

WESTFIR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, July 12, 2021

In-person meeting at Westfir City Hall, 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 and Edward Johnstone were present. All stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

MAYOR'S MINUTE:

Mayor Cornelius welcomed everyone to the first in-person meeting of 2021. She remarked that fire danger was high in the area and that the Governor declared a State of Emergency for wildfire on June 30. She asked the public to be watchful and call the Oakridge Fire Department or the Forest Service if they saw any smoke or fire. Further, the Mayor announced an upcoming road closure on Westoak Road at the railroad crossing from July 31 at 10 p.m. to August 3 at 6 p.m.

CITIZEN COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Although not an agenda item, Mayor Cornelius allowed comments by resident Helene Truthstone. Ms. Truthstone requested that the City move its speed-warning sign closer to the stop sign on Westoak Road because drivers don't see the sign until they have speeded around the curve. Mayor Cornelius agreed that the City would move the sign. Ms. Truthstone suggested asking the police to set up a speed trap. Mayor Cornelius stated that Westfir has limited police hours under its agreement with Oakridge, but that the OPD might be able to park a police vehicle nearby occasionally to discourage speeders.

COUNCILOR COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:

There were no Councilor comments.

ACCEPT RESIGNATION/DECLARE A COUNCIL VACANCY/REMOVE FROM BANK SIGNATURE CARD:

Mayor Cornelius stated that Westfir was seeking citizens to join the Council; that the City needed participation from more people in order to effectively represent everyone. Councilor Williams moved to accept the resignation of Councilor Randy Stark, to declare a council vacancy, and to remove Councilor Stark from the bank signature card. Mayor Cornelius seconded, and the motion carried, 3-0.

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

TRANS CASCADIA SITE PLAN UPDATE:

Nick Gibson introduced himself as the owner of Trans Cascadia Excursions, a mountain bike guide and outfitter. He stated that his goal is to purchase the 11-acre commercial and mixed-use property for sale in Westfir to develop a vacation destination for mountain biking and outdoor recreation. He said the plan is to develop camping spots and rental cabins; a grocery store and bike shop in the store space; potentially a shared kitchen for events; and possibly several homes. Mr. Gibson said that the first phase of the project would entail 30 camping spots and 5-10 rental units, which they hoped to develop by May 1, 2022. Mayor Cornelius pointed Mr. Gibson and his business partner, Blair Banker, also present, to the mixed-use section of the Westfir Land Development Code. She stated that she believed that their planned use was allowed under the code. Councilor Williams said that she would like to see a plan document with the development broken out into phases. She also suggested more screening between the development and Westoak Road. Mayor Cornelius complimented the site plan as attractive and stated that the development would be beneficial to the City. The Mayor opened the floor to questions and comments from the public. A resident asked if RVs would have water and electric hook-ups. Mr.

Gibson replied that he expected RV campers to be mostly self-contained, short-term campers. Ms. Truthstone stated that she supported the project generally but was concerned about noise, light pollution, and traffic.

The Mayor asked Mr. Gibson if he would be willing to address concerns about the camping he was currently allowing in the dry grassy field adjacent to Trans Cascadia Excursions. Mr. Gibson agreed. Noah Sunflower, co-owner of the Westfir Lodge, asked whether Mr. Gibson had a fire suppression plan for the camping site. Mr. Gibson said he did not, and Mayor Cornelius suggested that he coordinate with OFD. The Mayor expressed concern about vehicles on the site being parked on unirrigated grass. Mr. Gibson said he was willing to consider parking alternatives and providing small fire extinguishers to campers. He stated that it might be more practical to shut down camping until the formal plan was developed. Resident Katherine Bishop spoke and asked Mr. Gibson to keep the impact on his residential neighbors in mind. Mayor Cornelius informed Mr. Gibson that Westfir has an ordinance that prohibits dogs being off leash, in response to a complaint about loose dogs at the camp site.

PUBLIC MOVIE NIGHT:

Mayor Cornelius recognized Westfir resident Chris Patterson. Mr. Patterson said that he wanted to gauge interest in the idea of a community movie night. He stated that he had a projector, screen, and laptop to run a movie, but there was the matter of where to hold the event. Mayor Cornelius said the Portal should work as a location if the parking area and bridge were not impacted. Mr. Patterson stated that the movie night would need to be sponsored by the City because of royalty fees charged by movie rights holders. Mayor Cornelius asked Mr. Patterson if he had an idea of cost, but he said he did not because the cost is entirely dependent on the film and the number of viewers. Mr. Patterson noted that some older movies were in the public domain or were free to watch, but they were films that probably would not appeal to children. Mayor Cornelius stated that the Council supported the idea. She suggested that the grassy area behind one of the information kiosks would be a good location. Mr. Patterson said that he would research royalty fees with the idea of trying to hold an event in August. Councilor Williams suggested that the Council include \$300 in July expenditures for the event.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REPORT:

Chamber President Lynda Kammerer was not able to attend the meeting due to a scheduling conflict. Councilor Williams asked about progress on the bike wash stations for Westfir and Oakridge. Mayor Cornelius reported that the City of Westfir had finally received the wash stations and that she would be organizing the installation of the Westfir Portal station soon.

APPROVE MINUTES:

Mayor Cornelius made a motion to approve the minutes from June 7, 2021, June 15, 2021, and corrected minutes from May 24, 2021. Councilor Johnstone seconded, and the motion carried, 3-0.

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

IGA WITH LANE COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS:

Councilor Williams expressed concern that the IGA listed \$15,000 as the total billable amount, while the City budget for legal expenses is only \$4,000. Mayor Cornelius stated that she thought LCOG quoted the high end to avoid having to update the IGA during the year. City Recorder Nicole Tritten had mentioned to Councilor Williams that she thought much of the cost would come from development fees paid to Westfir. The Mayor stated that she was glad to enter into the agreement because the City would need assistance with upcoming development issues.

Mayor Cornelius moved that the City of Westfir enter into an intergovernmental agreement with Lane Council of Governments. Councilor Johnstone seconded, and the motion carried, 3–0.

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

NOTICE TO RENEGOTIATE POLICE IGA/EMPLOYEE IGA WITH OAKRIDGE:

Mayor Cornelius noted that Oakridge had fully executed the Police IGA that Westfir signed in April, but that they included a letter to renegotiate the IGA on Monday, October 4. Councilor Williams questioned whether the letter meant that the terms had to be negotiated by October 4. The Mayor said that she read the letter to mean that Oakridge representatives would appear at Westfir’s City Council meeting on that date.

Councilor Williams moved to accept the IGA with Oakridge for employee benefits through the month of November 2021. Councilor Johnstone seconded, and the motion carried, 3–0.

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

CLOSURE OF OAKRIDGE BRANCH OF BANNER BANK:

Mayor Cornelius stated that the closure was a problem for the City since it has its public account and a safe deposit box with Banner Bank. The Mayor was told that the Banner Bank ATM does not accept deposits, but that Kate Dyson at Banner Bank had told Nicole she would put in a request from the City for an ATM that accepts deposits. The Council questioned whether they could do business with the local credit union, at the very least to have a safety deposit box. The Mayor stated that having Nicole make cash deposits at the Pleasant Hill branch one a month would probably be fine since monthly cash income is relatively low, between \$1000–\$2000.

WATER / SEWER REPORT:

Jackson Stone presented the water and sewer report. He said that he had to buy a new battery for the generator at the wastewater plant. He reported that he had trouble with the City truck overheating, but the problem was repaired under warranty. He reported that the City had received the generator and LED lights that had been purchased for rental to events at the Portal. He stated that Relief City Operator and Operator in Training, Robert Archer, reported that he is studying the third of 10 chapters in his wastewater operator training materials. Jackson said that he planned to attend the Seaside, Oregon conference at the end of August to get continuing education units needed to maintain his certification. Councilor Williams asked about river levels. Jackson replied that they are going down, but there was still a foot of water over the intake pipe. Jackson said that he has the backup system ready to go if water levels fall below the intake.

POLICE REPORT:

Mayor Cornelius explained the several reports on June 15 of a suspicious male. She stated that the police were called about a man waving a gun in an intimidating manner. The police investigated and discovered that the man had a toy gun. Councilor Williams pointed out two thefts from vehicles on the report and reminded everyone to lock their vehicles. Mayor Cornelius stated that all three of her vehicle windshields had been shot.

PORTAL APPLICATION UPDATE:

The Council tabled the item for a work session.

PANDEMIC RV REGULATION ORDER:

Mayor Cornelius stated that the Order had been terminated as of June 30, 2021, because it was set to expire at the same time as the Governor’s State of Emergency for the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council

determined that any complaints of occupied recreational vehicles could now be acted upon by the City.

CITY RECORDER REPORT:

Nicole Tritten presented the report and addressed these items:

- She had not heard back from Emerald Broadband that Wi-Fi had been set up at the Portal, but Jackson learned from a technician that it had been set up. Nicole said that she would contact Emerald Broadband for clarification.
- Mountain Bike Oregon submitted all their application materials by the June 14 deadline and site preparation for the event would start the next day, on July 13.
- The remaining Coronavirus Relief Funds were used to purchase equipment to hold hybrid in-person/remote meetings: a TV for use as a monitor, a webcam with mic, and a laptop computer. Nicole projected that hybrid meetings could not be set up until at least September. She noted that Oregon House Bill 2560, requiring remote participation options for the public, would go into effect on January 1, 2022.
- Nicole noted that the Council packets included two estimates for Beneficial Use Certification. One of the estimates was from Russ Dodge, who originally filed the transfer for the City. Nicole expressed concern that she had not yet been able to locate a letter from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife that Westfir's fish screen met State specifications. [Mayor Cornelius stated that she liked the idea of using the specialist who was familiar with the City and its system and also was the less expensive of the two estimates. Councilor Williams suggested that Nicole might contact Chris Yee of the Springfield office of the ODFW since he had been involved in Westfir's water rights transfer application.]
- Nicole posed a question about handling citizen complaints about ordinance violations. She asked whether she had discretion in how the City responded to the complaints. Mayor Cornelius asked for an example. Nicole reported that she received a complaint about a truck with tags that were six-months expired and had some yard debris in the back. She noted that the household was not a source of chronic complaints. She stated that she thought an abatement notice and certified letter were a bit heavy-handed and asked whether a regular letter or courtesy call would be an acceptable response to the complaint. [The Council agreed that in this case, a letter and courtesy call would be fine, but that Nicole should be sure to document everything. However, Mayor Cornelius stated that she preferred that Nicole consult the Council rather than use her own discretion in the handling of citizen complaints about which she was uncertain.]
- Nicole asked the Council whether the City could mail newsletters free of charge to unincorporated Westfir residents. She said that she declined a request and referred the person to the City website even though the City does mail newsletters to two people outside of City limits. [The Council agreed that residents outside of City limits could access the newsletter on the website or at City Hall. The two exceptions were a business, the RV park, and a person who lives barely outside city limits and has mobility issues.]

CITY FINANCIAL REVIEW:

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

- On June 23 she emailed FY2021–2022 budget resolutions and related documents to Lane County Assessment and Taxation and mailed the budget document to Lane County Deeds and

Records. On June 23 she also completed the online State Department of Administrative Services Annual City Certification, which is required to receive State revenue. She reported that DAS notified her by email that she had not uploaded one of the required documents. She emailed the document to DAS on June 25 and received confirmation of receipt.

- Nicole reported that she met with the auditor on June 22, but he told her that he would not be able to file the audit by July 1. Consequently, the City's crime coverage was suspended on July 1 by the insurance company until the audit is filed and reviewed by them.
- The auditor called her on Friday and said there was a discrepancy between wages reported in QuickBooks and wages shown on Oregon quarterly tax reports for FY2019–2020. She said the auditor told her that Westfir was not entering payroll correctly in QuickBooks. Nicole said that she had a call in to the City's accountant to get his opinion since payroll has been handled the same way for many years. [Melody stated that when she was City Recorder, she had experienced issues with this auditor in which he flagged something as incorrect when it was not. The Council emphasized the need to find a new auditor, especially considering the late filing and suspension of crime coverage.]
- Nicole stated that she provided a report in the Council packets showing how the City used Coronavirus Relief Funds, and that \$657.18 was unused and had to be returned to DAS. She reported that the funds could not be paid back in FY2020–2021 because the funds had to be reported in the final reimbursement window of July 12–23. She also noted a glitch with the purchase of the laptop, which she ordered on June 27, but didn't clear the City's account until July 1. She said that she believed the purchase met the Federal deadline since it was ordered before June 30. However, as far as the budget was concerned, the laptop expense would appear in the FY2021–22 budget.
- She stated that the City received 90% of the Travel Oregon grant funds and spent \$9,072 of \$18,502 total funds in FY2020–2021. However, the project was meant to have been completed and all funds spent in FY2020–2021. She reported that she spoke to someone at DOR and confirmed that the City would need a supplementary budget to have appropriation authority for the grant expenditures in the current year budget. [Mayor Cornelius asked about the time frame for a supplementary budget. Nicole said her understanding was that a supplementary budget had to be done before the City exceeds its appropriation authority. She noted that it might be difficult to recognize that line in advance, so she preferred to do a supplementary budget soon. Mayor Cornelius suggested that discussion of a supplementary budget be tabled for the next work session.]

Mayor Cornelius made a motion to approve expenditures for July 2021 in the amount of \$53,555.22. Councilor Williams seconded, and the motion carried, 3–0.

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

CITIZEN CONCERNS NOT ON AGENDA:

Chris Patterson stated that he had an old piano board with backing that he would like to turn into a community park interactive art project. Mayor Cornelius said it sounded like a neat idea. She asked Mr. Patterson to bring a drawing and write-up of the concept to a Council meeting.

COUNCILOR CONCERNS NOT ON AGENDA:

Mayor Cornelius reiterated that the Governor issued a State of Emergency for fire danger on June 30. With that in mind, she stated that she wrote a draft resolution of an emergency declaration for fire for

the City of Westfir, and Nicole had sent it to the attorney for review. Councilor Williams stated that the City already had an agreement with other government agencies to take over in a fire emergency. She said that she thought it was part of the County's emergency plan and that the City resolution might be redundant. Chris Patterson was recognized by the Mayor. He stated that he thought the declaration was worth doing because the City would have something in place if they needed to apply for FEMA funds, for example. Mayor Cornelius located the County Hazard Mitigation Plan in the office. After giving the County plan a cursory look, she said that she didn't think the City resolution would conflict with the County plan and might even support it. Councilor Williams said that she was satisfied to pass the resolution.

Mayor Cornelius moved to adopt Resolution 507 declaring a temporary state of emergency within the City boundaries and delegating authority to the Mayor. Councilor Johnstone seconded, and the motion carried, 3-0.

Mayor Cornelius asked if there were any other Councilor concerns. Councilor Williams stated that she would like to see hybrid in-person/remote meetings set up well before the January deadline.

ADJOURN MEETING:

Mayor Cornelius moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Williams seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Melody Cornelius, Mayor

ATTEST:
Nicole Tritten, City Recorder

DATE