

DRAFT MINUTES

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING OF THE TOWN OF JEROME
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, JEROME TOWN HALL
600 CLARK STREET, JEROME, ARIZONA
TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2023, AT 7:00 PM

7:00 (0:07) 1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor/Chairperson to call meeting to order.

Mayor Alex Barber called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Town Clerk to call and record the roll.

Town Manager/Clerk Brett Klein called the roll. Present were Mayor Alex Barber, Vice Mayor Jane Moore, Councilmembers Dr. Jack Dillenberg, Sage Harvey, and Sonia Sheffield.

Staff Present included Town Manager/Clerk Brett Klein, Zoning Administrator Will Blodgett, and Deputy Town Clerk Kristen Muenz.

For the convenience of those present, it was decided to move Item #10B up in the order, to take place after Item #2 then Item #10A, after which the remaining items would be presented in their usual order. The items are all shown here as originally agendized.

7:02 (1:24) 2. PROCLAMATIONS and PRESENTATIONS

A. Members of the Upper Verde Wild and Scenic River Coalition will be Providing a Presentation

Former Mayor and Jerome resident Nikki Check introduced herself to the council and public. She said she was representing the Natural History Institute and the Wild and Scenic River Initiative for the Upper Verde. The coalition is made up of more than 14 organizations that are working to advocate for the wild and scenic designation. Ms. Check introduced former mayor of Camp Verde and founding member of the Friends of the Verde River, Tony Joya and Emma Burns, an intern for American Rivers. She acknowledged that Vice Mayor Moore has been a long-standing advocate for the river, and thanked her for sponsoring the item. Ms. Check then explained that the federal designation is the highest form of protection for a river, and which section of the river they were referring to, 44 miles of the Verde, or 24,000 acres. She said that the river is eligible due to 8 outstanding values, including 21 endangered species in the Upper Verde, 16 species that are sensitive or of concern, and rare plants. There are also 54 historic and prehistoric sites. Ms. Check said it is worth noting that the Yavapai Apache Nation is one of their partners and they are looking to highlight the cultural importance of the location. She said it is a center of biodiversity and one of Arizona's last, continuous free-flowing rivers. She said the result of the designation would be a powerful and permanent conservation effort, and asked that Jerome join others in Prescott, Prescott Valley, Cottonwood, and Camp Verde in drafting a resolution in support. Councilmember Dr. Jack Dillenberg said it sounds great and there is no obligation on us for funding at this point, it is just to support the designation of the river.

Ms. Check confirmed that support is what they are asking for.

Vice Mayor Jane Moore asked if Ms. Check has an idea of how long it might take?

Ms. Check replied that some sections of the Verde River have gone through the process before. She said it will probably take a couple years and they are deep into the process. She said they have received almost unanimous support.

Mayor Barber said there were 3 or 4 water committees, and now it is Friends of the Verde River and CWAG, the Citizens Advisory Water Committee. She asked if either was on board with this.

Ms. Check said that Friends of the Verde is heavily involved and a representative of CWAG, Gary Beverly with Sierra Club, would be giving a presentation this weekend. She said we are all working together.

Ms. Barber commented that Mr. Beverly is an asset. She said this is something that needs to happen, as Ms. Check pointed out, this is the last free-flowing perennial river. We need to protect the Verde River. She thanked Nikki Check.

Ms. Moore asked if Prescott, Prescott Valley, and Chino Valley are going to be supportive?

Ms. Check responded that Prescott and Prescott Valley are already supportive, and wanted to note that it would not interfere with groundwater pumping but it does create a junior water right and a voice saying this is worth protecting.

Ms. Moore thanked her for her hard work.

Dr. Dillenberg said that we will support it.

8:02 (1:01:45) 3. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Discussion/Possible Action

A. Financial Reports for February 2023

Council will consider and may approve the financial reports for month ending February 2023.

Ms. Harvey asked if, in future, we could get more detailed descriptions on the check report. She said the layout makes it difficult to understand what is being paid for.

Ms. Barber asked about an item on page 30 of the invoice report: W. S. Darley and Co, 2.5” gate valve.

Ms. Muenz replied that she did not know what it was, but she would find out.

Motion to approve Financial Reports for February 2023

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER			X			
DILLENBERG		X	X			
HARVEY	X		X			
MOORE			X			
SHEFFIELD			X			

8:04 (1:04:04) 4. STAFF AND COUNCIL REPORTS

Discussion/Possible Action

A. Reports by the Town Manager / Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Utilities Clerk, Accounting Clerk, Public Works Director, Building Inspector, Library Director, Municipal Magistrate, Police Chief, Fire Chief and Council Members

Ms. Barber commented that it is nice to see an uptick in sales tax.

Mr. Klein said if you compare the yearly amounts, we are doing fine. He said there was an ADEQ status meeting, and he and Mr. McVittie were on the call. ADEQ wants to be sure we are progressing on the Wastewater Treatment Plant. He said the cultural study slowed us down, but we are on track. Referring to the departure of Finance Manager, Melanie Atkin, Mr. Klein said he has been advertising and there have been 2 applicants, but he is hoping for more.

Ms. Barber thanked Mr. Klein for the new credit card processing company that has taken fees down 50%. Also, she pointed out that Terri Card has hit her 1-year service anniversary. She pointed out the last item on the Manager’s report, a discussion with Representative Toma, the Mayor of Sedona, and Mayor of Lake Havasu about a bill capping Short-Term Rentals. She asked for more details.

Mr. Klein said that two Mayors had been invited to the discussion because they are at 17% STR saturation or more. We are currently at 10%. He said Representative Toma was instrumental in curtailing municipality’s ability to regulate Short-Term rentals, but he appeared open to modifications. Mr. Klein said that he did not see anything being done this year, but it may be something that can gather steam.

Ms. Harvey brought up the CAT pilot program, and she said we discussed the sign for pickup, but this week the sign was still in the handicap parking space.

Mr. Klein confirmed that he had reached out to them and was going to follow up.

Ms. Harvey suggested it would be better for them to use a loading zone than the handicap spot. She said that she loved the new Aging Report for utilities. However, it brought up a lot of overdue accounts and some of them may need to be addressed through collections. As to the Fire Department, she asked for clarification on the firefighters who were sent to Wildland Academy for training. She wanted to know if John Krmpotich was or was not certified because he should be paid at a higher rate if he was.

Mr. Klein responded that he was not, but was working on it. He said he would follow up on that.

Referring to the Fire Department report again, Ms. Harvey said that if they do not get a grant to replace the AED, we need to fund it because they need to be up to date. She also said that the patch work performed by Public Works on 2nd Street is already torn out. Also, she has noticed a lot of issues with people parking on the outward flow of motorcycle parking area, and it looks like the arrow needs to be redone.

There was some discussion about a hot-dog vendor, and it was confirmed that he was licensed to operate in Jerome.

Ms. Barber pointed out that Ms. Atkin mentioned working with Ms. Muenz, we will really miss Ms. Atkin. She thanked all the departments, the staff, and volunteers who work for the town.

Motion to approve Staff and Council Reports

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER	X		X			
DILLENBERG			X			
HARVEY		X	X			
MOORE			X			
SHEFFIELD			X			

8:17 (1:16:57) 5. ZONING ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT/PLANNING & ZONING AND DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MINUTES

Information/Council Review

A. Minutes are provided for information only and do not require any action.

Zoning Administrator Will Blodgett summarized his report. He explained that the Planning & Zoning Meeting was postponed due to a posting that was either removed or lost in weather and he wanted to be sure there were no questions as to legality. He completed

initial field work for parking in the C-1 zone; there are some changes that will be made, and he wants to do the same for the entire town. He also began distribution of a rough draft of the Design Guidelines and said he had more research to do but would appreciate feedback. Mr. Blodgett said he had a delay in getting GIS software because our computers cannot run it, so he will investigate hardware requirements. Finally, he looked over a number of properties with Fire Chief Rusty Blair and Building Inspector Barry Wolstencroft with a variety of problems. He said we wish to be proactive in identifying the problems and talking to the owners about how we can assist because, if we don't, we will run into more situations like the Tamale Lady's House.

Jerome resident Nancy Robinson asked, for the C-1 parking inventory, can we access it online?

Mr. Blodgett said it was not online yet.

Referring to the list of property owners, Ms. Robinson asked if letters were sent.

Mr. Blodgett said that was not done yet as we are still familiarizing ourselves with the particular issues of each property. We must do more research. He mentioned that we will be discussing them at future DRB meetings.

Ms. Robinson asked if he was doing site visits.

Mr. Blodgett replied that he did drive by's and a visual estimate.

Ms. Robinson asked if he would be making a more comprehensive list because there are 9 houses on Main Street that are not on the list, so is he going to make a fairer and more open list?

Mr. Blodgett said his goal is not to be punitive. He said he has discussed with Scott Hudson of the Historic Society how we might be helpful; we are learning as we go.

Ms. Robinson said she experienced an issue with a porch that was going to fall off, and she didn't want to issue an eviction notice. She asked if there were there any similar situations where the property was so unsafe that could be an issue?

Mr. Blodgett said the concerning properties are not occupied at the moment but, if there was a significant hazard, we would take action immediately.

Referring to concerns on the list, Ms. Robinson asked if the heavy fuel at 231 Allen Springs Road meant trees and shrubs.

Mr. Blodgett confirmed that fuel load is vegetation.

Ms. Robinson said we don't want people to be displaced during a housing shortage.

Mr. Blodgett said that displacing people is not his priority.

Ms. Barber said she and others would point out some changes to the parking inventory and thanked Mr. Blodgett for his work.

8:25 (1:24:48) 6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Discussion/Possible Action

A. Consider Approval of the February 20, 2023, Rescheduled Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Ms. Harvey said that she had listened to the recording to confirm that there was no motion for the Proclamation at the February 20th meeting.

Motion to approve the February 20, 2023, Rescheduled Regular Council Meeting Minutes

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER			X			
DILLENBERG			X			
HARVEY	X		X			
MOORE			X			
SHEFFIELD		X	X			

8:26 (1:25:35) 7. PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no petitions from the public.

8:26 (1:26:00) 8. ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Discussion/Possible Action

A. Consideration and Possible Action on Second Reading of Ordinance No. 488, Use of Public Sewers and Sewer Pre-treatment Plan and to Adopt and Publish

Council will consider and may approve the second and final reading of Ordinance No. 488.

Ms. Harvey said that she thought we discussed removing the section on sewage haulers being able to pump. She said companies such as Black Hills have someplace to pump, and she does not feel like they should do that in our Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Mr. Klein explained that we could always say, "no." However, the new plant has vast amount of capacity, and it is a potential for revenue. We will probably never be asked, but we won't have the potential for revenue if we prohibit it. He said we could certainly could exclude it.

Ms. Moore, for those with a septic tank, it would be simpler for someone to have it pumped and use our sewer system.

Dr. Dillenberg said, as long as there is flexibility to say, "yes" or "no."

Ms. Harvey asked if we could put in there that levels have to be at certain point for it to be an option? She said she was concerned about a big company adding extra into it and no one was there to say they should not.

Mr. Klein said he would entrust that if Henry McVittie was gone, you would hire a professional that would certainly say something.

Ms. Moore said she would be okay with it as long as it says the Public Works Director in conjunction with the Sewer Treatment Operator has the final say.

Ms. Barber read a portion of the ordinance that included guidelines for haulers. She asked if those guidelines would be added to the document.

Mr. Klein confirmed that it would be an addendum.

Motion to approve adopting and publishing Ordinance No. 488, Use of Public Sewers and Sewer Pre-Treatment Plant

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER			X			
DILLENBERG			X			
HARVEY	X		X			
MOORE			X			
SHEFFIELD		X	X			

8:31 (1:31:05) B. Consider Resolution No. 650, A Resolution Designating the Chief Fiscal Officer for Officially Submitting the Fiscal Year 2023 Expenditure Limitation Report to the Arizona Auditor General

Council will consider and may approve Resolution No. 650.

Ms. Barber explained that the previous Town Manager, Candace Gallagher, was the designated CFO for submissions. Now that Ms. Gallagher is gone, the current Manager, Brett Klein, needs the designation.

Motion to approve Resolution No. 650, designation Brett Klein as the Chief Fiscal Officer for Officially Submitting for Fiscal Year 2023 Expenditure Limitation Report to the Arizona Auditor General

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER			X			
DILLENBERG		X	X			
HARVEY	X		X			
MOORE			X			
SHEFFIELD			X			

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Discussion/Possible Action

7:53 (53:31) 9A. Discussion on a drip system, electrical access and shed.

Council will discuss improvements needed to the community garden and may provide staff direction.

Ms. Harvey said that last time we talked about the shed, we spoke about adding electrical access and also talked about the drip system. She said she believed someone said they have their own system, and we have lots of hoses and a bib. She said a drip system can be expensive, and we have already put a lot of money into this project. Ms. Harvey said adding the shed and electricity are a great idea, but people should be using their own drip systems.

Ms. Barber agreed.

Jerome resident Wendy Irving Mills said she has been involved with the Community Garden from the beginning. She said, if you are planning on planting trees around the garden, that would be the time to talk about an irrigation system. Ms. Irving Mills agreed that it was not necessary to install a drip system for each box because she developed a system that does the same thing. She demonstrated how she used a faucet splitter and battery-operated timer to water her box garden.

Dr. Dillenberg asked how expensive it should be.

Ms. Irving Mills answered \$20.00, or double timer for \$40.00. She said she shares one, and they can each program for their different boxes, which is like a drip system without the cost.

Ms. Moore asked, where do we stand with this?

Zoning Administrator Will Blodgett explained that shed options are coming up at the next DRB meeting. They want to explore stick-built sheds and there are 3 potential designs, and there is also a small shed that a resident wants to donate for a potential potting shed with a sink.

Dr. Dillenberg said he loved the idea of a hose attachment.

Jerome resident Jera Peterson that the shed would not include the toilet, but it is free, and confirmed that it was wood.

Mr. Blodgett said it is not big enough for a storage shed, but it would be a nice addition.

Ms. Harvey said she had originally suggested the vinyl shed because nothing was being done and she wished to get the ball rolling. She said she remembered Ms. Irving Mills being present when the project first started, and thanked her for her work.

Ms. Moore asked, is the small shed something that could be added onto?

Mr. Blodgett said it might be possible.

Ms. Barber gave staff direction that we will wait until after the DRB meeting, and then Council will talk about it again at the next meeting.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion/Possible Action

7:16 (15:55) A. Presentations from Potential FA Consultants - (Mark Reader of Stifel); (Darren Hodge of PFM Financial Advisors LLC)

Discussion Only - Council will make a decision at a subsequent Council Meeting.

Town Manager Brett Klein introduced the representative from Stifel, Mr. Mark Reader.

Mr. Reader thanked the council for inviting them, and said he was appreciative of the opportunity to present our credentials for the very important Wastewater Treatment Project. He said he would like to talk about your project, the scope of services they would provide, and some of their experiences in the utility area, which is a specialty. Mr. Reader highlighted some of the costs that the town will incur in relation to the interim construction, which is a new requirement of the federal government. As a Financial Advisor, one of the value-added services is to lower those costs, that is their expertise. He said that the town has received a low interest rate, but interest rates have risen in the last year, so they would be responsible for keeping an eye on it. Mr. Reader briefly summarized the loan debt, and said that they are aware that the policy in Jerome is to keep rates and charges low. He said it will be a team effort, and they will take a lead role. In terms of the interim construction, he said they will bid it out, and they have some good ideas. Mr. Reader said that after the transaction closes, they will continue to be here for you.

Dr. Dillenberg asked, "Where are you located?"

Mr. Reader replied they are in Phoenix, and are one of the largest practices in the state with 15 employees. She briefly shared a case study on the Town of Clifton. They had a \$3.6 million dollar project, and the federal government contacted them and rescinded the funding. He explained how they pivoted to the Water Utility Public Grant Authority to get them a grant from the state. He said that Camp Verde is also one of their clients, and they have worked on a variety of projects with them, along with many other communities.

Mr. Reader's associate, Jack Leeper, then addressed the council and explained that Mr. Reader would be the lead banker for the Town of Jerome team. He explained his expertise and that of the third team member, Ms. Randie Stein.

Dr. Dillenberg replied that their credentials were very impressive and thanked Mr. Leeper. He said we are excited for this opportunity to collaborate.

Mr. Klein said that the town does not issue bonds frequently. However, some of the projects on the horizon, such as the Wastewater Treatment Plant, will require financial advice, so as an underwriter, would the town not need a Financial Advisor?

Mr. Reader asked if he was referring to a transaction outside of the Wastewater Treatment Plant and Mr. Klein answered, a bond issuance. Mr. Reader replied that we are competing for the Financial Advisor position for Jerome. As the FA, we do negotiations with the government; we don't need an underwriter to get bonds because we are getting 72% grant money. Once the transaction closes, we can also serve as your Financial Advisor, it is up to the town for each specific transaction. He said that some clients want us to sell bonds for them, and we do have experience as underwriters in the State of Arizona. If we are privileged to work with you on this, and a year from now you wanted to work with us again on a park, or whatever the project is, we would serve as your Financial Advisor.

Ms. Harvey asked for clarification on if they are also capable of underwriting.

Mr. Reader replied, we are, and some of our clients want us to do that for them to raise capital, while some of them want us to serve as Financial Advisor.

(36:36) Mr. Klein introduced Darren Hodge of PFM.

Mr. Hodge said that PFM is the industry's largest independent financial advisor's company. His office is in Chandler, and his territory also covers the western U.S., with a focus on general government and water and wastewater. Mr. Hodge said he originally worked in investment banking, but switched industries because he likes providing financial advice. He introduced his colleague Mr. Trejo. Mr. Trejo said he had a master's degree in public policy and was interested in advising local governments. He said they have been the largest financial advisors in the country for 25 years and have done more transactions than anyone else. He then explained the benefits of using their firm, such as better terms for clients, planning management, market presence, and experience with federal loans.

Mr. Hodge said that any type of municipal finances we need, they can assist with such as federal and state loan programs, financial planning, and advising on debt issuance. They can also assist with managing debt, compliance, and rating and development strategies. As regulations change, they can provide client education to make sure you are comfortable with the process. He said their goal is to avoid borrowing because of interest, but sometimes it is beneficial to borrow for large projects. Either way, they will compare which is better on a net-to-net basis and coordinate all aspects of financing. Mr. Hodge said that USDA loans are less flexible, but they can work with the bond council to make sure the terms are in our favor. Finally, they will work with us to develop a rating strategy.

Dr. Dillenberg asked where his office was based.

Mr. Hodge answered that he works out of Chandler and his colleague, Matt Stofel, is in Iowa. He said that Mr. Stofel has worked with Brett Klein in the past, and does USDA loans. Mr. Hodge briefly explained USDA loans and other types of funding. Mr. Klein asked if Mr. Hodge could highlight the differences between a Financial Advisor and an Underwriter, and can an Underwriter provide financial advice.

Mr. Hodge said that an underwriter is there to do bonds, their business is to find investors for securities. Prior to Dodd-Frank, firms could serve on the same project as an Underwriter and an Advisor, but there is an inherent conflict of interest. There are markets where firms can provide both services, but not on the same project. However, they feel that being independent means they don't write municipal bonds. They have a dedicated team monitoring the market so that they can negotiate on behalf of their clients, but they will never be in a situation where they have a conflict.

The council thanked Mr. Hodge and Mr. Trejo for their presentation.

7:11 (11:08) B. Consideration and Possible Action of Board and Commission Appointments (Design Review; Board of Adjustment; Planning and Zoning Commission)

Council will consider and may make appointments effective retroactively to March 1, 2023

Ms. Barber introduced the item, and allowed Ms. Harvey to make some comments.

Ms. Harvey said she wished to make a strong statement against reseating Mr. Chuck Romberger on the Planning & Zoning Commission. She said there was an oath that was taken to sit on any of our boards and it is to follow our laws. Ms. Harvey explained there has been refusal to follow our STR law for a vacation rental, and her understanding was that it was adamant. She said she feels that it is a conflict to sit on a board that is supposed to help us make and enforce the laws for our town, and you will not follow them. She added that she believes Karima Botterweg would make a great addition to the Board of Adjustment.

Ms. Barber thanked Ms. Harvey for her comments and seconded the fact that when you sit on a board, you should stand up for the laws of our town, such as the new vacation rental license. She said that at this point, Jera Peterson, Tyler Christensen Carol Wittner, Brice Wood, and Margie Hardie would all like to be reappointed. She asked which board Ms. Botterweg was interested in. Ms. Botterweg answered, the Board of Adjustment.

Ms. Barber asked if anyone would like to ask Karima Botterweg a question.

Ms. Moore asked, is there an opening on Planning & Zoning as well; is someone resigning?

Ms. Barber said that Chris Babbage was resigning from the BOA (Board of Adjustment).

Zoning Administrator Will Blodgett explained that no one on Planning & Zoning had currently resigned.

Ms. Moore clarified that it was BOA that needed a member, then.

Ms. Barber said she would make a motion to reappoint all our members, and to seat Karima Botterweg as the new member of the Board of Adjustment. She then apologized for saying "all" because Mr. Romberger was not being reappointed.

Ms. Harvey said she would second that.

Dr. Dillenberg commented that he felt Mr. Romberger should be separated out of it because he felt there were issues there that he is not familiar with. He said Mr. Romberger has been a tremendous asset to the community and, while there may be issues, he believed they would be clarified over time. He said he would not vote to eliminate him at this time, but he will vote to support the others. He suggested delaying any action on Mr. Romberger until our next meeting to get some clarification.

Ms. Barber said we can table the reappointment of Mr. Romberger until next month, reappoint everyone else, and appoint Karima Botterweg to the Board of Adjustment. She said Mr. Romberger can speak at the meeting next month.

Dr. Dillenberg replied that he thought that was the right way to go.

Motion to approve the reappointments, with the exception of tabling the reappointment of Chuck Romberger to the next meeting; Appointed Karima Botterweg to the Board of Adjustment

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER	X		X			
DILLENBERG			X			
HARVEY		X	X			
MOORE			X			
SHEFFIELD			X			

8:32 (1:31:44) C. Consideration and Possible Action on a Wage Adjustment for the Deputy Clerk

Council will consider and may approve a wage adjustment for the Deputy Clerk retroactive to February 1st.

Ms. Harvey commented that she had known Ms. Muenz for several years and, when former Deputy Clerk Joni Savage left, she had suggested to former Town Manager Ms. Gallagher that she hire Ms. Muenz as the new Deputy Clerk. She said staff and council were thrilled with her work and she felt a raise was due.

Dr. Dillenberg mentioned that Ms. Muenz was no longer able to make cookies because she was so busy, and he missed them.

Ms. Harvey said she would like to speak to Ms. Muenz's work ethic, character, and abilities and she felt she was worth any raise.

There was a round of applause.

Motion to approve wage adjustment for Deputy Clerk, retroactive to February 1st

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER			X			
DILLENBERG	X		X			
HARVEY		X	X			
MOORE			X			
SHEFFIELD			X			

8:34 (1:33:50) D. Consideration of Proposed Fire Department Bylaw Changes

Council will consider and may approve the proposed bylaw changes.

Ms. Barber said she thought this needed to happen because of the small pool to pull from.

Ms. Harvey said that initially, when she said he wanted to open up to Cottonwood, Clarkdale, and other areas, she was against it, but after she read it, she was for it. She explained that before she ran for Council, she was on the Fire Department for a year and, in budget discussions during her first term, had discussed staffing differently with Chief Blair. She said at the time, there was not a kitchen, so we did not have the ability to have someone there 24 hours. She said she was glad to see he brought this up, and she felt the only way it would work is if it is done in shifts. If you are located in Clarkdale, Cottonwood, or anywhere else, you are not going to make it up here before an ambulance; so, it was not feasible to be coming up for calls. But now, with amenities such as beds, bathroom, and a kitchen, it would be a great idea to move in this direction. She said the percentage of calls is important because, in the past, 1 or 2 guys were getting paid to go to meetings and receive training, but they did not show up for calls. She said she thought that it needed to be mandatory, even though it is a volunteer position, because when we are spending money to train people, it is important that they are not just taking training and not helping. She said she has listened to active calls, and the last two calls to assist elderly residents did not have enough people respond, and only Police responded, so they had to wait for an ambulance. She said that people need to actively participate because we need them to respond to calls; it should be more like an internship.

Mr. Klein said that is part of what this is presenting: to move to shifts, but also, the three Firewise positions will help with response times. He said with as remote as we are, it is also a state and national problem. We are fortunate to have certain members that are close by, but we need more local help. Mr. Klein explained that this was Police Chief Muma’s initiative that Fire Chief Blair supports.

Ms. Barber made a motion to approve the process of making the bylaw changes.

Ms. Harvey asked if we will get to see the finished bylaws, and Mr. Klein confirmed that the Council would have an opportunity to see them once completed.

Motion to approve the proposed Fire Department Bylaw Changes

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER	X		X			
DILLENBERG			X			
HARVEY			X			
MOORE		X	X			
SHEFFIELD			X			

8:40 (1:39:48) E. Discussion and Possible Direction Regarding Staff Wage Adjustments and Health Insurance for FY 2024 Budget Formulation

This is a discussion only item with Council potentially providing staff direction.

Referring to the report in the agenda packet that included the Social Security COLA raise, the fiscal impact, and the recommendation, she asked if it was a discussion item only because we will start moving into budget discussions next month.

Mr. Klein confirmed that and explained that it was important for staff to receive direction now because the insurance provider required the information within two days.

Mr. Klein said the Town’s policy, is to provide employees with the SSA COLA, which is high this year because of inflation. He said we are looking for several important positions that we recruit for, and he explained that the former Finance Manager had considered not taking that position because of the level of funding for dependent care. Mr. Klein said he spoke with several other communities about what they provide for dependent care, and it was 70% to 90% compared to our 50%. He said we will eliminate one plan with Kairos to help keep rates low. The thought was to increase the amount the town pays for dependent care while slightly decreasing the amount of COLA. This will be a good incentive for hiring people with dependents while not adversely affecting employees that do not have dependents.

Ms. Harvey said it seemed like a no-brainer to go forward.

Ms. Barber directed Mr. Klein to go forward with the proposal to offer the 5% pay increase in lieu of the 8% while also increasing the amount of dependent coverage to 65%.

8:45 (1:44:37) 11. TO AND FROM THE COUNCIL

Council may direct staff regarding items to be placed on a future agenda.

Dr. Dillenberg said he would like to discuss the Artist's Co-op during the next meeting.

Ms. Harvey brought up the reduced utility rate for allowing public restrooms in the Artist's Co-op and said that Scott Hudson had asked about the bathrooms in the New State building.

Ms. Barber explained that the town paid for all the supplies for the Co-op restrooms as well as give them a discount as part of the agreement to allow public access.

Dr. Dillenberg said the Co-op is losing members and he would like to have a meeting with their leadership.

Ms. Harvey commented that her husband looked into what was involved with membership, and after reading it, they were not interested.

Dr. Dillenberg said he thought we should look into it because the Co-op is an opportunity for the town to get back to art, food, and music, and not ghosts. He would like us to improve communication with the Co-op so that we can do what is right for them, for us, and for the citizens. He said what the Chamber of Commerce is doing with increased participation is impressive, and people want to innovate. He mentioned several new events the Chamber was holding. He said he would love to set up a meeting with the manager of the Co-op.

Ms. Barber said she was going to ask if he would like to sit down with them.

Dr. Dillenberg said he would be happy to, and he did not want to exclude anyone present because you all have creative ideas about art and the community. He said, we own the building, and we should take advantage of that to help the Co-op and the artists succeed and, at the same time, move forward with the development of Hotel Jerome.

Ms. Moore said she has been an advocate of the Co-op since its inception, and she would not mind sitting in on that. She asked, when are we going to discuss or decide on a Financial Advisor?

Mr. Klein said we could have dialogue and staff recommendations at the next meeting. He explained that it will be an agenda item for action.

Ms. Moore said she would like to continue to get general updates on the Sewer Treatment Plant. She asked if there has been surveying going on down there.

Mr. Blodgett confirmed that we had 2 archaeologists, and he joined them for a few hours while they did their cultural survey. He said that as far as he knew, it was a negative survey, and he saw nothing expressed on the surface.

Mr. Klein explained that it would be wrapping up and he would be providing updates.

Ms. Harvey said she had nothing further to add.

Ms. Barber said that at the last meeting, we talked about how we had to get a new water rate update and wastewater study and we all mentioned that we had already done that. She asked, for the Wastewater Treatment Plant, do we have to do it again?

Mr. Klein confirmed that we did.

Ms. Barber asked Ms. Sheffield if she had anything to add, and she did not.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:52 P.M.

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER	X		X			
DILLENBERG			X			
HARVEY		X	X			
MOORE			X			
SHEFFIELD			X			

APPROVE:

ATTEST:

Alex Barber, Mayor

Brett Klein, Town Manager/Clerk

Date: _____