

## **Finance Committee Meeting May 22, 2020**

The Finance Committee met Friday, May 22, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. by remote means (Zoom). Present were Committee Members Austin Lott, Brant Kassner and Curtis Reese.

Also present were: Mayor John Hollowell, Ben Holmen, & Deputy City Clerk/Recorder Mary Rowe.

Chairperson Lott called the meeting to order.

**1. Request of Citizens and Public Comment:**

None

**2. Discuss and Recommendation regarding the Sale of Leased Land Near Airport to the Lessee**

Ben Holmen (Lessee) stated that he has been leasing land from the Airport for three years. It is approximately two acres that border the Airport. There is a straight road in with no public access. A road is currently developed on half of the property; on the other half, one quarter of it is a ravine, and the other quarter of it is adjacent to his property. The Airport had told him to develop the land and construct as needed while leasing the land. Ben added a road to the property, scraped a pad making it useable land, built a culvert, and maintained the sagebrush. He provided the Committee with maps of the property and had gotten a real estate valuation on the land. He said that he is fine with whatever the Committee/Council decides on the value and if it goes to bid, he is also okay with that.

Mayor Hollowell explained that this discussion is to define whether the improvements that Ben Holmen has put into the property are substantial improvements (over fifty percent of the land value). If they are found to be substantial improvements, per the agreement, the land can be sold directly to him instead of going out for bid. This provision is to protect the lessee's improvements from another person coming in and under-cutting the lessee.

Chairperson Lott expressed concern with setting a bad precedent by not putting it up for auction. He inquired as to whether or not it could cause other land sale issues in the future if the land is sold directly to the lessee this time. He also stated that he is in support of a direct sale if that is what is decided.

Committee Member Reese does not want to see Ben Holmen charged for anything he has already put into it. He says that he believes it to be a sizeable improvement to the property. In the future if anyone else does the same with leased property, then he believes the Council will treat them in the same manner.

Committee Member Kassner agrees that it is a substantial improvement, as the improvements cost over fifty percent of the value of the property.

*\*\* Committee Chair Lott moved to recommend to Council to sell the leased land near the Airport to the Lessee, seconded by Committee Member Kassner. The motion passed unanimously.*

**3. Review and Recommendation on Sending \$28,343.93 from Ambulance fund to Collections**

*\*\* Committee Member Kassner moved to recommend to Council sending \$28,343.93 from the Ambulance fund to collections, seconded by Committee Member Lott. The motion passed unanimously.*

**4. Review and Recommendation Regarding Stipend pay for Part-Time Firefighters for Ambulance Trips**

Mayor Hollowell explained that the stipend is only for part-time Firefighters that take out of town ambulance trips. It is an incentive to go. Full-time union Firefighters already get a stipend for the trips. He also said that the ambulance fund is now at \$100,000 in the red compared to \$354,000 in the red a year or two ago, which is extreme.

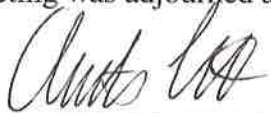
Chairperson Lott mentioned that every Billings trip makes money for the ambulance fund. Offering this incentive could increase staffing for the trips, which would eliminate missed revenue. He thinks that if we are already paying the full-time employees a stipend then we should also pay the part-time employees. The ultimate goal is to get the ambulance fund healthy and it will take some weight off the general fund.

*\*\* Committee Member Kassner moved to recommend to Council to approve stipend pay for part-time Firefighters for ambulance trips, seconded by Committee Member Reese. The motion passed unanimously.*

**5. Adjournment**

*\*\* Committee Member Kassner moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Committee Member Reese and passed unanimously.*

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.



Austin Lott, Committee Chairperson



Mary Rowe, Recorder