

Stevensville Special Town Council Meeting
Minutes for
FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2020
6:00 PM

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Roll Call: Mayor Dewey, Councilmembers Michalson, Vick, Devlin and Holcomb were present. Staff and members of the public were also present. The town attorney was available via speakerphone.

2. Public Comments (Public comment from citizens on items that are not on the agenda)

3. New Business

Discussion/Decision: Ordinance No.166 - An Emergency Ordinance of the Town Council of the Town of Stevensville, Montana, enacting measures to reduce the spread of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), providing for the continuity of Town business and waiving a second reading.

Ordinance No. 166 is in the packet. Mayor Dewey read sections 1-9. As of 6:00pm, we have not yet declared a State of Emergency, once the Council has adopted an ordinance how the town is to proceed, that will include those details.

Councilmember Vick made the Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 166, and Ms. Devlin Seconded that Motion.

Councilmember Vick has issues with the length, until April 30th, he would rather look as far as March 31st and look to reevaluate. The second issue is, he would like to see us hold electronic meetings, thru email, telephone, Zoom or Skype.

Mayor Dewey clarified that the Governor did express extending his orders because they are currently set to expire in 7 days. The timelines for this pandemic are rigid. There has been some guidance from some city attorneys that meetings held through email or speakerphone are not allowed. The ratifications of claims paid were discussed and will not be ratified until the next scheduled meeting. Councilmember Michalson would like to have a speaker phone meeting or call a special meeting to authorize the claims to be paid. Ms. Holcomb expressed discontent with having the claims come forth to Council after the fact. If Council gets together, the Public needs to be open. Observation of a Public Meeting is capable through a video meeting. The administration is concerned that, for instance, if the office staff is quarantined, that will mean the mail box will not be checked for 2 weeks. If this gets worse, limiting the amount of gathering will be increasingly difficult. Other towns have implemented similar ordinances. The Town's attorney spoke about the MCA, the public meeting laws and the ratification of bills. If the expenses are in the budget, that resolution, there will be no issue paying those bills.

Stevensville is ahead of the game, hosting meetings live already, as long as the public has the ability to call in and comment. Facebook Live goes further than Go Meeting. He clarified that the Town would still be in compliance. Ms. Devlin stated this would be a good time for everyone to come together, as it is a little scary out there for a lot of people. Mayor Dewey clarified Ordinance No. 166 would accommodate those uncertainties.

Discussion continued about paying the claims. Councilmember Vick and Holcomb agreed that paying the claims out past April 30th; Ms. Holcomb suggesting through April 10th. A

Councilmember Vick made a Secondary Motion to show through April 15th. The Secondary Motion was Seconded by Councilmember Devlin.

The Town of Stevensville will continually keep an update on the Ravalli County Health Dept's recommendations.

Mr. Michalson asked the Mayor how he had planned to manage staff. As of right now, staff are reporting to their regularly scheduled shifts.

Councilmember Holcomb requested that the Finance Officer email out the claims to Council prior to paying them.

Mayor Dewey called for further Council Comment and Public Comment before calling for the vote, starting with Councilmember Devlin "Aye," Holcomb "Aye," Michalson "Aye," Vick "Aye." Motion passes 4-0.

The Motion on the floor is Approval Ordinance No. 166. Mayor Dewey called for Public Comment.

Jim Crews, 316 9th St. Asked who wrote the ordinance because it did not look like the Town's Attorney wrote it, and if the attorney is going to give his opinion on anything, should be in writing so that the public can read it. He continued about the attorney's contract with the city; The Town of Stevensville is subservient to the Ravalli County Health Dept's pg. 114 Emergency Plan Guideline from 2010; That is the Emergency Plan, as the Town of Stevensville does not have an emergency plan. He does not see a reason for a temporary ordinance. He did not find anywhere that says the Mayor can declare a State of Emergency. If the Council gives the authority for the Mayor to close down Town Hall contrary to what the State says, his opinion is that would be violating the law because you do not have the authority to delegate that authority.

Stacie Barker, 104 Winslett. She stated her opinion that the bills will be there when we come back.

Ms. Holcomb asked Mayor Dewey if we are following pg.114 of the Emergency Plan. The Mayor stated that, yes, indeed we reviewed it today and it states very little on how the Council should proceed with Council Meetings. It talks about procedures with the county's emergency center. Mr. Vick agreed that the Emergency Plan does not say how often the Council should meet. Ms. Devlin would like to follow the legality of the ordinance, who is qualified to speak on the legality of the information in Ordinance No. 166.

March 16, 2020 is a ratified date of closing Town Hall so that we have that date in writing.

Mayor Dewey called for the Vote starting with Councilmember Vick "Aye," Devlin "Aye," Holcomb "Aye," Michalson "No." 3-1 Vote, Motion passes.

4. Adjournment

Mayor Dewey adjourned the meeting at 6:48pm.