

City of Rainier
City Council Meeting
March 4, 2024
6 p.m.
Rainier City Hall

Mayor Jerry Cole called the council meeting to order at 6 p.m.

Council Present: Connie Budge, Robert duPlessis, Jeremy Howell, Mike Kreger, Paul Langner and Denise Watson

Council Absent: Scott Cooper

City Attorney Present: No

City Staff Present: W. Scott Jorgensen, City Administrator; Sarah Blodgett, City Recorder; Gregg Griffith, Police Chief

Flag Salute

Additions/Deletions from the Agenda: There were no additions or deletions at this time.

Mayor's Address: Mayor Jerry Cole said that the city was featured in a recent *Oregonian* article. He was pleased with how it turned out.

Visitor Comments: Candis Forrest said she had concerns about the budget. City Administrator W. Scott Jorgensen said the budget is based on projections. The Budget Committee will be reconvened in a few weeks to do a mid-biennial adjustment.

Approval of the Consent Agenda

Consider Approval of the February 5, 2024 Regular Council Meeting Minutes and Financial Statements—Councilor Paul Langner moved to approve the consent agenda. That motion was seconded by Council President Mike Kreger and adopted unanimously.

New Business

- a. Interim Public Works Director Appointment—Cole said the previous interim director, Pat McCoy, had other opportunities elsewhere. The City had to find another interim director. Russ Reigel interviewed and applied for it. There is an immediate need. Cole convened the public works council liaisons and they interviewed Reigel. Councilor Jeremy Howell said Reigel has a good work history, has been in Rainier for a long time and wants to stay here. Councilor Robert duPlessis said he spoke with Reigel about his experience and was impressed. Reigel has done much project management and he's level-headed. That's what the City needs at this time. duPlessis moved to appoint Reigel as the interim public works director. That motion was seconded by Kreger. There was a discussion about having Reigel and members of the public works staff obtain water and wastewater certifications. Reigel said he's open to training and has spent the last 10 years managing projects and overseeing multi-million dollar contracts, including budgets and timeframes. Kreger said he's worked beside Reigel. He stepped

- into difficult situations, handled them well and is a problem solver. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. Timber Sale Discussion—Jorgensen said that McCoy was ill and unable to make it to the meeting. But he's spoken with him about the timber sale. The City decided against doing a sale last year because the market was bad and it's even worse now. There are several timber mills all over Oregon that have closed in recent weeks. The recommendation is that the council does not do a timber sale and wait to see if the market improves over the next year. Council agreed by consensus.
 - c. Library Board Appointment—Councilor Connie Budge moved to appoint Erika Ladage to the library board. That motion was seconded by Howell and adopted unanimously.
 - d. Appointment of Councilor Paul Langner to Col-Pac Board of Directors and Col-Pac Loan Administration Board—Kreger moved to appoint Langner to those boards. That motion was seconded by Howell and adopted unanimously, with Langner abstaining.
 - e. Nuisance Abatement at 422 West C Street—Police Chief Gregg Griffith said the police department followed the process set forth in city ordinance. A letter was sent to the property owner, a citation was issued, calls were made and no response was received by the department. Jorgensen said that the property owner did not show up for a scheduled court appearance to address the citation. A couple of councilors have been complaining about the nuisance. The City will not incur much cost for the cleanup. Public works would just have to haul the garbage to the dump. Kreger moved to declare the property a nuisance. That motion was seconded by duPlessis and adopted unanimously.
 - f. Legislative Update—Jorgensen said that the Legislature is passing two main bills. The first is Senate Bill 1537 and that deals with housing issues. The second is House Bill 4002, which is the fix to Measure 110.
 - g. Planning Update—Jorgensen said that Winterbrook Planning has signed a contract with the Department of Land Conservation and Development to begin the urban growth boundary (UGB) land exchange process. A residential buildable land inventory is scheduled for April, then there will be an alternatives analysis that will include a memo on the feasibility of extending public facilities to areas currently within the UGB. Work sessions with the planning commission and council would take place in August or September, with hearings to take place in early fall. The last step of the process would be hearings with the county planning commission and board of commissioners in November or December.
 - h. Senior Center Expansion—Jorgensen explained that the City would have to take the lead on permitting the project and would need architectural drawings to obtain that. He's spoken with Lower Columbia Engineering about what it would take to make it happen. Cole said he would like to see a more specific request, including dollar amount, and which line item it would be used to fund it. Jorgensen said he would obtain that information and bring it back to the next council meeting.

Unfinished Business

- a. Second Reading of Ordinance 1095—Adding a New Chapter to Rainier Municipal Code (RMC) Title 18, Division V Regarding Accessory Dwelling Units, Amending RMC Section 18.05.100, Chapters 18.15, 18.20 and 18.25 and Repealing RMC Section 18.25.100—Kreger moved to approve the ordinance. That motion was seconded by Budge and adopted unanimously.
- b. Second Reading of Ordinance 1096—Street Vacation for a Portion of Hickory Street Between View Street and Old Rainier Road—Kreger moved to approve the ordinance. That motion was seconded by Langner and adopted unanimously, with Budge abstaining.

- c. Second Reading of Ordinance 1097—Street Vacation for the 20-Foot Alley Lying Within Block 39, Plat of Unit “C” in West Rainier—Kreger moved to approve the ordinance. That motion was seconded by Councilor Denise Watson and adopted unanimously.
- d. Fox Creek Update—Jorgensen said he applied for \$1.8 million in federal grant funding for the design work and environmental permitting for the project.

Staff Report—Griffith said that Officer Mark Nielsen has started at the police academy and will be back in June.

Council Reports—Langner said he attended the council of governments meeting. There was a discussion there about having regular bus service from Rainier to Longview. Budge promoted the library’s upcoming murder mystery event and attended the first meeting of the writing group.

City Calendar/Announcements—The council goal setting session is scheduled for Monday, March 18 at 5 p.m. at the senior center.

Cole adjourned the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

Mayor Jerry Cole

W. Scott Jorgensen, City Administrator