

RIDGWAY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING

JUNE 5, 2019

The Town Council convened for a special meeting at 6:25 p.m. in the Ridgway Community Center at 201 N. Railroad Street, Ridgway, Colorado. The Mayor Pro Tem called the meeting to order with Councilors Austin, Cheek, Hunter, Lakin, Meyer and Mayor Pro Tem Johnson in attendance. Mayor Clark was absent.

Town Clerk's Notice of Special Meeting dated May 29, 2019.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Adoption of an Emergency Ordinance Regarding Water Rates for Non-Residential Users

Town Clerk's Notice of Public Hearing dated May 29, 2019.

Staff Report dated June 5, 2019 from the Town Manager, Town Engineer and Public Works Coordinator addressing a water rate adjustment for non-residential users and presenting a draft ordinance.

The Mayor Pro Tem noted the Town water department is operated as an enterprise fund, and similar to any business there are necessary costs and expenses to operate the system, and provide services; and planning for future expansion and capital improvements and building fund reserves are an important part of the process.

The Town Manager presented a synopsis of the draft ordinance which amends the rates adopted in Ordinance 2018-06 and became effective October 1, 2018. She noted the draft ordinance proposes a temporary reduction from July 1st through September 30th. She explained in follow up to direction from the Council workshop of May 23rd staff prepared a report detailing impacts to the fiscal year budget if non-residential water rates are changed to a rate of \$10.50 per 1000 gallons for all usage over the base allotment of 4,000 gallons. She noted absent any unforeseen events or significant reductions in water use, there should not be negative impacts to the budgeted water fee revenues for usage over the base allotment from June through December 2019.

The Mayor Pro Tem opened the public hearing.

SPEAKING FROM THE AUDIENCE:

Jack Petrucelli speaking as the President of the River Park PUD Homeowners Association, explained the association "is responsible to pay" to irrigate the landscaping the Town "required upon approval" of the subdivision. He noted they are "concerned about the rate, losing landscaping and maintenance" and asked that the rate be considered commercial "since the space belongs to the Town".

Robert Collin explained a number of businesses have "formed a group" and he has been asked to represent "some of the members" and present their comments which included establishing the new rate "retroactive to the beginning of the year"; begin the new rates as of June 1st; extend the rate "past September 30th"; extend the rate "to the end of December"; consider inviting Tri-County Water District to speak before the Council regarding using their services; increasing the base rate to 25,000 gallons. He asked the Council to consider forming

a committee of residents, business owners, staff and members of the Council to “begin meeting immediately” to discuss the next steps in the process.

Tammy Tuttle supported statements made by Mr. Collin.

Ned Bosworth requested considering increasing the base rate gallons; “take time to do research” and “push” the new rate to be effective “later in the season”.

Barthold Lichtenbelt stated he agrees “there needs to be enough money to maintain the water supply” and asked the Council “to extend the time frame” to “allow time to come up” with a “solution”.

Kuno Vollenweider asked the Council to consider “if a business uses that much water” they “have to be making money”, and asked the Council to “not subsidize businesses”.

Kat Lichtenbelt asked the Council to look at the ways “this affects”, “tourism”.

Jack Petrucelli spoke as a commercial property owner noting that based on State Law commercial properties “pay more than two-thirds” of the property taxes, and stated the increase in the water rate “is an added burden to us”.

Tammy Tuttle asked for formation of a community committee noting she would like to “understand how you came up with the numbers” for the proposed rates. She asked the Council to “help us understand” the basis of the costs.

The Town Clerk read into the record an email dated June 4, 2019 from Jack Young supporting a reduction in commercial water rates for lodging facilities.

The Mayor Pro Tem closed the public hearing. There were comments from the Council, and discussion. It was agreed to apply the rate change from June 1st though October of this year.

The Mayor Pro Tem asked staff to prepare a report outlining all of the information used to gather calculations, costs and the needs assessment of water facilities for the next twenty years. The Town Manager noted all existing documents used in the preparation of the original recommendation are on the Town’s website.

ACTION:

Councilor Austin moved to adopt the Emergency Ordinance Amending the Ridgway Municipal Code Section 9-1-17 Temporarily Adjusting Non-Residential Water Service Rates for Usage Over the Base Water Allotment for a Defined Period of Time. The temporary water rate structure is effective for water usage during the months of June, July, August, September and October 2019. The rates as adopted in Ordinance 2018-06 shall be effective for all subsequent water usage after the month of October 2019, unless such rates are superseded by the adoption of an ordinance by the Town Council providing a revised rate structure. Councilor Lakin seconded the motion and it carried unanimously with all members voting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Pam Kraft, MMC
Town Clerk