

**Stevensville Town Council Meeting Minutes**  
**for THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2024, 6:30 PM**  
**206 Buck Street, Town Hall**

CONDENSED MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Michalson called the meeting to order. Councilmembers Barker, Brown, Nelson and Smith were all present.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Comments (Public comment from citizens on items that are not on the agenda)

Larry Schoff, 1417 Creekside Drive: 3 items, point of contact for 2021 HDR water preliminary report. Where is the "Y" and what are the water rights about. How does the board feel about the Bell Crossing round about?

Mayor Michalson: this is public comment you will have to email the council to ask them that.

Scott Butler, 210 Church Street: last year when I ran for mayor I talked about my town. I am here to talk about the water increase. I also think that the town and this council do not know how to put together a budget. I think the citizens need to know what your level of expertise is in budgeting. Just as Councilmember Smith stated this will be one of the highest water rates in the state of Montana. I think that if you look further that our water rates will be higher than most in the united states. I think that this needs to be tabled and brought back, I speak for many citizens of this town and we need to think about recall petitions based on two things indifference and malefices in office.

4. Approval of Minutes

a. Town Council Meeting Minutes 07/25/2024

Mayor Michalson: introduced town council meeting minutes 07/25/2024.

Councilmember Barker: make a motion to approve town council meeting minutes for 07/25/2024.

Councilmember Nelson: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. Discussion from the council? Public comment? Seeing none, Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Nelson: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 4-0

b. Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes 08/07/2024

Mayor Michalson: introduced budget workshop meeting minutes 08/07/2024.

Councilmember Nelson: I make a motion that we approve the budget workshop meeting minutes 08/07/2024.

Councilmember Smith: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Michalson: Motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. Discussion from the council? Public comment? Seeing none, Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Nelson: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 4-0

c. Budget Workshop Meeting Minutes 08/13/2024

Mayor Michalson: introduced budget workshop meeting minutes 08/13/2024.

Councilmember Barker: make a motion to approve budget workshop meeting minutes 08/13/2024.

Councilmember Smith: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. Discussion from the council? Public comment? Seeing none, Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Nelson: abstained

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 3-1

5. Approval of Bi-Weekly Claims

a. Claims #19125, #19143-#19178

Mayor Michalson: introduced bi-weekly claims, #19125, #19143-#19178.

Councilmember Smith: I move that we adopt claims #19125, #19143-#19178.

Councilmember Barker: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. Discussion from the council.

Councilmember Brown: #19147 lifeguard certification. Is that for a year or just a few months?

Gina Crowe: I believe that it is two years.

Councilmember Brown: #19154 HDR engineering, \$9645.00, what is that for.

Gina Crowe: that is the water project. ARPA water project.

Councilmember Nelson: #19143, sewer treatment plant?

Gina Crowe: that is for the Northwest Energy bill, all of the claims for power.

Councilmember Brown: #19156 AWOS system, and is that up and running and at one time part of that bill was going to be written off?

Gina Crowe: no credits given. And to my understanding it is up and running.

Councilmember Brown: #19172 fall courses, court, are they carpooling?

Gina Crowe: I believe not because they are different days.

Mayor Michalson: any further comments from the council. Public comment? Seeing none, Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Nelson: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 4-0

## 6. New Business

### a. Discussion/Decision: Form a Committee Regarding Berta Farms

Mayor Michalson: introduced new business item a. Form a Committee Regarding Berta Farms. We just do not have the money in our budget to just get in there and get it done, I have been talking with Steve about setting aside one day a week to start some clean up. The committee, I would be on it and a councilmember.

Councilmember Brown: I would volunteer.

Mayor Michalson: I know that Pat would like to be on the committee, set a time to get the first meeting.

Councilmember Barker: I will make a motion to approve to form a committee regarding Berta Farms.

Councilmember Nelson: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. Council discussion?

Councilmember Barker: I just think that we are getting ourselves a little bit over our head into it I know that there is an understanding that we need to get it cleaned up. I have driven by there a

little bit, and they are starting to clean it up I commend them for starting to do some things I am sorry that it is not enough, and the resources are just not enough.

Mayor Michalson: any of other comments? Public comment?

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Citizen: what is Berta Farms?

Pat Groninger: gave a background on Berta Farms to the public. This has been going on for over 30 years. It is out of control; he just moves one pile to another location. It is time to get it cleaned up.

Loi Knap: there needs to be a member on the committee from the council.

Mayor Michalson: Cindy said that she would do that.

Pat Groninger: I need to set aside some time to meet with you Mayor and discuss my ideas.

Mayor Michalson: any further discussion from the council? Public comment? Seeing none, Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Nelson: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 4-0

#### b. Discussion/Decision: Renfro Properties to Continue Paying for 2 Water Meters

Mayor Michalson: introduced new business item b. Renfro Properties to Continue Paying for 2 Water Meters. Ms. Renfro reached out to me, and I explained that I did not have the authority to grant this and that I need to have it come in front of the council.

Councilmember Barker: I make a motion to approve Renfro Properties to Continue Paying for 2 Water Meters.

Councilmember Smith: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. Council discussion?

Councilmember Barker: my question after reading the information that she has provided, why is she the only one that was told to put two meters instead of the one?

Mayor Michalson: Bruce Parks.

Councilmember Barker: what was the reason behind that?

Sharon Renfro: he said that we had to put one meter per dwelling unit because the town wanted each tenant to pay their water bill separately. We could not get a building permit. We met at the lots and said that we had to do it that way. So, when I came into to get my certificates of occupancy, they said that I had to set up the accounts in my name. You have to pay on all four

meters, then I just had to start paying base rates on all four when the other town homes pay on one meter. It was the building inspector and Bruce Parks that told us that we had to have one meter per family. They said that every other building going up was being set up the same and that was not true.

Mayor Michalson: I don't think that the others are relevant.

Sharon Renfro: I think that was the fairest thing at the time that the town could do. (Sharon Renfro gave her presentation, this has been included with these meeting minutes.)

Mayor Michalson: after 23 years of research, we finally found this. Our deputy clerk is wonderful, and she found this. I did not have the authority, and the proper way is to bring this to a council. No Nancy, or Andrena or Jenelle.

Councilmember Smith: are your units fulling occupied?

Sharon Renfro: yes.

Councilmember Smith: are they occupied by family members?

Sharon Renfro: no. they never have been.

Councilmember Brwon: so, they are paying for the correct amount of usage?

Mayor Michalson: yes.

Councilmember Brown: is it only calculating on the usage of all four units or the two units?

Jenelle Berthoud: on one of her homes there are two meters one of the meters is calculating at the base rate of \$83.04 and anything over the base rate was being calculated and being charged to the second meter. Instead of two base rates only one base rate, the second meter being charged the overage of 3,000 gallons. Same for the other units.

Councilmember Brown: I thought that we had an ordinance in place that said that any home that goes through a sale has to have a meter on them.

Sharon Renfro: these have not sold.

Jenelle Berthoud: these do have meters on them.

Councilmember Brown: there was an ordinance several years ago when they upgraded the water and sewer plant that any homes in the town that were still running with out a water meter, that when they sold, they had to have a water meter installed and then charged.

Councilmember Barker: so, you are saying that they should just pay for one.

Councilmember Brown: I am just saying that we have that ordinance in place. Even if it is a single family.

Sharon Renfro: but we do have meters on them since the day that they were built.

Councilmember Brown: but they are not being read.

Jenelle Berthoud: they are reading just fine.

Mayor Michalson: they are just being charged one meter the base rate and the other meter is the overage.

Jenelle Berthoud: instead of each meter having a 3,000 gallons usage, the two units share the 3,000 gallons, the second meter is being charged for the overages over 3,000 gallons with one base rate.

Sharon Renfro: if we would have been told when we built them, we would have only had one meter on each unit and we would only be paying one base rate.

Councilmember Barker: so this family does not use the base and this unit is being charged for the excess.

Sharon Renfro: no, I am paying for everything. The town does not charge them separately I pay the bills.

Jenelle Berthoud: it is four tenants being divided into four bills and she is the only person that pays the bills.

Mayor Michalson: she is paying the base rate for two meters that is the bottom line.

Jenelle Berthoud: they register fine, they are paid.

Mayor Michalson: this is a mess, and you can see that through the minutes of past meetings.

Jenelle Berthoud: Andrena is doing extensive auditing of the meters as we have been fixing them and these four meters came up and we said why is one paying \$9.00 and one paying the \$83.04.

Councilmember Barker: they should all be the same.

Mayor Michalson: four base rates.

Sharon Renfro: and now I have the new bills and they area almost double. When a fourplex across the street has one meter and one base rate on a 1" line. Compared to four meters on a ¾" line. If we could go back to putting in two meters we would, but it is to much of a financial thing now.

Councilmember Barker: how do you sift through this?

Jenelle Berthoud: it bills correctly but our system sees it as four ¾" lines and all of the papers and meters that we found never showed this coming back to be voted on. We never found any notes.

Sharon Renfro: I have notes that show that they were talking about it. and it says "we" are fixing it.

Mayor Michalson: the only "we" that counts is the council. It never came back for a vote in any agenda. and through audits it probably just got swept under the table.

Councilmember Barker: so, we are asking for one unit per meter?

Sharon Renfro: one meter per duplex. And add the usage off of the other meter back in.

Councilmember Barker: I am lost, it is confusing to sift through it in my mind.

Mayor Michalson: the simplest is to say two base rates of four. If she has to pay four meters that is a lot more.

Sharon Renfro: if we could have done one meter it would have been cheaper, but they insisted that it had to be two.

Councilmember Barker: is this the only one that we having issues with?

Jenelle Berthoud: this is the only one from 2003. One side of the street they said four meters and the other side one meter as a 1”.

Councilmember Nelson: it is because they went from the tenants paying to the owner paying the bill.

Sharon Renfro: when we were planning, we wanted to just have one meter.

Councilmember Nelson: I think that I have it wrapped around my head.

Mayor Michalson: you are in one of these?

Councilmember Nelson: yes, I am.

Mayor Michalson: how would you like to proceed. Like to vote on it? Public comment?

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Pat Gronniger: what about the other ones.

Sharon Renfro: they are on one meter, 1” line. And now the new clerk is wanting me to pay four base rates.

Pat Gronniger: is there anyone else in this situation?

Mayor Michalson: everyone else is on a 1” line. It looks like it started with Bruce Parks.

Sharon Renfro: when I came down to set up my tenants, I was told I could not.

Vickey Motley: can the council cut those meters back to one meter per household for her and let the meters charge for one.

Jenelle Berthoud: that is what they are doing for eleven years.

Sharon Renfro: I am not debating what I have now I am debating being charged for four base rates and what the new water clerk is charging me.

Mayor Michalson: she is just doing her job.

Pat Gronniger: this is what I am concerned about, if there are four individuals that are fighting to pay their bills, and you have one that is. Will this affect others?

Sharon Renfro: I am the only one that this is effecting.

Jim Tadwick: I think that she should be treated as the other units.

Councilmember Barker: what would be the process to take those meters and just be on the one.

Jenelle Berthoud: it is the changing of the pipe size and the meter.

Councilmember Barker: but she is paying a lot right now.

Sharon Renfro: if we went back to the last eleven years, I am happy with that.

Councilmember Smith: take out two base rates.

Mayor Michalson: that is what they are doing.

Councilmember Barker: she is just doing her job. I understand that I was being charged one rate and then two rates.

Councilmember Brown: if she goes to the four meters does each duplex get its 3,000 gallons. And right now, the gallons between the two units.

Craig Thomas: I think that they should continue to pay for just the two meters.

Mayor Michalson: that is correct and is in the motion.

Trevor Motley: they are still going to pay for water usage?

Mayor Michalson: yes. Jenelle take the vote.

Councilmember Brown: no.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Councilmember Nelson: abstain.

Councilmember Barker: just one question, she is paying four units and two water meters.

Sharon Renfro: have four water meters. Paying two base rates and the overage on the other two meters.

Jenelle Berthoud: her meters do work and calculate every month correctly.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Mayor Michalson: motion passes with one abstain.

c. Discussion/Decision: Parking Zone on Park Avenue and Correct Signage

Mayor Michalson: introduced new business item c. Parking Zone on Park Avenue and Correct Signage. Officer Marble and another officer came in and told Jenelle that up by the school the homeowners are saying that people are blocking his driveway. They asked who put up the signs and word around the school is some janitors a long time ago put the signs up on utility poles and that is against the law which is a red flag that it did not come in front of the council. He could site for it and once it came down here it would not be able to be enforced because they were put on utility poles and were not brought in front of the council for approval, so this is in front of you.

Councilmember Smtih: so, we are talking across the street from the school, I went there today.

Jenelle Berthoud: I need a motion.

Mayor Michalson: we can do that in a minute.

Councilmember Barker: we need a motion, Bob.



Mayor Michalson: can I have motion please.

Councilmember Nelson: make a motion to approve parking signage.

Councilmember Baker: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. Council discussion?

Councilmember Smith: I went there today and the only signs that I saw said no parking from 8-4. These were not on utility poles they were on green poles.

Mayor Michalson: no, I have a picture, and I can bring those up for you.

Councilmember Brown: to make this clearer for Councilmember Smith, there are more than just these signs.

Mayor Michalson: there are, and there is also a loading zone only sign.

Councilmember Barker: it is going into a right of way.

Mayor Michalson: they get into a hurry and then they park in front of the driveway. Comments from the public.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Lance Wiley: I am the homeowner. The people do and they are aware of the signs, when I let them know that there is a sign there and they get upset with me. This is a safety issue, there is a nice drop off area to do this. They leave there car, go into the school and talk for 15 minutes.

Pat Groninger: along with signage is speed limits, that road is a racetrack. Make the school paint it a tow away zone.

Mayor Michalson: any other comments? Comments from the council?

Councilmember Barker: is this something, correct the problem first and see if it continues.

Lance Wiley: that is reasonable I came to the police chief last year and I waited a couple of weeks to see how it would be handled.

Councilmember Barker: I think that the police presence being there remind them and then sight them. Make sure that it is properly signed. And then come back and do a no parking tow away zone.

Councilmember Nelson: don't we have a liaison officer at the school.

Councilmember Barker: an SRO officer.

Mayor Michalson: no further comments? Jenelle, please take the vote.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Nelson: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 4-0.

d. Discussion/Decision: Resolution No. 553 a Resolution Establishing Mill Levies for the Town of Stevensville, Montana Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Mayor Michalson: introduced new business item d. Resolution No. 553 a Resolution Establishing Mill Levies for the Town of Stevensville, Montana Fiscal Year 2024-2025. This is what we got from the county; on your desk I gave you a copy of what was passed last year. Not much of an increase this year for the budget. Robert did some asking around and there are other towns that did not get what they were expecting as well. We are coming off of COVID. And now we have to live in reality and Stevensville is there now, and the budget is tight, and we still have some cuts to make.

Councilmember Barker: I make a motion to approve Resolution No. 553 a Resolution Establishing Mill Levies for the Town of Stevensville, Montana Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

Councilmember Brown: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Mayor Michalson: motion and a 2<sup>nd</sup>. Council discussion? Public comment?

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Sharon Renfro: it seems to me over the years houses for single families were affordable and in the last two years these prices have gone crazy. I do not know how the working man can make it. to the town of Stevensville does not get anything off of these increases.

Mayor Michalson: every time that we do our mills it is a slow steady climb, it does not jump up. The problem is that we have had inflation going up and we are down here, we have to be created.

Sharon Renfro: where do the extra taxes from that go?

Mayor Michalson: majority of the taxes go to the schools.

Councilmember Barker: we are looking a slow decline in those schools also.

Mayor Michalson: we are slowly declining. Jenelle and I will be putting together a safety levy for next year. We need to get a small safety levy for our police department and fire department. So that we have more money for our parks and pool.

Councilmember Barker: we here, where is our money going? We see it, it is just paying on everything.

Mayor Michalson: all the public can tell us is no. Jenelle and I are looking at what it will cost per household. The way that we are going we are just treading water, it is at no fault of other past administrations, it just is what it is. We have to face this head on, just like the water rates. That is the plan going forward. I do not believe that it has been done before. As everything keeps going up.

Sharon Renfro: I did not know that the pool needed help. Is there a way to put out to the public that we need the help for the pool. I did not know that it was struggling.

Leslie Tadwick: we raised most of that money last year at Creamery Picnic. We still have about \$1,000 left. If you want to contribute to it we will take your money.

Councilmember Barker: it comes up every year at budget time and what we need to do with the pool and our parks. It is out there.

Jim Tadvick: we tired to get that out by Facebook, but the donations are not tax deductible so we will look at someone taking that on.

Lesley Tadvick: I learned to swim there and my kids. We jut started to ask for money.

Pat Gronniger: prime example is the behind the scene. The two papers that are here, this is what you print up this is what you brag about. Not the crap that is out there now. Everyone puts up with the crap and these two ladies in the office. This is what needs to be printed in the newspaper.

Mayor Michalson: I wanted to answer this question earlier. I get an audit every year. The council has the audit I am not sure why Scotty can't go to a councilmember and ask for that audit. We just keep going around that the town is screwing the public, I just do not understand that. I don't get it. It grabbles me when people get up there and do not do their homework and I do not know if somebody sent him, or he is here. But to get up there and say those things to the public in hopes that it will get to the paper that is what it is all about now, it is bullshit. And I am tired of it. can I take the vote please.

(name not clear for public comment) there are many of us from the church that would like to volunteer our time.

Mayor Michalson: come and see me after the meeting.

Public comment: where can I find out how to volunteer?

Mayor Michalson: right here. Come to town hall and visit with the mayor.

Mayor Michalson: any other questions on the mills?

(name not given for public comment) is there a community board that we can look at and see what is going on or needed.

Mayor Michalson: come in and see Jenelle, this is great we have been missing participation. Thank you for raising your hands. Anything else, Jenelle, would you take the vote.

Councilmember Brown: aye.

Councilmember Barker: aye.

Councilmember Nelson: aye.

Councilmember Smith: aye.

Mayor Michalson: passes 4-0

## 7. Board Reports

None.

Councilmember Smith: I really do not have a report.

## 8. Town Council Comments

Councilmember Brown: I was on the phone with the mayor, and I asked him why we could not start an adopt a park. Like the highway department does. Is there groups out there that want to donate their time to walk the parks and pick up trash. I walk the parks, and I pick up garbage. Maybe we can look at adopting a park. Corporations, men's and women's groups.

Councilmember Barker: I want to thank Colette for taking care of the pathway she was out there in the heat of the day, and it looks amazing. I want to let people know that we have people that get out there and don't just sit here at town hall. We do have some amazing employees and thank you to Colette.

Councilmember Smith: I have a prepared statement, matter of correction. The matter of the Special town council meeting held on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Was lawfully structured and the town clerk did indeed comply with the necessary steps to inform the public of the meeting. The legality of the public hearing or the meeting itself is never in question I will admit in my advancing years I did indeed misspeak that the meeting was illegal, and I did correct that. And I stated that 48 hours was needed before the vote could be taken. This was ignored by the mayor who's duty it is to preside over the meeting. The abstract regarding discussion/decision resolutions 549 and 550. The town council vote taken that evening was out of order. In violation of Montana constitution, state law, the attorney general's opinion and our own town council rules. (Councilmember Smith gave definitions of two words; agency and revise/revised). Legislation and town council rules are established for the constitutional right for the public to participate and for the public to know. (councilmember Smith read Montana Constitution sec 8, right of participation, sec. 9 right to know, MCA 2-3-103 public participation sec.a procedures. MCA 2-3-111 public hearings. ). I submit to this body and public record that the vote taken at the August 6<sup>th</sup> on resolutions 549 and 550 were indeed in violation of declaration of rights due to the fact that the public was not given the right to submit data. (Councilmember Smith read attorney general's opinion, from the website of the attorney general opinion 4713, and 5217.) this now brings us to the Stevensville Town Council rules, part 4, sec. 1 final bullet point states the following: (Councilmember Smith read the bullet point). The agenda was revised before the meeting and the public was given no warning on the proposed water and sewer rates. I call on the mayor and this council to declare the vote of August 6<sup>th</sup> null and void and for the mayor to place resolution no. 549 and 550 back on the agenda for a subsequent meeting as per attorney general's opinion. In the seven days prior to that meeting the rate increases were changes three times. I also stipulate the accounting figures from Robert Underwood and Bobbi Shurude be presented to this council for examination plus an income report for the past five years for water and sewer. The town council can be expected to address an issue of public interest that affects the daily lives of its citizens without information in hand. I conclude with this final statement. The Stevensville town council are public servants we are servants of the people not steam rollers this unfortunately was the perception of the overwhelming majority of the 50 plus citizens in attendance on that evening. We can certainly do better in our representation.

## 9. Executive Report

Mayor Michalson: (Mayor Michalson read part 4 sec 1 of the town council rules) Keep in mind that this is a regular meeting not a special town council meeting. I am not sure where you go this.

Councilmember Smith: it certainly is.

Mayor Michalson: you can read it word for word.

Councilmember Smtih: I did it is on the website.

Mayor Michalson: I am looking at the website. Enough of that. The swimming pool will close this week along with the splash pad. Chief Boe will be in training in Helena. I attended the MMIA meeting. when I go to West Yellowstone in October I will be voting on some changes. We use MMIA a lot for our polices and procedures. They thanked us for using them. I also found out that all of the tree damage this year we can put in a claim for our damaged trees. I went around on Tuesday and looked at all of the trees. There is a \$1,000 deductible with MMIA. I would like to have another budget workshop next Thursday. Can we do it Tuesday if Robert can. Tuesday at 5:30, August 27<sup>th</sup>. (Mayor Michalson read the resignation letter from Airport Manager Will Rowe.) I would like to add, I started on the town council in 2016 I was a rookie, and all rookies went to the airport board. by the middle of 2017 there were issues with the board then, the problem that I have is that the airport board has gone through six or seven airport managers in 9 years. (public comment, actually 11) Eleven airport managers in 9 years, when is the airport board going to look and see that it is maybe your fault as well. We have to fix this. We had a great airport manager. I hear it all and I do not have an answer anymore, we will advertise for a new airport manager. I hope that you can put your heads together and see what needs to be done.

10. Adjournment

Councilmember Brown: adjourn.

Councilmember Nelson: 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**APPROVE:**

**ATTEST:**

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**Bob Michalson, Mayor**

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**Jenelle S. Berthoud, Town Clerk**

Dear Stevensville Town Council:

8/22/2024

I was last here in October 27, 2003 to discuss the number of meters that we were required to put on our duplexes at 211/215 and 219/221 Turner street when we built them in 2000. We met at the lots with two town officials, the building inspector and the utility person who both told us to put 4 meters, one per family, so the Town could shut off any renter who did not pay their utility bill, without inconveniencing the other tenants.

So we built these duplexes with 4 meters like we were told, but when I went to the town to set up the accounts for our tenants to be, the town told me that "No, we want the owner to pay the utilities and the town will bill me directly. Thus negating the need for those extra meters."

The duplex across the street had only one meter on one 1" line and so did several other duplexes on our street. So they had one base rate on a 1" line, where we had 4 base rates on 3/4" lines, which added up to much more for our 4 family units than it did for their 4 family units.

So I was told to come to the Town Council meeting on October 27, 2003 to put this to a vote.

I thought that this issue was solved in that I soon started getting charged for two of the meters' base rates with the water from the other two being added back in to reflect usage.

Being charged for 2 - 3/4 " lines as base rates instead of 1 - 1" line base rate was still higher for us, but we felt that this was as fair a solution as the town could do, and we agreed.

I have attached the minutes of that October 27, 2003 meeting where it states that "this issue would be taken under advisement until the council could further research it."

So I thought there was nothing further for me to do. I started getting correspondence from the town proving that "they" had been working on the issue.

On 2/2/2004 I got 2 notes from the Town of Stevensville, signed by "Donna" stating that "We deactivated 2 of your 4 accounts and they would combine water from meters at both sides of each duplex to get the water charges."

On 2/13/2004 I received a call from "Nancy" from the Town of Stevensville saying that

"They were charging only these two meters at the 3/4 " line base rates

since that's what they were. I agreed.

Then on 10/27/05 I got another note from the Town of Stevensville, signed by "Sandy", saying "**They** went through the system again and believe **we** have it all correct again and that after this , you should receive 2 bills with a combined water" for each .

This is how it has stayed since 2005. So I thought everything was fine. If these 3 different clerks were using "we" in their correspondences to me, they must have been conferring with someone else in the Town Offices. This someone else also believed the issue was resolved, and that this was how they figured out how to do it. Again, I agreed.

Forward to mid July, 2024, I get a call from Town of Stevensville, Deputy Clerk, Andrea Case that since none of the aforementioned correspondences or activities over the past eleven years had ever been voted on by the town council, then she had to start charging me with 4 base rates along with water usage. So that nothing the Town of Stevensville or I had agreed to over these years was valid?

So on Monday July 29, 2024 I submitted all the paperwork I had to Mayor Michalson and he encouraged me to again bring this issue to you.

Please inform me on what else I have to do to bring this October 27, 2003 issue to a vote? And would you make this vote retroactive so that it encompasses the new bills I got that are due 8/25/2024?

Sincerely,



Sharon M. Renfro

406-550-3528

Stevensville Town Council Meeting  
Minutes  
For  
October 27, 2003

The Stevensville Town Council meeting was called to order by Mayor William H. Meisner at 7:30 P.M. in the town council chambers. Councilperson's attending the meeting were Paul Ludington, Julie Wallace, Jake Weitzel and Tom Brown. Also attending the meeting were Clerk Nancy Lowell, Building Official Bob McCormick, Police Chief Lewis Barnett, Town Attorney Robert Brown, Airport Manager Don Misevic, Street Supt. Ed Sutherlin and Water Supt. George Thomas.

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and a motion to accept them as written was made by Tom Brown and seconded by Julie Wallace. All voted aye and the motion passed.

Correspondence read included a letter from the City of Hamilton to Mr. Dave Galt, Director of the Montana Dept. of Transportation regarding another pedestrian traffic accident which resulted in a death on U.S. Highway 93, a highway the State of Montana is responsible for. They are requesting more traffic lights on the road. A copy of the letter is attached.

Clerk Lowell also informed the council that the M.M.I.A. annual report was issued to the town. A copy of the report is on file in the clerk's office.

*incl  
211+215*  
Under new business, Mrs. Sharon Renfro attended the meeting to address the council about a utility billing at their duplexes at 219 and 221 Turner Street. She stated that she feels that they are being unjustly charged too much on their water and sewer bills and the reason for this is because they followed the Town of Stevensville's official's instructions while building these units. She stated that they wanted to put 1 water line and 1 sewer line to these units, however, at the time of construction they were told that they had to put in separate sewer and water lines to each unit. Consequently they are paying approximately \$1032.24 more per year than their neighboring 4 plexes. Discussion continued and it was decided by the mayor that this issue would be taken under advisement until the council could further research it.

Mrs. Darlene Grove attended the meeting to present the Town with a publication about Taking Care of the Bitterroot Watershed which addresses the threats to the irreplaceable waters of the Bitterroot Valley. It has information about examples where watershed stewardship is making a difference and you will find out how you can help put water quality and conservation at the forefront of land-use decisions. Mayor thanked Mrs. Grove for the book and her efforts putting the book together.