

**City of Rainier  
City Council Meeting  
April 1, 2024  
6 p.m.  
Rainier City Hall**

Mayor Jerry Cole called the council meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

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

**Council Absent:** None

**City Attorney Present:** No

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

**Flag Salute**

**Mayor’s Address:** Rainier Junior and Senior high honor society students and History Club members and volunteers were presented with awards for their efforts.

**Additions/Deletions from the Agenda:** City Administrator W. Scott Jorgensen said he wanted to add emergency sewer line repair under new business and also requested that audit report presentation be deleted, as it has been rescheduled for the May meeting. Councilor Scott Cooper moved to add emergency sewer line repair to the agenda. That motion was seconded by Council President Mike Kreger and adopted unanimously. Cooper moved to add senior center expansion to the agenda under unfinished business. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously. Councilor Connie Budge asked to add council work session on the public works department to the agenda under new business. That motion was seconded by Councilor Paul Langner and adopted unanimously.

**Visitor Comments:** There were no visitor comments at this time.

**Approval of the Consent Agenda**

Consider Approval of the March 4, 2024 Regular Council Meeting Minutes, March 18 Council Goal Setting Meeting Minutes and Financial Statements—Kreger moved to approve the consent agenda. That motion was seconded by Cooper and adopted unanimously.

**6. New Business**

a. Park Use Request for Summer Concert Series—Tina Curry from E2C Corporation said that the city is interested in community related activities and wants to utilize the park and the river for them. Her company has a history of event production. Her proposal is for River Time in Rainier. It will have free music and performers at the park on Wednesdays from June through August. The company will cover the costs. The City will provide an area for the stage. She will need help with garbage pickup, a building to store the stage and sound equipment. Mayor Jerry Cole said he and Jorgensen met with Curry to discuss all of this. Curry said her company follows Oregon Liquor Control regulations and has monitors at

the entrances providing oversight and checking coolers for alcohol. The beer garden will have fencing around it. Cole said the stage would be set up near the volleyball court and that there would be no concert the week of Rainier Days. Cooper moved to allow River Time at the city park. That motion was seconded by Kreger. Councilor Jeremy Howell asked about security. Curry said the company can hire an event security officer to have a presence. Police Chief Gregg Griffith said it should be fine as long as there is no overserving of alcohol. Cole said he trusts that the beer garden will be run responsibly. The motion passed on a 6-1 vote, with Howell opposed.

b. Audit Report Presentation—This item will be placed on the May 6 council meeting agenda.

c. Renewal of SL Environmental Consulting LLC Contract for Water and Wastewater Services—Jorgensen said the contract allows for three-month renewals and that is what has been requested. Councilor Robert duPlessis moved to approve a three-month renewal to the contract. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted on a 6-1 vote, with Budge opposed.

d. Oregon Government Ethics Commission Statement of Economic Interest Filings—Cole said this agenda item is a reminder to councilors to get their statements filed online.

e. Emergency Sewer Line Repair—Public Works Director Russ Reigel said that the line up to the school district property has a blockage caused by root intrusion. A pump truck was used to do pressure washing to clean and clear the line. There's one section where the pipe has shifted and two have pulled apart. They're going to have to be replaced. The current repair should hold until the end of the school year. Three-fourths of the line has been cleared. He's receiving bids to replace the sections that still need to be fixed. Cole said the school district might own the line. Reigel said there were also issues with the line near the RV business.

f. Senior Center Expansion—Cooper said the center wanted to apply for the grant to fund the expansion and needed a letter of support from the City, which was provided. The grant request was for \$40,000 and the center received a few thousand dollars less than that. The center was awarded the grant and received one bid. Work started on the project. That bid should have been brought to the City to manage the project. The process broke down. The senior center is seeking guidance on how to proceed. Cole said he was surprised at how far along the project was and that \$40,000 seemed like an unrealistic amount of money for getting it done. Cooper verified that the center has spent \$10,000 on the project so far. The bid document states that the City was to handle the permitting. Cole said it should have gone to council. The City is the landlords for the building and the senior center is the tenants. Cooper said the center isn't trying to get money out of the City. But there are no plans or permits in place for the project. Cole said he assumes most contractors wouldn't do work without a permit and reiterated that he has been supportive of the center for years. Budge said this is a learning experience and it can be tidied up. The project can be saved and repaired. There needs to be a plan. Cooper suggested that Reigel and Kreger meet at the center to see what needs to be done. Kreger said there is no footing. What's in place has to be dismantled. Howell said there need to be drawings and bids. Langner suggested that the project be reduced in scope. Maybe the expansion should be a covered area, but without electricity or heat. Cooper said the intent was to have space so multiple events can happen at the center at the same time. The grant funds don't have to be returned, but the center is required to do some reporting on the project. Budge said another round of grant funding may become available. Jorgensen asked if council wanted the senior center expansion added to future agendas under unfinished business. Council agreed by consensus.

g. Work Session on the Public Works Department—Budge said she would still like to do a work session on the public works department. It should include discussions about the state of public facilities, projects, priorities, timelines, wastewater and water certifications and trainings and the budget. Cole said the work session could be held immediately before the next council meeting. Council agreed by consensus that the work session would be held May 6 from 5 to 6 p.m., with REDCO from 6 to 6:30 p.m. and council at 6:30 p.m.

h. Audit—Langner wanted to add a discussion of the audit to the agenda and council agreed by consensus. He said he was unimpressed by the audit report. It's difficult to understand. Budge asked about doing an RFP for auditor services. Jorgensen said he has one prepared and could get it out the following day. Cole said there has been a lack of responsiveness, and that the firm currently used by the City didn't get it done in a timely fashion last year. Cooper moved to direct staff to do the RFP. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously.

#### **7. Unfinished Business**

a. Fox Creek Update—Jorgensen said he met with Regional Solutions at City Hall and it was agreed that this project would be a good one for Oregon Solutions to take on. That new agency is looking for projects to do and can provide a project manager. He has been in talks with Oregon Solutions and sent a letter of support for it taking over the project.

b. Wastewater Plant MOU—Jorgensen said he will go over the documents with Reigel.

**8. Staff Report**—Reigel said the public works staff abated the nuisance at 422 W C Street, painted curbs on A Street, worked to fix a sinkhole on Fox Creek and the sewer line leading up to the school district property. The insides of the park bathrooms are finished and the floors are being done. They have new dividers and locks have been ordered. The bathrooms should be open in a couple of weeks. He's going to be getting a bid for the repair to Richards Road and is asking staff about their certifications and the classes they plan on taking. For the city hall improvements, he's receiving bids for the roof and the windows. Budge asked about the damaged dock. Reigel said it has been removed. Griffith said that oral boards for new officer candidates are scheduled to take place soon. Jorgensen said he worked with the Department of Land Conservation and Development on the city's flood plain permitting process, attended the library board's writing group, the ribbon cutting ceremony for All About the Brisket, the Columbia County Jail Operating Citizens Advisory Committee meeting, library board meeting and met with county officials to discuss the Pacific Pride project. He participated in the library board's St. Patrick's Day murder mystery and met with U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley's field representative, along with Cole.

**9. Council Reports**-- Langner said he attended the recent Cowlitz Wahkiakum Council of Governments meeting with Jorgensen. Funds will soon become available that could potentially be used to establish a bus service between Rainier and Longview. Budge said the Area Agency on Aging is working on a plan for disaster relief and conducting a survey on how to reach seniors to determine what their needs are. Cooper said he spoke with the mayor about Cathlamet about how that city was able to provide wi-fi to its residents and businesses. duPlessis said he met with Reigel and will be doing so regularly.

#### **10. City Calendar/Announcements**

Cole adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m. The council entered into executive session at 8:10 p.m. under 192.660 (2)(e) to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions. The executive session adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Cole called the council meeting back into session at 8:31 p.m.

**12. New Business**

e. Authorize City Forester to Purchase Property—Kreger moved to authorize the mayor to act as the signer for a property purchase. That motion was seconded by Cooper and adopted unanimously.

Cole adjourned the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

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Mayor Jerry Cole

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W. Scott Jorgensen, City Administrator