

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN OF PLEVNA—Monday, December 9, 2019, 7 p.m.**  
**Town Office**

Mayor Benner called the meeting to order at 7:14 p.m.

Councilmen present were Jordan Hoffman, Alba Higgins, Kyle Vennes, and Gary Thielen.

Also present: Corrine Sander, Wastewater Operator      Krista Nemitz, Clerk/Treasurer  
Mark Thielen, Container Site Operator      Rick Schell, Water Operator  
Rich Menger, Fallon County Enviro Health      Shanny Gion, SMART  
Mary Grube, Planning Board

Members of the public present: Shawn Sander, Cliff & Jennifer Tudor

The minutes were approved for the November 12, 2019, regular meeting.

**Public Comment:**

- No public comment.

**Correspondence:**

- **DEQ Letter:** DEQ sent a letter outlining water monitoring changes. The Water Operator will review the letter.

**Old Business:**

**Utility Rates** –The Town Clerk prepared an overview of the Garbage Fund from the past three years up to the current month and presented the findings to the Town Council and Mayor Benner. Garbage Fund reports attached. Years 2017 and 2018 show the Town ending the fiscal year with a minimal amount of cash excess, while the Town ended 2019 with a loss of \$(1,656). The projected expenses for the fiscal year 2020 outweigh the expected income by \$11,675. This is due to the increased burden of operating expenses and administrative services related to the Plevna Container Site. A complete copy of the FY2020 Final Budget is available for public review at the Town Office. With assistance from Rachel's Accounting and the previous Town Clerk, the Garbage Fund Budget was reworked to reflect the very minimal amount of expenses and four garbage rates proposals were formulated. After review of all the materials, the council was in agreeance that in order for the Garbage Fund to be self-supporting it must generate \$29,000 per year. The only proposal that estimates the Town breaking even is Proposal #3:

**Residential:** \$20/month, **Commercial:** \$30-\$60-\$95/month, **Rural:** \$240/year  
With this increase going into effect in January 2020, the Town will be ending FY2020 with an estimated deficit of \$(3,900).

**A motion was made by Councilman Hoffman, seconded by Councilman Vennes, to adopt Garbage Rates Proposal #3.**

**Aye: 4      Nay:0      Absent: 0      Abstain: 0      Carried: 4:0**

A resolution outlining the increase in all utility rates will be adopted at the next council meeting along with a description of the Commercial Rate Tiers.

Mayor Benner issued a continuance of the utility rates discussion for January 13, 2019.

**RV Meter Placement** -Issue resolved with nothing new to report.

**Lagoon Pump** – A pump can be purchased for anywhere between \$300-\$3,000. Mayor Benner will get a more accurate quote on a Honda 3” pump. In the meantime, if a draw down needs to be done the work will have to be hired out.

### New Business:

- A Plevna representative is still needed for the Fallon County Planning Board. The Planning Board will start having meetings about updating the growth policy. The Growth Policy is updated every five years.
- Mayor Benner received a call from Rich Menger in regards to the Plevna Lagoon Site and its operation. Rich was contacted by DEQ after receiving a complaint alleging that the Town of Plevna’s Waste Water Lagoon System was not being properly operated. The issues described in the complaint included the inability to conduct operations as required due to the lack of access, and whether “Cell 3” is state water, which would impact the ability to conduct a draw down on the lagoons.

The Town will be receiving a letter from DEQ formally outlining their concerns. Rich stressed the importance of obtaining a permit from DEQ before the Wastewater Operator can perform a draw down on the lagoons. Rich stated that what has previously been referred to as “Cell 3”, is in fact, not an engineered lagoon cell and cannot operate as such. This area, southwest of the two-cell lagoon is state waters. The current overflow pipe is only to prevent overtopping of the lagoon and nothing more. The Certified Operator must be able to access all parts of the lagoon at all times, this does not mean the Certified Operator has a justified right to discharge whenever he/she thinks it is reasonable. You must have a state DEQ permit to discharge into state waters. This permit may take up to two weeks to obtain.

The first step towards becoming compliant with DEQ regulations will be to have written and adopt an Operational Maintenance Plan. Having a current O&M is a necessary prerequisite for obtaining financial assistance for lagoon maintenance. The estimated cost for completing this is \$25,000. The Town will be partnering with Shanny Gion, from SMART, and Rich Menger to obtain funding assistance. Shanny has previously worked with Midwest Assistance Program representatives and thinks they would be a great resource for the town to use. They do not offer funding, but their assistance is free of charge. She has made initial contact with MAP and the town will be assigned a representative. There are a few state and federal grants available that the town can start application for.