

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

Mayor Jerry Cole called the council meeting to order at 6:38 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; Gregg Griffith, Police Chief; Russ Reigel, Public Works Director

Flag Salute

Mayor’s Address: Mayor Jerry Cole said that the groundbreaking ceremony earlier in the day for the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum had good attendance and went well.

Additions/Deletions from the Agenda: City Administrator W. Scott Jorgensen requested that Supplemental Environmental Project be added to the agenda as item h under new business. Council President Mike Kreger moved to add that item to the agenda. That motion was seconded by Councilor Scott Cooper and adopted unanimously.

Visitor Comments: Columbia County Sheriff’s Office Captain James Macfarlane said a jail levy measure will be on the May 21 ballot. A three-year levy was first passed in 2014 at .57 per thousand dollars of assessed value. It was renewed in 2017 and 2020 at the same rate. The current measure is for four years and will be at the rate of .87 per thousand dollars of assessed value.

Approval of the Consent Agenda

Consider Approval of the April 1, 2024 Regular Council Meeting Minutes and Financial Statements—Cooper moved to approve the consent agenda. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously.

New Business

a. Audit Report Presentation—Jeff Voreis from Pauly Rogers summarized the written report that was included in the meeting packet. Councilor Connie Budge said that she is a longtime councilor and had never previously been presented with the governing body questionnaire. She reviewed public record laws and had a series of questions and concerns about the questionnaire that were forwarded to Pauly Rogers. No response was ever received. Voreis said the questionnaire is standard procedure. Budge requested answers to her questions in writing. Councilor Robert duPlessis said he’s been on council for ten years and this is the first time he’s seen such a questionnaire. Voreis went over the methods used to conduct the audit. The results were a clean opinion with numbers fairly presented and

nothing needing to be changed. No management letter was issued. There were no material weaknesses regarding the internal controls or how items are recorded.

b. Resolution 24-05-01—Proclaiming Authorization of a Loan from the Oregon

Department of Environmental Quality Clean Water State Revolving Fund for the Wastewater Collection System Master Plan—Budge moved to approve the resolution. That motion was seconded by duPlessis and adopted unanimously.

c. Wastewater Plant Centrifuge Control Screen Replacement—Public Works Director Russ Reigel said that the centrifuge was repaired and shipped back earlier in the day. It should be installed in a couple of weeks. Cole said the replacement had to be done immediately, but added that Jorgensen and the public works liaisons were aware of the situation. Budge moved to approve the \$23,733.93 expenditure for the replacement. That motion was seconded by Councilor Jeremy Howell and adopted unanimously.

d. Intergovernmental Agreement with Columbia County for the Use of Work Crews—Kreger moved to approve the agreement. That motion was seconded by Councilor Paul Langner and adopted unanimously.

e. First Reading of Ordinance 1098—Amending Ordinance 917 and Chapter 10.30.010 of Rainier Municipal Code—Jorgensen explained that the police department has received complaints about people parking in front of mailboxes. The ordinance governing parking in the city was passed in 1987 and doesn't include any language prohibiting that practice. This proposed ordinance adds a single sentence to that ordinance and the portion of the city code that codifies it to prohibit parking in front of mailboxes.

f. City Hall Improvements—Reigel said he received three bids for the roof replacement and recommends the second bid of \$74,931. Jorgensen said the underwriter for the city's insurance company took aerial photographs of the city hall building and is asking that the roof be replaced. Langner moved to approve the bid. That motion was seconded by Cooper and adopted unanimously. Cole said he reviewed the three bids Reigel received for window replacement and prefers the third option. He researched the company and feels that it does good work. The original proposal was to replace the windows in the administrative office. However, the work won't get any cheaper. As such, he proposes that all the windows be replaced. City hall is an historic building and the city is responsible for taking care of it. Jorgensen said that window replacement was included in past city budgets. Cole suggested taking out a loan from the Timber Fund. The total amount should be around \$130,000. Jorgensen said that there is currently \$1.5 million in the Timber Fund. The City made a profit of around \$500,000 on its last timber sale. duPlessis moved to approve the bid to replace all the windows and frames, with the work to be funded through a zero percent loan from the timber fund. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously.

g. Executive Compensation—Cole said that historically, the City's administrative position has served as a stepping stone and that's hard on staff. The City went without one for two years and had one acting remotely for a while. Good executives are hard to find and he wants to form a council subcommittee to look at the compensation for that position for the sake of better enabling the City to retain its administrators. The subcommittee can compare the administrator salary with others in the region and make a recommendation. Cooper and Langner volunteered to serve as the subcommittee. Budge said that the administrator position now includes more duties than it did before and suggested looking at how the job description has changed.

h. Supplemental Environmental Project—Jorgensen recommends that the City pay the \$67,380 in fines to the Department of Environmental Quality in lieu of doing the Supplemental Environmental Project previously approved by that agency, as was discussed in the council work session earlier in the day. Kreger moved to authorize staff to pay the fines. That motion was seconded by Councilor Denise Watson and adopted unanimously.

Unfinished Business

- a. Fox Creek Update—Jorgensen said he has obtained the legal description of the vacant lot property and passed it on to its owner, along with an application to start the partitioning process. He put together a list of stakeholders and recently emailed everyone on it to inform them that Oregon Solutions may be taking over the project.
- b. Wastewater Plant MAO—Jorgensen said he reached out to the city’s engineer about the progress on the Wastewater Master Plan. The response is included in the meeting packet.
- c. Senior Center Expansion—Kreger said he looked at the project and noted some issues. He had a contractor take a look to get a second opinion. The work that has already been done doesn’t have to be torn down. It doesn’t have to be started over. The drawings required to obtain the permits don’t have to be engineered. Reigel said he has drawings for the building and can submit a letter to the county for the permits.

Staff Report—Police Chief Gregg Griffith said the new camera system is in place and the department has an applicant going through the hiring process. Jorgensen said he toured the county jail, worked on putting a lien on the house council declared a nuisance, attended meetings of the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments, submitted a pre-application for the Transportation and Growth Management Program Planning grant to fund a Transportation System Plan Update and the REDCO financial reports to the taxing districts that contribute to it. He participated in the oral boards for the police officer candidates and appeared on KOHI radio along with Cole to promote the upcoming summer concert series.

Council Reports—Langner said he attended the city/county dinner the previous week. Watson attended the League of Oregon Cities conference in Klamath Falls and the small city meeting in St. Helens. Howell and duPlessis thanked the public works department for its efforts in getting projects completed.

City Calendar/Announcements—Jorgensen said the first day to file for council positions is June 5 and nine signatures will be required for the petitions. The last day is August 27. Council agreed by consensus to convene the Budget Committee June 17 at 6 p.m.

Executive Session—*The Rainier City Council will hold an executive session under ORS 192.660 (2)(h) to consult with counsel concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body about current litigation or litigation likely to be filed.*

Jorgensen said he had no updates at this time, so an executive session is not necessary.

Cole adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Mayor Jerry Cole

W. Scott Jorgensen, City Administrator