working for the County right now, but the Town is paying the County for animal control. Melba reported that the Town's income for the Special Protective Services (fire department) was a lot higher this year due to the trucks that served on several wildfires. The estimated income for last year is \$151,000, but the new budget only shows \$60,000 because it is better to budget low on revenue. The service and sewer charges should be just about the same, but there are a couple of homes that were purchased by the school district so the Town will lose some revenue there. For parks the budget will only include \$400 for revenue. This year the Town has earned \$600.00 from the park. The cemetery budget will remain the same, as well as the secondary water and Class C Road funds. Interest rates are still very low, and Melba does not see a chance of those going back up this year. The budget had appropriated \$16,000 but Melba now estimates that the Town will only earn \$11,915. Melba stated that the sale of materials included the trucks that were recently sold, but the Town is not planning on selling any other assets this year. The income for mineral rights in the amount of \$3,615.00 was from the lease renewal. Melba informed the council that the

Town received \$20,790 for the Cares Act Fund for this current year, but she did not expect any additional income from that fund to include in next year's budget

For the expenses portion of the budget, Melba reported that the council wages would show \$10,800, personnel expenses are \$46,000, Melba's pay would show \$15,000 and legal expenses would show \$3,000. The non-departmental expense reflects the price of the backhoe, so that will drop back down to \$18,000. The budget for government buildings will remain the same, and the audit expense will increase \$100.00. The insurance budget will be \$9,500.00. The fire department expenses this year were \$118,500, but the new budget will include expenses of \$60,000. The budget will include animal control expenses. The sanitation expense will be increased to \$26,000 and the sewer collection will be increased to \$48,000 because some testing needs to be done on the lines. The budget for repair and maintenance on roads will be \$19,000 and secondary water will remain the same. The budget for park expenses will show \$5,000.0. Last year we spent \$6,100 which was low. The budget for park lighting was \$860 last year, but the budget will show that expense at \$400.00 because the Town will only have that expense for a portion of the year. Cemeteries will remain the same and the Capital Improvement will include an expense of \$30,000.00.

Ole Olsen asked for an explanation of the expenditures on the sewage collection and disposal. Mayor Watkins stated that the expense was increased to allow the Town to run cameras down some of the lines. The council had discussed running cameras down the lines with high water to look for leaks. Inasmuch as this is a dry year, we may not be able to do that but if the budget doesn't allow for that expense, it would be necessary to hold a special public hearing if the Town decides it is necessary to camera the lines.

A Motion was made by Ole Olsen to exit the public hearing and re-enter the regularly scheduled Town Council Meeting. Motion seconded by Glen Jessen. Motion carried unanimously.

A Motion was made by Glen Jessen to adopt the 2021-2022 Budget as reviewed with the property tax of \$15,593.00 as currently calculated by the County, or according to the mill levy set by the County. Motion seconded by Ole Olsen. Motion carried unanimously.

A Motion was made by Sommer Arnold to amend the 2020-2021 Budget to reflect the increase in non-departmental expenses for purchase of the backhoe and the additional fire department expenses as reviewed by the council. Motion seconded by Glen Jessen. Motion carried unanimously.

Fire Department (7:27 p.m.)

Chief Phillips was not in attendance at the meeting so this item will be discussed at next month's meeting.

Park (7:28 p.m.)

Serena Brotherson stated that she has a couple groups asking what service projects could be done at the park. Last year the Ioka treatment center did some service in the Town. The Altamont 1st Ward Elder's Quorum is looking for a service project as well. Serena

asked if the Elder's Quorum might be able to do some work on the Melba Mobile and the other groups could paint curbs in town. Craig Kettle stated that there were a couple gallons of red paint left but he was unsure about the white paint. There is also paint left from when they painted the tables at the park. There are no rollers or brushes. Serena also asked about obtaining more wood chips for the playground. Last year the Town added sand to the playground. Glen Jessen asked if the insurance policy would allow wood chips. Serena stated that the insurance policy would allow playground grade certified chips. She asked if the Town had any funds available to help with service projects. Mayor Watkins stated that any funds that the Town puts toward the park would have to come from the general fund. Serena stated that the Longhorn Days budget had some funding available. She asked if Melba remembered the cost or measurement from the last time wood chips were ordered. Melba stated she would have to look up that information. Serena asked about other areas of Town in need of service such as the fence between Swasey's Other Place and the Country Flair. She has noticed that garbage piles up along that fence that could be picked up.

Serena also asked the council for permission to do fireworks at the park. Glen Jessen stated that she would need to follow state and county regulations, but he believed that the State had banned all exploding fireworks this year. Serena stated that she would look into that.

With regard to the banners on main street, Serena stated that she was aware some of the banners had blown off. She is looking into getting an endcap for the top part. She has also scheduled someone to take down the UBTech banners and put up banners for Longhorn Days. She has noticed that the speakers were not all installed at the same level and asked the Town for permission to get some of those re-hung so they are all at the same level. The council honored that request.

Serena asked if the gate codes were all still the same at the park. Craig stated that there is now a key to the front gate, but he will work with her on those to make sure they have access to what they need for Longhorn Days. Serena stated that there would be two cranes on main street for the parade, and they would like to put a crane over in the back parking lot so there can be a flag at the park for the celebration as well.

Serena Brotherson left the meeting.

Mayor Watkins stated that Strata added a landline and internet for the recreation district. There are additional expenses to the Town for these services. It would be beneficial for the recreation district to donate funds to help cover those costs.

With regards to the wood chips at the park, Glen stated that he would not be in favor of the Town purchasing those wood chips at this time inasmuch as the Recreational District will be taking over the park and that is not an expense the Town needs to incur right now.

Mayor Watkins informed the council that the Town purchased a backhoe. He further stated that there needed to be a plan made for trees at the cemeteries. This is an issue that had been discussed several times, but he was unsure if a plan was ever made. The council stated that Derek had started a plan, but nothing was ever finalized. Sommer stated that she may still have a copy of the proposal.

Sewer System (7:56 p.m.)

Mayor Watkins stated that the council needed to discuss plans for the sewer system, including running cameras down the lines. There was a plan to run cameras down the lines when they were wet to see if there was a leak. It is a very dry year, but the Town may need to run some cameras to check the system anyway.

Miscellaneous

Mayor Watkins stated that the council may need to start finding someone to take Melba's place as she plans to retire in December. Melba stated that with the fraud risk, it would be beneficial to hire someone with a degree. It is also nice to have someone in the position who has an interest in the Town. No one has applied for the position.

Glen stated that with regards to the sidewalk projects, they have not been meeting because of Covid so that project will not be completed this year.

The next Town Council meeting will be held on July 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

A Motion was made by Glen Jessen to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m. Motion seconded by Sommer Arnold. Motion carried unanimously.

Read and approved this 8th day of July, 2021.

e-mailed to

altamonttown@gmail.com

July 3, 2021