

**City of Rainier
City Council Meeting
January 5, 2026
6 p.m.
Rainier City Hall**

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

Council Present: Scott Cooper, Robert duPlessis, Mike Kreger, Paul Langner, Charleen Ratkie and Denise Watson

Council Absent: Jeremy Howell

City Attorney Present: No

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

Flag Salute

Additions/Deletions from the Agenda: Mayor Jerry Cole said that Columbia 911 Executive Director Jeremy Hipes rescheduled his appearance for the March meeting. Councilor Paul Langner moved to add Sewer Fund Balance and Performance and City Hall Improvements to the agenda. That motion was seconded by Councilor Robert duPlessis. Councilors Scott Cooper, duPlessis, Mike Kreger, Paul Langner, Charleen Ratkie and Denise Watson all voted in favor. None were opposed.

Mayor's Address: Cole observed a moment of silence for late Police Chief Ralph Painter.

Visitor Comments: City Administrator W. Scott Jorgensen read a remark into the record from a resident requesting stops signs on all four corners of East 3rd and D streets. He also read remarks into the record from the president of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police. That organization is seeking nominations for its upcoming annual awards banquet. Charlie Schreiner said he lives next door to a vacant city-owned lot. It can't be built on because of water lines going through it. He wants to use fill dirt and turn it into a community garden maintained by seven families in the neighborhood. Cole directed staff to place the item on the agenda for the February meeting. Rainier Chamber of Commerce President Nicole Jordan went over that organization's accomplishments for 2025 and plans for 2026.

Consider Approval of the Consent Agenda

Consider Approval of the December 8, 2025 Regular Council Meeting Minutes and Monthly Financial Statements—Cooper moved to approve the consent agenda. That motion was seconded by Watson. Councilors Cooper, duPlessis, Kreger, Langner, Ratkie and Watson all voted in favor. None were opposed.

New Business

- a. Fox Creek Collaborative Discussion—Rachel Barry from the Lower Columbia River Watershed Council said that organization was approached by Oregon Solutions, which is looking for an entity to convene partners for the Fox Creek project. The objective is

to move it forward without the City taking on financial risk. Cole said the City is responsible for the portion under C Street, but the project also involves private property and Highway 30, which is maintained by the Oregon Department of Transportation. The City doesn't have the money to purchase the private property. Barry said she would like a couple of councilors to serve on a steering committee to help guide the efforts. Council agreed by consensus, with Watson and Ratkie agreeing to serve on the steering committee. Jorgensen presented a cooperative agreement with the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership for its ongoing stewardship efforts along Fox Creek. Kreger moved to approve the cooperative agreement. That motion was seconded by Watson. Langner said there was a failed Department of State Lands mitigation in town and he wants to avoid a similar situation happening again. He suggested that the agreement include a long-term commitment and moved to amend the previous motion to include a provision that the work be done for a period of up to seven years. That motion was seconded by Cooper. Cooper, duPlessis, Kreger, Langner, Ratkie and Watson all voted in favor. None were opposed. Cooper, duPlessis, Kreger, Langner, Ratkie and Watson all voted in favor of Kreger's original motion to approve the agreement. None were opposed.

- b. Sewer Fund Balance and Performance—Langner said he met with Jorgensen and Public Works Director Russ Reigel. They informed him that the Sewer Fund is not performing well and has shortfalls. He would like to discuss it at the next meeting. Jorgensen said the audit report is scheduled to be presented at the February meeting. He would like to form a revenue committee consisting of councilors and budget committee members.
- c. City Hall Improvements—Langner said he would like to put any improvements in abeyance until there's more clarity on the City's overall financial position.

Unfinished Business

- a. Second Reading of Ordinance 1104—Vacating a 306-Foot Alley Lying Within Block 2 Vogel Tract between E Norwood Street and Fisher Street—Kreger moved to approve the ordinance. That motion was seconded by duPlessis. Cooper, duPlessis, Kreger, Langner, Ratkie and Watson all voted in favor. None were opposed.
- b. Wastewater Plant MAO—Reigel said he's putting together a report to the Department of Environmental Quality about the city's collections system. Flow monitoring started the previous Friday.

Reports—Police Chief Gregg Griffith said Officer Michael Hernandez officially started his position today. Hernandez will be going to the police academy February 2 and will be back May 22.

City Calendar/Announcements—Jorgensen said there will be a REDCO meeting immediately prior to the February 2 council meeting. Parks Committee is scheduled to meet January 12.

Cole adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Mayor Jerry Cole

W. Scott Jorgensen, City Administrator