

TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP

The Town Council of the Town of Wheatland held a workshop of Wednesday, Feb. 11, 2009 in the Council Room of the Town Hall for the purpose of discussion on the development of a new snow removal plan for the Town.

Mayor Hensel called the workshop to order and members present were: Councilmen Shoemaker and Madsen. Also present was Clerk/Treasurer, Cindy Kahler, Street Supt. Allen Baker, Street employee, Brian Kraft, Police Chief, Randy Chesser, Sheriff, Steve Keigley, Platte County Emergency Management Coordinator, Jane Carlson, Wheatland Emergency Management Coordinator, Scott Scheller, P.C. Record Times Editor, Amber Ningen, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer, Sandy Lipps, Kent Smith, Jason Querry, Laramie Cole and two citizens (did not get names).

Also participating in the workshop were Boy Scouts from Troop 300, Tyler Stafford, Matthan Stafford Jr., Kort Riddle, Ambrose McGannon, Taylor Bush and Mathew Grider who were working on their Citizenship Merit Badge. They were accompanied by Matthan Stafford Sr., and Michael Grider.

Mayor Hensel stated that the Town Council had called the workshop to gather input on snow removal since the storm that the Town experienced, January 24, 2009 thru Feb. 3, 2009, and he went over the snow removal log for that time period. Mayor Hensel stated that the cost for handling the storm was \$57,203.50.

Laramie Cole asked what the snow removal policy is presently and Mayor Hensel stated the priorities are airport, hospital, P.D., Fire Hall and main arterioles i.e. Gilchrist, 9th, South, 16th, Rowley and Mariposa. Laramie Cole asked why the airport is a priority when flight for life is primarily done by helicopter. Clerk/Treasurer, Cindy Kahler stated that there seems to be some confusion regarding the maintenance of the airport and flight for life. She stated that the Town receives financial aid from the FAA for maintenance at the airport, and they just recently received \$700,000.00 to refurbish the apron and tie down area. She indicated that when a community receives federal funding they have an obligation to keep the airport open, primarily in case a plane is forced to land and can be diverted to Wheatland.

Street Supt., Allen Baker stated that the Street Dept. presently has 3 people, 1 motograder, 2 loaders, and 3 dump trucks, one with a blade on the front. During this particular snow storm, he borrowed a backhoe and operator from the Water Dept., and a backhoe and operator from the Electric Dept. He also used two people from Parks, the mechanic and the maintenance man to drive snow haul trucks. There was a discussion concerning a snow removal budget and Mayor Hensel stated that it is almost impossible to have a very large snow removal budget for one storm a year. We just have to absorb the costs in the operating budgets as best we can.

Councilman Madden discussed the possibility of designated snow routes, school bus routes, wind rowing with cut outs for intersections and approaches. He stated that he had received Ordinances from other communities and he went over some of the points addressed in them, particularly the one from Wright, Wyoming. He stated that snow plans can be set for different

levels of snow, 2, 4, or 6 depending on the need.

Chief Chesser and Emergency Mgmt. Coordinator, Scheller presented a map and discussed setting designated snow routes i.e. Emergency Snow Routes.

Priority One - airport, hospital, South Street, 16th Street, Rowley Street, Mariposa, 9th Street
Streets surrounding the hospital

Priority Two - School Bus Routes, East Cole Street (radio station)

Priority Three - Residential Districts

The plan would be to wind row the snow and remove it in some areas as time allowed. The Street Dept. would not be responsible for emergency calls, pulling people out, plowing areas not on the schedule. The Police Dept. would be the first responders for emergency calls either from Town Hall or Dispatch.

County Emergency Mgmt. Coordinator, Jane Carlson stated that she would like to see the Town pass an Ordinance, allowing for the closure of certain streets and citations being written with fines up to \$750.00 for anyone accessing a “closed street”.

Police Chief, Chesser stated the Dept. had pushed or pulled out seventy-eight vehicles during the last storm.

Coordinator, Carlson stated that it could have been much worse in Wheatland during this storm, however, she had requested WYDOT not open Casper until Cheyenne was open to keep the highway traffic where there were more accommodations. She stated that she did not have enough volunteers to open the shelter in Wheatland if she had needed to.

Coordinator, Jane Carlson also indicated that the public seems to lack education in the type of conditions that were presented in this last storm. Sheriff Keigley stated the Town needs to develop an Ordinance to declare “emergency situations” to exist and close streets, as this last storm tied up resources, particularly on north 16th Street. He stated that he closed north 16th on Tuesday, during this last storm as the visibility was zero and people were running other vehicles off the road, getting them stuck. Alan Madsen stated that the Wright, Wyoming Ordinance addressed an “emergency” procedure for closing down streets.

Kent Smith suggested making some rules for the people removing snow from private property and pushing it into the street. He stated there are “good” snow removal contractors who stay on the property they are removing snow from and there are “bad” contractors who simply plow it into the street and leave it in big piles.

There was a discussion concerning the pro’s and con’s of wind rowing the snow to the middle of the street and doing cut outs for access. It was brought up that when it melts it can cause severe icing and in the case of blowing snow, wind rows will often times make the drifting substantially worse. Allen Baker suggested a snow depth of 6" triggering the snow removal plan and Councilman Madsen stated he thought it should be 4".

There was a discussion concerning the Police Dept. being able to handle all the calls while snow plowing and removal is being done and Jane Carlson suggested setting up an “emergency operating center” to channel the calls. Steve Snook stated that “somebody” needs to take responsibility for taking, prioritizing and dispatching the calls.

There was further discussion on developing a list of private snow removal contractors and volunteers who could assist with four wheel drives on an emergency basis.

Jason Querry stated the Town should consider putting an eight foot dozer plow on the skidster at the Cemetery and using it for snow plowing and removal as it has a short turning radius and could work for cut outs and snow removal.

Allen Baker asked about signage and how close the signs need to be to each other on the designated snow routes?

Mayor Hensel formed a Committee to develop the plan and an Ordinance. Mayor Hensel, WYDOT, John Benson, Chief, Randy Chesser, Emergency Mgmt. Coordinators, Scott Scheller and Jane Carlson, someone from the Ambulance Service, Councilman Madsen. He stated their first meeting would be Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2009, in the Council Room at 6:30 P.M..

Mayor Hensel closed the workshop at 7:30 P.M..

Clerk/Treasurer, Cindy Kahler