

**City of Rainier
City Council Meeting
February 3, 2025
6 p.m.
Rainier City Hall**

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

Council Present: Connie Budge, Robert duPlessis, Jeremy Howell and Mike Kreger

Council Absent: Scott Cooper, Paul Langner and Denise Watson

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

Additions/Deletions from the Agenda: City Administrator W. Scott Jorgensen said that Sierra Trass from Columbia Economic Team rescheduled her presentation for the March meeting. Public Works Director Russ Reigel said he wanted to add an item about Neer City Road Signs to new business. Councilor Connie Budge moved to make the addition. That motion was seconded by Council President Mike Kreger. Councilors Budge, Robert duPlessis, Jeremy Howell and Kreger voted in favor, with none opposed.

Mayor's Address: Mayor Jerry Cole read a proclamation into the record declaring February American Heart Month.

Visitor Comments: Tina Curry thanked the City's public works and police departments for their help with the Rivertime in Rainier concert series. The community was very supportive and she's confirming bands for the next series and plans to announce those soon. She's putting together a Columbia County Directory that will have 1500 copies printed. It will also be online and will include sections for local governments and nonprofit organizations.

Consider Approval of the Consent Agenda

Consider Approval of the December 2, 2024, January 6, 2025 Regular Council Meeting Minutes and Monthly Financial Reports—Budge moved to approve the consent agenda. That motion was seconded by Kreger. Councilors duPlessis, Howell and Kreger voted in favor, with none opposed. Budge abstained.

New Business

- a. Wastewater Master Plan and Collections System Master Plan Presentation—Yarrow Murphy from Leeway Engineering said that under the Mutual Agreement and Order (MAO), the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is requiring the City to reduce flows through a series of disconnections and fixes to its cleanouts and catch basins. The City must also complete additional flow monitoring. City Engineer Preston Van Meter said the schedule set forth in the MAO is achievable. There needs to be some improvements to the aeration basin and the headworks at the wastewater plant. There need to be more pumps at the effluent pump station. If the City can reduce the flows going into the wastewater plant, less work will be required later. A new clarifier is also needed. But that would enable an older one to be used for septage receiving so the City can generate funds to service the debt for the upgrades. A new solids building

- can replace the centrifuge, which has proven problematic. He is asking council to adopt the master plans to keep the City on the schedule set forth in the MAO and in order to start securing funding for the required projects. The pre-design report for the wastewater plant upgrades is due in September and West Yost will have to start work on it soon. Budge moved to adopt the master plans. That motion was seconded by Kreger. Budge, duPlessis, Howell and Kreger voted in favor, with none opposed.
- b. Doing Business in Rainier and Columbia County Presentation
 - c. Hazardous Tree Removal Request—Jorgensen said the committee that was formed to review the request was in favor of reimbursing the entire amount. Budge moved to approve the reimbursement. That motion was seconded by Kreger. Budge, duPlessis, Howell and Kreger voted in favor, with none opposed.
 - d. Gas Tax Discussion—Council agreed by consensus to table this discussion to the next meeting.
 - e. Neer City Road Signs—Reigel said he wants to add a total of five signs indicating a 10 mile per hour speed limit and sharp curves, for a total of around \$1,000. Council agreed by consensus.

Unfinished Business

- a. Fox Creek Update—Jorgensen said the petition to partition the vacant lot property was initially rejected by the city planner. The surveyor made some changes and re-submitted it. That updated application is currently under review.
- b. Wastewater Plant MAO—Jorgensen said the updated MAO needs to be approved so it can be signed and sent to DEQ. Kreger moved to approve the updated MAO. That motion was seconded by Howell. Budge, duPlessis, Howell and Kreger voted in favor, with none opposed.
- c. Senior Center Expansion—Reigel said the door should be arriving soon.
- d. Second Reading of Ordinance 1100—Vacation for the Portion of East Sixth Street Between East D Street and East E Street—Kreger moved to approve Ordinance 1100. That motion was seconded by Budge. Budge, duPlessis, Howell and Kreger voted in favor, with none opposed.
- e. Rate Study Update—Council agreed by consensus to table this item to the next meeting.
- f. Liaison Roles and Definitions—Howell moved to adopt the definition that was included in the meeting packet. That motion was seconded by Budge. Budge, duPlessis, Howell and Kreger voted in favor, with none opposed.

Staff Report—Reigel said the permit for solids at the wastewater plant has been renewed, so those can now be hauled away. He’s working on another permit to spread them in the watershed. Under the MAO, the City has 60 days to decide on a supplemental environmental project. He recommends submitting the project to do disconnections on Fern Hill, which DEQ had previously approved. Council agreed by consensus. Jorgensen said he had a meeting with a consultant about strategies for applying for a Transportation System Plan grant. He’s been following up with the Oregon Department of Transportation about the \$200,000 in fund exchange dollars that have yet to be distributed to the City and Rainier School District Superintendent Chad Holloway about the \$20,000 that the district owes the City for past sewer line repairs. Jorgensen met with city officials in Vernonia to discuss the public outreach that city did with its successful urban growth boundary land swap and scheduled meetings with members of the Legislature’s Capital Construction Subcommittee to discuss the City’s funding request. He and Police Chief Gregg Griffith attended Officer Mitch Matthews’ graduation from the police academy. Jorgensen, Reigel and Cole met with Capital Construction Subcommittee Co-Chair Rob Nosse in Portland.

Council Reports—Kreger said he, Jorgensen and Reigel attended City Day at the Capitol and lobbied legislators for the City’s funding request.

City Calendar/Announcements—Cole said the quarterly city/county dinner was scheduled for the following evening and he planned to attend. Rosemary Reynolds has scheduled an event at the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum February 22 to promote the book she published about late former Police Chief Ralph Painter. Jorgensen said a joint council and planning commission work session on the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) land swap is scheduled for February 10. The Rainier Chamber of Commerce annual awards event is scheduled for February 13. An open house about the UGB land swap is scheduled for March 10 and the next planning commission meeting is scheduled for March 17.

Cole adjourned the meeting at 7:24 p.m.

Mayor Jerry Cole

W. Scott Jorgensen, City Administrator