

**City of Rainier  
City Council Meeting  
September 9, 2024  
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, Paul Langner and Denise Watson

**Council Absent:** Mike Kreger

**City Attorney Present:** No

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

**Flag Salute**

**Mayor’s Address:** Mayor Jerry Cole had no comments at this time.

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

**Visitor Comments:** Sierra Trass from Columbia Economic Team invited council members to attend the Doing Business in Columbia County event scheduled for September 24 at City Hall. Ryan Murphy with the Columbia County Sheriff’s Office said that the jail operating levy on the upcoming November general election ballot is critical to law enforcement. Councilor Paul Langner moved for council to support the levy. That motion was seconded by Councilor Robert duPlessis and adopted unanimously.

**Approval of the Consent Agenda**

Consider Approval of the July 15, 2024 Regular Council Meeting Minutes and Monthly Financial Statements—Councilor Scott Cooper moved to approve the consent agenda. That motion was seconded by Langner and adopted unanimously.

**New Business**

- a. NW Code Professionals Presentation on Building Department Services—NW Code Professionals Operations Manager and Chief Building Official Brandon Zipser said that the company was founded in 1973. It provides full services to 27 cities in Oregon and Washington and partial services to 29 more. The company can help enforce codes and local ordinances. They have the same qualifications as the county officials but offer better and more localized customer service. City Administrator W. Scott Jorgensen said he worked with the company when he was with the City of Aurora. They have regular office hours and also provide services to the cities of Vernonia and Clatskanie. Cooper moved to direct staff to negotiate with NW Code Professionals. That motion was seconded by Councilor Connie Budge and adopted unanimously.
- b. Lateral Committee Recommendations—Jorgensen said that the committee met and came to consensus about Ordinance 1099. The new draft clearly delineates property

- owner's responsibility for lateral lines up to the property line or public right of way. The committee also recommends that public works get a camera and do the collections system rehabilitation work one section of town at a time. Other recommendations include requiring all new lines to have written easements before being installed on other peoples' private property, requiring homeowners to have their sewer lines TV'd and repaired if needed before sale of home, updating the application and connection fees and requiring an infrastructure transfer agreement for new construction.
- c. Committee Updates—Jorgensen said that the consultants who are working on the Urban Growth Boundary land swap are requesting a joint work session of the council and Planning Commission once they've concluded their work. Now that public works has completed some major projects, he would like to reconvene the Parks Committee. There is still money in the budget for park improvements and the committee can prioritize those. Former councilor Levi Richardson served as the chair and the council liaison to that committee. Since Richardson is no longer on council, there will need to be another member in that role. Jorgensen is also going to start advertising to fill the vacancies on the Library Board. Cooper moved to appoint Langner as liaison to the Parks Committee. That motion was seconded by Councilor Jeremy Howell and adopted unanimously.
  - d. Approve Public Works Director Contract—duPlessis moved to approve the agreement. That motion was seconded by Cooper and adopted unanimously.
  - e. Fox Street and New Bedford Infrastructure Improvements—Public Works Director Russ Reigel said that the Fox Street project is complete and has been approved by the state. The City is now eligible for the next round of Small City Allotment grant funds. The original project bid covered paving for most of New Bedford, but not the last one-third of it. That total cost is around \$32,000. Langner moved to approve funds not to exceed \$32,000. That motion was seconded by duPlessis and adopted unanimously.
  - f. Award Bid for Water Plant Settlement Pond Sediment Removal—This matter was tabled to the October meeting so Reigel can gather more information.
  - g. League of Oregon Cities November 1 Small Cities Meeting—Council decided by consensus to hold the meeting in the council chambers and have it catered by El Tapatio.

### **Unfinished Business**

- a. Fox Creek Update—Jorgensen said that Oregon Solutions did its stakeholder interviews. That organization is willing to facilitate the continued convening of persons and entities to pursue grant funds for the project. He spoke with Betsy Johnson and she indicated some willingness to have her foundation split the cost with the City for Oregon Solutions' services. But the City will have to complete the vacant lot property purchase first. He's going to use a different surveying company to get that work done because the process has been delayed.
- b. Wastewater Plant MOU—Reigel said he submitted the Wastewater Master Plan update to the Department of Environmental Quality.
- c. Senior Center Expansion—Reigel said he has the drawings to submit to the county for permits.

**Staff Report**—Reigel said the aeration basin is being cleaned and the RAZ pumps are working. Police Chief Gregg Griffith said Officer Mark Nielsen has completed his training and Officer Mitch Matthews is now at the police academy. Jorgensen said he attended the Columbia Economic Team annual membership meeting, applied for the grant for a Transportation System Plan update, spoke with Sen. Suzanne Weber about the City's

legislative priorities and went to meetings for the Jail Operations Citizens Advisory Committee, Col-Pac, Northwest Area Commission on Transportation, Columbia County Cultural Coalition and the Rainier Chamber of Commerce board of directors.

**Council Reports**—Budge said she wants to discuss council liaisons. Jorgensen said he could put it on the agenda for the October meeting. Budget also wants the City to begin a dialogue with the Port of Columbia County. Jorgensen said he was planning to attend their next meeting and can invite them to send a representative to a future council meeting. There was a discussion about the documents that should be included on the website. Councilor Denise Watson said she met with the head of C.C. Rider. There's an agreement in place for the Rainier Chamber of Commerce to use the facility as a visitors center and the sheriff's office and Oregon State Police are also exploring using it as a public safety substation. Cooper promoted the September 28 dinner and auction at the senior center.

**New Business**

h. City Administrator Contract Extension—This item will be continued to the next meeting.

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