

**New Castle Town Council Regular Virtual Meeting
Tuesday, February 16, 2021, 7:00 PM**

Due to concerns related to COVID-19, the meeting was be open to the public as a virtual meeting only.

**To join by computer, smart phone or tablet:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7096588400>**

**If you prefer to telephone in:
Please call: 1-346-248-7799
Meeting ID: 709 658 8400**

Call to Order

Mayor A Riddile called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Present	Councilor Mariscal Councilor Owens Councilor Hazelton Mayor A Riddile Councilor Copeland Councilor Leland Councilor G Riddile
Absent	None

Also present at the meeting were Town Administrator Dave Reynolds, Town Clerk Melody Harrison, Town Treasurer Loni Burk, Deputy Town Clerk Mindy Andis and Administrative Assistant Rochelle Firth.

Meeting Notice

Town Clerk Melody Harrison verified that her office gave notice of the meeting in accordance with Resolution TC 2021-1.

Conflicts of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest.

Agenda Changes

There were no agenda changes.

Citizen Comments on Items not on the Agenda

There were no citizen comments.

Consultant Reports

Consultant Attorney – not present.

Consultant Engineer – not present.

Items for Consideration

Moment of Silence for Our Lost Eagle County Officials: Seth Bossung, Andy Jessen and Adam Palmer

Congratulations: Deputy Town Clerk Mindy Andis Celebrating 20 Years with the Town

Mayor A Riddile read a brief article about Deputy Town Clerk Mindy Andis' tenure with the Town of New Castle, noting that she had been working for the town longer than any other employee.

Mayor A Riddile presented Deputy Clerk Andis with a crystal plaque memorializing her service and dedication to the Town of New Castle.

Welcome and Congratulations: Colorado River Fire Rescue Chief Leif Sackett

Chief Sackett was unable to attend the meeting therefore, the item was tabled.

Introduction and Grants Report: Administrative Assistant to the Town Administrator, Rochelle Firth

Town Administrator Dave Reynolds introduced his new Administrative Assistant Rochelle Firth. He said that Admin. Assistant Firth had done an excellent job of fitting in and taking on work and projects. Administrator Reynolds said that one of the duties she had taken on was outgoing grants, and there had been two different grant programs in 2020: Health & Welfare grants as well as the Business Assistance Grants using CARES Act funds. He said she would provide updates on both.

Administrative Assistant Rochelle Firth greeted the council. Referring to the documents in the packet, she noted that a little more than half the funds for Health & Welfare had been awarded during the first round of 2021 grants, with the remaining funds to be distributed during the second round in early summer. Admin. Assistant Firth said that many of the recipients had sent thank you notes, which were in the packet. Others sent Christmas treats and cards. Regarding the Business Assistance Grants, Admin. Assistant Firth said that being able to go to each business and hand them a check right before Christmas was very special, and she thanked the council for the opportunity. She said many of the recipients were in tears, because they were in jeopardy of losing their businesses and/or livelihood. She said everyone was very grateful, and many of those thank you notes were in the packet as well.

Admin. Assistant Firth thanked the council for their time.

Mayor A Riddile said that he felt it was very important that the council see the cards and letters from the grant recipients, and he thanked her for putting the information in the packet.

Consider Resolution TC 2021-6 - Adopting a Directory of Fees and Charges

Clerk Harrison told the council that within the Directory of Fees and Charges was a listing for 'Other Fees' under the building permits chapter. There had not been a fee listed for additional plan reviews for quite some time, and the resolution was to add that fee.

MOTION: Mayor A Riddile made a motion to Approve Resolution TC 2021-6, A Resolution of the New Castle Town Council Adopting a Directory of Fees and Charges. Councilor Hazelton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda

February 2, 2021 minutes

MOTION: Mayor A Riddile made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilor Owens seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Staff Reports

Town Administrator – Administrator Reynolds told the council that another new staff member would start on Thursday. Beth Elswick was a long-time resident and was hired to fill the support position for planning and finance. He said that staff was excited to have her on board. Administrator Reynolds said that he had met with Jeanne Golay of LoVa, Debra Figueroa of Glenwood Springs and Jeff Layman of the Town of Silt regarding the LoVa Trail and the purpose was to take a broad look at plans going forward. He said they had discussed some ideas for grants and potentially extending the trail from New Castle to Silt. Administrator Reynolds said that there was a private school that was interested in the old schoolhouse building on Main Street. He said he had a meeting with the interested party as well as with some contractors they hired to determine upgrade needs. Administrator Reynolds said that representatives of the private school would be flying to California to meet with Ms. Olilang who managed the building. He said that the private school would initially utilize only the second floor of the building, and remodeling/utilization of the remaining portions of the building would be done in phases. He said that if an agreement was reached, the lease would be a long-term lease, likely 20 years, and the private school would grow into the building over time. Administrator Reynolds said that Public Works Director John Wenzel was on vacation and the rest of the department had been busy plowing snow. Administrator Reynolds said that staff had been exploring the idea of a skating rink, and there was a lot to learn about it. He said that several New Castle staff members had gone to Carbondale to learn about and tour their seasonal ice rink facility. He said there had been a few New Castle residents inquire about a temporary ice rink in town. He thought that with the redesign of Frank Breslin Park, an area could be included for a seasonal rink and further brainstorming about it will resume once Director Wenzel was back from vacation. Administrator Reynolds said that he was trying to schedule a meeting with the gentleman who was interested in the 6th and Main lot owned by the town. In the meantime, he said a second interested person had contacted Planner Smith. He said they would report to council once those meetings had

taken place. Administrator Reynolds said that there had been an initial meeting with the town's political consultant Bill Ray regarding a potential vehicle use tax. He said that Treasurer Burk had put together some numbers regarding what the town's needs were and as demonstration of the town's fiscal responsibility regarding the tax measures passed in November 2019 to help Mr. Ray in his efforts. He also said that Mr. Ray wanted the public survey to be very succinct and targeted; a short narrative followed by perhaps a dozen questions. Administrator Reynolds said that staff had met with the Romero Group regarding possible development in the Lakota PUD.

Town Clerk – Clerk Harrison said she had done some historical research on EQRs. EQRs are how the code calculated how much water was needed for a commercial or residential property. The research was to determine how much water was available in the downtown prior to Castle Valley Ranch and Lakota Canyon Ranch coming in. Clerk Harrison said there would be an ordinance at next council meeting that will address campaign finance law. She said that the legislature had changed the laws the previous year to provide some authority for municipalities to impose fines for violations of campaign finance rules. Clerk Harrison said that she still held a seat on the Colorado Municipal Clerks Association Membership Committee and the committee was working on a membership drive. Clerk Harrison said that she had worked with Administrative Assistant Bart Mendoza to update the dog license database. She said that the spreadsheet that had been used for some time was inefficient, and Admin. Assistant Mendoza had rebuilt the database to be more intuitive. She said that while it may sound like it was not necessary, she had received a phone call earlier in the day from a woman taking a walk. The woman said a dog had come running up to her and it only had a town license on its collar and Clerk Harrison was able to locate owner information for the citizen in moments with the new formatting of the database. Clerk Harrison said that she had been busy also with plans for Deputy Clerk Andis' 20th anniversary and that staff was planning something on February 26, which was her actual anniversary. Mayor A Riddle asked the Clerk Harrison let the council know what the plans were. Clerk Harrison said she was working with Administrator Reynolds and Admin. Assistant Firth on some changes and improvements on the website.

Town Treasurer – Treasurer Burk said she had put in for a third reimbursement for CARES Act funds. She said they had pushed back on a few items but she had been able to explain the expenses and they had been approved. Treasurer Burk said that there was approximately \$9k left to spend, and that the town had until December 31, 2021 to do so. Treasurer Burk told the council that she had sent an e-mail to the council that stated that December sales tax had come in at about 11.5% over the previous year, and 2020 finished at about 21% over 2019 collections, which amounted to \$334,000.00. She also said that was \$395,000.00 over budget. Treasurer Burk said they had received tobacco tax collections from one vendor for the month of January, and it was one of the smaller vendors who had collected \$960.00 in January 2021, compared to January 2020 which was about \$700.00. She said that it was a good sign for the revenue side, but not good because people were still smoking. Councilor Hazelton asked if the state was collecting their new tax, and Treasurer Burk said that they were.

Town Planner – not present.

Public Works Director – not present.

Commission Reports

Planning & Zoning Commission – nothing to report.

Historic Preservation Commission – nothing to report.

Climate and Environment Commission – nothing to report.

Senior Program – nothing to report.

RFTA – Mayor A Riddile said that he had updated the board members regarding the County funding being less or going away. He said that RFTA held a workshop with the City of Rifle and advised them that they should consider joining RFTA or create their own transit authority. Mayor A Riddile said that he expected that RFTA would not see county funding for the Hogback service from New Castle to Rifle. He said that New Castle was a RFTA member and would not be affected.

AGNC – nothing to report.

GCE – nothing to report.

EAB - nothing to report.

Council Comments

Councilor Owens said that he had assumed that when the council meeting would be in-person that they would be back in town hall, and clearly, that was not the case. He asked if there was any possibility of moving back to council chambers. Mayor A Riddile said that there was still a social-distancing requirement of six feet, and that was easily accomplished in the community center, but not so easy in chambers.

Councilor Owens said that it seemed to be a lot of work to set up the meeting in the community center. In addition, the space could be used for other businesses and the martial arts studio. He felt that if the council could not be in town hall that perhaps they should consider going back to virtual meetings to allow others to use the community center.

Mayor A Riddile said they could discuss it. The council agreed to explore the idea at the next council meeting.

Councilor Hazelton said that he agreed and thought that council chambers could be mapped out for social distancing. He said he felt it was worth a discussion.

Councilor Leland said that at the last meeting Councilor Owens had talked about dog waste in Lakota and he noted that that same discussion had been taking place in the Castle Valley web discussion forum. He said that he did not have an answer, but wanted the council to know that Councilor Owens concerns were being echoed.

Councilor G Riddile thanked Public Works for the great job on snow removal.

Mayor A Riddile said that the trucks moving in and out of the Dow Rippy property on County Road 335 were dragging a lot of mud onto the county road and if it wasn't for the snow storm the road would have been a terrible mess. He felt that something should be mentioned to Mr. Rippy about cleaning up the roadway.

Administrator Reynolds said that the county was hesitant to make Mr. Rippy pull permits for the mine reclamation project, and he felt that was going to need to happen, and that track pads should be used to reduce the mud issue.

Mayor A Riddile said that in the recent CML Newsletter there was some survey information on the COVID impacts to municipal budgets and workforces. He said that 345 had postponed filling vacancies in full-time positions; 23% had frozen salaries; 13% had reduced hours of full-time employees. Mayor A Riddile said that New Castle had been very fortunate and had done none of those things. Other cuts: 36% had cut capital improvements; 33% cut parks and recreation; 20% cuts in arts and culture; 19% in public safety. Mayor A Riddile said that the town had been able to add staff, no one was

laid off, there were no salary freezes, salaries were actually increased by 3% and they were able to give staff a bonus. He said that the town had done a very impressive job. He thanked everyone for stepping up and keeping the town moving forward.

MOTION: Mayor A Riddile made a motion to adjourn. Councilor Copeland seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Mayor A Riddile


Town Clerk Melody Harrison, CMC

