

**City of Rainier**  
**Regular City Council Meeting**  
**March 6, 2023**  
**6 p.m.**  
**Rainier City Hall**

Mayor Jerry Cole called the council meeting to order at 6 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:** Public Works Director Sue Lawrence asked that city hall improvements and emergency water intrusion repair be added to the agenda. Council agreed by consensus. City Administrator W. Scott Jorgensen said that the RDIC has requested to be at the April meeting.

**Mayor's Address:** Mayor Jerry Cole read a proclamation into the record declaring March 21 Save Soil Day.

**Visitor Comments:** Rainier School District Superintendent Joseph Hattrick, school board members and employees gave a presentation about the bond initiative that will be on the May ballot. Don Puckett said that the audio quality of the council meeting recordings can be improved. He would also like to see the street blocked off during Little League games, with some signage to warn drivers about it. Puckett also urged councilors to review portions of the city charter.

**Consider Approval of the Consent Agenda**

Consider Approval of the February 6, 2023 Regular Council Meeting Minutes—Council President Mike Kreger moved to approve the consent agenda. That motion was seconded by Councilor Denise Watson and adopted unanimously.

**New Business**

- a. Timber Sale Discussion with City Forester—City Forester Pat McCoy said he was originally planning a timber sale for this year, but the market has been down the last few months. A sale in these economic conditions would be around \$100,000 less than the city's last harvest. He recommends waiting until the market improves and anticipates that it will be better next year. Councilor Scott Cooper moved to postpone the timber sale until next year. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously. Councilor Robert duPlessis asked about how the city's watershed and future harvests

could be affected by a proposed Oregon Department of Forestry rule change around riparian areas. McCoy said it would mostly affect the areas near fish bearing streams. The watershed already has buffers around streams and most of the trees in those areas are not as valuable as others. Most of the streams in the watershed are not fish bearing, so the city won't lose much harvestable acreage. Jorgensen asked how McCoy felt about the city possibly going to a two-year budget. McCoy said it would help by giving him more flexibility for when he can do harvests.

- b. Discussion with Rainier Drainage Improvement Company
- c. Parks Committee Recommendation on Master Plan Update—Dave Elkin from Juncus Studio gave a presentation on the master plan document. Jorgensen said that the Parks Committee recommended its adoption. Councilor Connie Budge mentioned that the pocket park west of 8<sup>th</sup> Street was not included in the plan and should be. Cooper wanted to make sure that the city be adequately able to maintain any future parks. Budge moved to adopt the master plan update. That motion was seconded by Cooper and adopted unanimously.
- d. Statement of Assurance—Jorgensen explained that this was recommended by the city's auditing firm as a further assurance that council has oversight over financial matters. Cooper moved to approve the statement. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously.
- e. Budget Discussion—Jorgensen said that one of council's goals in 2022 was to examine the possibility of doing a two-year budget. Doing it for the upcoming cycle would align with the state's budget, as well as both of the city's collective bargaining agreements. State budget law allows it, but council would have to pass a resolution. He could have that ready for the April meeting. duPlessis asked if this approach would limit the city's flexibility. Cole and Budge said there could be a mid-cycle review at the end of the first year. Cole said the budget committee could always reconvene, if need be. Jorgensen said a two-year budget could help public works plan better for long-term projects. Lawrence said it would save her much time and work. Funds get carried over between budgets because processes are not yet finished. Council agreed by consensus to move forward with a two-year budget.
- f. City Hall Improvements—Lawrence said she has received two bids for a remodel, including adding an emergency exit, a break room and another bathroom. She recommends the bid submitted by Lower Columbia Engineering for \$28,000 for project design and preparation. Cooper moved to approve the bid. That motion was seconded by Watson and adopted unanimously.
- g. Emergency Water Intrusion Repair—Lawrence said that past water issues in the basement of city hall could lead to mold. She's received one bid for the work and is expecting two more. The bid she received came in at \$14,000. If one of the other bids is lower, she will go with it, but doesn't want to wait until the next council meeting to get the work started. Budge moved to approve the expenditure of \$14,000 for the work. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously.

## **7. Unfinished Business**

- a. Fox Creek Update—Jorgensen said that a site visit was recently conducted with representatives of the city's engineering firm, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. ODOT originally wanted to do its portion of the project separately, but has since agreed to take the lead on obtaining grant funding for it. He spoke with Ree Armitage from U.S. Senator Ron Wyden's office about obtaining a letter of support for grant funding.
- b. Wastewater Treatment Plant Capacity Study—Lawrence said the study is part of the city's

agreement with the Department of Environmental Quality. Kreger moved to approve the study. That motion was seconded by duPlessis and adopted unanimously.

**Staff Report**—Police Chief Gregg Griffith said that Officer Phillip George should be done with his training by the end of March. Jorgensen said that he and Lawrence attended a recent League of Oregon Cities small cities meeting in St. Helens. He participated in the library board’s Mardi Gras murder mystery and accompanied Griffith to George’s graduation ceremony from the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. Contract negotiations were conducted with the Teamsters for the police contract. A ratification vote will be held soon. If the officers approve the contract, it will be brought back to the next meeting for council approval.

**Council Reports**—duPlessis said he and Jorgensen toured the new businesses that are coming to downtown. He also went to the soft opening at the new gift shop. Budge said she was pleased that the murder mystery went so well. Kreger said he and Jorgensen are going to Tillamook later on this month to meet with local officials about doing a project to honor veterans.

**City Calendar/Announcements**—The council goal setting work session is scheduled for March 13 at 6 p.m. at the senior center. The city/county dinner is scheduled for March 28 at 5:30 p.m.

Cole adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Council entered into executive session at 8 p.m. under ORS 192.660 (2)(h) to consult with counsel concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body with regard to current litigation or litigation likely to be filed and ORS 192.660 (2)(e) to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions. The executive session was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Cole called the council meeting back into session at 8:34 p.m. Cooper moved for the city to accept donated property. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously.

Cole adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

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Mayor Jerry Cole

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W. Scott Jorgensen, City Administrator