

Town of Empire
30 East Park Avenue/P.O. Box 100 Empire, CO 80438
303.569.2978 - 303.569.2282 fax

Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2024 ~ 6:30 pm

1. **Called Meeting to Order** – Trustee Denise Tennant called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. The meeting was held in person and through Zoom.

2. **Roll Call** – The Empire Board of Trustees requires a simple majority of four trustees present at the meeting for a quorum.

Present: Trustee Denise Tennant, Trustee Lorrain Singmaster, Trustee Jacob Belcher, Trustee Randy Horning. Also in attendance were Town Clerk Jeannette Piel and Deputy Town Clerk Lisa Kunze.

Absent: Mayor Wendy Koch, Mayor Pro-Tem Linda Robertson, and Trustee Lon Fulton.
A quorum was present at the meeting.

TRUSTEE BELCHER MOTIONED TO APPOINT TRUSTEE DENISE TENNANT AS CHAIR FOR THE MEETING, TRUSTEE HORNING SECONDED THE MOTION, CLERK KUNZE CONDUCTED A ROLL CALL VOTE, ALL WERE IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED.

Trustee Tennant was appointed to preside over the meeting as Chairperson.

3. **Approval of Agenda**

TRUSTEE HORNING MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR MARCH 19, 2024, TRUSTEE BELCHER SECONDED THE MOTION, CLERK KUNZE CONDUCTED A ROLL CALL VOTE, ALL WERE IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED.

The Agenda was approved.

4. **Approval of Consent Agenda:**

- a. Minutes February Regular Meeting
- b. Minutes March Training & Work Session Meeting

Town Staff will correct the header of the February 20, 2024 minutes to read “Minutes” instead of “Agenda.”

TRUSTEE BELCHER MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA, TRUSTEE HORNING PROVIDED THE SECOND, CLERK KUNZE CONDUCTED A ROLL CALL VOTE, ALL WERE IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED.

The Consent Agenda was approved.

5. **Resolutions:**

- a. **Resolution 24-16: Adopting a New Official Seal**
 - i. Exhibit A Town Seal

TRUSTEE HORNING MOTIONED TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 24-16: ADOPTING A NEW OFFICIAL TOWN SEAL, TRUSTEE SINGMASTER PROVIDED THE SECOND, CLERK KUNZE CONDUCTED A ROLL CALL VOTE, ALL WERE IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED.

Resolution 24-16 is adopted and is effective immediately.

6. **Town Clerk Jennifer Boswell Oath of Office**

Jennifer Boswell took the Oath of Office and was sworn in as Town Clerk.

7. **Election Day is April 2nd, 2024:**

- a. **“Decisions are made by those who show up!”** (*Quote from the TV Series The West Wing*) **We encourage everyone to vote in our local election!**

Mail Ballot Elections make voting easy. You will receive your ballot in the mail, fill out your ballot at home, put it in the postage paid return envelope, and take it to the Post Office, or drop it off at Town Hall. Please verify your voter registration with the County to ensure you receive a Ballot. Ballots must be received at Town Hall by April 2nd, 2024.

b. Here are your candidates:

MAYOR: Wendy Koch

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Randy Horning, Jacob Belcher, Denise Tennant, Lon Fulton c.

Ballots were mailed the week of March 11th. Please contact Town Hall if you need an absentee ballot form so we can send your ballot to you. (303-569-2978,

clerk@empirecolorado.us)

d. Please pick up a handout or go to the website (empirecolorado.us) to get information on the ballot question asking if you, the voters, want to eliminate term limits. It's important to understand what your "yes" or "no" vote means.

e. Candidates – please see Clerk Kunze after the meeting if you need forms notarized. f. Thank you to all the Candidates for participating in the Candidate Meet & Greet! We appreciate everyone taking the time to come to an extra meeting and spend time sharing your hopes and dreams for Empire!

g. The first Training and Work Session for the new term will be May 7th. At that time, we will have orientation for new Board members, and also explore all the ideas that were shared by Board members at the Candidate Meet & Greet. This list will give us our direction for the next term.

8. Multi-Jurisdictional Housing Authority (MJHA)

a. Empire's goals

Trustee discussion included:

- Previously declared housing as an emergency as a Board and are committed to provide affordable housing for workers.
- More efforts outside of the MJHA will be needed to solve this massive problem.
- Provide tax incentives to developers to encourage the creation of more affordable housing.
- Ski areas like Loveland, Vail, Keystone and Winter park have begun providing alternative housing for workers.
- Sally Rush, Housing Coordinator for Clear Creek County, explained that Empire will have equal access to Idaho Springs with the newly formed MJHA, and that her past efforts have included assisting new homebuyers with their first mortgage through combined efforts with Summit County. The MJHA is a business; once it's operating it can provide benefits for "affordable housing," which, for example, a family of 2 in Clear Creek County would qualify for with \$75,000 in income. Clear Creek hasn't been able to do much, with the MJHA the tide will raise all boats and will be a robust housing authority. Summit has done rental assistance and employee housing, once the MJHA is up and running it is a good business.

The Board identified these goals for our participation in the MJHA:

1. Allows access to funding the Town would not have on our own.
2. Will allow Empire to continue to advocate for affordable housing with a larger network.
3. Helps seasonal workers with housing or rental assistance that may help these workers live where they work and contribute to the local economic development efforts.
4. Partner with Loveland or other places who do seasonal housing to provide this.
5. Streamlines the application process.
6. Ensure the habitability of current housing stock.
7. Blue Spruce Habitat and NWCOG both have home repair programs where the median income to qualify is \$75,000: the MJHA program wants to renovate existing housing stock and Empire could really use this resource.
8. Incentivize housing for small families with school-aged children to help the school district's tax base and our aging population.

This initial discussion will provide some direction as Empire and all the municipalities form their IGAs. More discussion will occur at the next Board meeting.

9. Discussion on posting the open Police Officer Position

The Board has budgeted about \$60,000 for a new police officer in 2024, preferably right out of Academy. This means the new person will need new equipment, training and onboarding. Candidates are often sponsored to attend Academy so the available pool is small. Instead, we have other more experienced candidates who may be interested, may have their own equipment and do not need the intensive training a new officer would require. Financially, there are 2 options: stay with this \$60,000 figure or find more in the budget to increase the base salary to hire an experienced

officer.

Chief Lorenz teaches at the Academy and knows that hiring is tricky; some who are sponsored may drop out or others are poached when they show promise as an officer. Training someone with experience is much easier, less costly, and they can get on the street earlier without supervision. This will help the 3 officers with 24/7 coverage and have some off duty days, which is difficult now with 2 officers.

The Board discussed the high cost of police equipment, the proper salary range for hiring a candidate right out of the academy versus a more experienced candidate, and the training necessary to get an officer ready to patrol solo. The Board indicated they were in consensus for staff to post the position with a higher salary to hire an experienced officer.

10. Reports:

- a. Finances – Town Administrator
 - i. List of Monthly Bills will be uploaded on the website tomorrow.
 - ii. Easter Seals wrote a thank you note for the Town’s donation (attached.)
- b. Grants – Town Administrator. Work is continuing to move forward on the following two grant processes:
 - i. Water Distribution System
 - 1. Community Project Funding from HUD for infrastructure (CPF WDS)
\$4,000,000
 - a. Water Lines and Valves plan is at 60% design
 - b. Repair Roads after line replacement
 - c. Meters and Command Link
 - 2. Lead and Copper Rule Revision (LCRR) Water Service Line Inventory
 - ii. Freeport McMoran (Henderson Mine Site Investment)
 - 1. Community & Economic Development \$9500
- c. CCFA – Trustee Horning reported the meeting with the County Commissioners was contentious; they want more information about what questions they could survey the area with; are investigating a ballot measure for November with these questions; and discussed the governance structure. Trustee Belcher also said the meeting was feisty; he attended on Zoom and felt the negativity only turned positive when discussion turned to surveying the community. They may meet twice a month instead of once and have a CWPP survey online they’d like people to take.
Both said they need an impartial moderator who is not a part of the group; and Town Administrator Piel said the staff will prepare the questions the Board have discussed and send it out for the Board to review. They will then send it to the Commissioners who have asked for it knowing we’ve had two lengthy discussions about the issue.
- d. ROMP – Town Administrator
 - i. Partners Meeting 3-28-24
 - ii. Amy Saxton will present to the BOCC 4-2-24
- e. Police Department – Chief Lorenz
 - i. January 1 through March 19th Monthly statistics in Attachment. Chief Lorenz explained that crime is down, traffic stops are up and officers are helping other communities, CDOT, and nearby counties as well.
 - ii. Trustee Belcher congratulated Chief Lorenz on the apprehension of the suspect on Berthoud Pass that got national press during last week’s snow storm.
- f. Upcoming Events – Town Administrator
 - i. March 30th – Saturday, 11 am, Empire’s Easter Egg Hunt! Meet in Minton Park.
 - ii. April 10th – Wednesday, 6:30 pm in Town Hall – join us for our Empire Police Department Meet & Greet!
- g. Planning Commission – Mayor
 - i. All Planning Commission meetings are in-person with remote access.
 - ii. The next Regular Planning Commission Meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 27th, 2024, at 6:30 pm.

11. **Public Comment:** Public comment is limited to 5 minutes per person. The Board does not respond to

questions during this time. For operational questions, please email the clerk.

No public comment.

12. Moment of Appreciation – We would like to know what you appreciate about Empire, what facilities you use, what you like to do, and what goals you would like for the Town. It can be anything. What’s the first thing that comes to your mind, or what’s the first thing you show people when they visit, or what do you miss the most when you are away. Short and sweet answers – please keep it positive!

- Loved how the 3 feet of snow melted down to cover our mountains with white fondant!
- I appreciate where our Board is going.
- No traffic in either direction on Highway 40 some mornings when there’s no cars and you can freely cross the street!
- The snow and more of it coming!
- The water we’re getting from this snow is wonderful. We love water!
- A new business venture in town, Andrew Ratliff, will help plow out people in town for a fee, which is needed and appreciated!
- Snow and people out helping other people.
- The snow day for workers and the kids, where families spontaneously met up to sled at the park and it was a true SNOW DAY.
- Public works, Kevin Luce, did an amazing job on our streets during the big snow and any emergencies could have been addressed because our streets looked better than Idaho Springs!

13. New Business from Board of Trustee Members

No new business.

14. The Next Board of Trustees Work Session is Tuesday, May 7th, 2024, at 6:30 pm.

15. The Next Board of Trustees Regular Meeting is Tuesday, April 16th, 2024, at 6:30 pm. In person with remote access.

16. Adjourn Meeting –

TRUSTEE HORNING MOTIONED TO ADJOURN, TRUSTEE BELCHER SECONDED THE MOTION, CLERK KUNZE CONDUCTED A ROLL CALL VOTE, ALL WERE IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

(Mayor Wendy Koch)

(Deputy Town Clerk Lisa Kunze)