

**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

City of Rainier
Joint City Council and Planning Commission Work Session
February 10, 2025
6 p.m.
Rainier City Hall

Mayor Jerry Cole called the council meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Council Present: Connie Budge, Robert duPlessis, and Mike Kreger Denise Watson

Commissioners Present: Erin O’Connell, Dena Nordstrom and Nina Pogue

Council Absent: Scott Cooper, Jeremy Howell and Paul Langner

Commissioners Absent: Nic Gratzner and Jan Rich

City Attorney Present: No

City Staff Present: W. Scott Jorgensen, City Administrator; Skip Urling, City Planner

New Business

a. Urban Growth Boundary Land Swap Presentation—City Administrator W. Scott Jorgensen discussed the issues involving Rainier’s Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). There’s a lack of buildable land for housing in Rainier because much of the UGB is in areas that are either hilly or prone to flooding. The City’s original comprehensive plan calls for any future development to be near the school district property. He applied for a grant to fund a planning consultant to do the analysis for a UGB land swap, and it was awarded. Other cities have done a similar land swap process, including Sutherlin in Southern Oregon and nearby Vernonia. Winterbrook Planning worked on Vernonia’s project, so the City chose to work with them. Winterbrook Senior Planner Grace Coffey gave an overview of the state’s technical requirements for a land swap. Rainier has many slopes, which makes it difficult to service those areas with public facilities. Under the proposed swap, the Old Rainier Road Slopes Area and Beaver Creek Flood Plain would be removed from the UGB and the Parkdale area by the school district property would be added. There are five areas close to the UGB that were analyzed as potential alternatives. The area near the school district property is fairly unconstrained and serviceable by public utilities. Around 120 total acres would be swapped and would retain current county zoning. The county expressed reservations about removing a trailer park from the UGB. Any eventual annexations into the City would not be forced.

Mayor Jerry Cole adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

DRAFT

Scott Jorgensen

From: Fashing, Bill <bfashing@cwco.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 13, 2025 9:39 AM
To: Scott Jorgensen
Cc: Seeks, Jim
Subject: River Cities

Scott

The River Cities board met yesterday and was supportive of considering the issue more formally at their next meeting. They meet monthly.

They were excited to learn of the possible support from Rainier.

In discussions with staff this morning we came up with this ask framework. I understand that this Council will not be able to make a firm commitment for an extended period, but we are hoping to get an indication of some willingness to support for at least four years.

In summary, we are asking for the following.

\$10,000 during CY 2025

\$10,000 during CY 2026

\$14,000 during CY 2027

And \$14,000 during CY 2028.

The \$14,000 covers almost 20% of the total match funds that will be required given current funding levels.

I am happy to attend an upcoming Council meeting to provide information and answer questions. Jim Seeks will also attend as possible.

February 17 is a holiday, are you meeting the 18th? I have a meeting in Woodland but can miss it if necessary.

February 24 – Not available due to travel schedule

March 3 – Available

March 10 – Available

Let me know how you want to proceed.

Thanks,

Bill

*Bill Fashing, Executive Director
Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments
PO Box 128, Kelso, WA 98626*

Chapter 4—Ballot titles

All tax ballot titles have a common format.

1. **Caption:** 10-word limit. This is a title identifying the subject of the measure. The name of the district and dollar amounts are **not** included in the caption.
2. **Question:** 20-word limit. The question asks voters if they will allow the district to impose a dollar amount of tax or a tax rate. It must be stated so that it can be answered "yes" or "no."

In addition, a "yes" response must mean that voters approve the measure, while a "no" response must mean they do not approve.

Except for general obligation bond measures, the question must contain the **amount of property tax in dollars and cents or the tax rate per \$1,000 of assessed value** being requested and the **first fiscal year** the tax will be imposed. For local option tax measures, it must include the **purpose of the tax**, such as operating or capital project, and the **number of years** that the tax will be imposed (OAR 150-280-0020).

The word "district" can be substituted if the full name of the local government is in the ballot title summary (OAR 150-280-0020).

The following statement is required directly after the question for new local option taxes: "This measure may cause property taxes to increase more than three percent." This statement is not included in the 20-word limit [ORS 280.070(4)].

If the measure asks voters to renew a currently existing local option levy, this statement is required instead: "This measure renews current local option taxes." This statement is not included in the 20-word limit (ORS 280.075).

A measure renews a current local option tax if it is for substantially the same purpose and asks for a rate or amount that is equal to or less than the current rate or amount.

3. **Summary:** 175-word limit. The explanation is in plain, factual, and nontechnical language. It describes the specifics of the question without advocating a "yes" or "no" response to the question.

Unless the election is held in May or November, **the first sentence of the summary must be the following statement:** "This measure may be passed only at an election with at least 50 percent voter turnout." This statement is not included in the 175-word limit.

For local option taxes, the summary must include the **total amount of tax** to be raised by the measure. If the local option tax is in the form of a rate, the summary must also give an estimate of the **amount of tax to be raised in each year** in which the tax will be imposed. This statement is not included in the 175-word limit [ORS 280.075(2)].

If you are asking for approval of a fixed-dollar local option tax, you may include the estimated rate per \$1,000 of assessed value that is expected from the tax amount requested. This is optional. It allows voters to more easily figure how the new taxes will affect their property. To determine the rate, divide the amount requested by the total assessed value in the district, then multiply by 1,000. For example, if you are asking for a tax amount of \$100,000 and the assessed value in your district is estimated at \$50,000,000, the estimated rate would be \$2.00 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

If the estimated rate for a fixed-dollar levy is given in the summary, you must include the following statement: "The estimated tax cost for this measure is an **ESTIMATE ONLY** based on the best information available from the county assessor at the time of the estimate and may reflect the impact of early payment discounts, compression and the collection rate." This statement is not counted as part of the 175-word limit [ORS 280.075(1)].

Ballot measure examples

Multiple-year local option tax—fixed-dollar amount [ORS 280.060(1)(a)]

Caption—10 words

- a. Purpose is to identify the type of tax.
- b. Do not put district name or dollar amounts in the caption.

Question—20 words

- a. Include the name of the taxing district. The word “district” may be substituted for the full name if the full name is included in the summary.
- b. State the amount of tax to be imposed each year in dollars.
- c. State whether the tax is for operating purposes or capital projects.
- d. State the first fiscal year the tax will be imposed and the number of years the tax will be imposed.
- e. If this is a new local option tax, include the following statement after the question: **“This measure may cause property taxes to increase more than three percent.”** If the measure is renewing a currently existing local option tax, include the following statement instead: **“This measure renews current local option taxes.”** These statements are not counted in the 20-word limit.

Summary—175 words

- a. Explain the purpose in plain language. Do not advocate a yes or no answer.
- b. This example is in May, so the double majority statement is not included.
- c. Include the total amount of tax to be raised by the measure.
- d. If an estimated rate per \$1,000 is given, include the statement: **“The estimated tax cost for this measure is an ESTIMATE ONLY based on the best information available from the county assessor at the time of the estimate and may reflect the impact of early payment discounts, compression and the collection rate.”** This statement is not counted in the 175-word limit.





May 2022 election

Caption: Six-year capital projects local option tax.





Question: Shall Sample District impose \$20,830 each year for six years for capital projects beginning in 2022–2023? This measure may cause property taxes to increase more than three percent.

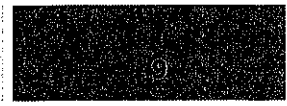
Summary: The taxes needed for six years total \$124,980, which will be imposed in equal amounts of \$20,830 each year. The taxes will be used to purchase office furniture and equipment for the district headquarters building. It is estimated that the proposed tax will result in a rate of \$0.01 per \$1,000 of assessed value in the first year. The estimated tax cost for this measure is an ESTIMATE ONLY based on the best information available from the county assessor at the time of the estimate and may reflect the impact of early payment discounts, compression and the collection rate.

2024 Local Elections Calendar

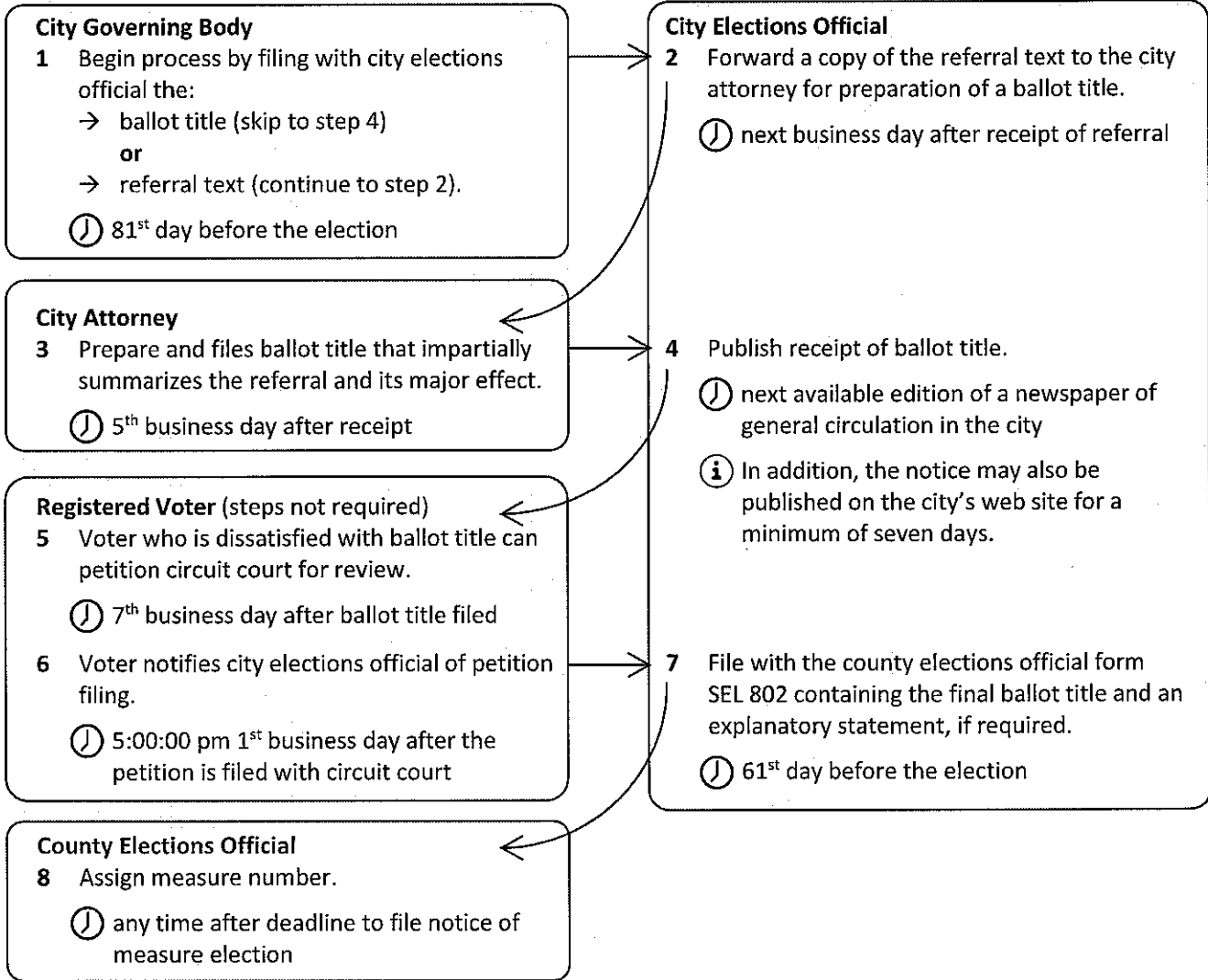
 District Measures	March 12	May 21	August 27	November 5
Last Day for County Elections Official to Publish → notice of district measure election	See ORS 255.085			
Last Day for County, City, or District Governing Body to File with Local Elections Official → ballot title for publication of notice or → referral text so a ballot title can be written	December 22, 2023	March 1	June 7	August 16
Last Day for Local Governing Body to File with County Elections Official → Form SEL 801 Notice of Measure Election - County  Form may only be filed upon completion of the ballot title challenge process.	January 11	March 21	June 27	September 5
→ Form SEL 802 Notice of Measure Election - City  Form may only be filed upon completion of the ballot title challenge process.	January 11	March 21	June 27	September 5
→ Form SEL 803 Notice of Measure Election – District  Form may not be filed until after the deadline for the immediately preceding election has passed and only upon completion of the ballot title challenge process.	January 11	March 21	June 27	September 5
Last Day to File with County Elections Official → arguments for inclusion in county voters' pamphlet	January 16	March 25	July 1	September 9

2025 Local Elections Calendar

 District Measures	March 11	May 20	August 26	November 4
Last Day for County Elections Official to Publish → notice of district measure election	See ORS 255.085			
Last Day for County or City Governing Body to File with Local Elections Official → ballot title for publication of notice or → referral text so a ballot title can be written	December 20, 2024	February 28	June 6	August 15
Last Day for Local Governing Body to File with County Elections Official → Form SEL 801 Notice of Measure Election - County  Form may only be filed upon completion of the ballot title challenge process.	January 9	March 20	June 26	September 4
→ Form SEL 802 Notice of Measure Election - City  Form may only be filed upon completion of the ballot title challenge process.	January 9	March 20	June 26	September 4
→ Form SEL 803 Notice of Measure Election – District  Form may not be filed until after the deadline for the immediately preceding election has passed and only upon completion of the ballot title challenge process.	January 9	March 20	June 26	September 4
Last Day to File with County Elections Official → arguments for inclusion in county voters' pamphlet	January 13	March 24	June 30	September 8




City Referral Steps



Competing Measure

If a qualified initiative is filed by the city elections official at a city governing body meeting that occurs on the 90th day before the election and the governing body refers a competing measure, the ballot title process including the challenge period must be completed no later than the 61st day before the election.

City Referral Process

 Local charter or ordinance requirements do not supersede ORS 250.035 relating to ballot title format or the statement of measures filed under ORS 254.095.

Once a city governing body refers a measure for the voters to decide, a ballot title must be written. All ballot titles must comply with the requirements in ORS 250.035.

Ballot Title Process

ORS 250.035, 250.275, 250.285, and 250.296

A ballot title is a concise and impartial statement prepared by the city governing body or the city attorney that will be printed on the ballot summarizing the referral and its major effect. Any voter may challenge the ballot title in circuit court and the referral may only appear on the ballot once this process is complete.

1 Preparation

For any referral, the city governing body may:

→ prepare and file a ballot title with the city elections official

or

→ file referral text with the city elections official.



Form SEL 805 Request for Ballot Title – Preparation or Publication of Notice may be used to file:

→ the text of the referral so a ballot title can be written

or

→ the ballot title written by the governing body or city attorney for publication of notice.

The city elections official will forward a copy of the referral text to the city attorney for preparation of a ballot title. After receiving the referral, the city attorney writes and files a ballot title with the city elections official.

2 Format

Each ballot title must contain all of the following elements:

→ a caption that does not exceed 10 words describing the subject of the referral;

→ a question that does not exceed 20 words plainly phrasing the main purpose of the referral so that an affirmative response to the question corresponds to a yes vote on the referral; and

→ a summary that does not exceed 175 words describing the major effect of the referral.



Additional ballot title requirements apply to referrals requesting a general obligation bond, a local option tax, or a permanent rate limit.



For further information you may contact the Elections Division, your bond counsel, or the Oregon Department of Revenue, Property Tax Division 800 356 4222.



3 Notice

After receiving a ballot title from the city governing body or the city attorney, the city elections official publishes notice in the next available edition of a newspaper of general circulation that any voter may challenge the ballot title. It is advisable to also publish the notice on the city website for a minimum of seven days. The notice must include all of the following:

- a statement that a ballot title has been received and that any voter may file a petition for review of the ballot title;
- the deadline for filing a petition for review of the ballot title with the circuit court; and
- the ballot title provided by the city governing body or city attorney or information on how to obtain a copy.

! Notice must be published prior to the deadline to file a petition to review the ballot title.

4 Ballot Title Appeal

Any registered voter who is dissatisfied with the ballot title may petition the circuit court to review the ballot title. If a registered voter files a petition to review a ballot title with the circuit court, the voter must:

- name the city governing body or city attorney as respondent, depending who prepared the ballot title;
- state the reasons why the ballot title is insufficient, not concise or unfair; and
- notify the city elections official in writing that a petition has been filed.

! If the notification of the city elections official is not timely filed, the petition to the circuit court may be dismissed.

5 Circuit Court Review

When a petition is filed, the circuit court conducts its review and renders its decision certifying a ballot title meeting the requirements of ORS 250.035. The review of the ballot title by the circuit court shall be the first and final review.

i If the Circuit Court certifies a different ballot title, the city elections official forwards the final ballot title to the city official authorized to submit notice of measure election for preparation of form SEL 802.

Explanatory Statement

ORS 251.067, 251.285, 251.345, and OAR 165-022-0040

An explanatory statement is an impartial, simple and understandable statement, of no more than 500 words, that explains the measure.

If the county is producing a voters' pamphlet, the city governing body must prepare and file an explanatory statement.

i Cities are encouraged to adopt and comply with an ordinance that provides a judicial review procedure for an explanatory statement which is contested.



See the State Voters' Pamphlet Manual available at www.oregonvotes.gov for additional requirements for referrals appearing in the state voters' pamphlet.

Certification of Referral to Ballot

ORS 254.095

The city governing body must certify that the challenge process is complete and file the final ballot title on:



Form SEL 802 Notice of Measure Election – City.



If the county is producing a voters' pamphlet, the county elections official will reject any SEL 802 that is not accompanied by an explanatory statement.

After receiving a city referral, the county elections official assigns a measure number. County elections official then provides Notice of Measure Election to the Elections Division.



Ballot measure numbers will not be repeated. If the measure is later removed from the ballot, the measure number will not be re-used.

Withdrawal of Referral

To withdraw a referral, the city governing body must complete and file with the county elections official:



Form SEL 804 Withdrawal - Notice of Measure Election.



The SEL 804 must be submitted no later than the 61st day before the election.



City Administrator Report
March 3, 2025 Rainier Council Meeting

Mayor Cole and Members of the Council,

I spent part of January 27 preparing outreach mailers for property owners that could be affected by the potential Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) land swap. The following day, I attended City Day at the Capitol with Public Works Director Russ Reigel and Council President Mike Kreger.

On January 29, I attended a funding meeting with Rural Communities Assistance Corporation (RCAC) and a work session about State Revolving Funds (SRF).

I submitted additional materials to the Legislative Fiscal Office February 4 for the City's state funding request and had a discussion with county officials about the potential UGB land swap. Two days later, I met with Michael Morter from DiamondM Consulting about possible funding opportunities for the water line project on Debast Road.

A League of Oregon Cities small cities meeting was held in Scappoose February 7, and I attended.

On February 11, I attended the library board meeting and chaired the Jail Operating Citizens Advisory Committee meeting. The following day, I spoke with Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments Director Bill Fasching about possible bus service from Rainier to Longview.

I attended the February 13 meetings of Col-Pac and the Northwest Area Commission on Transportation.

Along with Reigel, I met with officials at RCAC to discuss the City's SRF application. I also submitted the City's funding disbursement request to the Department of Environmental Quality for the \$350,000 that was spent on the collections system and wastewater master plan updates.

On February 19, I attended the Rainier Chamber of Commerce board of directors meeting. The following day, I performed HR duties for the vacant Utility I position.

Lastly, I helped set up the February 22 book signing event at the museum and served as the emcee.

At Your Service,

W. Scott Jorgensen, Executive MPA
City Administrator

March Public Works Council Report

We have been awarded the \$5,000 grant for a push camera with pipe locator that we applied for last month. This is a reimbursement grant, and we will be ordering a camera very soon.

Mid-February the crew had to deal with multiple large water leaks mostly around Fern Hill Road and all different lines. A 6" line on maple drive broke, a 4" line on Fern Hill broke, a fitting on the service line on Fern Hill failed, a 2" line on Fern Hill split, a fitting broke on Lewis Rd, a fitting behind city hall broke, plus 2 minor leaks on service lines.

Senior center is done. Final inspection is scheduled for 3-3-2025.

The last round of city hall windows is scheduled to be installed in the first week of March.

Nyk and I have been working on resolving all the deficiencies from our water survey done in October. We received the survey report on January 29, and we must respond with a written action plan by March 19th. We will have everything corrected before March 19.

Road signs are ordered for Near City Rd

Certifications:

Bryan passed his distribution 2 test. He will now be the cities designated operator for the distribution system. This will satisfy one of our deficiencies with OHA.

Nyk has been approved to take water treatment 2 test. He is taking some water treatment, pump, and math classes the first week of March then testing for treatment 2 march 7th.

Brian had some issues with his account with DEQ. Waiting for DEQ to correct so he can schedule his test.