

**POLSON SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
CITY HALL – CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS
MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2011, 5:30 P.M.**

ATTENDANCE: City Commissioners: Don Smith, John Campbell, Judy Preston, Mike Lies, Elsa Duford and Fred Funke present. Mayor Pat DeVries presiding. City Attorney James Raymond and City Manager Todd Crossett present. Others present: Ric Smith, Jeremy Morget, Murat Kalinyaprak, Police Chief Doug Chase, Water & Sewer Superintendent Tony Porrazzo, Parks Superintendent Karen Sargeant, Margie Hendricks, and Rory Horning.

Mayor DeVries called the meeting to order and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED AGENDA: Commissioner Preston moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MATTERS OF SIGNIFICANT INTEREST TO THE PUBLIC NOT ON THE AGENDA: Ric Smith gave his opinion as follows. It was a pleasure to give testimony to the City Manager's performance. As someone who had watched the City Council for over two decades he felt that the City was running better and more efficiently than ever and the City Manager deserved credit for that. The City had voted for a manager form of government, and Mr. Crossett had done the job the way it was meant. In addition to the day to day activities he noted the Streetscape Project, and the phenomenal Skyline project. The City needed someone on a fulltime basis. He had spoken to many department heads and they were happy with the leadership and the management and felt that spoke highly of Mr. Crossett. He had seen Mr. Crossett under fire and, in his view, treated disrespectfully at times, however Mr. Crossett had been very professional, civil and intelligent and how he handles that. He hoped the Commission would have a positive review and felt Polson was fortunate to have him.

Jeremy Morgret gave his opinion as follows. He did not know the ins and outs of the daily work, however he had noticed that Mr. Crossett had a lot of respect and trust from his department heads which he felt said a lot. He added that there were many accomplishments, which Mr. Crossett couldn't take full credit for, but he had a hand in them. He supported Mr. Crossett and felt that he'd done a very good job, doing what this new the manager position was supposed to do.

Dennis Duty gave his opinion as follows. He wished to positively comment on Mr. Crossett. He expressed his agreement with Ric Smith, in that he'd also seen Mr. Crossett taking criticism. He also felt that he had handled it with professionalism. The budgeting for the current year had been difficult, and Mr. Crossett had excelled in that area. The grant monies he'd received was an important part of the job and Mr. Crossett had gotten a lot of that done. He appreciated the "get it done attitude". He hoped the Commission also felt positive about his accomplishments.

Parks Superintendent Karen Sargeant gave her opinion as follows. She encouraged the Commissioners to give Mr. Crossett a positive evaluation and to consider extending his contract as the City Manager of Polson. He was progressive, open minded and placed trust in the department heads. Resulting in the departments being able to work more efficiently, effectively and to a higher standard in order to support him in his position. The big picture view had allowed for the Commission and Department Heads to work together to form a mission statement, something the City had never had. This allowed for the departments to develop strategic plans designed to target
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the vision statement. He was a team oriented leader which was necessary in these economic times. It allowed for the success of the staff and citizens alike. With his encouragement and support the staff had brought in more than 12 million dollars in grant money for projects that would benefit the City. She felt his business, management and leadership skills were evident by the higher moral and accomplishments of the staff. He and his family were a part of the City, and she felt he was in it for the long haul.

Water & Sewer Superintendent Tony Porrazzo gave his opinion as follows. Mr. Crossett had earned his way. He had saved a lot of money on the various construction projects. He felt he was an asset to the City. He also expressed that he was in favor of the City Manager form of government.

Police Chief Chase gave his opinion as follows. He expressed his agreement with Parks Superintendent Sargeant's statements. It was a pleasure to work at City hall for someone that was polite and firm. He was an outstanding Manager and one of the finest people he'd ever work with.

Rory Horning commented that it was nice to see the staff there and wondered if Mr. Crossett was keeping records and suggested that he buy some people lunch. Mayor DeVries asked Mr. Horning to direct his comments to the Commission. Rory Horning gave his opinion as follows. People were treated differently if they were a pro or a con, and he was a con so he understood the attitude. He expressed an apology for commenting that the manager's contract had been extended at the special session last year, which he felt was in violation of Montana law. It did not extend the contract but expanded his benefits from the outgoing Commission in time off for his other job. They had missed the mark because to cancel a contract with the manager the contract required 90 days notice, but the contract was up June 15th. Some people deal with contracts looser than others, but there were some things that they were not following. He had a business on Main Street, and Polson had a unique Main Street in way the street lights were spaced. Neither he nor his partner had been addressed in regards to their issue on Main Street, they'd been left hanging. He hoped they didn't mind him letting them be left hanging when they wanted tax dollars. As they gave glowing comments, they should not get too heavy on the perfection. They were still driving on potholes; they did not magically go into Oz.

Murat Kalinyaprak gave his opinion as follows. He didn't think there had been any analysis into whether or not the city manager form of government works better, but it must work better for some because they testify to it. It did not work well for everyone or for the City itself, whether it was the person or the system. He urged the Commission not to commit the City to any contract that would tie the hands of the City in the event that citizens gathered enough signatures to revise the government on the ballot. He felt that the City Manager did not perform cost savings well on a lot of things, noting the Ingram lot switch, requesting to purchase the Tamsco building, and the unviable well #8 property. He felt that the manager's policies were making people feel less welcome at meetings and at City Hall. He felt the new design of City Hall was like a fortress where people would just pay and go. He disliked having to ask permission to come into City Hall to use the restroom. At the PCDA meeting there was no agenda and a person was not allowed to participate unless they stomped their feet and said they wanted to participate. He had attempted to use the handicapped access backdoor and it had been locked. It was mind blowing that citizens and a Commissioner had been denied items on the agenda. The separation of executive and legislative duties was supposed to depoliticize the process, but he felt it did not and the form of government

was not working. He questioned the why the figurehead Mayor had been sent to a Mayor's conference and that expense of that to the City.

Margie Hendricks commented that she had been in the process of preparing a cost analysis of the City of Polson, but her agenda request had been denied. She expressed her opinion as follows. The average income in the City of Polson was low and she doubted it was an average of \$26,000/year. It was culturally accepted for CEOs to receive huge salaries and bonuses when compared to workers. She calculated the City Manager's wages and benefits to total nearly \$100,000/year and she felt that was too high for a city the size of Polson. She compared the employee benefits of Polson to Hamilton, which was a similar sized City with snowbirds, where the City Manager was wage was lower and the health care was only for single employees. She felt the administrative cost was out of balance with the City's needs. As a citizen she did not feel welcome at meetings, and that much more than just what was said was happening. She had gotten a reputation as a trouble maker, but that she felt she did not earn that. She was never impolite or vulgar. People had the right to say when they think something is wrong and they should not be made to feel uncomfortable. She explained to the Commissioners when and why she had started coming to meetings over concerns about conflicts of interest. One of the Councilmen at her first or second meeting had said that they were trying to mislead well meaning people, but she was a well meaning person and she had no other agenda than to see her government follow the rules. She had first met with Mr. Crossett when he first arrived over discrepancies in the water loss numbers for the rate establishment study, and she didn't feel that was wrong to bring up. She didn't believe that it was ever resolved, and she didn't think it was detrimental to the well being of the City to be brought before the Commission. She commented that properties were exchanged between the City and the County, and they were not of equal value which State law required. She felt that the City Manager and the City Attorney should know these things and they should tell the Commission. And that often the Commission was making decisions on things they were not getting all of the information on leaving them unable to make informed decision. She was concerned on behalf of herself and the citizens.

Mayor DeVries thanked all those who commented.

Mayor DeVries called for a five minute recess at 6:05 p.m.

CLOSED MEETING – EXECUTIVE SESSION: Mayor DeVries closed the meeting. The executive session was held on the subject of City Manager Crossett's evaluation. The City Manager responded to allegations had by the public in the public comment period. Remarks were made by Mr. Crossett and by several Commissioners. The final written evaluation would be prepared by City Attorney James Raymond.

Mayor DeVries reopened the meeting to the public. The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Mayor Pat DeVries

Attest: Kala Parker, City Clerk