

TOWN OF MEEKER MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 21, 2025

The Regular Meeting of the Meeker Town Board was held Tuesday, January 21, 2025 at Town Hall.

Members Present

Mayor
Trustees

Day
Browning
Day
Jehorek
Lockwood
Nielsen
Sizemore

Town Staff Present

Administrator
Town Clerk
Attorney
Police Chief
Comm. Dev./Planner
Public Works Supt.

Etheridge
Cook
Massih (by phone)
Thompson
Thomson
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 added item b approval of minutes. Trustee Nielsen made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Second by Trustee Sizemore. All ayes. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

A motion was made by Trustee Day to approve the minutes of January 7, 2025, as submitted. Second by Trustee Nielsen. All ayes. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Trustee Sizemore to approve the minutes of January 14, 2025. Second by Trustee Nielsen. All ayes, Trustees Browning, Day, and Jehorek abstained due to their absence. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MONTHLY DISBURSEMENTS

A motion was made by Trustee Browning to approve the disbursements dated January 21, 2025. Second by Trustee Jehorek. All ayes. Motion carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

STAFF UPDATES

Public Works Superintendent Willey reported during the month of December 17, 350,008 gallons were pumped; received new motor grader along with a ½ day training on the equipment that will be split over two weeks; they have worked on 3 water leaks in the last 10 days; Willey commended his crew saying that they were doing a great job.

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Police Chief Thomson reported that during the month of December there were 200 calls for service, 17 citations, and 7 arrests. Overview for 2024 showed 41 arrests, 3,124 calls for service, 154 citations, and that the K9 unit was deployed on 7 traffic stops resulting on 2 positive hits and 1 apprehended after vehicle pursuit.

Planner Thomson reported that the planning projects update is in packets; sent out renewals for Short Term Rentals and have already received 6 of the 9 active application and reminded the Board that renewals are a staff approval unless the recommendation is to deny; there will be a Planning Commission meeting on Monday for an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) application which will come to the Board at the next meeting on February 4th along with some Land Use Code updates; Thomson requested that the Board review the draft mission and vision statement for the Housing Partnership that is funded with a Department of Housing local planning capacity grant.

Town Clerk Cook reported during the month of December a Special Events License was issued to Meeker Lions Club for the Skijor New Years Dance and a Temporary Tavern License was issued to Riggs Downtown LLC when they purchased Chipper’s Downtown, the public hearing for that transfer application is scheduled for February 4th. Cook also presented the 4th Quarter Financial Report stating the total of all cash and investments on December 31st was \$10,757,234.77, operation and maintenance in the general fund shows a positive balance of \$451,921.20 and in the water fund a positive balance of \$90,292.12 for the year end. All departments came in under budget for the year and no reserves were required to balance either fund.

Attorney Masih reported that she is planning to be at the February 4th meeting in person to facilitate the Administrator evaluations, adding that the due date for those evaluations is January 27th so that she can compile summary sheet. There will be an executive session to discuss the evaluation summary. Lastly, there is municipal court toward end of month.

NEW BUSINESS

Consideration of Library Board appointment.

Mayor Day explained the procedure for the evening regarding the appointments. Administrator Etheridge stated that this is the year for a Town appointment to the Library Board and included in the packet is the current Board and their terms; terms are set up so that a new appointment is made every year and alternates between a Town appointment and a County appointment.

The Board vacancy was advertised online and in the Herald Times from December with a deadline of last Wednesday, the 15th. We received 5 applications, listed in the order received are Lee Overton, Bob Dorsett, Derek Dewey, Toby Leavitt, and Kris Casey. Applicants are present tonight so that the Board can put a face to a name and ask any clarifying questions based on the applications we received.

Upon opening up this discussion to public comment, Etheridge read into record several messages received in support of applicants:

Sandra Besseghini, and Jan Oldland in support of Toby Leavitt or Bob Dorset
Stacy Hudelson, Steve Coley, Dave and Jeni Morlan, Peggy Strate, Kathleen Kelley, Ray and Sherry Matthews, and Martha Cole all in support of Toby Leavitt
Debbie and Mike Frazier in support of Toby Leavitt, Bob Dorsett, and Kris Casey.

Mayor Day opened the floor for public comment:

Mike Grady spoke in support of Toby, Bob and Kris and referenced letter to the editor in the newspaper demonstrating a need for someone on the Library Board who is interested in the library and that 3 of the 5 current Library Board members are representing their own agenda; Grady stated it should be kept it a public library.

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Kathleen Kelley shared her support of exactly what Mike just said, adding that she has been attending Library Board meetings for the last several months and that this is the worst board I have ever seen; there is lack of procedure and it should follow Roberts Rules of Order and be mindful of what the public library actually serves; Kelley expressed support for Toby, Bob and Kris stating that the Library Board needed to return to really good governing and sharing her concern with the direction the Library Board is going and the need to get it right.

Pat Dagett stated her opinion was along the same lines as the others and she has been watching the Library Board since last February; some Library Board members are trying to select books themselves and after serving 12 years on the Library Board Dagett stated the Board's job is to support the librarian and that by selecting the books they are in danger of legal problems; 3 of the new members of the Library Board are being obstructionist.

Mayor Day asked the Board for further questions of the applications:

Trustee Sizemore asked whether the current Library Board is aware of recent legislation regarding book selection; Dagett stated that none of the new Library Board members showed up for the meeting from the State to explain the law. Peggy Strate shared that she was at the meeting where the Library Board was made aware.

Trustee Lockwood asked the application whether they would you ever consider banning or removing material from the library or to not honor a patron's request for material:

- Toby Leavitt stated no, that is up to the librarian, and they may discuss it with the Library Board.
- Lee Overton stated that it's not the Library Board's job to ban or choose books but would be open to discussion if there is a problem book.
- Bob Dorsett stated that collections should be managed by the librarian, there is specific policy in place for the deaquisitioning of materials and to remove or request new material is in the bylaws.
- Derek Dewey stated that there are freedoms as an American and it is not my place to do that, and as a Board member would not seek to.
- Kris Casey stated that the policy of the library makes it the duty of the librarian to remove or request material and that it is the job of the librarian to determine what books come on or are taken off the shelves.

Trustee Browning asked the applicants when was the last time they were in the library and what services where rendered:

- Kris Casey went last week to pick up a book from inter-library loan and the week before to attend the Library Board work session; she is a frequent user of the library and access to online.
- Derek Dewey has not been in in some time, he did go with daughters who are avid readers and users of the inter-library loan.
- Bob Dorsett went last week to run samples with the river watch program, not only does the library offer books but provides many other services; he will be back in tomorrow setting up another program with White River alliance; there are a ton of programs facilitated or sponsored by the library.
- Lee Overton was there for the December Library Board meeting.
- Toby went this week to talk to the librarian, returned books for Hope West, returned books for grandkids and does check out books from time to time.

Trustee Jehorek asked the applicants whether they agree with the statement that individuals should be allowed to make their own decisions about what to read:

- Derik Dewey stated yes.
- Bob Dorsett stated yes, and that it's the parent's responsibility to monitor their children's activity in the library.
- Lee Overton agreed with Dorsett's statement.

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- Toby stated yes.
- Kris stated yes, adding that parents should know what their kids are reading.

Trustee Day asked the applicants what their plans would be to sustain the reserves or to build them higher:

- Bob Dorsett stated that this was a sore point since the current Library Board recently slashed the mill levy to below a sustaining funding amount; adding that it was a serious problem to be sitting on substantial reserves with no plan on how or when to spend down those reserves.
- Lee Overton agreed with Dorsett, adding that there is no current long term plan and he went to the December Library Board meeting where they addressed the budget with not much thought or planning and his focus would be fiscal responsibility and to come up with a plan for the future.
- Toby Leavitt stated that it is important to have a one year budget, five and 10 year outlook, and that next year amount now could be worth half of what it is worth now, adding that the Library is the main source for the high school, and with a large the technology piece there are so many ideas out there if we are willing to listen and look into them.
- Kris Casey stated that there is large amount of money sitting in the Library reserves and there is no plan, getting to that plan is having a conversation with the librarian, and that some of the money needs to go to more part time employees as Kristina has asked for to provide more community outreach.
- Derek Dewey stated he tried to live life to not one extreme or another, having a balanced mindset, and if we deplete the library reserve funds it will be hard to function, adding that he doesn't have a specific plan but would go about it with wisdom and find the happy place where people can get along and have sensibility on how to maintain the money.

Trustee Day then asked the applicants how they would reestablish Roberts Rules of Order (RRO):

- Lee Overton stated training and a workshop.
- Toby Leavitt stated it is in the bylaws for the library, and yes, training is needed and would apply every time a new board member is brought on.
- Kris Casey agreed that a review and training would be good and suggested attending other board meetings and see it in action to actually know what that looks like.
- Derek Dewey shared that in church they use RRO loosely to provide organization and a path.
- Bob Dorsett stated that RRO are a matter of habit and practice and would be well for any board to train themselves and to visit other well functioning entities, adding that establishing a parliamentarian could be helpful, even someone outside the board.

Trustee Sizemore asked about the Library Board's purpose of cutting the mill levy. Toby Leavitt stated that 3 of the Library board members thought they shouldn't take it at all and 2 others didn't agree. Kris Casey shared that the discussion was about the large amount of reserve and why would the library would continue to assess mills if we don't use it, it looks bad in the community to keep asking if we aren't using it, but no plan was developed on how to use it. Lee Overton stated that they just have no plan.

Trustee Lockwood asked the applicants whether they would be willing to go the extra mile to support legislation to prohibit censoring material:

- Kris Casey stated that part of being on that board is to not have a political statement.
- Derek Dewey agreed but also believed that he would look at specific legislation and see if it aligns personally but as far as supporting it didn't believe you can push any specific legislation.
- Bob Dorsett stated that the current statute is very clear that a public library cannot censor the contents for any reason.
- Lee Overton stated that the library can't start banning books.
- Toby Leavitt stated that as a board member we have to keep things good for the whole.

Mayor Day discussed the way to appoint, whether a motion should be made directly or Trustees should each write down their preferred applicant and then make the motion based on that majority. Mayor Day

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consulted Attorney Massih on process and it was agreed to write down names to determine the motion. Mayor Day received 3 votes each for Toby Leavitt and Kris Casey, Mayor Day then thanked everyone for attending and supporting this process and broke the tie by calling for a motion to appoint Toby Levitt as she has the time and experience needed for the position. Motion made by Trustee Lockwood, second by Trustee Nielsen. All ayes. Motion carried.

MANAGER’S REPORT

Administrator Etheridge shared the following:

- In partnership with the RBC Weed & Pest Control Department, the Conservation District will be hosting a public education meeting regarding the cricket abatement process in Meeker at the Fire Hall on Thursday, February 20th at 6pm.
- In Circle Park news, SGM received the CAD information needed to finish staking the revised location for the ramp and should be staking this week, mobilization has begun, and Jake has submitted the stormwater permit with CDPHE.
- Davey Smith contacted Tobey Willey, PW Superintendent this morning about ice jamming on the river; we will be keeping an eye on things as temperatures are not supposed to be above freezing for the next week.
- Just as a reminder, we have 2 open bids right now: the new Police Vehicle which closes next Thursday, January 30th and the Garfield Street Waterline Replacement which has a mandatory pre-bid meeting on the 5th of February and a closing date of the 25th of February.

MAYOR’S REMARKS

None.

OTHER BOARD BUSINESS

Trustee Jehorek pointed out that some of the new downtown lights are not working properly. Administrator Etheridge stated that as we realized last year that some of the photocells were not working, we made sure they were under warranty and replaced by the manufacturer. Through this process it has been determined that because they are photocells they don’t work as on a switch but are somewhat weather related. Trustee Jehorek asked what the warranty was specifically and Etheridge stated we may be approaching the end as they are a year old. Trustee Jehorek asked whether we needed to be doing anything different if we are having to replace so many should we be doing something different; Etheridge replied that the Town would research warranty and report back.

Trustee Browning asked for clarification on the process of tagging cars that don’t move. Administrator Etheridge replied that our Community Service Officer would manage that process, guided by Public Works if they notice vehicles that are not moving after snow plowing, and that vehicles are tagged, tracked, then then cited if not moved.

Trustee Sizemore asked about the property at end of 7th Street and whether it complied with the Town’s Short Term Rental code. Planner Thomson stated that she has not received an application back for that location but they are not due until the end of February. The Board asked about non-compliance and Thomson stated she would research and get report back.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Mayor Day adjourned the meeting at 8:24 pm.

/s/Travis Day, Mayor

Attest: /s/Lisa Cook, Town Clerk