

City of Rainier
Regular City Council Meeting
February 1, 2021
6 p.m.
Rainier City Hall

Mayor Jerry Cole called the Regular Council Meeting to order at 6 p.m.

Council Present: Connie Budge, Robert duPlessis, Mike Kreger, Levi Richardson, Richard Sanders, Brenda Tschida

Council Absent: None

City Attorney Present: No

City Staff Present: Sarah Blodgett, City Recorder; Gregg Griffith, Police Chief; W. Scott Jorgensen, City Administrator; Sue Lawrence, Public Works Director

Flag Salute

Additions/Deletions from the Agenda

Mayor's Address: Mayor Jerry Cole introduced Police Chief Greg Griffith. Griffith presented a Lifesaver Award to Officer Troy Caldwell. Caldwell responded to a call in which a subject had overdosed and was turning blue. The Narcan that Caldwell administered revived the subject. Cole then introduced Columbia River Fire and Rescue (CRFR) Chief Joel Medina and Fire Marshall Tad Pedersen. Medina said that CRFR will continue to provide service with the highest standard. Councilor Connie Budge thanked Medina for CRFR's response to an incident earlier in the day.

Visitor Comments: NEXT Renewables President James Merritt introduced himself to the council and highlighted his experience working on energy projects. He said the proposed Port Westward project will only be adding a couple of rail carts to the line running through town. The project seeks to create biodiesel fuel through a clean, low emitting process. Three parties are opposed to it, but he has been meeting with them and talking to community leaders. Three major permits have been filed for the project. It's scheduled to take place from 2022 to 2024 and will have a peak of 1500 employees during its construction phase. He would like to form a steering committee to direct how Payment in Lieu of Taxes dollars will be distributed to local communities. Councilor Robert duPlessis asked how many full-time employees will work at

the facility once it's completed. Merritt said between 50 and 100. Cole said a citizen reached out to him about the new stop sign at the intersection of 11th and C streets. He was going to call the citizen during the meeting but didn't have a good phone number. Cole then read an email the citizen sent him about the stop sign. Council President Mike Kreger said he lives near that intersection and sees the traffic. The traffic and the number of speeders has increased since 2004. But since the stop sign was put up, people have been stopping, the instances of speeding have reduced and the area is safer to walk. City Administrator W. Scott Jorgensen said he received a few complaints when the signs were first put up but none recently. Councilor Brenda Tschida said she understands the complaint but that many people feel the sign has been beneficial. Neighbors should be notified prior to the installation of such signs in the future. Councilor Levi Richardson asked if the city had done any studies of ways to slow traffic through the area. Public Works Director Sue Lawrence confirmed that she reviewed documents about different options. Councilor Richard Sanders said his children and grandchildren live near the intersection. The streets are safer than they were before. Budge said she spoke with neighbors. They said the traffic has been slowed and is now going to B Street. Overall, the stop sign has had a positive impact.

Consider Approval of the Consent Agenda:

Consider Approval of the January 4, 2021 Regular Council Meeting Minutes—Kreger moved to approve the consent agenda. That motion was seconded by Richardson and adopted unanimously.

Unfinished Business

- a. Riverfront Trail Update—Lawrence said a walk through with the contractor was scheduled for the following day, with construction to commence 24 hours after that site visit.

New Business

- f. Riverfront Trail Change Order—Lawrence said the original estimate of the project was \$92,680. But adding the switchback to the design bumped it up to over \$148,000. Cole said the switchback will help the project be more handicapped accessible under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act. The City needs to do something about the erosion at the site. A grant through the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments could be used to fund the project's second phase, if it is awarded to the City. The project will tie the downtown area to the park. Finance Officer Debbie Dudley gave the go-ahead for using \$100,000 from the Timber Fund for the project. A City ordinance states that fund can be used for capital items. In a worst-case scenario, the City can borrow \$100,000 from the fund and pay it back at zero interest over 20 years at \$5,000 per year. A grant is also being pursued to fund the

project's third phase. Jorgensen verified that he applied for a grant through the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). Sanders said that if the City receives any grant funding, it can pay the Timber Fund loan off earlier than the proposed 20-year period. Jorgensen said the deadline to apply for the COG grant is late February. He and Lawrence plan to get together to prepare and submit the application. Cole said bank stabilization will be the main component of the project's second phase. Jorgensen said he's been in touch with the owner of El Tapatio to try and obtain that easement. duPlessis asked about the cost difference between doing the project all at once versus spreading out the phases. Jorgensen said mobilization is usually a significant cost for contractors on projects. Kreger moved to approve the proposed change order and authorize the City to borrow \$100,000 from the Timber Fund, to be paid back at \$5000 per year for 20 years at zero percent interest, if needed. That motion was seconded by Councilor Jenna Weaver and adopted unanimously.

Unfinished Business

- b. Fox Creek Update
- c. Senior Housing—Budge said that every four years, the Area Agency on Aging has to submit a plan to the federal government to receive funding. The top priorities for program funding have been identified as housing, transportation and in-home care, including meals on wheels. She is asking council to authorize her to meet with Jorgensen to draft a letter of support from the city for the draft plan. Budge moved to authorize Jorgensen to draft the letter. That motion was seconded Kreger and adopted unanimously.
- d. Council Goal Setting Workshop—Jorgensen said the council chose March 10 to do its workshop but that date will coincide with a Planning Commission meeting. Cole suggested that it be held March 9 at 6 p.m. at the Masonic Lodge. Council agreed by consensus.
- e. First Reading of Ordinance 1078—Establishing Business License Regulations for Food Carts—Cole said the draft ordinance was changed from the last meeting. Budge, Kreger and Jorgensen worked on it. The draft includes input from council and the Planning Commission. Kreger said it doesn't identify a fee for the permit. Office Manager Sarah Blodgett said a resolution can be created for it and presented at the next council meeting. Resolutions are easier to change than ordinances.

New Business

- a. Resolution 20-02-01—A Resolution to Establish a Parks Committee for the City of Rainier and the Requirements for Membership—Budge moved to approve the resolution. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously.
- b. Payne Reforestation Contract—Kreger moved to approve the contract.

- That motion was seconded by Richardson and adopted unanimously.
- c. Budget Committee Update—Cole said the committee has many vacancies. He proposes allowing two members from outside of the city limits. There are people in that area who would be interested in serving. Budge asked if that would be consistent with state budget law and the city's charter. Staff agreed to further look into the matter.
 - d. OLCC License Renewals—Kreger moved for the City to recommend approve the renewals. That motion was seconded by Sanders and adopted unanimously.
 - e. Engineering RFP—Lawrence said the city received three RFPs that were rated and evaluated. They were sent by Keller, Lower Columbia Engineering and West Yost. She said West Yost has the most experience with water and wastewater and is currently helping the City with its Water Master Plan. Keller is based in Salem but has much of its staff in Idaho. Lower Columbia doesn't have as much experience but could still be used for projects even if the City uses another firm as its engineering firm of record. She recommends West Yost. The next step is to have whichever firm is selected come back with a contract spelling out the scope of work to be done for the City. Kreger moved for the City to select West Yost as its engineering firm of record. That motion was seconded by Weaver and adopted unanimously.

Staff Report-Lawrence said that the filter rehabilitation project at the water plan just started. The replacement of the front doors at city hall is nearly finished. The inflow and infiltration study and Water Master Plan have both been started. An issue has been identified regarding the City's meter reading. She will bring that back to council at its next meeting. There are eight wooden light posts on Neer Way that are rotting. The public utility district has disconnected power to them. She received a proposal for \$17,000 to replace the posts. Council agreed by consensus to discuss street light requests at its March meeting. Jorgensen said he was asked to represent the City on the Col-Pac board and agreed after conferring with Cole. He worked with Budge and Kreger on the food cart ordinance, put together the Parks Committee resolution and has been advertising the vacant positions on the Budget Committee. Jorgensen took a tour of the Senior Center and submitted the City's letter of intent for an ODOT grant to fund the riverfront trail's third phase. He and Lawrence met with Paul Vogel to look at possible bike hub sites, as the county is applying for a grant to fund them. The City's request for grant funds to reimburse the costs for the city hall door replacement has been accepted, and he met with a representative of KLTV about having council meetings on public access. There will be a presentation about that at the next meeting.

Council Reports-Cole said the museum representatives want to be able to have people in their space at city hall and have submitted a COVID plan to him. Kreger said the new stop sign at C and Ferncrest has worked well.

City Calendar/Announcements

Cole adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Mayor Jerry Cole

W. Scott Jorgensen, City Administrator