

GOLD BAR: Notes on Special Meeting
Saturday, June 17, 2006, 10:00 a.m.
(Authored by Susan Forbes)

***NOTE: From L. Storm, webmistress:** The below notes were authored entirely by Susan Forbes, a Gold Bar resident, who attended yet-another “Special” meeting in Gold Bar, one of several since Robert Amenn gained majority control of the Council. This document has been posted on the www.ittakesgrit.org website at my request for two reasons: (1) to supplement and augment our audio** recorded at the 6/17 “special” meeting in my stead by co-founder Ray Kistenmacher; and (2) because I have an ethical “stake” (as should all Sky Valley residents) in what is occurring in Gold Bar because of Councilman Robert Amenn’s continuing actions, which I believe to be destructive to himself, the citizens of Gold Bar and to the entire Sky Valley area.*

This is a meeting called for by Robert Amenn to discuss the “termination” of the City Clerk, Treasurer. The Public was not “allowed” to comment.

He asked the mayor to read the 5 items on his agenda so everyone would be clear on what the agenda was.

Councilman Norris stated that all of the items could be discussed in the regular council meetings. He called for the meeting to be adjourned. Councilman Turner seconded the motion and the mayor adjourned the meeting. At that time Councilman Amenn asked the attorney (whom he asked personally to attend the special meeting at expense to the city) to give an opinion on the adjournment of the meeting without a vote of the council. (He used this tactic in the past but when it was used on him he objected). The attorney felt that there should be a vote to comply with the law. There was some discussion regarding this. The meeting then continued. Councilman Turner had already left.

Councilman Amenn asked for a motion to recess so people could calm down before the meeting continued. That did not fly. Then he wanted to make a clarification that he had heard comments regarding the fact his agenda used the word “termination” instead of resignation. (the clerk turned in her resignation on May 19th) He mentioned it had to do with her benefit package. Councilman Croshaw was concerned with the hours of vacation time that the clerk was claiming she had coming to her. (289 hrs) She felt that the clerk was entitled to whatever she had coming but that there was no way the clerk could possibly have 289 hours accumulated. There was discussion regarding vacation policy. They are supposed to carry only 20 hours year to year. Councilman Croshaw wanted a list of where the hours were from before she received a final payroll. She commented that she had not received a response from her e-mails to the mayor requesting the information. She wanted to see the benefit package the clerk was to receive. Councilman Amenn commented that he wanted to see the benefit package also. He made comments on vacation policy. He said he might make an exception in this case if the clerk would sign an exit agreement that stated the clerk would relinquish the city of all liability. (isn’t that withholding money owed until you get what you want)? I am wondering what liability it is that Councilman Amenn is afraid off. He also wanted an exit audit of the books by a council appointed committee. He felt this would make a better transition for the next clerk. He said something about things happening on the sly. He also commented about setting a bunch of policies before the new clerk was hired. He claimed none of this was aimed at the present clerk and used the word termination again. (members of the audience corrected his wording) He commented that if the current clerk was going to stay and work for the next two weeks he would appreciate her willingness to work with the council. The mayor commented on the fact that the staff already was working on information to make the transition for a new employee go smoothly. Councilman Amenn stated that he would like to see that info and that he had contacted the mayor and asked for it and had not been given any info. The mayor interjected that he contacted her and asked her to fire the clerk. Councilman Amenn denied this. He made comments that if the clerk couldn’t work with the council she should move on and a temp hired until she could be replaced. The mayor commented and Councilman Amenn again commented on an exit document. Councilman Woods stated he would like that too. Councilman Amenn asked the mayor if she understood what he was asking for. Councilman Wood made a motion “to do what Robert just said” and Councilman Croshaw seconded the motion. When Councilman Wood was asked what it was that Councilman Amenn

just said he couldn't answer. So Councilman Amenn embellished once again. He again stated that he wanted an agreement with the clerk that she relinquished any liability to the city. (Again, I am interested in why he is so insistent on that – what is he worried about?) He stated that if she did there would be some exception to the vacation policy. The mayor commented on the motion and policy and ordinances. At this time Councilman Amenn read the vacation policy. The Mayor explained that the employees were not always able to take vacation as outlined in the policy because they were short handed. She said that in the past exceptions had been made for other employees. Councilman Amenn said he would like an opinion from the Attorney on if the Mayor or administration had the authority to do that. He made some personal comments toward the Mayor at this time. Councilman Croshaw interjected with a question about why the clerk had not gotten vacation. The Mayor was giving an answer when Councilman Amenn interrupted. At this point Councilman Norris called for a vote on the motion. Councilman Amenn, Councilman Wood, and Councilman Croshaw, were for and Councilman Norris was opposed to calling for a signed exit agreement from the City Clerk. The City Attorney commented on the fact that if the past councils and staff had set a pattern on carrying vacation time they could be subject to a claim from the employee. He was willing to check into this but Councilman Amenn stated he didn't see the need to spend money on the attorney if they came to an agreement with the clerk.

There were comments from Councilman Croshaw that she would like a policy regarding employee's attendance at conferences and meetings. The clerk was going to attend the AWC conference but cancelled. The Mayor commented on the fact that she was going to allow the clerk to attend the conference to make contact with employees from other cities that might be interested in the clerk position and to get it out to the AWC that a position was open. There was other discussion. Councilman Amenn and Councilman Wood agreed with Councilman Croshaw. Councilman Amenn commented again something to the fact that he hasn't been given info he requested and he would like to see a policy regarding staff attendance at functions outside of the city. Councilman Wood agreed with Councilman Amenn. Councilman Amenn said he would like to "take a stab" at preparing the policy. He had other comments. Councilman Croshaw stated that she had attended many of the conferences and some of them were worthwhile and some were frivolous. Councilman Croshaw made a motion to have a policy for meeting attendance. There was some discussion regarding this and Councilman Amenn interrupted with "I would like to get a consensus from the Council for me to "take a crack" at drafting a policy regarding attendance at conferences. After some discussion re whether there were a motion already or not, Councilman Croshaw withdrew her motion and her and Councilman Wood gave consensus to Councilman Amenn to "take a crack" at drafting the policy.

Councilman Amenn brought up that he wanted a set schedule from the Mayor of hours she would be in the office for meeting with Council members and public. He made comments about setting up meetings that never took place because the Mayor cancelled. He brought up that she made a statement in her campaign that she would set hours. When he was done with his attack the Mayor stated that she had not been able to set hours because she was constantly being called away from her job to deal with issues for the city and she gave examples. She told Councilman Amenn that she stopped having meetings with him when he started telling people she had said things in the meeting that she did not say. She stated that she did not have a problem answering e-mails as long as they were not personal attacks or derogatory. She had other comments. Councilman Amenn "cautioned" her that she should poll the Council as to if they felt they could communicate with her. He made other comments.

Councilman Wood stated that no matter what job you go to there is always some kind of a contract. The Mayor mentioned that this motion had been defeated at the last Council meeting. Councilman Amenn interjected that he would support it and he wanted to make a motion to open it for discussion again. The Mayor informed him that it had to be reopened by one of the people that helped defeat it and that she wasn't sure if a special meeting was the place to do that. Councilman Amenn asked for an opinion from the Attorney and he affirmed what the Mayor stated. After some discussion Councilman Amenn asked Councilman Croshaw to reopen the issue. Councilman Croshaw made a motion to reopen the subject. Amenn stated (for the whole Council???) that they were interested in splitting the Clerk-Treasurer position. Councilman Wood stated that if the clerk had been under a lot of stress they should split the position. The Mayor stated that maybe a better solution than reorganizing City Hall would be to hire the 2 part time people or one full time person they had budgeted to help in the office. Councilman Amenn made a comment to the effect that policies set by previous councils should be reviewed and they may want to

consider changing the policies of previous councils now that there was a new council. (talk about confusing your employees!!!!) The Mayor stated again that she felt hiring a person already budgeted for would be better than restructuring and micro management. Councilman Amenn stated that this Council did not set the budget and this Council felt the City might not have the right position mix. (Again, he was speaking for the whole Council.) He stated that for 6 months the Council has indicated there should be a change in positions. He stated it did not make sense to hire someone if they were going to reorganize the positions. He commented more. The Mayor said she was going to wash her hands of the issue and the Council would do what it wants anyway. Councilman Wood agreed with Councilman Amenn and Councilman Croshaw said nothing about hiring a budgeted position had ever come before them. He wanted information regarding what every employee did. Councilman Norris stated that that information had been provided in some form at the budget sessions.

Councilman Amenn wanted to form a special audit committee for the clerk's departure. The Mayor interjected that the new clerk being a fresh perspective should be able to bring before the Council any concerns they had regarding finances. Councilman Croshaw wanted to make sure it was just an internal audit. Councilman Amenn stated it would be a council-appointed in-house committee. I interjected that no family members of Council should be on that committee. He recommended forming the committee and he said the committee should include Al White (because of his experience), Dorothy Croshaw, Jerry Wood, and potentially other citizens would be on the committee. He stated he was making a motion that the committee be formed and that these people should be on it. I stated at this point that it needed to be an impartial committee. The Mayor suggested that maybe they should wait until a regular council meeting to form this committee instead of kicking out names. She asked for one of the other Council members to give a second to this motion, on record, without a scope of the committee being given to the public at a regular meeting. Council Amenn withdrew the motion and made a new motion to set the scope of the committee and potential members. Councilman Wood seconded the motion. Councilman Norris opposed the motion. There was some discussion. I made the Comment that Robert is the Mayor whether he was elected or not. He just grinned. Go figure. We were reminded that there were no public comments allowed and I stated, "there will be comments at the next meeting". Councilman Amenn then stated, "What do you think Dorothy?" In other words Robert Amenn tells everyone what he wants and then when he is done declaring how it is going to be he asks how the other Councilmen feel or what they think. The sad thing is they just go along and let it happen.

The Mayor again asked about hiring a person to fill the budgeted position and Councilman Amenn stated that he would support a temp agency hire and embellished on his wishes. The Mayor had a few comments and stated that this wasn't an open council discussion, it was Councilman Amenn saying what was going to happen. Councilman Amenn stated, "please don't be abrupt." (That works two ways, Robert.) He tried to make a speech about how Councilman Croshaw and Wood didn't always rubber stamp what he wanted.

The meeting adjourned.

Once adjourned, several of the public in attendance asked Councilman Amenn to stop calling special meetings for things that could be discussed at regular council meetings and to give more adequate notice to the public of the meetings. One of the public got notice before two of the Councilmen did. He was told if some of the Councilmen had prior commitments he should schedule for when they could all be there.

---(HERE ENDS SUSAN FORBES' NOTES)----

****G.R.I.T. Audio:** Below are the audio files of this meeting, split up into 7-10 minute segments. I was not present, thus, did not take notes on time codes as I normally would (and I do not have time now) so it may be difficult for our readers to "match" these notes with our audio. If anyone wishes to do this, we will revise this document in the future.

AUDIO OF MEETING

(in MP3, compatible with Microsoft's Mediaplayer or other digitized MP3 device.):

[File A \(962 kb\)](#): Pledge of Allegiance, discussion re motion to adjourn; council breaks.

[File B \(1.7 mb\)](#) – attorney’s opinion re motion to adjourn, discussion.

[File C \(1.8 mb\)](#)

[File D \(1.5 mb\)](#)

[File E \(1.6 mb\)](#)

[File F \(1.5 mb\)](#)

[File G \(1.7 mb\)](#)

[File H \(1.8 mb\)](#)