

Regular Meeting

The Town of Chester Council held the Regular Scheduled Council meeting on May 9, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

Members Present: Mayor James Dahlen, Council Persons, Sonja Dahlen, Scott Decker, Rachel Ghekiere, Garrett Graff, Tina Neer and Jim Sivils

Members Absent:

Staff Present:

Ashley Wickum (Clerk/Treasurer)
Terry Tyler (Public Works Director)

Guests:

Pledge of Allegiance

1. Mayor James Dahlen called the regular meeting to order at 6:03 pm
2. Tina Neer made a motion to accept the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting, April 10, 2024. Sonja Dahlen seconded the motion. Motion to approve the minutes passed with all voting ayes.
3. Claims were presented to the council for approval. Ashley Wickum informed the council that the check for Lakeside/DOR and RPA will be held until the ARPA funds are received. Scott Decker asked how often an excavator is rented to dig the pit, Terry informed the council that usually 1 time per year to dig a new pit. Rachel Ghekiere made the motion to approve the claims submitted for payment. Ck # 20211-20234, electronic payments -99977 & Payroll Advances Ck #20236-20237. Tina Neer seconded the motion. Motion to approve claims passed with all voting ayes.
4. The council reviewed the adjustments and journal entries made in April. Rachel Ghekiere made the motion to approve the JV & Adjustments. Tina Neer seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
5. Public Comments: None
6. Sheriff's Office Report: was provided to the council.
7. New Business:
 1. Set and Approve Pool Pass and Swim Lesson Prices: There has been no increase to pool pass rates since 2011 and only a recorded \$10 increase since 2008. Scott Decker made the motion to increase the Pool Pass prices by \$15, setting Family Pass at \$100, Individual Pas at \$70, Punch Card (15 punches) at \$45, and lessons with a pass at \$50 and lessons without a pass at \$60. Jim Sivils seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
 2. Approval of Swimming Pool Agreement: The Swimming Pool Agreement with the Chester Swim Team was presented to the council with no changes from last year. There is currently no swimming meet planned, however, there is a possibility of hosting one here on July 13 & 14. They should know the beginning of July in order

to give the public plenty of notice of the pool being closed that weekend for the meet. Sonja Dahlen made the motion to approve the Swimming Pool Agreement with the Chester Swim Team. Garrett Graff seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.

3. Approval of New Hires: 11 lifeguard applications were received. Certification for the new lifeguards will be May 28 & 29. Pool Manager Lily Wickum reviewed the applications and recommended all of the applications for hire. She is planning to clean the pool on May 20-22 so that it can be filled and ready for training. Rachel Ghekiere made the motion to hire all lifeguard applicants. Tina Neer seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
4. Approval of Use of Park & Surrounding Streets for 3 on 3 Tournament: Jenny Fraser would like to use the North and East Streets by the park for a 3 on 3 basketball tournament July 14th. She will provide event insurance and will use chalk to mark the streets. She has asked that the intersections have cones put in them for safety. Scott Decker made the motion to approve the use of the streets around the park and the park for the 3 on 3 basketball tournament. Sonja Dahlen seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.
5. Approval Building Permit:
 - Fire Department- Concrete Slab: the fire department is planning to extend their concrete in front of the building and will add a riser to the curb stop. The town will work with them to install the riser.
 - CJI Schools Elevator Addition- the elevator addition may cover the school's service line. Terry will speak with the head of maintenance, CJ Maska about this. Ashley will have the engineers sign an acknowledgement that they are aware of this.
 - CJI Schools Bleacher Project- the school is removing the old bleachers and will be putting in new ones. They started the work before getting the building permit and the contractor hit the clean out, Terry Tyler worked with the superintendent and the contractor to make sure the sewer line was flushed and the clean out was repaired. Bill Hunt provided an agreement for the school to sign acknowledging that they are aware that they are placing the bleachers over the sewer main. The new bleachers are going exactly where the old bleachers were.
 - K. Gonzalez- Would like to put up a fence around his house. It would be finishing the fence that is currently there. He does not own this house. The council would like to have written permission from the owners for him to do this.
 - Katie & Chad Ridinger- have decided not to go ahead with the addition to the trailer and fence at 18 ½ West Jefferson Ave

Sonja Dahlen made the motion to approve all building permits, with agreements from the school elevator addition and written permission for Keith Gonzalez. Rachel Ghekiere seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.

8. Old Business:

1. EDU Sewer Rates: The Sewer rate needs to be increased to meet the target rate for the sewer project. Mayor Dahlen would like to get more information on the EDU system before proceeding with it. The commercial accounts only pay one sewer base rate like a residential account, this will need to be addressed for accounts with more

than one unit. Ashley Wickum can check with engineers about other communities and how they structure their EDU rates. Mayor Dahlen suggested increasing the base rate by \$4 and adjusting the variable rate for the commercial accounts. Council discussion about doing the rate increase all at once instead of over time. Also, discussion about keeping the variable rate lower so it wouldn't need to be adjusted down when go to the EDU system. Jim Sivils made the motion to increase the sewer base rate by \$4 from \$32.81 to \$36.81 and to increase the commercial variable rate from \$1.60/ 1000 gallons of water used after the first 2000 gallons to \$3/1000 gallons of water used after the first 2000 gallons, Garrett Graff seconded the motion. Motion passed with all voting ayes.

- 9. Mayor Report/ Additional Agenda Items: Mayor Dahlen asked for the council to start thinking about how to use the Amtrak Donation. Jim Sivils suggested looking at some of the used table from the BOR at the lake.
- 10. PWD update: Terry Tyler updated the council that the sewer project is going well. Dennis with MET will be here next week to try and get the Scada system wrapped up. He is getting ready to patch streets, mowing and other summer projects.
- 11. Clerk update: Ashley updated the council that she emailed the county sanitarian about five decrepit properties that need to be looked at. Bill Hunt is still working on getting the land information for the lagoon area with the County. There was a complaint about the roof at the RNA Hall blowing wood shingles off and nails being on the road, she will call the owner about this. The lead line inventory is going well and will be completed before the deadline. There are additional requirements for reporting lead lines and unknown that will need to be followed.
- 12. Council: Sonja Dahlen asked if a dead-end sign could be placed at the west end of Casey Street on the north side. People are turning around in the yard. Terry will take care of this.

Scott Decker spoke with Rural Water, and Dennis has the machine in Havre to do the core sampling for the filter media and we can pick it up and then take the sample and give it to the engineers to take care of it. If we start the process now, we will be ready to replace it this fall. Terry has been in touch with Dennis about this as well. He will continue to work on it. Scott asked about flushing hydrants and exercising valves, and Terry said this is on the list to be done. Scott also asked about draining the north pond. Terry stated that draining the north pond will affect the school's pressure for watering. They will start doing it now so work can be done on the valve. Scott also spoke to Nate with AE2S about the Reginal Water. Nate stated that Chester is a member and estimates it will be 6-8 years to get water to Chester. They are planning to have water to the Havre area in 2027. It would be a good idea to have Jody Hellegaard or Eric Minneti with the North Central Montana Reginal Water Authority come to a meeting to give an update. It is a good idea to look ahead, as the cost is going to keep going up.

Jim Sivils asked if the guys passed their last test, they did not, so they will need to be registered to take it again, as well as getting Dan Davis signed up. Jim Sivils also stated that he received a concern about the garbage truck operator being seen trying to talk on the phone and operate the garbage truck. Terry will talk to all the crew about this and safety.

- 13. Tina Neer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rachel Ghekiere seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Submitted by _____ Approved by _____
Clerk Mayor