

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING

RIDGWAY TOWN COUNCIL

FEBRUARY 28, 2022

The Town Council convened for a meeting on a virtual platform, pursuant to the Town's Electronic Participation Policy.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. The Council was present in its entirety with Councilors Beck, Grambley, Lakin, Schuyler, Mayor Pro Tem Meyer and Mayor Clark in attendance.

Town Clerk's Notice of Workshop Meeting dated February 24, 2022.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Robyn Cascade expressed concerns that affordable housing requirements placed on new development, "is not affordable to an average person working within Town". She suggested Council increase the deed restricted percentage from 10% to 20%; encourage developers to increase the cost of other units to lower the price on the units designated affordable; ask developers to not get a profit on the affordable units; and "keep a townhouse to \$300,000".

There were comments from the Council.

Jennifer Cram stated she agreed with the comments made by Ms. Cascade.

Andrea Sokolowski, President of Home Trust of Ouray County, noted the Home Trust is campaigning to raise funds to assist in purchases of affordable housing units.

1. Presentation of Water Supply Assessment report

Staff Report dated February 24, 2022 from the Town Manager presenting the Water Supply Assessment prepared by LRE Water.

Manager Neill reported in May of 2021 the Town solicited requests for proposal to prepare a comprehensive assessment of the Town's current water rights portfolio and supplies. The study was to determine the total projected water supplies available during normal, single dry and multiple dry water years over a thirty year projection, and to determine if it meets the demands of future growth. The competitive bid process was awarded to LRE Water, and a comprehensive analysis was performed over a seven month period. Staff provided information and data to assist the consultants to quantify existing and future water demands, evaluate adequacy of the existing water supply system to meet those demands, and identify any deficiencies in either the available physical or legal supply.

Representing LRE Water, Ashley Moffatt, lead engineer and senior project manager, and Mark Mitisek, lead hydrologist and senior project manager presented the findings of the study. Key objectives of the study included system overview; existing water demands based on 1150 residents; supplies available from a legal and physical basis; water supply strategies; findings and recommendations.

Ms. Moffatt reported a key objective was the review of the water supply system, water rights portfolio, quantify existing and future water demands and analyzed physical water availability. It was noted the existing water system was evaluated at the “best available data at hand”. With a population base of approximately 1150 residents, the need was found to be approximately 315 acres per year. To determine the projected water demands of 2050 water availability from the water rights were reviewed. Taking into account for climate change adjustments, the consultants noted the importance of having water storage in the lake.

There were questions from Council and audience, and a discussion ensued regarding climate change models and possible reductions in flow.

The consultants addressed current operations or at full entitlement; demand totals; potable water use; model scenarios of historical hydrology and the demand scenario of the 30 year hydrology. The consultants stated the model results show that if the Town continues to manage the Ridgway Ditch such that it receives approximately 37% of the total available diversion, then its municipal water system will not be able to reliably support the high growth, total 2050 demand under historical or climate change hydrology. They also explained that the model results also show that by managing the Ridgway Ditch such that the Town receives the entire supply up to the first 2 cfs during the summer irrigation season and entire supply up to 0.25 cfs during the winter non-irrigation season, the total 2050 municipal demand can be met.

The consultants suggested water supply strategies the Town could explore as alternatives to making operational changes or in combination with changes. The suggestions included increased storage, acquiring water rights and developing a plan for augmentation.

Recommendations included data improvements though production records, Lake O records, Ridgway Ditch Diversion records; legal availability though Ridgway Ditch operations and Cottonwood Creek administration; develop codes through adequate water supply rules, and raw water demands; study legal considerations through the current Ouray County Water Court case and pursue available grants.

There were questions from the Council

SPEAKING FROM THE AUDIENCE:

Jack Petruccelli spoke in support of “piping Ridgway Ditch”, noting it could “protect us for the next 30-40 years”.

Pat Willits as the manager of the property upon which Lake Ottonawanda is located, stated he has monitored lake and ditch levels with “measuring sticks” and observations between the years of 2017-2021 are “the lake loses water in the wintertime”, and he is “confident in addition to evaporation there is a sippage loss in Lake O”. He recommended the Town monitor “what is diverted at Beaver Creek and what comes into the Lake” as there appears to be a “significant loss in those three miles”. He stated the reports show “we can double usage but based on what we are seeing at the lake and ditch”, “I would say the report is super over optimistic” and “I worry about what this model is projecting”. He stated “I think the Town needs to take a hard look” at “how the Town is going to grow and where the water is going to come from”. He agreed with the need to “pipe Beaver Creek to the lake”.

Jennifer Cram asked “if we need more data” where would research be performed to locate “where things might not be right”. Ms. Moffat stated the report needs to be “looked at periodically” and “continued to look at”.

Joan Chismire questioned water levels if there was a need for wildfire mitigation.

Gail Melgren had questions regarding uses from the raw water system.

Ken Miller presented questions regarding the capacity at Lake Ottonawanda.

2. Project Development and Implementation Agreement for Lena Street Improvements

Staff Report dated 2-24-22 from the Town Manager presenting a Project Development and Implementation Agreement for Lena Street Improvements with Lena Street Commons LLC.

The Town Attorney reported based on the recorded Development Agreement for the Lena Street Commons Project, staff and has met with development representatives to prepare an implementation plan which establishes responsible parties for undertaking the improvements on North Lena Street between Charles and Otto Streets. The cost sharing for the project is sixty percent by the developer and forty percent by the Town.

There were questions from the Council.

ACTION:

Moved by Mayor Pro Tem Meyer to approve the Project Development and Implementation Agreement for Lena Street Improvements seconded by Councilor Lakin and approved by a roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pam Kraft, MMC
Town Clerk