Town of Hot Springs
Regular Meeting
November 5, 2019

Present:
Mayor Sidney Harrison
Alderman Jeanne Gentry
Alderman Vaughn Barnett
Alderman Jimmy Moore
Clerk Nancy Thomas
Tax Collector Clara Ramsey
Town Attorney Ron Moore

Mayor Harrison called the meeting to order at 7:00 and welcomed guests.

Alderman Barnett made the motion to approve the minutes and financial statements of October 1
Alderman Moore seconded the motion.
All were in favor.

Public Comment

Julie Hochwender gave an update on the Christmas Parade and the "Light the Night" event scheduled for December 1.
Ms. Hochwender then voiced her interest in re-instating an official event committee. She said several people she has talked to have shown interest in being on the committee. The former Entertainment Committee hosted events on Labor Day, Memorial Day, and Easter, and she would like to see another committee work on bringing events and celebrations back to Hot Springs. She asked the Board if she needed permission from them, and if the former committee was part of the town.
Alderman Gentry said she was OK with another committee being established.
Mayor Harrison said a separate bank account would have to be set up for that. The former Entertainment Committee had their own EIN #.
Alderman Moore said the former committee was separate from the town, but still had to present their event plans to the Board for approval.
Alderman Gentry suggested talking to the Towns Accountant.
Attorney Moore said whether the committee stood alone or was a part of the town, there had to be public accountability when money was involved. He suggested seeing what other towns did about handling money for event committees, and recommend a quarterly or yearly report.

Alderman Moore made the motion to approve her request and move forward with the project.
Alderman Gentry seconded the motion.
All were in favor.

Fire Chief Josh Norton discussed installing the new fire hydrants. He said a maintenance employee at Marshall, Tracy Dufek, said he would be willing to help the Hot Springs Maintenance employees with replacements one morning to show them how to install them properly. Mr. Norton said the hydrant on Ranger Road is a must fix before freezing temperatures cause a major problem.
Mr. Norton said the Department received a grant check, and the Department would be submitting one to the Town of Hot Springs for their part in the hydrant purchases.

The Board discussed getting the Fire Department moved to the Ranger Road buildings. Julie Hochwender would like to have a time frame on the current building availability, as they are eager to lease the building for their new business.
Mayor Harrison said they were still looking for someone to fix the buildings and not charge an excessive amount of money to do it. He said the building for the fire department will be the first one fixed. He added it will have to have power and heat; the gas company would have to come and see what they was needed.
Alderman Gentry asked if the fire department could use the community center for their meetings. She said they were having a hard time getting contractors to take on the forest service property; doing the repairs and getting the buildings ready for occupancy.
Ashley Norton said the fire department had to have a place for the call reports. Josh Norton agreed and added they had to be compliant with State regulations, or they would lose State funding.
Mayor Harrison agreed the property needed to be fixed so the Fire Department can start moving their equipment. He said they were trying to get that done.

Town Business

Mayor Harrison said the Board will be going into Executive Session tonight to discuss offers on the Forest Service property (house) and grease traps.

Alderman Gentry said first, she has a few things to discuss.

Alderman Gentry made the motion to approve Christmas Bonus for employees.
$300.00 for full time staff, and $100.00 for part time staff.
Alderman Moore seconded the motion.
All were in favor.

Alderman Gentry said the Maintenance employees needed reflective winter jackets. She said it would save money to buy the jackets rather than rent them. She said they were around $70.00 each at Northern Tool.

Alderman Gentry made the motion to approve the purchase of three jackets for the Maintenance Employees at a cost of around $70.00 each.
Alderman Moore seconded the motion.
All were in favor.

Alderman Gentry said the Maintenance Department requested a lap top computer or tablet and Wi-Fi service for the Maintenance shop. They said these purchases will enable them to do their required reports.

Alderman Barnett made the motion to approve the purchase of a lap top or tablet, and Wi-Fi for the maintenance shop.
Alderman Moore seconded the motion.
All were in favor.

Alderman Gentry said the water cards were all audited, and their were eighteen accounts, mostly vacation rentals, that were not paying business rates. One was not paying at all, and others were being charged for water only, and sewer rates should be applied. She said these accounts would receive a letter explaining what charges they would be responsible for.
Mayor Harrison asked if they would be charged for previous months.
Alderman Gentry said they would be charged from the date the accounts became a business.
Alderman Gentry said every card would be re-visited, and letters will be sent out to all accounts that will have changes.

Alderman Moore said water was coming into the Police Department when it rains.
Alderman Moore made the motion to get a quote for an awning for the Police Department front door.
Alderman Barnett seconded the motion.
All were in favor.
Mayor Harrison said they also needed to look into getting a sealant for the floor.

Alderman Moore said he has obtained numbers for various Cell Phone Companies, and advised they will be contacting some companies, doing some research, and moving forward on having our booster tower brought back to Hot Springs, or another cell tower erected.

Alderman Moore said the Maintenance Department needed a battery operated pump. He said when they read the water meters, sometimes they were under water after a hard rain, and it was too time consuming to hand pump water away. It was agreed without a motion to purchase a battery operated pump.

Mayor Harrison asked Ms. Hochwender to confirm the Christmas Parade will line up at Hot Springs Elementary School. She said yes.

Mayor Harrison asked the Board if they agreed to hire Cody Fisher as a part time Maintenance employee. He said Mr. Fisher has been working part time for a few weeks. He is doing a good job and seems to like it.

Alderman Barnett made the motion to officially hire Cody Fisher as part time Maintenance employee.
Alderman Moore seconded the motion.
All were in favor.

Alderman Gentry made the motion to go into Executive Session.
Alderman Barnett seconded the motion.
All were in favor. **7:35**

Alderman Barnett made the motion to return to Regular Session.
Alderman Gentry seconded the motion.
All were in favor. **8:08**

Mayor Harrison said in Executive Session, discussions were:
First, three offers have been made on the house portion of the forest service property.
He added they have been advised by the Realtor not to release names at this time, or the amounts of the offers.

Alderman Gentry made the motion to accept option # 1, and accept option # 2 as a back up. Alderman Moore seconded the motion.

Mayor Harrison said he will inform the Realtor, and give her authorization to accept the offer, and in turn the party making the offer will have thirty days to change their mind, or otherwise be committed to purchase.

Second, the Board discussed grease traps. Mayor Harrison said the Alderman have discussed adopting a system to check all grease traps on a regular basis. The reason being grease build up has caused problems with the sewer system, and in turn caused problems with DENR. He asked Alderman Gentry to elaborate.

Alderman Gentry said basically, Hot Springs has grease issues. On many occasions, we have had to call Septic Tank Companies to come to Hot Springs to clear sewer lines, sometimes on Saturday or Sunday. The invoices for these services have been as high as $1,000.00, and adding to that expense is the possibility of being fined by DENR for having clogged sewer lines. The Town purchased a jetter at a cost of $12,000.00 in hopes we will save money by unclogging the lines ourselves. The ideal fix for the issue, however, is to eliminate the problem. The Board has talked to the Maintenance employees, and all agreed a good start to eliminating the issue is to regularly inspect all businesses that have a grease trap. The Maintenance Department will have an inspection sheet that will be signed by the employee and business owner at the time of inspection. If a grease trap is not functioning properly, the business owner will have 24 hours to rectify the problem. If the problem is not rectified, a first time fine will be imposed of $100.00. A second time fine of $500.00 will be imposed, and the Health Department will be notified. A third time offense will be $1,000.00 fine, plus disconnection of water service.
Alderman Gentry added the jetter the Town purchased is not industrial standard, and will only be effective if the Town takes steps to keep the lines in good shape. She said the industrial standard jetters cost at least double of what we paid for the one we now have, and the Town's jetter will only be able to handle minor clogs, so prevention is key.

Business owner Tim Arnett commented that the Spring Creek Tavern cleaned their grease trap once a month. He added some restaurants had underground grease traps that were not accessible, and how did Maintenance plan on inspecting them? He said the Spring Creek Tavern's trap was in the basement. Mr. Arnett said the last time Hot Springs Maintenance came to look at their grease trap, he wasn't there, and they mistook a catch pipe for a release pipe. Alderman Gentry said so it appeared to Maintenance that the pipe was clogged, but it was not a release pipe. Alderman Gentry said Maintenance would get with all the business owners to discuss the inspection process before moving forward. In reply to Mr. Arnetts' question about the underground traps, Mayor Harrison said they had pipe cameras they can use in those instances. Alderman Moore said the cameras can tell where any clogs originated.
Mr. Arnett said there are also tablets available that break down grease, and cause all residue to rise to the surface where it can be skimmed. Alderman Gentry said they used those tablets at the diner also.

Alderman Gentry said the bottom line is they don't want to continue spending money on a problem that isn't even the town's fault, and hope these inspections help.
Alderman Moore agreed that they just want to eliminate the problem.

Alderman Gentry made the motion to make the Grease Trap Policy official, pending a start date and letters sent to all the businesses.
Alderman Moore seconded the motion.
All were in favor.

As there was no other business at this time,

Alderman Gentry made the motion to adjourn.
Alderman Moore and Barnett seconded the motion.

Approved ✓ Date 12/03/2018

Sidney Harrison

Sidney Harrison, Mayor

Other