

Town of Meeker Meeting Minutes – September 17, 2024

The Regular Meeting of the Meeker Town Board was held Tuesday, September 17, 2024, at Town Hall.

Members Present

Mayor	Day
Trustees	Browning
	Day
	Jehorek
	Lockwood
	Nielsen
	Sizemore

Town Staff Present

Administrator	Etheridge
Town Clerk	Cook
Attorney	Massih
Police Chief	Thompson
Comm. Dev./Planner	Thomson
Public Works Supt.	Willey

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Day called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

All Board members were present.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Day asked for changes to the agenda. Trustee Day made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Second by Trustee Nielsen. All ayes. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

A motion was made by Trustee Sizemore to approve the minutes of September 3, 2024, as submitted. Second by Trustee Browning. Ayes: Browning, Day, Lockwood, Nielsen, and Sizemore. Trustee Jehorek abstained due to her absence. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MONTHLY DISBURSEMENTS

A motion was made by Trustee Browning to approve the disbursements dated September 17, 2024. Second by Trustee Jehorek. All ayes. Motion carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Chamber of Commerce/Uplift Meeker. Chamber Director Stephanie Hanson updated the Board on the highway banner that was taken down earlier in the summer because it looked like the poles were moving during high winds, adding that SGM engineered the project and WREA installed the poles. Hanson said she had asked SGM to take another look at the project, they have indicated the soils in that area are the problem, recommending filling the footing with foam and attaching a guide wire to the top and bottom to hold each pole. The cost estimate is approximately \$1,600 and Hanson stated they will have to be more aware of the weather in the future which means the banners will not be up continually. Mayor Day asked if guide wires were to be used, how will you address any trip hazard. Hanson said they are discussing this with Elk

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Mountain Inn for the wire that would be on their property. After more discussion Board consensus was to request SGM to engineer the poles for higher wind speeds.

Administrator Etheridge introduced Bob Amick and informed the Board of an opportunity for a mentorship program through the Colorado Tourism Office. There is an interested coalition that includes participation from MACC, RB Historical Society, White River Alliance, and the opportunity will be discussed at the Uplift Meeker meeting on Friday. There is no action at this time other than to introduce the opportunity and should the mentorship program be awarded, keep you updated on progress and potential action items for Dark Sky Compliance. This program starts in December and lasts six months, it will require 70 hours of dedicated time from a lead applicant that is focused on tourism development. Objectives are increased tourism, education, IDSP Certification, and sustainability. The mentorship is free, but there is a \$250 application fee.

Amick said they are trying to get as many western slope communities involved as possible, the dark sky experts will come in and do a full evaluation of the Town, they look at lighting installed on homes, businesses and rural areas and make recommendations. Amick said he has offered to chair the committee along with the other organizations who have volunteered to see this project accomplished. Trustee Nielsen said education will be key for residents. Mayor Day asked if Amick will be talking to the Commissioners; Amick replied yes, particularly about the lighting ordinance and we will be discussing it at the Uplift Meeker meeting this coming Friday.

STAFF UPDATES

Public Works Supt. Willey reported during the month of August 28,330,000 gallons of water was pumped, there were three water leaks, staff will be trimming trees to comply with sight triangles and getting ready for winter. Willey said sealing of the Town Shop roof should be completed tomorrow. Trustee Sizemore said there is a bush at Garfield and Third Street that needs trimmed and Willey said residents have until October 15th to comply, but his staff will look into it.

Police Chief Thompson reported during August there were 297 calls for service, eleven citations and eight warnings issued. The department passed the CCIC audit, Melissa Fellows, the new Community Services Officer started mid-month, and twelve dogs were picked up and returned to their owners.

Community Development/Planner Thomson reported that included in the packet are projects currently on the table and completed within last month. Thomson informed the Board that she and Chamber Director Hanson had applied for and received a \$5,000 AARP grant for the downtown ice rink.

Town Clerk Cook reported she had been working on the budget, liquor license renewals were processed for White River Convenience and Ma Famiglia's, a Temporary Permit for Meeker Grocery LLC was issued and the public hearing for transfer of the license is scheduled for October 1st, also a Report of Changes for White River Convenience's LLC partnership was processed.

Town Attorney Massih reported in addition to the subject of the executive session, she and Chief Thompson have been working on updating the Model Traffic Code to 2024 and there will be court next week.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion regarding updates to the Town of Meeker Personnel Policy and Procedures and Purchasing Policies. Administrator Etheridge said updating the Town's Purchasing Policy was the catalyst for updating a few other items in the Personnel Policies as well, tonight is only discussion and the final policy will come before the Board for adoption via resolution at the next meeting.

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Etheridge recommended adding a floating holiday, which will not be a set date, giving the example that this year July 5th was on Friday, most employees used vacation to take the day off, but the office was completely quiet and only a few of us worked. Trustee Lockwood asked what the purpose of it was. Clerk Cook replied scheduling the holiday allows Town Hall to be closed. Etheridge said in 2025 it would most likely be recommend for the floating holiday to be set on Friday, Dec. 26th, another option with the floating holiday when there is not an obvious date would be to choose a specific holiday that the Town doesn't currently observe like the Friday before Easter or Juneteenth, the floating holiday would come before the Board for approval. Trustee Browning suggested that the floating holidays could just be a statement within the policy. The Board concurred to allow one floating holiday per year.

Administrator Etheridge addressed Section IX. C. Sick Leave, while the term *immediate family* is critical to establish boundaries regarding nepotism and conflicts of interest, in relation to an employee's ability to use sick leave to care for another person, which does have the caveat of administrator approval, it is too restrictive and should use the more inclusive terminology of *network of support*. Mayor Day asked about the legal aspect of it. Attorney Massih replied that it is the employee's sick time, we are not giving them more time and this allows them to be honest about it. Mayor Day asked if we have a definition of *network of support*? Attorney Massih said she did not think it was necessary. The Board concurred to change the wording to network of support. Trustee Browning suggested that Bereavement Leave should possibly mirror this.

Etheridge said in order to modernize the competitive bid process, she recommended new language that outlines the ability for vendors to submit bids via a digital solicitation platform such as Bidnet, but not via email or facsimile as there remains too much room for interference or obstruction, we should also maintain the ability for vendors to submit manually, either by mail or hand delivery. Also recommended was that the published submission deadline for bids be concurrent with the public bid opening and clarify that the bid opening shall be open to the public, but not necessarily a public meeting (Board meeting). For example, any vendors that hand deliver could be present for the opening of manual bids which would also coincide with the opening of bids on the digital platform, bids could be tabulated before the Board meeting on Tuesday evening, at which time they could be considered for award. This reduces the process from at best two weeks to less than a week from bid submission to award. Etheridge said typically large bids for construction projects will include the Administrator, PW Supt. and the engineer be present.

After much discussion regarding transparency, the price points of comparative pricing and when bids are required, Clerk Cook stated in the past bid openings were conducted in this manner and also included recordation of the meeting both digitally and manually which were then placed in the minutes of permanent record. The Board concurred with the policy changes and Mayor Day suggested that this policy should also be included for Town items that are to be sold.

Consideration of Professional Services Agreement with Baseline Engineering Corporation for 2nd Street evaluation proposal. Administrator Etheridge said one of our Capital Projects for 2024 is the 2nd Street survey and engineering. Jim Joy is expected to complete a property survey for 2nd Street from Main to Water by the end of the month. Once that is complete, it could be forwarded to Mike Beurskens with Baseline Engineering in Steamboat so he can complete the work set out in his proposal, specifically to deliver a drainage summary, and concept plan for improvements to 2nd Street. Etheridge requested approval of the professional services agreement with Baseline so that we can proceed once the survey is complete.

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Mayor Day asked if we had gotten two proposals, which we had not. The Board concurred to table the item for receipt of a second proposal.

MANAGER’S REPORT

Administrator Etheridge referred to the flyer in the packets for the National Public Lands Day – a volunteer opportunity sponsored by the BLM. This will be held next Saturday, the 28th from 8:00 a.m. to noon starting at the Hill Street trailhead in Ute Park.

Etheridge referred to an email of the draft resolution that RBC is working on with Moffat, Garfield, and Mesa Counties to approve later this month in opposition to Prop127, a ballot measure which prohibits trophy hunting of Mountain Lion, Bobcat and Lynx in Colorado. She spoke with Eddie Smercina, Natural Resource Manager of RBC yesterday and he said that the Towns of Meeker and Rangely could sign on to the resolution once it is approved at the Commissioner’s meeting on the 24th of September. Trustee Day stated he feels it is important to sign it and show solidarity and made a motion to that effect. Second by Trustee Browning. All ayes. Motion carried. Trustee Day asked that the administrator be allowed to sign on behalf of the Town so the Commissioners, if approved, will not have to wait to come back before the Board.

Administrator Etheridge said the latest Circle Park update came this morning from Tom, Michael has everything ready for the floodplain permit submission with the County; they have reached out to Jake to start defining the materials; the plan is to have a final project cost by the first of the month (2 weeks) and still be able to issue the Notice to Proceed in October. Mayor Day asked if we have plans yet. Etheridge replied no, only emails back and forth but the plans are based on what the Board has already approved with the changes discussed at the last meeting, because the materials will change, so may the price, noting the Notice to Proceed will be after the Board has approved the contract.

Etheridge informed the Board that the meeting on October 1st will include a 6:00 p.m. workshop prior to the regular meeting with Matt Solomon of AGNC regarding the Energy Initiative to meet federal grant requirements for a quarterly public outreach session. He would like to go into greater detail about the ideas of energy resources in NW Colorado and get feedback from the Board.

MAYOR’S REMARKS

Mayor Day thanked everyone for attending the county wide workshop last week.

OTHER BOARD BUSINESS

Trustee Day asked if the Town is forming a committee with the building departments as was discussed at this workshop. Administrator Etheridge said the next meeting is set for November 14th. Trustee Lockwood volunteered to be a part of that committee along with Building Inspector Padilla.

Trustee Lockwood asked how the pump track at Ute Park was coming along. Administrator Etheridge said she had walked by yesterday and nothing is happening with it.

Members of the Board requested in the future they be notified when something happens like a Police Officer being hospitalized or a town vehicle stolen, etc.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(b) Conference with attorney for the purpose of receiving legal advice on a specific legal issue. At 8:16 p.m. Mayor Day called for a motion to adjourn into executive session pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(b) for conference with the attorney for the purpose of receiving legal advice on a specific legal issue. Moved by Trustee Day. Second by Trustee Jehorek. All ayes. Motion carried.

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ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Day reconvened the regular meeting at 8:28 p.m. and having no further business adjourned.
/s/Travis Day, Mayor

Attest: /s/Lisa Cook, Town Clerk