

**City of Rainier
City Council Meeting
October 7, 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, Mike Kreger, Paul Langner and Denise Watson

Council Absent: None

City Attorney Present: No

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

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: Jan Rich announced that the St. Helens senior center is laying off its paid staff as of October 16. The Rainier Senior Center is doing fundraisers and increased charges for its meals, but she is concerned about its long-term finances. Councilor Scott Cooper said that the center receives no funding from the county or state. Rich said the federal funds are being reduced. Columbia 9-1-1 Communications District Executive Director Mike Fletcher gave a presentation about that agency and the levy it will have on the November general election ballot. The levy has been in place since 1999 and is 42 percent of the agency’s annual needed revenue. Its passage would provide \$1.9 million in annual revenue to the district. The agency can implement user fees if the levy fails. Cole asked if council would like to approve a letter of support. Councilor Jeremy Howell moved to direct staff to draft a letter of support. That motion was seconded by Councilor Scott Cooper and adopted unanimously.

Approval of the Consent Agenda

Consider Approval of the September 9, 2024 Regular Council Meeting Minutes and Monthly Financial Statements—Cooper moved to approve the consent agenda. That motion was seconded by Council President Mike Kreger and adopted unanimously.

New Business

- a. Resolution 24-10-01—Establishing Procurement Policies and Procedures—Kreger moved to approve Resolution 24-10-01. That motion was seconded by Howell and adopted unanimously.
- b. Resolution 24-10-02—Designating the Longview Daily News as the City’s Official Newspaper of Notice—Cooper moved to adopt resolution 24-10-02. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously.
- c. Website Content—City Administrator W. Scott Jorgensen explained that even though

- the City upgraded its website, the content is the same as it was before. He asked councilors to bring a list of what they would like to see added to the November meeting.
- d. Liaison Roles and Definitions—Cooper said he would like to see a more truncated version of what was included in the meeting packet. Jorgensen said he will put something together to present at the next meeting.
 - e. Library Board Recommendation on Unattended Child Policy—There was a discussion about consequences for violating the policy. Jorgensen will make some edits and present at the next council meeting.

Unfinished Business

- a. Fox Creek Update—Jorgensen said he received a bid for surveying work to do the partition for the vacant lot property. He can get more bids if council wants. Langner said that Oregon Solutions will be putting together a contract for the continued convening of agency personnel to find funding for the work. Former Senator Betsy Johnson has offered to have her foundation help pay for Oregon Solutions' work, but on the condition that the vacant lot property purchase go through.
- b. Wastewater Plant MAO—Jorgensen said that the wastewater master plan update has been submitted to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The City is awaiting further comment from that agency. He received a letter from the Environmental Protection Agency and has signed a representation agreement with the attorney who put together the City's MAO with the DEQ to draft a response.
- c. Senior Center Expansion—Jorgensen said the City is awaiting a bid from a contractor for the work. The county has agreed to work with the contractor on the required permitting.
- d. Building Program Update—Jorgensen said he reached out to the Building Codes Division. There was an October 1 deadline for the City to apply for assuming its building program. The application process is so involved that there was no way to meet that deadline, so it would have to wait another year. Cole suggested that the City reach out to the county to see if the processes for permitting can be improved upon. Langner said he met individually with each of the county commissioners to express concerns. It was decided by consensus that Jorgensen, Cole, Langner and Watson could meet with county staff and a commissioner, with the goal of having the first meeting by the end of the year.
- e. City Administrator Contract Extension—Councilor Connie Budge said she reviewed Jorgensen's contract. His job description has been updated since then to assume several of the duties of the finance officer position that was eliminated. No compensation was added along with those duties, and he's paid less than the City's other department heads. She recommends that instead of instituting a bonus system, Jorgensen's base salary be boosted to \$105,000. Jorgensen said he was fine with that. Langner moved to extend Jorgensen's contract to June 30, 2027, with a base salary of \$105,000 as of his September anniversary date. That motion was seconded by Cooper and adopted unanimously.

Staff Report—Police Chief Gregg Griffith said the department is still recruiting for its vacant officer position. Jorgensen said he met with the jail commander, submitted a grant application along with Public Works Director Russ Reigel for the work on Richards Drive, attended meetings of the Port of Columbia County, the library board, the Rainier Chamber of Commerce, Columbia Economic Team and the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments. He's been speaking with City Forester Pat McCoy about a potential timber harvest and facilitated a field trip to City Hall for students at Solid Rock Christian School.

Council Reports—Councilors Robert duPlessis and Howell praised the work that Reigel has been doing as public works director. Cooper said that Sloan Nelson donated an ATM to the Senior Center. Langner said he and Jorgensen attended a ribbon cutting ceremony for the county’s John Gumm Building. He also went to the Doing Business in Columbia County luncheon that was recently held at City Hall. Cole thanked John Dewey for his 18 years of service to the City.

City Calendar/Announcements—Jorgensen said that the next League of Oregon Cities small cities meeting will be held at the council chambers November 1. The City of Scappoose is hosting the next city/county dinner October 22. Budge said she would like to attend.

Cole adjourned the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

Mayor Jerry Cole

W. Scott Jorgensen, City Administrator