

## **Finance Committee Meeting March 20, 2014**

The **Finance Committee** met Thursday, March 20, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall Conference Room. Present were Committee members Sue Galbraith, Dwayne Andrews, and Sheena Martin. John Hollowell was absent.

Also present were Councilperson Ken Gardner, Utility Billing Clerk Patti Bishop, Fire Chief Dale Berg, Fire Captain Branden Stevens, Human Resource/Payroll Officer Billie Burkhalter, Public Utilities Director Al Kelm, and Recorder/City Clerk Lorrie Pearce.

### **Request of Citizens**

None

### **Ordinance No. 1262: An Ordinance amending Ordinance 1073 And Revising “Administrative Rules And Regulations Of The Public Utility Department Of The City Of Miles City”**

Chairperson Galbraith explained the Ordinance is to amend Ordinance 1073 on revising how the City collects money on past dues and authorizing new charges for re connect and late payment fees. It would also change how the landlord and tenant pay their utility bills; ultimately the landlord will be responsible for it. She said that the majority of the delinquent payments are mostly tenants, and that's why the City is making the changes.

Landlord John Goff was concerned the City is making the landlord responsible to collect the City's bills. He felt that if the City takes the bill out of the tenant's name, the tenant will use more water, since they will not be responsible for it. He requested a form for the landowner to authorized water to be shut off on the 60<sup>th</sup> day of delinquency. He added that there is no security for the Landlord because once they receive a notice the bill is already two months behind. He was also concerned that landlords could use this ordinance against the tenant. Goff asked if the City would consider pro rating the final bill. Utility Clerk Bishop said that if we prorated for tenants, then we would have to prorate for all utility users. Human Resource/Payroll Officer Billie Burkhalter explained the City doesn't prorate because it doesn't charge for turn on or turn offs.

Landlord LeRoy Meidinger asked for clarification on MCA 7-13-4303-4313. It was explained to him that the City can shut the water off at any time due to nonpayment. The tenant will need to sign the form approving this before they can receive water. Meidinger asked if the City could tell the landlord if the new tenant has been delinquent before. Chairperson Galbraith told him yes, once the tenant has

signed up for service. He also asked if the landlord will be responsible to pay for the re connect fee and penalty fee charges. Utility Clerk Bishop told him no.

Both Goff and Meidinger were very concerned if the City doesn't send the last bill to the tenant, that the landlord will always be responsible for it. If the tenant doesn't receive the bill, they will not pay it.

Committee Member Andrews recommended to amend the ordinance in Section 4.0 Landlord/Tenant, paragraph two, by adding to the end of the first sentence "with a courtesy copy to the tenant".

- \* \* *Committee Member Andrews moved to amend Ordinance No. 1262 by adding, "with a courtesy copy to the tenant". The motion was seconded by Chairperson Galbraith; the motion carried unanimously, 3-0.*
- \* \* *Committee Member Andrews moved to recommend that the City Council approve Ordinance No. 1262, with correction. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Martin; the motion carried unanimously, 3-0.*

**Ordinance No. 1263: An Ordinance Revising Section 23-36 Of The Code Of Ordinances Of The City Of Miles City, Montana, So As To Revise The Fee Charged For Water Reconnect Services.**

- \* \* *Committee Member Martin moved to recommend that the City Council approve Ordinance No. 1263. The motion was seconded by Committee Member Andrew; the motion carried unanimously, 3-0.*

**Resolution No. 3671: A Resolution Pursuant To Section 7-6-4006 Of The Montana Code Annotated Authorizing Amendment Of Final Budget For FY 2013-2014 To Appropriate Unanticipated Revenues To Historic Preservation Fund 2935.**

- \* \* *Committee Member Martin moved to recommend that the City Council approve Resolution No.3671. The motion was seconded by Chairperson Galbraith; the motion carried unanimously, 3-0.*

**Review bids on Workman's Compensation Rates**

- \* \* *Committee Member Andrews moved to table reviewing bids on Workman's Compensation rates. The motion was seconded by Councilperson Martin; the motion carried unanimously, 3-0.*

## Discussion on Mitigating Overtime for Fire and Ambulance

Fire Chief Berg explained the handout of cost cutting measures for Miles City's Fire and Ambulance.

- Fire alarm calls will be restructured as to how they are responded to. Only an engine and an ambulance will be sent. This will save the City approximately \$12,600 a year. Councilperson Andrew thought that General should be added to describe what type of fire alarm it is. Fire Chief Berg said that Dispatch is being trained to receive as much information as possible before they disconnect from the call. This will help in deciding what vehicle and how many Firefighters/EMT's will respond to the call.
- Hiring a maximum of 20 part paid firefighter to supplement the department, will help with the overtime. Having more part paid firefighter on standby will save the City approximately \$6,200 a year. He felt this will take about 3 years to implement. At the present part paid firefighters with all of their EMT and firefighting training is being paid \$9.50 an hour. The new salary proposal would start the part paid wage at \$9.50 an hour and work up to \$14.00 an hour. This will be presented at a future finance meeting.
- Employees are being called in once or twice a day on their days off. Right now, when the ambulance goes on a call a minimum of two people are called in, that is being changed to one. The exception is when the Ambulance goes out to the country, and then two people will be called in.

Councilperson Andrew thanked Berg for looking into cutting cost for the City. He said it's important, because money is going to be limited this year, and it's going to be tough.

Fire Captain Stevens said the Firefighter and EMT's knows that the City is looking at cutting cuts. He said by taking these measures, it will reduce service, and he would like the Council's support when citizens are calling about the response time.

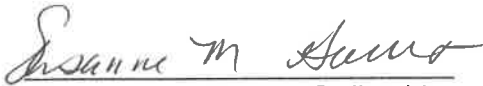
Fire Chief Berg explained the Insurance Service Organization rating could be affected. He thinks that making these cuts, the City would stay at a 5 rating. He said the City is real close to becoming a 4 rating, which would decrease the insurance rate from 5-7%. If the change would drop the service to a 6 rating, there would be an 8-9% increase rate. He also added, if the level of service is being

decreased, the EMT or firefighters need to be supported as to what vehicles are being taken for each situation.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, *Committee Member Martin moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Committee Member Andrews.* The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

  
Chairperson Susan Galbraith

  
City Clerk Lorrie Pearce