

MINUTES OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
April 3, 2025, 7:00 p.m.
TOWN OF VIRGINIA CITY, MONTANA
Elk's Lodge

Council Present: Justin Gatewood, Amy Grice, Greg Jorczyk, Kacey Smart, David Bacon

Absent: None

Staff Present: Timber Baceski Clerk/Treasurer, Eric Barsness HPO, Roger Williams PWD, Jesse Boag Training PWD

Absent: None

Public Present: Tanya Engle, Paul Handelman, Matt Mudd, Van Puckett, Daphne Puckett, Diana Bunitsky, Duke Gilman, Kal Poole, Angela Mueller

Public Present on Zoom: Becky DiGiovanna, Madison Goettle, George Wollner, Jill Swenson, Dan Allhands

1) Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Justin Gatewood, Mayor

2) Mayor and Commissioner's Reports/Comments:

a) Mayor Gatewood updated the public on active legislative bills. SB260, which would allow for the redrawing of hospital district boundaries, has been amended. HB162, which would allow additional 1% resort tax to go towards workforce/affordable housing, has passed the committee and is going to the senate next. SB188, which has to do with shared solar programs, looks as though it has a good chance of passing.

b) Mayor Gatewood mentioned that the Local Government Review Committee held a hearing two weeks ago, which went well. The Committee is working hard and should have a report for the Town Council by July of 2025.

3) Public Comments

a) Tanya Engle informed the public that the Elk's Lodge will be hosting the annual cake walk on April 12th to support the Virginia City Rural Fire Department (VCRFD).

4) Clerks Report:

Clerk Timber Pruett reported that, outside of regular duties, she has been revamping permit applications and continuing to work on the annual voluntary audit.

5) HPO/HPAC Report:

HPO Eric Barsness reported that HPAC has been looking at regulations regarding use of undeveloped streets and alleys. HPO Barsness that he has been working with Amy Grice and Mark Jacobs, traveling around the County to provide informational sessions about the Madison County Courthouse and its proposed additions. HPO Barsness also attended a tree board retreat with Amy Grice in Helena.

6) New Business:

a) Sign Permit Application – Virginia City Farmacy

i) The Virginia City Farmacy wants to put up an open flag. The first open flag in Virginia City was approved in 2016, at which point it was decided that open flags would only be allowed to fly outside of resort tax season, and all open flags would need to look the exact same (color, size, font, etc.). The proposed flag matches those that are already approved in Town.

MOTION: To approve the Sign Permit Application for Virginia City Farmacy (Open Flag) as presented. Motion made by Amy Grice; Seconded by David Bacon. The question was called. The motion passed by voice vote, Justin Gatewood, Amy Grice, David Bacon, Greg Jorczyk, and Kacey Smart in favor. None opposed.

b) Sign Permit Application – St. Paul's Episcopal Church

MOTION: To approve the Sign Permit Application for St. Paul's Episcopal Church as presented. Motion made by Justin Gatewood; Seconded by David Bacon. The question was called. The motion passed by voice vote, Justin Gatewood, Amy Grice, David Bacon, Greg Jorczyk, and Kacey Smart in favor. None opposed.

c) Site/Zoning Permit Application – Jill Swenson

i) This application is for a 16'x32' garage beside the existing house.

MOTION: To approve the Site/Zoning Permit Application for Jill Swenson as presented. Motion made by Justin Gatewood; Seconded by David Bacon. The question was called. The motion passed by voice vote, Justin Gatewood, Amy Grice, David Bacon, Greg Jorczyk, and Kacey Smart in favor. None opposed.

d) Site/Zoning Permit Amendment - Rasmussen

i) Bren Rasmussen turned HPO Barsness' drawings into a nearly identical CAD version. These will be the final changes made to the Rasmussen Site/Zoning Permit.

MOTION: To approve the Site/Zoning Permit Amendment for Rasmussen as presented. Motion made by Kacey Smart; Seconded by Amy Grice. The question was called. The motion passed by voice vote, Justin Gatewood, Amy Grice, David Bacon, Greg Jorczyk, and Kacey Smart in favor. None opposed.

e) VC/Great West Engineering Update – Matt Mudd, GWE

i) Matt Mudd of Great West Engineering is working with the Town to update Virginia City's Wastewater Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) using the \$25,000 in DNRC funding and \$45,000 in MCEP funding that the Town was awarded. The PER is a planning document that is focused on capital improvement specifically within the Town's wastewater system. The PER should be complete by the end of 2025.

ii) Mayor Gatewood emphasized the importance of PERs, mentioning that the water PER was why the Town was able to receive over \$1 million in ARPA funding.

f) Montana Heritage Commission Update – Kal Poole, MHC Executive Director

i) Kal Poole updated the Council on a variety of MHC happenings and relevant legislature.

- SB116 would adjust the structure and size of the MHC from 14 members to 9 members, and HB680 would allow 99-year leases to be put in place between the MHC and any entity interested in making substantial contributions and/or doing major work on the property being leased.
- The Virginia City Chamber of Commerce will be moving from the Village Pump building into the Gypsy Arcade building, which will allow for a thrift/gift store with Made in Montana products to be put inside the Village Pump. Bert & Ernie's Pedal Pub will also operate by the Village Pump.
- MHC is looking for potential partners for a campground in Nevada City, as well as a hotelier/vendor to operate the Nevada City hotel. Other potential ideas include a haunted house, audio tour content, and moving in a historic 1905 building, courtesy of Les Gilman.
- MHC is currently trying to determine the full cost for finishing the Stonewall Hall project. After a solid number is obtained, MHC will launch a more formal campaign for fundraising. This campaign, which will be for both Stonewall Hall and the Dudley, will be multi-faceted and aimed toward high-level donors

g) BMS Pay Presentation – Timber Pruett, Clerk/Treasurer

i) Clerk Timber Pruett answered questions from last month's meeting. There would be no wiggle room for ACH payments, and Virginia City's cost would exactly mirror that of Twin Bridges. Clerk Pruett asked to conduct a survey to gauge if enough users would be interested in the online payment service for it to be financially worth it for the Town. Mayor Gatewood suggested that we only use the current number of users who pay with a credit card to make that determination.

h) Update on ARPA Water Project

i) There is roughly \$80,000 in contingency funds that have been allocated to various smaller projects, mainly \$60,000 for valves.

7) Public Works Report:

a) PWD Jesse Boag attended the MRWS Conference with former PWD Robert Erdall. PWD Boag informed the Council that the current system we use to read water meters each month has become outdated and obsolete. It works fine for now, but if the Clerk computer were to crash, the Town would be unable to read meters without upgrading our equipment and software.

8) Consent Agenda:

a) Minutes from March 6, 2025 Council Meeting

i) Changes to be made:

- Agenda Item 6ai: change "house was built" to "guest house was built"

- Put “in training” after Jesse Boag PWD

MOTION: To approve the Minutes from March 6, 2025 Council Meeting as amended. Motion made by Justin Gatewood; Seconded by Amy Grice. The question was called. The motion passed by voice vote, Justin Gatewood, Greg Jorczyk, Kacey Smart, David Bacon, and Amy Grice in favor. None opposed.

b) Invoices and Checks March 2025

MOTION: To approve the Invoices and Checks for March 2025. Motion made by David Bacon; Seconded by Amy Grice. The question was called. The motion passed by voice vote, Justin Gatewood, Amy Grice, Greg Jorczyk, David Bacon, and Kacey Smart in favor. None opposed.

c) Accounts Payable, Receivable, Adjustments, and Electronic Checks March 2025

MOTION: To approve the Accounts Payable, Receivable, Adjustments, and Electronic Checks March 2025. Motion made by David Bacon; Seconded by Amy Grice. The question was called. The motion passed by voice vote, Justin Gatewood, Amy Grice, David Bacon, and Kacey Smart in favor. None opposed.

d) Bank Reconciliation for January 2025

MOTION: To approve the Bank Reconciliation for January 2025. Motion made by Justin Gatewood; Seconded by Amy Grice. The question was called. The motion passed by voice vote, Justin Gatewood, Amy Grice, Greg Jorczyk, David Bacon, and Kacey Smart in favor. None opposed.

e) Great West Draw

None.

9) Public Comment:

None.

10) Adjournment

MOTION: To Adjourn. Motion made by David Bacon; Seconded by Amy Grice. The question was called: Motion was passed by voice vote, all in favor. None opposed.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 8:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted and attested,

Justin Gatewood
Mayor

Timber Baceski
Clerk Treasurer