

RIDGWAY TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 8, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was held both in person and via virtual meeting portal Zoom Meeting, pursuant to the Town's Electronic Participation Policy.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. In attendance Councilors Grambley, Lakin, Schuyler, Mayor Pro Tem Meyer and Mayor Clark. Councilmembers Kroger and Thomas were absent.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes of Regular Meeting of September 13, 2023.
2. Minutes of Regular Meeting of October 11, 2023.
3. Minutes of Budget Retreat Meeting on October 21, 2023.
4. Register of Demands for November 2023.
5. Renewal of Restaurant Liquor License for Taco Del Gnar.
6. Renewal of Restaurant Liquor License for Thai Paradise.

ACTION:

It was moved by Councilor Lakin, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Meyer and unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jeanne Jantmoore noted 121 individuals submitted comments on the proposed Athletic Park Master Plan, 60 of those were in receipt when the Council presented direction to the consultants at the previous meeting. At the meeting it was noted a majority favored Option #3, and after all comments were tallied after the meeting, it was shown that 51% favored Option #1 she stated. She encouraged the Council to consider all age groups, not just youth, when prioritizing implementation of the plan options.

PUBLIC REQUESTS

7. Presentation of the 2022 Fiscal Year Audit

Pete Blair with Blair and Associates CPA, presented a Governance Letter and Management Report, along with the 2022 Fiscal Year Audit.

Auditor Blair reviewed the Management Report with the Council and noted capital assets increased by \$800,000; "debt is going down" with a payoff of a loan in 2022; investments of 6.5 million are in federally insured accounts, with 5 million in investment pools. There was a question from the Council regarding the investment pools.

Mr. Blair stated “the Town is in a great financial state and is increasing its net position every year, and in 2022 this increased by 2 million”. Reviewing the audit document, he stated the fund balance and working capital increased from the prior year, from 2.9 to 3.5%, up \$600,000, or a 20% increase in the General Fund; the Water Fund had a 14% increase, or \$470,000; the Sewer Fund less than \$100,000, or an 8% increase, with all funds increasing by 2 million dollars compared to 2021. He stated “the Town did a really great job” and is in a “really good financial situation”. Comparing 2021 to 2022, he noted, assets increased by 1.2 million in cash and accounts receivables, and \$800,000 in capital assets; total liabilities decreased due to paying off debt service. In 2022 revenues were up in all funds from 4.9 to 6 million; depreciation increased from 1.4 million in 2021 to 2 million in 2022, noting “everything is positive moving forward with the Town”.

8. Annual report from the Ridgway Community Garden and request for assistance in 2024

Letter dated 9-27-23 from the Ridgway Community Garden presenting an update report for 2023.

Representing the Ridgway Community Garden, Agnieszka Przeszlowska presented slides of photographs of the garden during the summer months. She reported this year 90 adults and 35 children participated, a 30% increase over the previous year. The year offered a “short growing season” starting July 9th and ending in a “hard freeze in September”. A number of improvements were made in the garden including installing four “waist high” beds, completing the children’s area, installing pathways and re-grading the parking area, which the Town assisted with. Partnerships and programs with the Apiary, Food Pantry, Voyager Youth Program, Ridgway Library and Ridgway Secondary School were undertaken. She explained in 2024 the non-profit organization is requesting Town assistance to improve and extend the storage area.

9. Presentation from the Home Trust of Ouray County and funding request for 2024

Letter dated 10-30-23 from the Home Trust of Ouray County seeking 2024 operational support.

Andrea Sokolowski with the Home Trust of Ouray County presented items accomplished during the year which included acquiring rental property in Ouray; starting a homeowner project in Parkside Subdivision; design for a rental project in Ouray; receiving 100 hours of technical assistance from CHFA for the Ridgway Childcare and Rentals project; and increasing receipts from grants and fundraising efforts. She explained the 2024 budget has been set at \$393,024 and the three jurisdictions within the County are each being asked to allocate \$30,000 towards the Home Trust, noting “we are looking at being self funded through each development project”.

There were questions from the Council.

10. Request to close Clinton Street for Noel Night and request for use of Town streets for parade

Ashley Perkins with the Ridgway Area Chamber of Commerce requested closure of Clinton Street from Laura to Lena for an outdoor holiday market during Noel Night on December 1st, and closure of Clinton Street on November 30th for a holiday parade.

There was discussion by Council and questions to staff and the applicant.

ACTION:

Moved by Councilor Schuyler, seconded by Councilor Lakin and unanimously carried to authorize Town staff to work out the details with the Chamber for a parade on November 30th, timing and route to be confirmed, and closure of Clinton Street on December 1st.

11. Proposal from Helios Charging Inc. for the deployment of electric vehicle chargers on Town property

Letter dated 9-23-23 from Daniel Benhammou with Helios Charging Inc. proposing Town partnership with the company for deployment of electric vehicle chargers.

Daniel Benhammou with Helios Charging presented a background on federally funded grants to deploy electric vehicle charging stations. He noted the Colorado Energy Office is disbursing funding, and the company would like to include in a proposal installation of four charging stations in a “plaza area,” in the parking lot to the south of Town Hall.

Mr. Benhammou requested a letter of support from the Town to proceed with the application noting if the grant is awarded he would work with San Miguel Power Association (SMPA) for transformers. Helios would retain the funds charged to use the stations, and “ten percent would be given back to the community”. The charging stations will have to comply with the national electric vehicle charging standards, noting the plaza area will require electrical upgrades, and must be fully lighted all night. He noted the requested letter of support should address allowing the use of Town property and state it is “a collaborative effort with the Town”, and noted “it could be one year” before the transformers are received.

Councilmember Schuyler, spoke as a representative of SMPA, and stated transformers are “18 months to two years out”, and cost for a transformer is \$100,000. Based on the kilowatts per charger to maintain the demand rate, there would need to be 500 charges a month, or 15 to 20 charges a day, to keep the rate affordable at \$25. The Mayor noted the Town is a dark sky community so the area can not be lite at night, and would not meet the requirements of the federal standards for a plaza area.

Mr. Benhammou explained there are two grants available one for “plaza areas with fast chargers”, and an other with slow chargers.

SPEAKING FROM THE AUDIENCE:

Patty Schaffer supported installing slow chargers, stating the fast charger plaza areas “don’t fit Hartwell Park”. She noted “ there are already fast charge areas” which are free of charge, “in Montrose, Ouray and Telluride”.

Chris Hawkins noted the corporation was only formed two months ago, and questioned “will they stay around and be committed in the long term”.

Joan Chismire spoke in support of the installing the slower charging stations.

There was discussion by the Council and it was noted installing the chargers at one of the gas stations in Town, which are lighted all night, maybe a better choice. It was agreed the Town Manager can prepare a letter of support for the company to install two slower charging stations.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

12. Application for Beer and Wine Liquor License from Kismet Cafe

Staff Report from the Town Clerk dated 10-6-23 presenting an application from Kismet Cafe for a Beer and Wine Liquor License.

The Town Clerk explained Wick Coffee Co LLC, Shareholders Nathaniel and Tera Wick have applied for a Beer and Wine Liquor License for the premises at 618 Clinton Street for a new business to be called Kismet Cafe. The application includes licensing patio areas on the north side of the building, and the ability to later use the south patio. The application has been made with concurrent review to State Liquor Enforcement, which allows local issuance of a temporary permit until receipt of the State license. She reported all requirements of the license have been met.

ACTION:

Moved by Councilmember Lakin to approve the Beer and Wine Liquor License from Wick Coffee Co LLC members Nathaniel and Tera Wick, dba Kismet Cafe. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Meyer and carried unanimously.

13. Ordinance No. 07-2023 Concerning Floodplain Management Regulations and Adopting Updated Flood Insurance Study and Flood Insurance Rate Map

Staff Report dated 11-1-23 from the Town Manager presenting an ordinance for second reading and adoption pertaining to the Flood Insurance Rate Map for the Town.

Manager Neill explained adoption of the ordinance is required under a Federal Emergency Management Agency flood hazard determination for our community. The determination includes local adoption of the Flood Plain Management Regulations of the National Flood Insurance Program, and the recently created Flood Insurance Study and Rate Map for the Town.

ACTION:

Mayor Pro Tem Meyer moved, Councilmember Schuyler seconded, and it was unanimously carried to adopt on second reading, Ordinance No. 07-2023 Amending Section 6-2 of the Ridgway Municipal Code Concerning Floodplain Management Regulations and Adopting Updated Flood Insurance Study and Flood Insurance Rate Map.

POLICY MATTERS

14. Master Plan Amendment Request for Preserve PUD

Staff Report dated 11-1-23 from TJ Dlubac, Contractual Planner with Community Planning Strategies presenting an application from Dalwhinnie Group LLC for amendment to the Master Plan Future Land Use Map and Three Mile Plan for the Preserve Planned Use Development (PUD) located within the Savath Subdivision Part of Outlot A and Woodford Addition, on County Road 23.

Planner Dlubac stated an application was made last year for modification of the Master Plan for a portion of Lot A of the Abbott Exception, which is located within the Town and Ouray County. Last year the Council met with County Commissioners to discuss the request, and the County suggested the area within County limits be incorporated into the Town. The area

is 200 feet south of the current Town boundary, he noted and if incorporated would require adjusting components to the Land Use Zoning Map, changes to the Initial Growth Boundary and the Three Mile Plan and Area of Influence. The Planning Commission unanimously approved the Master Plan Amendment request, and approved an amendment to the Master Plan, Future Land Use Map, and the Three Mile Plan, to include the area requested by the Dalwhinnie Group LLC.

Chris Hawkins with Alpine Planning explained approval of the amendment will allow the property owner to convey land to the Town to construct a sewer lift station.

Owner representative Michael Cox stated “our intention is to build out the property” for the Preserve PUD.

There were questions from the Council.

ACTION:

Councilor Schuyler moved to ratify the Town of Ridgway Planning Commission decision to approve the amendment to the Master Plan, Future Land Use Map and Three Mile Plan requested by the Dalwinne Group LLC. Mayor Pro Tem Meyer seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

15. Presentation of the Draft 2024 Fiscal Year Budget

The Town Clerk/Treasurer presented the Draft 2024 Fiscal Year Budget and the Five and Ten Year Capital Improvement Plans.

The Clerk reported with voter approval of a recent ballot question, lodging tax revenues will be adjusted from 3.5% to 6% and the revenue line items for marketing and affordable housing adjusted accordingly. Sales tax revenues have been projected conservatively and with the same projection as the current years budget. She noted funding requests from local non-profits groups have increased significantly in both the amount, and the number of requesting organizations. Staff is recommending placing in the Strategic Plan creation of a formal application process for funding requests, with criteria and funding limitations, for use in next years budget process. She noted the Capital Improvement Plans do not include items the Council suggested at the Budget Retreat, these will be presented at the Budget Workshop Meeting next week to assist with balancing the budget.

The Town Manager noted at a recent integrated water and land use planning workshop, staff prepared an action plan with specific goals and outcomes “to be more water conscious” and came to the conclusion that use of water on parks would for the first way to accomplish this goal. The plan will be presented at the Budget Workshop meeting.

16. Compensation adjustment for Town Manager

Mayor Clark reported the Council has completed the annual performance evaluation for the Town Manager, and are recommending a retroactive pay increase, moving one step in the Town’s established pay structure.

ACTION:

Mayor Pro Tem Meyer moved to issue the Town Manager a pay increase retroactive to the first of the year. Councilor Schuyler seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

Manager Neill highlighted some items contained in the monthly Managers Report.

Councilor Schuyler presented an update on the Space to Create Micro-grid grant application process, noting a letter of support is need from the Council. The Council agreed to the support letter.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pam Kraft, MMC
Town Clerk