

The Regular Meeting of the Meeker Town Board was held Tuesday, May 21, 2024, at Town Hall.

Members Present	Mayor Trustees	Day Browning Day Jehorek Nielsen Sizemore
Town Staff Present	Administrator Town Clerk Attorney Police Chief Comm. Dev./Planner	Etheridge Cook Massih Thompson Thomson

**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 except Trustee Lockwood.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Mayor Day asked for changes to the agenda. Trustee Jehorek 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 Browning to approve the minutes of May 7, 2024, as submitted. Second by Trustee Sizemore. All ayes. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF MONTHLY DISBURSEMENTS**

A motion was made by Trustee Browning to approve the disbursements dated May 21, 2024. Second by Trustee Jehorek. All ayes. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Officer Hetzel was present and introduced DAK the Police Department’s new narcotics dog.

Callie Scritchfield introduced herself as a candidate for County Commissioner and gave a brief background about herself and her aspirations for Rio Blanco County if she were to be elected.

Regas Halandras also introduced himself as candidate for County Commissioner and thanked the Board for letting both candidates speak and encouraged everyone to vote in the upcoming Primary Election.

Chamber Director Stephanie Hanson gave an update for the Meeker Chamber of Commerce and Uplift Meeker. Hanson said the Chamber appreciates the Town’s support of their programs and their relationship

**Regular Meeting of the Town of Meeker – May 21, 2024**

with the Town. Membership is now over two hundred and the Chamber works to promote the businesses and all they do. Hanson said staff has been working on marketing materials for the summer events and the Business Center is really taking off as there are ten groups who regularly use the rooms for trainings or meetings and said she is applying for a T-Mobile grant for more furniture. The Tourism and Visitor’s Center working in partnership with Parks & Wildlife, BLM, and Forest Service has produced the Responsible Recreation Guide and with that we are more thoughtful on who and how to promote Meeker in a responsible way.

Hanson said Uplift Meeker has worked in collaboration with the Town on projects such as the wayfinding signs, banners, and is currently working on the banner over the highway; a mini grant was obtained through the State with a required 25% match which the Town contributes. Hanson welcomed the Board or anyone to stop by for sharing of information or to discuss ideas.

**STAFF UPDATES**

Public Works Superintendent Willey reported during the month of April 11,501,056 gallons of water was pumped; staff spent several days preparing the alleys for mag chloride; Daylon Nielsen received his CDL license; and unfortunately Nick Smith has resigned so we will be advertising for that position. We set out the parklets downtown for the summer, and Aiyana McCook was hired for our summer temp position and is doing a good job.

Police Chief Thompson reported during the month of April his department received 209 calls for service resulting in two arrests and six citations, and the department is back to full staff with the completion of DAK’s training. Mayor Day asked for an update on the delivery of the Department’s vehicle. Chief Thompson said it is currently in the shop and will hopefully be ready next week.

Community Development/Planner Thomson stated her update is included in the Board’s packet, she will be presenting an application for a minor subdivision at the next meeting and received an application for another minor subdivision today.

Town Clerk Cook said she had nothing out of the ordinary to report.

Town Attorney Massih had nothing specific to report other than there will be no court for the next two months as Judge Edwards had a conflict with the dates.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

***Consideration of special event liquor license application from Meeker Chamber of Commerce for Meekerpalooza on June 7 and June 21, 2024.*** Mayor Day opened the public hearing at 7:22 p.m. Clerk Cook stated the Chamber of Commerce has applied for the permit; Stephani Hanson, who is present will be the event manager; the events will be held on June 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> on the courthouse lawn from 4:00 to 9:00 p.m.; the licensed area will be the grassy area within the sidewalks and to the west end of the lawn; the area will be staked every twenty feet with signage, “no alcohol beyond this point”; IDs will be checked at the bar; food vendors will be available; the County has given permission to use the premises; Chief Thompson has no objections; the public hearing has been advertised; the application is complete; and staff recommends approval.

***Regular Meeting of the Town of Meeker – May 21, 2024***

Mayor Day asked for comments. Upon hearing none, closed the public hearing at 7:23 p.m. and called for a motion. Trustee Sizemore motioned to approve the Special Event Permit for Meeker Chamber of Commerce. Second by Trustee Day. Via roll call vote ayes: Trustees Browning, Day, Nielsen, and Sizemore. Trustee Jehorek abstained due to a conflict of interest. Motion carried.

***Consideration of special event liquor license application from Lions Club for Hopewest Cornhole Tournament on June 8, 2024.*** Mayor Day opened the public hearing at 7:24 p.m. Clerk Cook stated the Lion’s Club has applied for the permit; Mark Rogers is present representing the Lions Club; Dianna Jones will be the event manager; the event will be held on June 8<sup>th</sup> at the County 4-H building from 9 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.; the licensed area will be the 4-H building and the adjacent fenced outdoor area; the perimeter will be signed “no alcohol beyond this point”; IDs will be checked at the bar; there will be food available; the County has given permission to use the premises; Chief Thompson has no objections; the public hearing has been advertised; the application is complete; and staff recommends approval.

Mayor Day asked for comments. Mark Rogers encouraged everyone to attend as it is a very worthwhile fundraising event. Hearing no further comments, Mayor Day closed the public hearing at 7:25 p.m. and called for a motion. Moved by Trustee Sizemore. Second by Trustee Brown. All ayes via roll call vote. Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS**

***Consideration of donation request from MAMBA.*** Regas Halandras, representing MAMBA, addressed the Board stating they did not get the CPW grant they applied for last fall, but we are still moving ahead with trail work on the China Wall trail from Ute Park all the way to Sanderson. The work will be done with professional trail builders, and will utilize the funds received to date from the Town and others. Halandras said they do not want to exceed the cost of \$41,000, they have \$30,000 total right now, the Walton Foundation has reallocated \$15,000 for the project through the Recreation District, and when they apply for the grant again this fall it will show initiative that they have completed work, while also still having matching funds. The BLM plans to bring in Youth Corp to help finish the tie-in trail to the top, and they can use the expertise of the professionals, Gumption Trail works.

Trustee Browning asked what will happen if they don’t receive all the funding. Halandras replied, it will shorten the amount of work they can do, they will be trying to move forward by obtaining other private donations. Administrator Etheridge stated the request from the Town is for \$5,000 and explained the three different line items it could be funded by, adding that historically, if the Board agreed to approve the request, it would come from the Community Improvement line item.

Trustee Browning made a motion to approve the \$5,000 donation to MAMBA to come from the Community Improvement line item. Second by Trustee Sizemore. All ayes. Motion carried.

Halandras took the opportunity to make another request for Ute Park regarding the Hill St. trailhead which sees a lot of usage and needs a port-a-john. He asked if he were to get one donated whether he could build a three-sided structure around it to keep it from blowing over and out of sight of the neighbors. He also may have access to a picnic table and would like to sit that at the trailhead as well and eventually build a small shelter over the table. Additionally, people on bikes are fighting the chains on three of the gates and he would like to improve the access on those as well.

***Regular Meeting of the Town of Meeker – May 21, 2024***

Mayor Day asked how much a port-a-john costs per month. Halandras said he plans to ask Overton Recycling if they would consider donating it. Trustee Nielsen suggested making the shelter large enough for two port-a-johns. Trustee Day requested to see an actual budget for these improvements. Halandras replied that he was not asking for money from the Town, only permission to pursue these projects. Mayor Day stated the Town has committed to developing the pump track area, we only ask that it looks nice and called for a motion. Trustee Sizemore made a motion to give permission for the improvements of the port-a-john and picnic table and to work with Public Works on the locks for the gates. Second by Trustee Jehorek. All ayes. Motion carried.

***Consideration of extension request for variance at 314 Garfield Street.*** Planner Thomson stated Matthew and Beth Ann Parsons, on behalf of Allan Jones, are requesting a variance extension for the property at 314 Garfield Street. Mr. Jones was granted a variance on May 23, 2022. The variance would allow for a lot size of 6,243 square feet, a variance from the required 7,500 square feet for a single-family lot, as shown as Proposed Lot B in the Board packet. A variance was necessary for the applicant to proceed with the Lot Line Adjustment. To move forward with the Lot Line Adjustment, Atmos Energy requires each residence to have a singular and dedicated gas line. At this time both residences share a gas line. Meeker Municipal Code section 18.1.17, General Procedures, subsection (7), expiration of approval states “the town planner and Planning Commission may provide one extension for a maximum of one year. The Town Board of Trustees may provide multiple extensions and may provide extensions greater than one year.” In May of 2023, the Planning Commission granted a variance extension for 314 Garfield Street, and therefore the applicant is requesting an additional extension from the Board of Trustees now.

Town Staff recommends granting an extension to Mr. Allan Jones at 314 Garfield Street and recommends the extension of one year. Applicant Beth Ann Parsons was present by telephone and stated they have been working with Atmos to determine how they can logistically run the line without crossing another property.

Mayor Day asked for comments. Hearing none he called for a motion to approve the variance extension at 314 Garfield Street for one year. Moved by Trustee Day. Second by Trustee Browning. All ayes. Motion carried.

***Consideration of DOLA’s Local Planning Capacity Grant Application.*** Planner Thomson addressed the Board stating The Local Planning Capacity Grant Program was established through Proposition 123, the statewide affordable housing support fund and is managed through Colorado Department of Local Affairs’ Community Development Office.

To be eligible entities must be municipalities, counties, or tribal governments that have opted in to Proposition 123 and whose baseline and commitment have been accepted by the Division of Housing. The Town of Meeker opted in with their baseline and commitment prior to the November 2023 deadline.

The intent of the Local Planning Capacity Grant program is to increase the capacity of local government planning departments. Grant funds could support new staff wages, hiring consultants, and implementing new systems and technologies. The grant requires a 20% match from the applicant.

In the 2024 budget, the Town of Meeker approved the budget line item in the amount of \$50,000 in the Systems Development Fund for Housing Feasibility and the implementation of the Housing Needs Assessment Action plan items.

***Regular Meeting of the Town of Meeker – May 21, 2024***

The Housing Needs Assessment outlines the following Implementation Strategies as: (1) organizational structure and capacity building, (2) development strategies, (3) aligning policies and regulations and (4) special programs and funding strategies policies and regulation considerations. The Local Planning Capacity grant will address the implementation strategy of organizational structure and capacity building.

The fundamental question asked in this strategy is “who will act as the developer?” There are three types of entities that can take on this role: public (local governments), private, or a public-private partnership. Town staff is proposing the formation of a public-private partnership to provide organizational structure and capacity building to address affordable housing. The example provided in your board packet is the Kit Carson Rural Development model which has successfully added seventeen new affordable housing units within the community.

The Local Planning Capacity grant would be used for a variety of consultant services. This includes legal guidance to stand up the public-private partnership, identifying, mapping, and assessing potential properties, and grant writing support for future affordable housing projects. These are described in greater detail in the board packet. The proposed budget of \$40,000 allocates 25% towards legal expenses, 25% towards property assessments, and 50% towards grant writing support with flexibility within the grant for these services.

Planner Thomson added that it would be exciting to collaborate with the School District on this project. Trustee Jehorek asked how soon it would start. Thomson replied the grant is due in June with funding in July and could begin quickly. Mayor Day asked how the results from the housing assessment will affect this project. Thomson said included in the Board packets is a draft of the housing assessment action plan. Mayor Day expressed concern moving forward with the grant since the Board has not yet discussed the draft and asked how long the Town had to spend the funds. Thomson said the grant was for three years and as an example of capacity stated that in speaking with the City of Craig regarding their housing project, they have six half-time staff members dedicated to their project. Trustee Browning asked if we could work through the grant while finishing the assessment with Ayres. Trustee Jehorek stated she would like to see the Town move forward with this. Mayor Day called for a motion to authorize staff to apply for the DOLA Local Planning Capacity Grant. Moved by Trustee Jehorek. Second by Trustee Browning. All ayes. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS**

***Consideration of new RFP for Circle Park project.*** Administrator Etheridge gave a timeline of the project to show where we have been and where we are currently, and introduced Brian Barackman with Diggin’ It Riverworks who was present. Etheridge stated at the last meeting she asked whether the Board would consider going back out to bid, this time under a design/build RFP where the contractor would be asked to work directly with the design engineer as the plans are being finalized. Etheridge has looked into what a design/build project looks like and spoken to several stakeholders who recommend this approach, including Dana with DOLA. Tom Smrdel with GEI said they would be happy to synergize with a contractor as they approach final engineering of the riverbank stabilization and landscape plan.

Etheridge asked for the Board’s approval to move forward with the draft RFP, contingent on finalizing any verbiage and adding the template for contract agreement as an attachment adding, if we go out to RFP now, and we are not comfortable with what we are getting, we do not have to award a bid; but if we don’t go out to RFP now, we potentially miss an opportunity to move forward with this project and risk not being able to fund the project at all.

Mayor Day stated he had major concerns about sending out an RFP without a sketch plan for the ramp, and

### ***Regular Meeting of the Town of Meeker – May 21, 2024***

now we are moving flower beds, we don't know what it is going to look like and it seems like we are throwing away all of the plans we have come up with so far. Administrator Etheridge replied that what GEI is proposing is a more simplified and stabilized plan, so the conceptual is really not changing. They are substituting the bank stabilization method, and the grade of the ramp at Circle Park since the current plan calls for geotechnical engineering and the new plan would have the ramp on-grade. Trustee Jehorek asked if there was a template of the contract being sent out. Etheridge replied that the template would be similar conditions that were approved by the Board previously and that the template is only to be used as an example to alert a contractor as to what the Town's terms and conditions would look like. The contract is negotiable once a bid is awarded.

Administrator Etheridge stated that if we act now and publish the RFP, we are required by state statute to have it open for a minimum of 14 days. I would like to take just a little longer to make sure we have good distribution. The good thing about our RFP is that it has sufficient disclaimers where we retain the right to reject any proposal, change, add, or amend specifications or the Agreement, and modify the scope of work at our discretion. Then if we have a worthy contractor, we have the opportunity to negotiate the timeline, terms, conditions, and maximum guaranteed price while they mobilize and purchase products so that everything dovetails into a fall timeline.

Mayor Day said that during this whole process what concerns him is the plans are not complete and it ends up coming back on the Town and delays the project further, then asked what the Rec District's take was on this. Administrator Etheridge replied that she had not spoken with them. Mayor Day said he would like to have a workshop with them to go over the plans. Trustee Day said that going through BidNet the Town is going to have proposals from all over the place and it would be better if the plans were more finalized and asked Mr. Barackman why he withdrew his bid on the project. Barackman replied that he and the Town did not agree on the contract and that when the project was bid the RFP stated the engineering was complete and he was not informed the plans were not complete until after the bid was submitted and at this point we have no idea when the engineering will be complete. Trustee Day asked if this RFP is one that Barackman and others would have interest in. Barackman replied yes, as you are saying upfront that it is a design/build project. Trustee Jehorek asked if we have been given a deadline for the engineering and Etheridge said July.

Mayor Day reiterated we need to have a conceptual design and urged the Board to pump the brakes until we have more definite plans before moving forward with the RFP. He recommended having a workshop with the Rec District and a more finalized contract. Trustee Jehorek said she could see the benefit in moving forward at this time as we have the ability in the RFP to scale back the budget if needed, whether we send out the RFP now or in July it is still going to take the same amount of time to complete the project so if we have a contractor who has agreed to do the job and we are able to procure them, at this point in time I see that as a benefit. Jehorek added she is scared about saying let's just throw in extra money unless we come to some agreement that we do not go over the budget by a certain percentage, maybe we vote now that we don't allow budget increases. Etheridge said her only concern with that is it does not give us any flexibility to make changes in the future, adding that another concern financially is the longer we wait the more expensive the project is going to be and the more tenuous our grant funding becomes.

Trustee Nielsen agreed that meeting with the Rec District before moving forward was a good idea. Mayor Day proposed a motion to table the decision until the next meeting to allow scheduling of a workshop with the Rec District. Administrator Etheridge said she did not need a motion, only Board consensus. The Board concurred with tabling the discussion.

**Regular Meeting of the Town of Meeker – May 21, 2024**

**MAYOR’S REMARKS**

Mayor Day reported he had attended an AGNC meeting in Rifle where they projected that over the next 10 years Rio Blanco and Moffat Counties are slated to lose population.

**OTHER BOARD BUSINESS**

None.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

*Pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(b) to conference with attorney for the purpose of receiving legal advice on specific legal questions.* Mayor Day moved to go into executive session for the reason cited above and called for a motion. Moved by Trustee Day. Second by Trustee Jehorek. All ayes. Motion carried. The regular meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Mayor Day stated the time is now 9:05 p.m., and the executive session has been concluded. The participants in the executive session were: Myself, Trustees Browning, Day, Jehorek, Nielsen and Sizemore, Administrator Etheridge, and Attorney Massih.

For the record, if any person who participated in the executive session believes that any substantial discussion of any matters not included in the motion to go into the executive session occurred during the executive session, or that any improper action occurred during the executive session in violation of the Open Meetings Law, I would ask that you state your concerns for the record.” Hearing none the Board proceeded to discuss what they would like to address in the joint workshop with the Recreation District.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Day adjourned the meeting at 9:09 p.m.

/s/Travis Day, Mayor

Attest:

/s/Lisa Cook, Town Clerk