

# **WESTFIR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, March 1, 2021**

**Audio/Video Teleconference, 5:30 p.m.**

## **MINUTES**

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Mayor Melody Cornelius called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Councilors D'Lynn Williams, Edward Johnstone, and Randy Stark were present.

### **MAYOR'S MINUTE:**

Mayor Cornelius announced that Westfir was awarded the Destination Ready grant by Travel Oregon for the installation of a bike wash and repair station at the Westfir Portal and at Oakridge's Greenwaters Park. She reported that the project would begin within 2–3 months and be completed within six months.

### **CITIZEN COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:**

There were no citizen comments.

### **COUNCILOR COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:**

There were no Councilor comments.

### **MILL SITE PROPOSAL:**

Ralph Christensen, one of three owners of the 50-acre Hines mill site, presented a proposal to the Council for the development of the land. Mr. Christensen proposed to divide the land into 6–12 smaller parcels because the site is too large for one entity to risk developing. He clarified that in years to come the parcels could be developed with the greater density allowed by the land use zoning. He asked the Council to consider waiving the Master Plan under the Land Use Plan because the 30–40 acres of developable land was not going to develop within the lifetime of a Master Plan. Mr. Christensen stated that the developers were looking for feedback from the Council as to whether they support the proposal and to hear any concerns they had. Mayor Cornelius stated that any development would likely have to tie into the City's water and sewer systems. Mr. Christensen stated that he saw the use of the onsite solutions of septic tanks and wells as interim measures until greater density is developed on the site.

### **MIDDLE FORK WILLAMETTE WATERSHED COUNCIL:**

Ka-Voka Jackson did not attend the meeting as scheduled.

### **TURTLE ISLAND RIVER ACCESS PROPOSAL:**

Noah and Tracey Sunflower presented an update on the project to improve river access at the Westfir park unofficially named Turtle Island Park. Noah reported that Don Henderson agreed to do the work to stabilize and fill the giant puddle in the access road for under \$1200 and that any additional time would be spent on non-native blackberry mitigation. Noah reported that he had a meeting with Greater Oakridge Trail Stewards, for whom Mayor Cornelius is the treasurer, and said that they were willing to do trail consolidation for the cost of fuel reimbursement. Noah reported that he would plant willow cuttings to block social trails. Councilor Stark wanted to know what entity determined placement of the high-water mark and expressed concern about making any changes to the riverbed without higher authority. Mayor Cornelius said she believed that the State had the final say on the high-water mark, but that the work currently proposed was above the high-water mark and no permanent changes were being made. Rather, she said, the work was designed to guide users to the best access spots rather than have people creating ad hoc trails and disrupting the riparian environment. Councilor Johnstone confirmed with Noah that no materials were being brought from offsite. Councilor Stark invited Michelle Emmons of Willamette Riverkeeper, who was in attendance, to comment on the project. She said that

she thought the project sounded well researched, and she expressed enthusiasm for creating a more permanent access point that the community could be proud to offer to boaters coming into the area. She did warn that a high-water event could move disturbed soil back into the confluence.

#### **CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REPORT:**

Chamber President Lynda Kamerrer presented the report. She said the Chamber was looking at housing development as crucial to economic growth in the area. She reported that Laura Buhl, Transportation and Growth Management, DLCD Planning Services Division ODOT, would be auditing Oakridge development code to see what changes could be made to make housing development easier. Lynda stated that the Chamber was putting together a 12-month calendar of activities and trying to diversify the tourism economy. She said that there was an art gallery in the planning stages. She reported that the disc golf course was proving to be popular, with 63 out of 72 spots in a tournament already filled.

#### **APPROVE MINUTES:**

Councilor Williams made a motion to approve the minutes from February 1, 2021 and January 13, 2021 [*Incorrect date listed on the February 11 minutes*]. Mayor Cornelius seconded, and the motion carried, 4–0.

**AYES:** Cornelius, Williams, Johnstone, Stark    **NAYS:** 0    **ABSTENTIONS:** 0

#### **WATER / SEWER REPORT:**

Jackson Stone presented the water and sewer report. He stated that the City truck repairs went overbudget but that the truck was now in excellent condition. He noted that water usage was double the same time last year and speculated it was due to COVID-19, with more people staying at home. Mayor Cornelius noted that wastewater had actually decreased from last year.

#### **POLICE REPORT:**

Mayor Cornelius made a correction to the report. She said that report of a gate chain being cut at the Westfir Portal on February 25 was not accurate. She also drew the Council's attention to the burglary in Hemlock, which she said was a major theft of firearms and an ongoing investigation. Councilor Stark expressed concern that there was more activity in the report than usual. Mayor Cornelius stated that much of the activity was followup on the burglary. She noted that someone got locked in the Portal restrooms, which appeared on the report, and that Tony, the Portal maintenance operator, had fixed the lock.

#### **CITY RECORDER REPORT:**

Nicole Tritten presented the report and addressed these items:

- She attended the second module of local budget law training over Zoom on February 18 and would attend the next module on March 9. She stated that her goal was to complete the proposed budget by April 7.
- She asked the Council whether she should get an estimate to resurface the Portal parking area. [Mayor Cornelius confirmed and asked Nicole to also get a bid on the unfinished paving projects from the prior fiscal year: resurfacing the basketball court in Hemlock Park; creating an asphalt path to the water plant; and fixing the driveway at City Hall.]
- She contacted Oakridge City Administrator Bryan Cutchen about the IGAs for the next fiscal year. He stated that the fire and employee IGAs would be straightforward but that the police IGA would require discussion prior to developing the agreement. [The Council asked Nicole to arrange for Mr. Cutchen to attend a Westfir Council work session.]
- She asked the Council how much of a priority it was to develop an upgraded website in the next fiscal year, and what they would expect it to cost. [The Council decided that more research was required into the City's options.]

**CITY FINANCIAL REVIEW:**

Nicole submitted the cash deposits and expenditure sheet, and addressed these items:

- The Banner Bank statement for February was not available as of 3 p.m. today, and she would submit the bank statement and bank reconciliation to the Council on Wednesday.
- The water fund was overbudget in the repair/maintenance – facilities/equipment category by \$2,567. [Mayor Cornelius stated that the City was still well within the budget for all materials and services in the fund. She said that she thought the City would not exceed the budget, but to keep an eye on the fund.]
- She asked the Council whether the ACH withdrawals for water payments should be done no earlier than the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month. She reported that she processed the ACH payments on February 24 because of the short month, and that a resident called and said he had an overdraft fee because he understood that the funds were always withdrawn on the 25<sup>th</sup>. [Mayor Cornelius stated that the ACH withdrawals should not be made earlier than the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month. The Council agreed to offer a credit on the resident’s water bill of \$36 to cover his overdraft fee.]
- She reallocated \$347 of Coronavirus Relief Funds with the State DAS from Rent & Utility Relief Programs to Disinfecting Public Areas (\$255) and Medical & Protective Supplies (\$92).
- She moved \$50 into petty cash to cover gas and postage expenses until the new debit card arrived.

Mayor Cornelius asked the Council to review the GMD Electric proposal for replacing the three overhead lights at the Portal that randomly turn on and off. The Council agreed to authorize the work as part of March expenditures.

Mayor Cornelius made a motion to approve expenditures for March 2021 in the amount of \$26,164.53. Councilor Williams seconded, and the motion carried, 4–0.

**AYES:** Cornelius, Williams, Johnstone, Stark    **NAYS:** 0    **ABSTENTIONS:** 0

**CITIZEN CONCERNS NOT ON AGENDA:**

Oakridge City Councilor Audy Spliethof reported that in December the Hazeldell Fire District discussed outsourcing its ambulance service. Councilor Williams stated that her understanding was that Oakridge planned to keep emergency services for local calls, but that ambulance transport would be contracted with a third party. Councilor Spliethof confirmed Councilor Williams’ statement, and said he wanted to be sure that Westfir was aware of a change that was going to greatly affect local people.

Elizabeth Stark reported that she had had mail stolen, and that residents should be vigilant if more stimulus payments are issued because thieves know to intercept them.

**COUNCILOR CONCERNS NOT ON AGENDA:**

Councilor Stark reported hearing what sounded like gun shots in and around the neighborhood during the past couple of weeks. Mayor Cornelius asked Nicole to look up and read the ordinance regarding firearm use within City limits. Nicole read the relevant part of Ordinance 20, which clearly prohibits gunfire within City limits. Mayor Cornelius asked Nicole to post the Ordinance on the City website.

**RECESS REGULAR MEETING FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO ORS 192.660(2)(i):**

At 7:13 p.m. Mayor Cornelius called for an Executive Session to review and evaluate the job performance of a chief executive officer, other officers, employees, and staff.

**ADJOURN EXECUTIVE SESSION, RECONVENE AND CALL COUNCIL MEETING TO ORDER:**

Mayor Cornelius adjourned the Executive Session at 7:32 p.m. and reconvened the Council meeting.

Councilor Johnstone made a motion to increase the hourly compensation of City Recorder Nicole Tritten by 6% retroactive to January 1, 2021. Councilor Williams seconded, and the motion carried, 4–0.

**AYES:** Cornelius, Williams, Johnstone, Stark    **NAYS:** 0    **ABSTENTIONS:** 0

Councilor Stark made a motion to increase the hourly compensation of City Operator Jackson Stone by 6% retroactive to January 1, 2021. Councilor Williams seconded, and the motion carried, 4–0.

**AYES:** Cornelius, Williams, Johnstone, Stark    **NAYS:** 0    **ABSTENTIONS:** 0

Councilor Johnstone made a motion to increase the hourly compensation of Relief City Operator Robert Archer by 6% retroactive to January 1, 2021. Councilor Williams seconded, and the motion carried, 4–0.

**AYES:** Cornelius, Williams, Johnstone, Stark    **NAYS:** 0    **ABSTENTIONS:** 0

**ADJOURN MEETING:**

Councilor Stark moved to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Cornelius seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

**AYES:** Cornelius, Williams, Johnstone, Stark    **NAYS:** 0    **ABSTENTIONS:** 0

Respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Melody Cornelius, Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
ATTEST:  
Nicole Tritten, City Recorder

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE