

**City of Rainier**  
**Regular City Council Meeting**  
**May 3, 2021**  
**6 p.m.**  
**Rainier City Hall**

Mayor Jerry Cole called the Regular Council Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

**Council Present:** Connie Budge, Robert duPlessis, Mike Kreger, Jenna Weaver

**Council Absent:** Brenda Tschida, Levi Richardson

**City Attorney Present:** No

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

**Flag Salute**

**Additions/Deletions from the Agenda:** Mayor Cole said that Chief Griffith wanted to add Columbia County Deadly Physical Force Plan to the agenda as a separate item. Council President Mike Kreger moved to add that item to the agenda. That motion was seconded by Councilor Robert duPlessis and adopted unanimously. City Administrator W. Scott Jorgensen said an issue has come up with utility bill relief, so he would like to add that to the agenda. Kreger moved to add it to the agenda. That motion was seconded by Councilor Jenna Weaver and adopted unanimously.

**Mayor's Address:** Cole said that Councilor Rick Sanders passed away April 18. He read Sanders' biography into the record and said the deceased councilor was proud to be a veteran. Sanders also served on the city's Planning Commission and Budget Committee. A moment of silence was observed for Sanders. Cole displayed a plaque honoring City Forester Byron Rickert's years of service to the city. Rickert has retired and moved to Central Oregon. Cole said that Jorgensen drafted a letter to the governor about the latest round of business shutdowns due to the county's reclassification as high risk. Cole talked to Scappoose Mayor Scott Burge about it and Commissioner Casey Garrett obtained signatures from elected officials throughout the county.

**Visitor Comments:** Dan Graham asked about the status of East First Street. Cole said the city hired a Geotech to look at it.

### **Consider Approval of the Consent Agenda:**

Consider Approval of the April 5, 2021 Regular Council Meeting Minutes—Kreger moved to approve the consent agenda. That motion was seconded by duPlessis and adopted unanimously.

### **Unfinished Business**

- a. Riverfront Trail Update—Cole said that the easement for the Eagles Lodge property was obtained. Jorgensen said the bank stabilization component of the project is well underway. Cole said some stairs may be added by El Tapatio for beach access.
- b. Fox Creek Update—Jorgensen said he spoke with Sen. Betsy Johnson and Rep. Brad Witt about the state funding request for the feasibility study. Witt had originally suggested a range of \$90,000 to \$120,000, but they decided to split the difference and ask for \$100,000.
- c. Senior and Multi-Generational Housing—Cole said a committee will be formed after the budget is passed to look at potential future development opportunities along the waterfront. Jorgensen said a pre-application conference was held for three duplexes near the condo property. The owners are moving forward with the permitting process.
- d. Reimbursement Request for Maple Drive Tree Removal—Cole said the three trees cost \$1800 to remove. They weren't on city property but in its right of way. Jorgensen said that Public Works Director Sue Lawrence is not in attendance but submitted a written report saying that she has received other similar requests. He added that if the city honors this request, it would be setting a precedent that could get very expensive. Cole said the council could move to approve the request or do nothing. Councilor Connie Budge said she would like to have a dialogue with the citizen who made the request before making a decision. Council agreed to keep the item on the agenda to allow the citizen to address the request at a future meeting.
- e. 516 East E Street—Cole said council should move forward with declaring the house a nuisance. He and Jorgensen did a site visit the previous Friday. He feels sorry for the neighbors. Weaver said there has been vandalism and she's seen children trying to access the property. Jorgensen cited the process set forth in the city's code. Budge moved to declare the house a nuisance and schedule a public hearing for the council's June meeting. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously.

### **New Business**

- a. Discussion of Intergovernmental Agreement with the RDIC for Stormwater Management—Terry Deaton said the ask is for the city to join the RDIC to address stormwater management. The RDIC is almost done with its levy recertification. Inspections, tests and analysis have been done and submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The

- process should be done by the end of June, and all that information will be submitted to FEMA. The RDIC is asking the city to share the cost of pumping and discharging the water that runs down to the drainage district area. The City of Portland has an IGA with its local drainage district. She would like a data map from the city to determine how much stormwater is coming to the district from the city. Cole said the city needs to update its stormwater master plan. He isn't sure if the figures the city currently has would be accurate until the plan is updated. Deaton asked if Lawrence could consult with her and the engineer hired by the RDIC. Jorgensen said he would have Lawrence reach out to Deaton.
- b. Forestry Contract—Patrick McCoy introduced himself to the council. He said he grew up locally and graduated from Rainier High School before going on to earn a forestry degree from Oregon State University. McCoy managed a 98,000-acre tree farm while working for Longview Fiber and consults for Weyerhaeuser. He has 20 years of experience in forestry and will be touring the city's watershed in a couple of days with Rickert, Jorgensen and Cole. Cole recommended that council vote to hire McCoy as the city's new forester for one year, then revisit the arrangement next spring. Kreger moved to hire McCoy as the city's contract forester for one year. That motion was seconded by Budge and adopted unanimously.
  - c. IGA with Rainier School District #13 Providing the Contracted Service to Manage the City Library—Rainier School District Superintendent Joseph Hattrick said he had a few proposed changes to the IGA. They were presented to council. If the city approves, he'll take the IGA to the school board for its approval, at which point all of the parties can sign it. Budge moved to approve the IGA. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously.
  - d. Department of State Lands Special Use Lease Renewal—Cole said this comes up every 20 years. The city's park is on land that is owned by the DSL. Kreger moved to renew the lease. That motion was seconded by Weaver and adopted unanimously.
  - e. IGA for Columbia County Major Crimes Team and Columbia County Deadly Physical Force Plan—Budge moved to authorize city officials to sign both documents. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously.
  - f. Resolution 21-05-01—Authorizing and Approving a DEQ State Revolving Fund Loan to Finance Sanitary Sewer Line Improvements for the 'A' Street Project—Cole said the loan is 50 percent forgivable. Kreger moved to approve the resolution. That motion was seconded by duPlessis and adopted unanimously.
  - g. RV Park Discussion—Cole said the original intention of the RV park isn't being met. It's turned into an eyesore. Staff recommends that the city close it. Jorgensen said if the council does away with the RV park, they will have to repeal the ordinance that created it and established

- its rules. That could be done at the June meeting. Weaver said she doesn't it but would be willing to re-open the RV park if it can be improved and available by reservation only. Budge moved to close the RV park and repeal its ordinance at the June meeting. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously.
- h. Utility Bill Relief—Jorgensen said this came up earlier in the day. A citizen called asking about it because it was included on the website. But that posting was from last May, when the COVID closures first started. To date, the city has spent around \$3,000 on COVID-related utility bill relief. Would the city like to continue the program, or should he have that post removed from the website? Budge said that the Area Commission on Aging has rental and utility assistance for seniors, low-income and the disabled. Jorgensen said staff could direct any callers to those resources. Council agreed by consensus to suspend utility bill relief and directed Jorgensen to have that item removed from the city's website.

**Staff Report**-Cole said council had previously approved \$34,000 for a Geotech study for the landslide on First Street. Cars driving on the road have contributed to the slide. He wants to stabilize the street and fix the utilities under it but is not in favor of spending large amounts of money to make it drivable again. The cost of fixing the road could be huge and would only benefit a couple of houses that are already accessible through First or Hilyard streets. There are other roads he would like to fix before that one. He wants to contact the Geotech firm and put that work on hold. It's been a slide area since the 1970s. Budge said the road should be closed, except for foot traffic. Cole said the utilities should be fixed and barriers erected to prevent cars from driving on the road. Budge moved to fix the utilities and close the road. That motion was seconded by Kreger and adopted unanimously. Jorgensen reported that public works has installed 536 new water meters and has 330 left to do. He met with officials from Longview Community College about recruiting students from its criminology program to bolster the city's police department reserves and was the keynote speaker at the Rainier Chamber of Commerce April meeting. On April 10, he served as emcee for the open house event marking city hall's 100-year anniversary. Negotiations were held for the new union contract for the city's police officers and he submitted written testimony in support of Rep. Witt's funding request for the Fox Creek feasibility study. Jorgensen met with officials from NEXT Renewables and submitted a grant application to the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments for funding for the third phase of the riverfront project. A pre-application conference was held for the proposed duplex project on A Street. He submitted a letter of support for federal funding for a Small Business Development Center in the county and spoke with a Comcast representative about televising council meetings on public access. Jorgensen worked with U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici's office to request

over \$2 million in federal funding for improvements to Veterans Way. He also applied for the DEQ loan for the A Street closeout, met with Hattrick to discuss the IGA for the library and participated in an interview panel for Col-Pac's new program manager position. On April 2, he met with the city's insurance agent to discuss the policy renewal and attended the Eagles meeting to obtain the easement for the riverfront trail project. He attended a League of Oregon Cities small cities meeting April 30.

**Council Reports-**Budge expressed concerns about House Bill 3115. That bill has already passed the Oregon House of Representatives and is set to advance in the Senate. It could create liabilities for cities in dealing with homelessness.

**City Calendar/Announcements-**Cole reminded council that Budget Committee is scheduled to meet May 17 at 5 p.m. at the Masonic Lodge.

Cole adjourned the meeting at 7:51 p.m.

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Mayor Jerry Cole

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W. Scott Jorgensen, City Administrator