

**City of Rainier  
City Council Meeting  
January 6, 2025  
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, Jeremy Howell, Mike Kreger, Paul Langner and Denise Watson

**Council Absent:** Robert duPlessis,

**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**

**New Business**

- a. Swearing in Mayor Jerry Cole and Councilors Mike Kreger, Paul Langner and Denise Watson

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

**Mayor's Address:** Mayor Jerry Cole thanked his family for attending his swearing in ceremony. He also thanked the council, citizens of Rainier and city staff. Cole then observed a moment of silence for the anniversary of former Police Chief Ralph Painter's passing.

**Visitor Comments:** Jordan Styner said that he had a tree fall on his property during the December 18 storm. The tree blocked the roadway. Another tree fell on other trees in the public right of way. He received an estimate for the removal. City Administrator W. Scott Jorgensen said council passed Resolution 21-07-01. It creates a fund to assist citizens with hazardous tree removals. Cole appointed councilors Mike Kreger, Paul Langner, Jorgensen and Reigel to a committee to evaluate the request and report back at the next council meeting. Mark Hooper said he lives on East 10<sup>th</sup> Street and is concerned about vehicles driving too fast. He would like to see some kind of traffic calming or signage there. Cole suggested that Hooper create a petition, have neighbors sign it and turn it into the city.

**Approval of the Consent Agenda**

Consider Approval of the December 2, 2024 Regular Council Meeting Minutes—Councilor Connie Budge moved to table the consent agenda. That motion was seconded by Councilor Denise Watson. Councilors Budge, Cooper, Howell and Watson voted in favor, Kreger voted in opposition and Langner abstained.

**New Business**

- b. Selection of Council President—Langner moved for Kreger to be council president. That

motion was seconded by Cooper. Councilors Budge, Cooper, Howell, Kreger, Langner and Watson voted in favor.

- c. Appointments to REDCO Board—Kreger moved to appoint the members of the city council as the REDCO board. That motion was seconded by Cooper. Councilors Budge, Cooper, Howell, Kreger, Langner and Watson voted in favor.
- d. Appointment of Budget Officer—Budge moved to appoint Jorgensen as the budget officer. That motion was seconded by Kreger. Councilors Budge, Cooper, Howell, Kreger, Langner and Watson voted in favor.
- e. Resolution 25-01-01—Setting Regular Meeting Days and Times—Budge moved to approve the resolution. That motion was seconded by Cooper. Councilors Budge, Cooper, Howell, Kreger, Langner and Watson voted in favor.
- f. Public Hearing on Proposed Street Vacation for the Portion of East Sixth Street Between East D Street and East E Street—Cole opened the public hearing at 6:26 p.m. Applicant Kim Adolph said that the platted street has served as a driveway for she and the other neighbors. Jorgensen said that city staff looked into it and has no objections. Cole said vacating that portion of the street would not landlock anyone. He closed the hearing at 6:28 p.m.
- g. First Reading of Ordinance 1100—Vacation for the Portion of East Sixth Street Between East D Street and East E Street
- h. Rate Study Update—Jorgensen said the rate study will be presented at the March meeting. Langner suggested that Jorgensen include information in the February meeting packets for rates from other local cities. He also suggested that any changes be enacted by July 1. If the city's rates are below market, regulatory agencies will force them to get there. Langner provided a handout showing what the city's rates would have been since 2018 if they were tied to the cost of living increases provided to Social Security recipients. Water and sewer connection fees are much higher in other local cities.

### **Unfinished Business**

- a. Fox Creek Update—Jorgensen said the most recent surveying work that he received for the vacant lot property is still incomplete.
- b. Wastewater Plant MAO—Reigel said the collections plan and facilities plans are being submitted to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Jorgensen credited Wastewater Plant Operator Brian Liga for the good job he's been doing of keeping the city in compliance.
- c. Senior Center Expansion—Reigel said work was being done on the inside of the building earlier in the day and the wall should be finished by the end of the week. The door should arrive around the middle of February.
- d. Liaison Roles and Definitions—Cooper said the intention was to familiarize councilors with the various functions of the City or outside groups that need support from council. Liaisons should listen to them and give guidance but not interfere with the operations. Cole said not all liaison assignments are the same. He would rather have the roles and definitions as guidelines for the sake of having more flexibility. Kreger said having the definitions too clearly defined could take away the ability to adjust the role. Jorgensen said a liaison to a city department performs different functions than one for an external group. Budge had another definition she would like to incorporate. Jorgensen said he can take all three definitions that have been submitted, put them together and bring them to the next meeting.

**Staff Reports**—Reigel said three of the windows for the library will be installed around January 20, at which point the last of them will be taken for restoration. Public Works Lead Bryan McConnell has applied for his Distribution 2 certification. Water Plant Operator Nyk Ladage and Reigel are applying for their Water Treatment 1 certifications and will be taking a class in February. Liga is applying for his Wastewater 1 certification and taking a class in March. Reigel is also looking at municipal asset management software. It’s around \$6,000 per year and can be offset by eliminating an unnecessary expense that has been identified by staff. Police Chief Gregg Griffith said Officer Mitch Matthews graduates from the police academy January 17. Jorgensen said he and Reigel have been talking with engineers about the collections system master plan update and DEQ about modifications to the MAO.

**Council Reports**

**City Calendar/Announcements**

Cole adjourned the meeting at 7:16 p.m.

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Mayor Jerry Cole

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W. Scott Jorgensen, City Administrator