

Town of Empire
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Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Minutes
June 18, 2024 ~ 6:30 pm

Remote Meeting using the Zoom Platform.

1. **Call Meeting to Order** – Mayor Koch called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. The meeting was held in person and through Zoom.

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

Present: Mayor Wendy Koch, Trustee Randy Horning, Trustee Denise Tennant, Trustee Jacob Belcher and Trustee Lon Fulton. Also in attendance were Town Attorney Wilson Scarbeary, Police Chief Andrew Lorenz, Town Administrator Jeannette Piel, and Deputy Town Clerk Lisa Kunze.

A quorum was present at the meeting.

3. **Approval of Agenda**

TRUSTEE BELCHER MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR JUNE 18, 2024, TRUSTEE FULTON 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 May 21, 2024 Regular Meeting
- b. Minutes May 29, 2024 PC and BOT Joint Public Hearing
- c. Minutes June 4, 2024 Work Session & Training Meeting

TRUSTEE TENNANT 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. **Presentation by Tracy Troia for the Mayor's and Commissioner's Youth Award**

Tracy stated that Empire has been generous in giving towards this scholarship. The Award has been given for the past 20 years, and is given to young people who have demonstrated overcoming diversity and who have become inspiration and role models for their peers. Eight students were awarded this year during a dinner at the Easter Seals Camp. In addition, each receives a \$500 scholarship to use for academic or athletic enrichment and a computer with software and earbuds to help set them up for success in their journey.

With more civic support, they'd like to get the awards up to \$1,000. Mayor Koch said the Empire Board of Trustees has previously approved a \$500 donation and will be sending the organization a check.

6. **Board of Trustees Goals for 2024-2026**

- a. Continue summarizing Board goals for this term; Beginning goals are to increase revenue, protect our natural non monetizable assets.

Town Administrator Piel started with a reminder that CML has set goals for this year, and they are all related to civility. She explained that we talked about this at the work session, and we'll continue to refer to the articles and resources. The most exciting thing to her as she was reading the articles - we have been doing all of these

things for the last couple of years, as we have been creating a “culture of respect.” The Board hasn't had a chance to talk about it in detail, but this matrix (attached) was started 2 years ago. It started with the administrative team, expanded to the whole staff, and we are now working it into the Board and Planning Commission, with the hopes that it can be extended to those in the community.

The Board then revisited their comments from the Candidate meet & greet session as a starting point to goals for this term. These included very general categories: to increase revenue, and protect our natural non-monetizable assets. Considering these and any other priorities, the Board discussed and generated this goal to guide them as they create or amend policy and code.

- A. Using the SMART goals process:
 - 1. To increase revenue (sales tax revenue, economic development, traffic enforcement, infrastructure but specifically business revenue.)
 - 2. To protect our natural non-monetizable assets

After further discussion, the Board brainstormed this as a possible goal for the remainder of this term:

The Town of Empire will increase revenue by supporting the economic needs of current and future businesses by capitalizing on our unique location and the traffic that it provides within this term limit without compromising our non monetizable assets that give us the charm that we have.

The Board will revisit this at the next work session for informal adoption.

7. Ordinance discussion

- a. Setting Town priorities to guide Board policy decisions

At the last Board Work Session, Town Administrator Piel walked through what she jokingly called “The Triangle of Doom.” Current trends in state and local policy recommend more dense housing, fewer parking spots which conflict with fire safety and economic development. Simply, before we can begin working on code for Parking, Affordable Housing, and Fire Safety, we have to determine what are our Town’s priorities. The Board suggested we survey our community (Agenda Item 7c), and our Attorney indicated other towns are struggling with these competing priorities as well.

- b. Attorney Scarbeary will present options from other municipalities

Attorney Scarbeary addressed the parking side of the triangle. He advised the Board on the legal aspect of this, quoting state law. A bill was mentioned that has been introduced this year, it applies to front range municipalities, municipalities over a certain size and those located along transit corridors. Empire is still outside of this range and does not qualify. Parking minimums, public transportation and fire code were also topics of conversation. The Board further discussed parking limitations and identifying parking signs throughout the town. The Board then transitions the conversation over to fire proofing and defensible space.

- c. Community survey for priorities

The Board received a paper copy of the new online Community Survey. These are complicated issues but we tried to lay them out with pros and cons and explain what the effect will be on the community. We are hoping to get good feedback so that the community can help the Board decide on the priorities.

- d. Discussion from Public

Bob Wise: Speaking as a citizen, and as an employee who has been researching the hazards. He suggests fire mitigation not be separate but concurrent with the other priorities. There is fuel everywhere for fires.

8. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between Clear Creek County and the Town of Empire for Use of Empire Town Hall as Emergency Shelter

Clear Creek Advocates and the Emergency Management Team have set up the Town Hall as a safe place

for evacuation. If we were to have a blizzard and there are stranded motorists, it could provide a safe place for those stranded. If a major fire happens, the town hall can provide a shelter area. Town hall has cots, water and provisions. This in no way obligates staff, and it will be staffed by the Clear Creek Advocates. It would be nice to have in case of an emergency, and it is the first of this type of agreement.

9. Presentation of three bids for the Water Distribution System Grant Request for Proposal (RFP)

- a. Announce bids – Received bids from 3 companies: SMH West LLC, ESCO Construction, and Bear Excavating, with Bear being the lowest bid.
- b. Recommendation from engineering firm JVA who is the project lead – see attached letter from JVA for the breakdown of the recommendation.
- c. Vote for approval.

TRUSTEE TENNANT MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE BID FROM BEAR EXCAVATING FOR THE WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM GRANT RFP, TRUSTEE BELCHER SECONDED THE MOTION, CLERK KUNZE CONDUCTED A ROLL CALL VOTE, ALL WERE IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED.

The bid from Bear Excavating has been approved. Staff will proceed with negotiating a contract through our attorney.

10. Vote to approve bill over \$10,000.00

- a. East Slope Excavating – work on Sewer Main and Manholes on Hanchett Rd

The project for the Visitor Center was much less than expected because the line went directly to the sewer main and not through the parking lot as originally expected. The bill was only \$4935.00 and does not need approval.

The second bill was for the project for Steve Konsella at Empire School. He found that the school was never tied into the sewer system and was on a large septic tank. The tank was filled in and he had to connect to the sewer main. He chose to continue the sewer main west to east down Hanchett road and tie in at the intersection of Hanchett and Avery. The bill presented to the Town is for \$22,564 for the Manholes. (See Attached Invoice from East Slope Excavating.)

- b. Vote for approval

TRUSTEE BELCHER MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE INVOICE FROM EAST SLOPE EXCAVATING, TRUSTEE HORNING SECONDED THE MOTION, CLERK KUNZE CONDUCTED A ROLL CALL VOTE, ALL WERE IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED.

Payment to East Slope Excavating for work on sewer main and manholes on Hanchett Road has been approved.

11. Vote to donate to the C3 festival for Clear Creek County

- a. Event details – Chief Lorenz explained the festival has been going on for many years, but was stopped during the pandemic. It was resurrected last year, and is a similar event to our National Night Out (NNO.) The county is asking for donations, and they support our department and our NNO, so he is asking the Board to approve a donation for student sport scholarships or AP classes at Clear Creek Middle and High School. Their goal is \$15,000 and they have asked all municipalities and all communities.

- b. Vote for approval

TRUSTEE HORNING MOTIONED TO APPROVE A \$300 DONATION TO THE C3 FESTIVAL, TRUSTEE BELCHER SECONDED THE MOTION, CLERK KUNZE CONDUCTED A ROLL CALL VOTE, ALL WERE IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED.

A donation to the C3 festival of \$300 has been authorized.

12. Updates on Open Staff Positions

- a. Hiring for Code Enforcement Officer who will also be Zoning & Compliance Officer: We are excited to announce that this position has been filled by Lon Fulton. Unfortunately that means Lon is required to resign from the Board of Trustees and the Planning Commission. Lon said he is not looking forward to not being on the Board and Planning Commission, but he will still be attending in his new role.

b. Hiring for Town Administrator. The job has been posted on the town's website and on governmentjobs.com with a July 2, 2024 closing date. The hiring committee is Town Clerk Jennifer Boswell, Town Deputy Clerk Lisa Kunze, Mayor Wendy Koch, Chief of Police Andrew Lorenz, Mayor Pro-Tem Randy Horning, Trustee Denise Tennant and Trustee Jacob Belcher.

13. Update on Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) and Parks Master Plan

a. We are creating the framework for the Operational Master Plans, such as the Parks Master Plan, which will then feed into the Comprehensive Master Plan. The staff is continuing to fact check and reformat the CMP.

b. The following list was generated by the Board at the last work session. It represents their "DREAMS" for our major park assets as well as the issues present at each park. The PC will do the same, and the Town Park survey from Minton Park will also be used to include the community's wishes. This will form the vision for future parks planning into the next 20 years that is beginning this summer in earnest:

Minton Park:

- Dreams: Mountain bikes/bmx areas; landscaping; splash pad; multi use field; event stage; nature trail; disc golf course; bigger dog park; restrooms
- Issues: Ground squirrels; location; vandalism; signage; no restrooms; flood plain, no sewage

Theobald Park:

- Dreams: tribute to history; fix school and church for function; natural to state flora; self guided tours; shaded picnic areas; farmers market; wedding receptions in renovated church; small amphitheater, move school/church
- Issues: too front and center; high level of opinions; dead trees; budget/funding; small area d.

Welcome Park:

- Dreams: Move schoolhouse/church; electric vehicle charging station; picnic area; additional business parking; kiosk for tourists; welcoming signage; access to water; aesthetic lighting; westbound restroom; ingress/egress
- Issues: lot shape; topography; hidden; speeders through town; lowest priority on totem pole

14. Letters of Intent for a candidate to fill the remainder of a current term for Board of Trustees

a. Letter of Intent and Introduction of Jessie Reiman
See attached letter.

b. Vote for approval

CLERK KUNZE CONDUCTED A CONSENSUS VOTE TO APPOINT JESSIE REIMAN TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, ALL WERE IN FAVOR, MOTION PASSED.

c. If approved, Oath of Office
Jessie Reiman took the oath of office.

15. Additional Questions for Current Projects or Initiatives

a. Confirm the date of the Supplemental meeting to vote on the West Fork Village Subdivision Plat and Plan, tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, July 9th, 2024 at 6:30 pm.

16. Reports:

a. Budget/Audit/Grants

i. Update on Budget and Audit timelines – set goals starting in July, the start of the budget and audit timeline. Also in July, the Board will look at budget numbers at the end of the second quarter to see if we are on target.

ii. Update on Well - finally passed state testing for the new Well to be used!

iii. Update on Water Distribution Grant - Construction on water mains and valves will start soon. There will be a significant amount of road repair needed, and we will do our best to inform people block by block when your road will be under construction. Please send your email to the clerk so we

can inform as many people as possible by email.

iv. Update on Loader - Mayor Koch has been researching; she and Steve from Public Works went to look at and test drive the available loaders. She will soon ask the board to approve this purchase after completing her research.

v. Update on Roller – We are pricing rollers, which compact asphalt millings and make the surface harder and smoother. This will also be included in the budget for the water distribution grant.

vi. Admin: Anyone writing checks for water/sewer bills, please use the Town of Empire for the Payee.

You will receive a June newsletter by the end of the week that will include a link to our Consumer Confidence Report for 2023 and the report will be on our website as well. This report is from the CDPHE and evaluates our drinking water quality.

b. Police Department

i. Monthly report and Stats from Chief Lorenz – March and April attached. Chief Lorenz walked through May, which will be provided to Board members later. Also, a reminder to sign up for Lookout Alert through Jeffcom dispatch. If you signed up before, you may have received an alert 2 weeks ago. If you did not, sign up again as they are trying to use this for disasters and other emergency alerts.

c. Public Works

i. Road Survey – you may have seen the surveyors all over town recently, they are working on surveying the entire town so that we have an accurate map of all of our roads, right of ways, and property lines for our town facilities. We will also have benchmarks in the ground to keep track of the boundaries going forward.

ii. Asphalt Millings for sale – please call the office and Teana will start that process for you.

d. ROMP/OHVs – This item will be on every agenda while the ROMP plan is being finalized. We do not have any new information, but we encourage the Board and the public to share their comments so they will be part of the public record.

e. CCFA

i. CWPP Survey – please visit clearcreekfire.com and scan the QR code to participate in this survey. This will help the Fire Authority as they update their Plan.

f. MJHA (Multijurisdictional Housing Authority)

i. Still working on the IGA

g. Public Transit

i. The Board will take a Field Trip on July 2, 2024 Work/Ice Cream Session on the Roundabout. The County will be discussing Public Transportation in the upcoming year, and we want to use the roundabout so we are better able to understand the issues surrounding public transportation to make informed decisions. And it's a good excuse to go get ice cream!

h. Upcoming Events

i. Sat, June 22, Clean-Up Day, 4 dumpsters and a chipper, 9-1

Also, see attached flyer for the 5K Run & Walk - a race to benefit Clear Creek Advocates

ii. SAVE THE DATE National Night Out. Aug 6, Minton Park

iii. SAVE THE DATE C3 Festival, Clear Creek County. Aug 17, Idaho Springs Baseball Fields

iv. SAVE THE DATE Trunk-or-Treat. Oct 26

v. SAVE THE DATE Christmas. Dec 14

i. Planning Commission

i. All Planning Commission meetings are in-person with remote access.

ii. The next Regular Planning Commission Meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 26th, 2024, at 6:30 pm.

17. **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.

Brigitte Korte: is applying for the Town Administrator position and wanted to introduce herself. She believes local government is important; her education and experience have been in writing. She wanted to say hello, and she will show up in the future.

18. **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!

- We are so small, we can ‘hear’ people complain.
- Sit on deck and watch the bighorns on the hillside, or the elk on the other mountain, or the pair of eagles up Bard creek!
- Stop in Empire on the way to Winter Park, love the DQ and Edge cafe’.
- We are so small that we can give a Christmas gift to every kid in town; with our town being only 8 blocks long, we can hang flowers up this week!
- Hummingbirds going crazy!
- The flags are up!

19. **New Business from Board of Trustee Members**

Trustee Tennant reported she saw an article at work about grants to small towns for co-ops; maybe we can use this to make a change for Empire because we are in a “food desert.”

20. **The Next Board of Trustees Work Session is Tuesday, July 2nd, 2024, at 6:30 pm. (THIS HAS BEEN CANCELED NOW.)**

21. **The Next Board of Trustees Supplemental Meeting and Work Session/Training is Tuesday, July 9th, 2024, at 6:30 pm. In person with remote access.**

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

23. **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 9:29 PM.

(Mayor Wendy Koch)

(Deputy Town Clerk Lisa Kunze)