

City of Rainier
Regular City Council Meeting
March 7, 2022
6 p.m.
Rainier City Hall

Mayor Jerry Cole called the Regular Council Meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Council Present: Connie Budge, Scott Cooper, Robert duPlessis, Jeremy Howell Mike Kreger and Denise Watson

Council Absent: Levi Richardson

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: Councilor Denise Watson moved to add a discussion about the NAPIS form that's been given to the Senior Center to the agenda. That motion was seconded by Councilor Scott Cooper and adopted unanimously.

Mayor's Address: Mayor Jerry Cole reiterated his personal support for the people of the Ukraine in light of the recent attack by Russia.

Visitor Comments: There were no visitors at this time.

Consider Approval of the Consent Agenda

Consider Approval of the February 7, 2022 Regular Council Meeting Minutes—Council President Mike Kreger moved to approve the consent agenda. That motion was seconded by Councilor Scott Cooper and adopted unanimously.

Unfinished Business

- a. Timber Sale Update—Forester Patrick McCoy said he audited the recent timber harvest in the watershed. The city has been paid in full for the timber and 14,000 new trees were planted the previous week. There was a net revenue to the city of around \$492,000 from the sale. The city was able to capitalize on a strong timber market. Councilor Robert duPlessis asked about the market's current state. McCoy said it's still

strong and will likely remain so because Russia supplies wood from Siberia. It could make sense to reevaluate this summer whether or not to do another harvest. If the market is up another 20 to 30 percent, the city should consider it. The market may hit an all-time high in the next month or so. City Administrator W. Scott Jorgensen asked if McCoy has identified any particular timber stands in the watershed for the next harvest. McCoy said there are two big stands the city could cut. One is 150 acres and the other is 70. If the market softens, there are some spots that could be cleared. The permitting process for harvesting is easy and he would need three months to line it up. Cole asked about the cost of permitting. McCoy said it would only involve 10 hours of his time. The permit could be renewed if the city ops not to harvest and they're good for two years. Cole asked if there are any tracts of land in the watershed that need to be refurbished. McCoy said there is some pre-commercial thinning that could be done that's good for fir trees. Jorgensen asked if that kind of work could be paid for out of the timber fund. Cole said it could. Jorgensen asked if council wanted to have a discussion about the next timber sale at its June meeting. Council agreed by consensus. McCoy said he was having some no trespassing signs made to keep people from cutting firewood in the watershed.

- b. Riverfront Trail Update—Public Works Director Sue Lawrence said the engineering firm is designing the base for the installation of the bridge and the decking should be done in the next couple of weeks. They're building the buttresses and that work should be starting soon. The design will have the bridge going across from the trail. Jorgensen said the stairs to the beach have been installed.
- c. Fox Creek Update—Lawrence said a meeting has been scheduled for the following Wednesday for the feasibility study kickoff. Jorgensen said he was asked to speak at the March 14 Friends of Fox Creek meeting, just prior to the council's scheduled goal setting session that same night.
- d. Senior and Multigenerational Housing—Councilor Connie Budge said she would like to revisit the matter after goal setting and the budget is adopted. Council agreed by consensus.

New Business

- a. Water Master Plan Presentation—Preston Van Meter, the city's engineer with West Yost, said he's been working on the plan for the last year. It was last updated in 1995. The new plan looks at the next 20 years and he recommends that it be updated every five to ten years. There were no major surprises in the study. Grants can be used to fund the recommended projects, and the plan can be used to get them. There are capacity upgrades recommended in the study, including getting some water lines to six or eight inches for better fire flow. The study recommends the addition of two reservoirs, one at Neer City and the other at Townsend. The high priority upgrades will cost around \$1.4 million. He recommends a follow-up study, but the system is in good

shape overall. Fox Creek is not a recommended water supply. Cole said his vision for Fox Creek is to have potable water available for residents in the event that the city can't pump out of the Columbia. Staff ran its current system and the Fox Creek system 13 to 14 years ago. They would switch over to Fox Creek when there was too much turbidity on the Columbia.

- b. Inflow and Infiltration Study Contract Extension—Lawrence said she's been talking with the engineering firm about the scope of work and will bring it back for the next meeting.
- c. RAW Weather Station—Lawrence said she's been in discussion with the public utility district. Having a weather station could help prevent power outages. It would cost around \$19,000, split between project partners, and the U.S. Forestry Service would pay for servicing the equipment. Cole said he attended a meeting about it. The PUD likes the idea of using the city's water plant as a site. He proposes that the city contribute \$5,000 to the costs, split between the sewer and water funds, under the condition that the station be located in Rainier. The fire district may also contribute to the costs. Budge moved for the city to offer a \$5,000 contribution to the station, with the condition that it be located in Rainier. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously.
- d. Resolution 22-03-01—To Assess the Costs for Abating the Nuisance Property at 313 West 7th Street—Cole said he and Jorgensen visited the property and that the public works department did a good job of abating the nuisance. The neighbors are happy. Lawrence said the cleanup involved seven trips to the dump. One of those was for tires. Cole asked if the city included administrative time in the costs. Lawrence confirmed that 25 percent was added to the total. Cooper moved to adopt the resolution. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously.
- e. Code Enforcement Update—Jorgensen said he met with officials from the county. They hired two land use compliance specialists who can be used to enforce land use issues, like unpermitted construction. But they can also be used to do code enforcement in the city. He found the ordinance that the City of St. Helens uses. Rainier's ordinances don't have firm enough penalties in place for lack of compliance. The one from St. Helens spells out an entire process. He can copy it and bring it to council for adoption. Councilor Jeremy Howell says the St. Helens ordinance works well in his role as a police officer for that city. Cooper asked about the ongoing issues with enforcing code on property owned by the Department of State Lands (DSL). Jorgensen said he spoke with a representative from DSL and that agency wanted proof that the city has provided alternative housing options for the man living on the boat on DSL land. That was a concern for DSL due to the precedent set by the Boise court decision. Officer Troy Caldwell provided Jorgensen with correspondence he's had on that issue, and it was forwarded to DSL. Cooper moved to give Cole permission to enter into an agreement with

- DSL and to direct Jorgensen to draft the code enforcement ordinance. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously.
- f. RV Ordinance Discussion—Jorgensen said there was a discussion at Planning Commission about how to regulate RV use in the city. Planning Commission Chair Erin O’Connell works for the county public health department and suggested that RVs be regulated as separate dwelling units required to have their own sewer and water hookups if they’re to be occupied for any long period of time. He included RV ordinances in the meeting materials from the City of Aurora and had to enforce that code while working there. Jorgensen wants direction from the council about this, before putting something together for the Planning Commission. Those areas include street parking and the temporary use of RVs for visitors, both of which are addressed in the City of Aurora’s ordinances. City Recorder Sarah Blodgett said that another ordinance included in the council packet was from North Dakota. It has a “purpose” section that can be used for an RV ordinance here. Budge said Longview’s ordinance includes a provision allowing for a family with a member in hospice care to stay in an RV on the property and would like to see similar language included.
 - g. Budget Officer Appointment—Cole recommended that Jorgensen be appointed as the city’s budget officer. Kreger moved to appoint Jorgensen as the city’s budget officer. That motion was seconded by Cooper and adopted unanimously.
 - h. Budget Committee Appointment—Kreger moved to appoint Tess Pote to the vacant Budget Committee position. That motion was seconded by Cooper and adopted unanimously.
 - i. Parks Committee Appointment—Kreger moved to appoint Pote and Rosemary Scandale to the Parks Committee. That motion was seconded by Cooper and adopted unanimously.
 - j. Goal Setting Session—Cole reminded the council that the goal setting session was scheduled for Monday, March 14 at 6 p.m. at the Masonic Lodge.
 - k. NAMIS Form—Senior Center Director Jan Rich said those forms have been around a long time. They allow the federal government to provide funding for each meal served through home delivery or congregate meals. But many seniors are considering the forms to be intrusive, insulting and nosy. The form is not applied by the state, it doesn’t have to be involved in NAMIS, but it will be back in the summer. She wants a conversation from council on this. There was a discussion about having any possible legislative town hall be held at the senior center. Budge encouraged anyone concerned about the form to reach out to their legislators.

Staff Report—Police Chief Gregg Griffith said that a candidate for the vacant officer position is undergoing a background check. Lawrence said the light pole at the senior center and the other one on B Street should both be replaced soon. The Parks Committee is working on having a Parks Master

Plan done and brought back to council. Blodgett said the utility billing clerk position will be advertised soon. Jorgensen said a best practices assessment was done with CIS. He provided written and oral testimony on a legislative bill that could help the city with its urban growth boundary issues, but the bill did not pass. Jorgensen attended the Rainier Chamber of Commerce meeting and conducted the meeting with county officials about code enforcement. He submitted the REDCO financial report to the taxing districts that contribute to the urban renewal district and had the required notice published. Jorgensen participated in the oral board for the police officer position, followed up with DSL about the code enforcement issues on that agency's property and spent much time working on abating the nuisance at the property located at 313 West 7th Street. He reminded councilors that their statements of economic interest will be due to the Government Ethics Commission by April 14.

Council Reports—duPlessis said he went over to the First Street landslide repair area and that it looks good. He asked about possibly adding parking spots on A Street by the vacant bank building. Howell said the new dugouts at the Little League field looks good. Lawrence said a flagpole is going to be installed at center field.

City Calendar/Announcements

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

Mayor Jerry Cole

W. Scott Jorgensen, City Administrator