

**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL
MEETING**

January 10, 2023

7:00 PM

City Hall



CITY OF MILLS
EST. 1921

Mayor:
Seth Coleman
Council President:
Darla Ives
Council Members:
James Hollander
Sara McCarthy
Brad Neumiller

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Mayor Seth Coleman
Council President Darla Ives
Council Member Jim Hollander
Council Member Sara McCarthy
Council Member Brad Neumiller

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

OLD BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes

1. Council Meeting Minutes 12-13-2022

Motion made by Council Member Hollander, Seconded by Council President Ives.
Voting Yea: Mayor Coleman, Council President Ives, Council Member Hollander, Council Member McCarthy, Council Member Neumiller

2. Executive Meeting Minutes 12-13-2022 for a Legal Issue

Motion made by Council Member Hollander, Seconded by Council President Ives.
Voting Yea: Mayor Coleman, Council President Ives, Council Member Hollander, Council Member McCarthy, Council Member Neumiller

3. Executive Meeting Minutes 12-13-2022 for a Legal Issue

Motion made by Council Member Hollander, Seconded by Council President Ives.
Voting Yea: Mayor Coleman, Council President Ives, Council Member Hollander, Council Member McCarthy, Council Member Neumiller

4. Executive Meeting Minutes 12-13-2022 for a Legal Issue

Motion made by Council Member Hollander, Seconded by Council President Ives.
Voting Yea: Mayor Coleman, Council President Ives, Council Member Hollander, Council Member
McCarthy, Council Member Neumiller

MAYOR COLEMAN OUTGOING STATEMENT

The Mayor asked for the City Clerk to give his speech to the City Attorney.

The City Attorney then read Seth's Speech, which is attached to the minutes.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

5. Recognition Awards for Mayor Coleman, Council President Ives and Council Member Hollander

The City Clerk stated that the meeting will be divided up into two meeting. The first part will be the old business that needs to be approved by this council and then the next part will be the swear in's of new Council and then approve the new business.

The City Clerk read the history behind getting the key to the Town/City.

The City Clerk called Councilman Hollander down to received his award. She Thanked him for his dedication and service to the City of Mills.

The City Clerk called Councilman Ives down to received her award. She stated that Councilman Ives has been a councilmember for 6 years. She also thanked her for her dedication and service to the City of Mill.

The City Clerk Called Mayor Coleman down to receive his award. She stated that she has worked with Seth for a long time and that he will be missed. She also stated that all the Mayors pictures on the wall have all brought great things to the Town and City. But it has taken all of them to achieve what Mills needed. She then thanked Seth for his service and dedication as Mayor for the City of Mills.

RECESS MEETING

The City Clerk recessed the meeting at 7:25pm, while we set up for the next part of the meeting.

NEXT MEETING - January 24th, 2023 @ 7:00pm/ February 14th, 2023 @ 7:00pm

NEXT WORK SESSION - January 23rd, 2023 @ 9:00am/ January 24th, 2023 @ 6:00pm/ February 13th, 2023 @ 9:00am

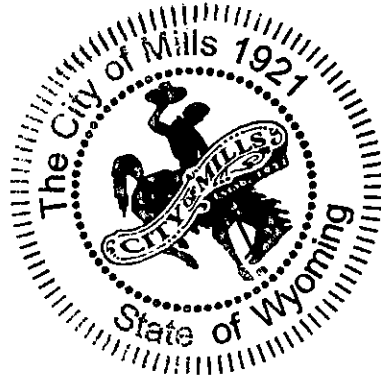
In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons who need accommodation in order to attend or participate in this meeting should contact City Hall at 307-234-6679 within 48 hours prior to the meeting in order to request such assistance.



Mayor, Seth Coleman



City Clerk, Christine Trumbull



Remarks by Mayor Coleman

Thanks to all of you for attending tonight.

We have city council meetings twice per month, but only every other year do we swear people into their elected offices, and only once every four years do we swear in the office of mayor. Indeed, in considering my remarks for tonight, I realized that tonight is the first time that a new mayor has been sworn in after an outgoing mayor completed a four year term. Due to various factors, this has not happened in Mills since the city went to four year terms some time ago.

By custom, this is also the time at which the outgoing mayor makes some remarks prior to handing over the gavel to the new mayor, and then the new mayor makes some remarks after being sworn in. This always occurs with changes in administration, but the purposes of the remarks are not really the same. The new mayor generally thanks those who have aided their path into office, and sets out the hopes for their upcoming administration. The outgoing mayor, in contrast, has the heavy burden of try to convey the lessons learned and the experiences gained for the incoming administration, knowing that all that can really be done is to offer advice, and advice is so often just as easily rejected as accepted. None the less, it's the duty, really, of the outgoing mayor to offer a few comments.

I came into this office after first being a city councilman, which I came to after attending council meetings and becoming frustrated with how the council at the time passed ordinances that then went on to be impossible to implement, ignored, or that became a burden on the residents of the city. My first goal was to address that, and we've been successful. Upon becoming mayor, I learned that the Mills Town Code, as it was then called, had not been codified since the 1960s, so a large number of ordinances that had passed in the intervening fifty years had never made their way into an organized code. We undertook with the help of the council and the city's departments, to revise and recodify the entire code, some of which had not been touched since the 1930s. This effort, one that wasn't glamorous by any means and so generally outside of the popular interest, was monumental in nature and took a total of six years to complete. It is largely complete now, but the final part, which is the final modernization of the code, continues on.

Unlike the neighboring communities, Mills had never put their code on line so that it was easily accessible to the public in an electronic code database. The city has now arranged to do so. This will not only allow citizens of Mills, and the neighboring communities, to go online and find the town's ordinances, but it is also synthesized with a new system being adopted around the state called Digitickets, which will allow the police force and city police system to seamlessly coordinate with each other and the judicial system in general. Through all of this, Mills residents will be better served by their city, in no small part because the city's legal code will be easily available to them for the very first time.

As the municipal code is uploaded over the next few months to MuniCode there will be revisions to the code for that purpose. This should be simple enough, but I would go back to note my initial purpose on coming onto the council. I've taken the approach that the old maxim "That government is best which governs least" and would urge that approach continue as to law making. In the past it was often the council's approach to simply pass a law when something came up, or to pass an overarching one if one was needed, often relying on what other towns elsewhere had done. We've taken the approach that the government telling people what to do should be kept to a minimum, and it's worked well. In keeping with that we've eliminated some legal requirements that used to exist in the city, and where new ordinances have been enacted, we've kept them as unrestrictive as possible.

Another large task has been establishing fiscal controls on the city, and this topic will soon visit the incoming council as the budget is always created early in the year. I became mayor, in fact, when a lack of fiscal control in the city resulted, as some of you will remember, in the prior administration being subjected to a criminal investigation by the State of Wyoming which resulted in the Treasurer who was then in office facing criminal charges and the prior mayor resigning. After taking over in that position, we imposed strict control over the finances of the town and went to rigorous annual auditing, something that served us well when we became a "First Class City", that is a city with over 4,000 residents, in 2021. No expenditure by the city escapes the city's attention and the outgoing council and administration leave the incoming council and mayor with finances that are in good shape.

As part of that we have worked to build for the future economically. Some of you will recall that the city needed to move its maintenance facilities in part because the city had outgrown them, and in part because their presence here in lower Mills proved to be a nuisance to the neighborhood. Estimates were that it would cost the city \$5,000,000 to build a new structure for public works, but through the use of public funding and diligence, a new location was found for half that amount. This should serve the city for the next thirty to fifty years. The City has also worked to find creative solutions for animal control, which Mills disproportionately paid for in conjunction with other Natrona County governmental entities. The town is still working on matters pertaining to dispatching and 911 calls which are subject to similar concerns.

This same approach has operated to keep fees for Mills residents as low as possible, as and lower than that of our neighboring communities, something which has always been our expressed goal. Franchise fees which the city charges utilities have been kept uniformly lower than the neighboring municipalities in order to keep passed on prices low to the city's residents. Mills has some of the lowest franchise fees in Natrona County and it would be my hope that it continues to in the future.

At the same time, and again using grant money where available, the city has been diligent in trying to improve the quality of life for its residents. Improvements to parks have been made, and the city continues to work on the river front project which will make use of the property

along the river across from the courthouse. This is an ongoing project, but in the future the residents of Mills can hope to see a continuation of the pathway which runs along the river up to the bridge over the Platte continued, and park space and suitable businesses go in at that location.

We brought in as part of this overall goal a Community Development Director, Sabrina Kemper, who has secured innumerable amounts in funding from various grants that would otherwise have been completely missed by the City. Her efforts have saved the city tens of thousands of dollars in revenue and paid for things which simply could not have been paid for but for her efforts. I'd note this as an example of forward economic thinking which has marked this council and our administration. Everything from parks, to fire trucks has been impacted by this.

One of the matters of greatest concern to the residents of Mills was the closure of both schools that served the town by the school district which occurred nearly at the beginning of my interim term. At meeting after meeting we were approached by angry residents who wanted to know why this had been allowed to happen, even though the closures were done without our input. The city filed a lawsuit regarding this which, while it did not keep a school open, did cause the school district to revisit the process of how it was closing schools to make it comport with the law. Moreover, Mills purchased the old Mills Elementary School in lower Mills when the district sold it. Again, through forward thinking, we have now secured the reentry of a school, the Wyoming Classical Academy, which shall open next spring in the old Mills Elementary School while it commences to build a new school in the western part of Mills. The goal of restoring a school to Mills has been met.

It was partially met through working through one of the real estate developers here in Mills and a private school entity. As with the school, forward thinking has brought development to Mills which would otherwise have gone to a neighboring community in Natrona County, and therefore the tax dollars have come with it. This also involved some innovative funding mechanisms involving the Federal Government which other municipalities would have been likely to forego due to their difficulty.

During our administration we have emphasized a community policing model. Mills is very fortunate to have a highly dedicated staff of policemen led by Chief Bryan Preciado, who has made the department universally respected. We added police cruisers so that Mills policemen could take their cars home with them at the end of their shifts. While not every Mills policeman lives in Mills, this effort helps give a visible police presence around the clock in Mills. The city has also added police officers during my administration. As we are near a larger municipality, problems that develop there visit themselves upon Mills, and this helps reduce crime and protect the residents of the city.

Many, no doubt, will recall the news stories about the Fire Department early in our administration, which were often inaccurate. Mills is fairly unique in having full time firemen

for a city of its size, and the Fire Department is a large budget item for the city. Mills has been very fortunate to have a group of dedicated professional firemen who have served the town for many years, but we found that earlier administrations never created a legal structure for it at any point, let alone during the period in which it changed from a volunteer department to a full time staffed one. With the reforms to the city's code, it was established as a combination fire department with dedicated full time firemen under the municipal code for the very first time. We also worked to create what the fire department was lacking, which was a professional administrative element which is now in place. While it has been a long process, we feel that with the inclusion of Chief Wil Gay, we have obtained the efficiency and dedication that we were seeking.

I have sought, during my administration, to deal with the legacy of the city's early history and changing times in ways that we hope will address the challenges of the future. One such instance was in our attempting to deal with the large waterline running through Mills which was put in by the City of Casper in the 1940s for the airport, which was then an air base, and which features pipe that old. This led to a change in our City Code as the line, now administered by the Regional water system, would not be addressed by Regional. Knowing that it runs under residences and cannot last forever, the city is attempting to protect its citizens in this fashion. This matter is currently in litigation as Regional has taken its reluctance to accept any Mills role into court. If Mills prevails it hopes to have a role in securing the safety of its citizens in regard to these old water lines.

Protecting the right of the residents of the city to know what is going on led to a change in the Code allowing legal notices to be published electronically, although this has not yet been done. This has also resulted in litigation as the local newspaper has sought to preserve a system developed in the 19th Century rather than accept a newer method of communication for the 21st. The same topic has been presented to the legislature at least once, where print media lobbying prevented any change. This is now in front of the local district court where Mills has been joined by one of the other municipalities in this effort. Should it be successful, this stands to save Mills thousands of dollars in print legal notices.

As I noted at the beginning of this speech, it's given in the spirit of summarizing what we've done, the problems we've run into, and what we've achieved, in the hopes that this will be of use to the people coming in, as well as those continuing on. The next comments are more directly so, for the new mayor.

Mills is blessed to have what I believe to be the most dedicated group of municipal employees of any city in Wyoming. The people who work here have consistently shown that they do so not only because it provides a livelihood for them and their families, but also because they love the town. Every department head and many of the rank and file employees are doing more, with less, and for less, than almost anyone around, and yet they keep doing this knowing

this to be the case. These people are a valuable resource and I hope that you'll make use of them and I urge you to listen to them, as I'm sure you will.

The same is not so true for the many people you'll receive advice from outside of the city, and whom probably have sought to bend your ear going into it. Those who don't live in the city and are not employed here or not directly involved with it in some fashion often have their own agendas they'll seek to advance through the mayor and council if they can. Some of those agendas you'll want to advance as well, but some of them you will not. People claiming to have the best interest of the town at heart sometimes do not.

You'll also find that the time line between the accolades you'll receive today and the vitriol you'll receive tomorrow is about that short. There's little you can do to prepare for it, other than to remember to keep on keeping on when it occurs. In times such as that, I've been reminded of the words of President Theodore Roosevelt, who counseled:

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

I would additionally remind you often in the past Mills has followed along with other municipal entities or private interests that really sought to advance themselves, rather than Mills. We have viewed Mills as a friend of business and a sibling of our sister towns and cities, all of whom are endeavoring to advance the interests of our residents and overall community. But as a little sister city, for example, of the larger one to our east, we have to remember that we are all adult siblings, and Mills interest is, and that of its citizens, is, at the end of the day, Mills' alone.

Indeed, here's a good place to offer concluding advice that has endured for 2,000 years, that of St. Paul, as set out in his letter to the Romans.

Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them.

Thank you. It's been an honor to serve the City, and the residents, of Mills.