

WESTFIR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 4, 2021

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

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER:

Council President D'Lynn Williams called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. Councilors Nicole Davis, Edward Johnstone, and Kelly Packard were present. Mayor Melody Cornelius was absent.

MAYOR'S MINUTE:

Councilor Williams stated that she was glad the rains had started.

CITIZEN COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:

There were no citizen comments.

COUNCILOR COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:

There were no Councilor comments.

CLAIM OF BENEFICIAL USE CERTIFICATION:

Councilor Williams recognized Russ Dodge. Mr. Dodge stated that he was the water rights examiner who worked on the transfer of water rights on behalf of Westfir in 2015. He said that he had been contacted by the City recently to perform the Claim of Beneficial Use (COBU) and site report. The report is required for finalization of the water rights transfer and is due by October 1, 2022. Mr. Dodge stated that it was straightforward to file the COBU, but that the City might want to consider filing for an extension. He said that an extension, which is generally for five years, would cost a bit more in State fees but would allow for an increase in water usage in coming years if there is growth and development in Westfir. He stated that once water rights were released, they were irretrievable. Councilor Williams stated that she was in favor of filing an extension because of possible mill site development. The other Councilors were also in favor of an extension. Mr. Dodge said that he would email the City the cost to file the extension.

COMMUNITY EFFORTS TO CLEAN UP WATERSHED:

Noah Sunflower, co-owner of the Westfir Lodge, appeared on behalf of Jay Skordahl. He reported that a community group was started to address non-recreational camping in the area surrounding Oakridge and Westfir. He stated that the group, informally called the Five Rivers Cleanup Effort, held a meeting at Greenwaters Park to map out goals and strategies for handling the massive amount of trash being generated by non-recreational camping. He reported that around 25 people cleaned up two sites the day following the meeting. Mr. Sunflower stated that the group determined that the community needs to advocate with the Forest Service to regulate non-recreational camping. He said that the group saw the problems of non-recreational camping as three-fold: river pollution; risk to the local recreation economy; and fire danger. He stated that the group was asking the City of Westfir to send a letter of concern to the Forest Service. Councilor Williams noted that the City had sent a letter of concern to the Forest Service about this matter before, but that it was worth doing again. The Council agreed to send a letter of concern to the Forest Service.

POLICE IGA RENEGOTIATION WITH OAKRIDGE:

Councilor Williams recognized Mikal McPherson and Chief Martin of the Oakridge Police Department, Oakridge Mayor Kathy Holsten, and Oakridge City Administrator Brian Cutchen. Mayor Holsten stated that in order to continue providing current levels of police and fire service to Oakridge, the Oakridge City Council voted to add a \$22 monthly public safety fee for every water meter connection in Oakridge. In

addition, the Oakridge City Council decided that if the fee was passed, Westfir would also be asked to pay more for services provided under the IGAs with Oakridge. Mr. Cutchen stated that he arrived at an additional payment for Westfir of \$24,600 for the remaining eight months of the fiscal year. He based the amount on Westfir's 140 water meters × \$22 fee × 8 months. Mr. Cutchen stated that the driver of the budget shortfall is ambulance service, with Oakridge losing money every time they transport to the hospital.

Councilor Williams asked Mr. Cutchen to confirm that some households in Oakridge would be exempt from the fee based on income. Mr. Cutchen confirmed that households at or below 50% of the median household income in Lane County would be eligible to apply for an exemption with proof of income. Councilor Williams stated that Westfir's citizens deserved the same consideration for low-income households. Mr. Cutchen suggested that low-income households in Westfir could be factored into Westfir's fees based on demographics rather than proof on income. The Westfir Council liked the proposal. Mr. Cutchen said that he would revise the payment amount using the same standard for low-income households as Oakridge and then present the new figure to the Oakridge City Council at their next meeting. He clarified that he asked for the public safety fee as a temporary measure to give him time to work with Lane County to try to reduce the burden on Oakridge EMS of providing ambulance service to such a large area, particularly for traffic accidents on Highway 58.

PROJECT TO PROMOTE RECREATION IN WESTFIR:

Noah Sunflower introduced Joe Potoczak, a former colleague at a travel guide company who recently moved to Bend and writes about outdoor recreation for magazines including *Men's Journal*, *Outside Magazine*, and *Canoe and Kayak*. Mr. Potoczak explained that he had visited the Westfir Lodge and the Mountain Bike Oregon event this past summer; that he was impressed by the recreational resources in Westfir; and thought about how he could help to promote Westfir recreation. He emailed a proposal to the City for a 1200-word article accompanied by images that could be used by Westfir in various local outlets and that he could submit to national magazines. He requested a budget of \$700 to cover his time and expenses. The Council was enthusiastic about the idea, and Councilor Williams said that money from the RTMP fund could be used for the project. Nicole agreed but stated that she would like to receive the RTMP grant, which is usually paid in October, before committing to the project. Councilor Williams asked Mr. Potoczak if it would work to get back to him at the beginning of November. He agreed to that timeline. Mr. Sunflower stated that per Mr. Potoczak's emailed proposal, the Westfir Lodge would match the amount spent by the City in support such as shuttles, tours, and equipment.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REPORT:

Councilor Williams recognized Lynda Kamerrer of the Oakridge Westfir Area Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Kamerrer stated that the Chamber is working to get the business directory completed on their website. She reported that they have been working with businesses along Highway 58 to make the area more attractive. Councilor Packard asked about what specifically was being done to improve businesses along Highway 58. Ms. Kamerrer stated that much of the work is relationship-building with each business finding out how the owners are doing and their vision for the area. She noted that Oakridge has a block grant program that will match funds up to \$500 that businesses spend on exterior improvements.

APPROVE MINUTES:

Councilor Williams made a motion to approve the minutes from September 13, 2021. Councilor Johnstone seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0.

AYES: Williams, Davis, Johnstone, Packard **NAYS:** 0 **ABSTENTIONS:** 0

WATER / SEWER REPORT:

Jackson Stone presented the water and sewer report. He reported that sand filter No. 1 was back online

at the water plant, and everything was ready for winter. He stated that there were no problems at the sewer plant. Councilor Williams requested that Jackson invite Relief Operator Robert Archer to the next Council meeting since he would be taking over the Operator position at the beginning of December. She also asked how Robert was progressing with his training for wastewater operator certification. Jackson reported that Robert would not be able to take the examination by the six-month deadline, but that he would renew the training program at his own expense. Councilor Williams asked about the UV lights on the expenditure sheet and whether they were an annual expense. Jackson stated that he used two sets per year and liked to have one set in reserve.

UPDATE OPERATOR AND RELIEF OPERATOR JOB DESCRIPTIONS:

Councilor Williams asked for confirmation that the City did not have to advertise the positions. Nicole replied that she had come to that understanding after discussion with the attorney. Councilor Johnstone made a motion to adopt the revised job descriptions for City Operator and Relief City Operator. Councilor Davis seconded, and the motion carried, 4–0.

AYES: Williams, Davis, Johnstone, Packard **NAYS:** 0 **ABSTENTIONS:** 0

COURIER SERVICES TO BANNER BANK IN PLEASANT HILL:

Councilor Williams stated that the City was informed of two delivery services they might use given the closure of the Oakridge Branch of Banner Bank. One service, Dash Delivery, was recommended by Banner Bank and the other by former City councilor Thalia Lerin. Nicole Tritten reported that she didn't have details from Dash Delivery but received confirmation that they were making deliveries to the Pleasant Hill branch five days a week. Nicole said that Relief Recorder Arron has spoken to Coco Rawlings whose services were recommended by Thalia Lerin. Coco quoted \$30 for one delivery per month, and she was willing to make the exchange of backup drives. Nicole noted that Ms. Rawlings was not bonded. Councilor Williams recommended that the matter be discussed at the next work session when they had more information.

POLICE REPORT:

Councilor Packard asked Chief Martin, who was still present at the meeting, if OPD was seeing an increase in reports from Westfir. Chief Martin replied that incidents tend to ebb and flow, and he noted that there was less activity in the winter. Referring to the discussion of non-recreational camping, Chief Martin stated that there were a couple of useful academic papers on the topic. Councilor Johnstone asked if Chief Martin could find the articles for the Council, and he said that he would do so. Chief Martin recommended that citizens doing cleanup exercise caution, both for their own safety, and also because Oregon laws around homelessness had changed drastically and could result in legal liability for those doing cleanup.

ORDINANCE 141: CAMPING/PARKING/LITTERING:

Nicole Tritten reported that the ordinance was not ready to be voted on. Councilor Williams tabled the item for review at the next work session.

CITY RECORDER REPORT:

Nicole Tritten presented the report and addressed these items:

- She said that Mountain Bike Oregon submitted a preliminary application for June 21–June 26, 2022, but there was nothing yet for the Council to vote on.
- Nicole said that plans to hold a movie night on October 30 were proceeding. Volunteer Chris Patterson suggested the film *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*, which is royalty free. Nicole said that choice was acceptable to her. She noted that Jason Nehmer had just submitted

a Portal use application for the same day, from 12:00–4:00 p.m., and she wasn't sure if that would conflict with the movie showing.

- She reported that the Community Cleanup began on September 29, and the first dumpster was filled in just three days. Nicole expressed concern that if the second bin filled quickly, there wouldn't be space for the river cleanup on October 9. She stated that she could order a third bin, but it would exceed the budget line by \$250. [Councilor Williams said she thought the third dumpster would be needed given the amount of garbage in recreational areas. The Council agreed to allow Nicole to order a third dumpster, believing that the expense was small enough to be absorbed by the General Fund.]
- She presented the status of Case #210242/Citation #40579. The citation was served on August 7 for violation of Ordinance 120 for at-large/vicious animal; leashed animal; and public nuisance animal. She reported that the defendant claimed illness and did not show up to the arraignment. She stated that Wendy Whitney at the Oakridge Municipal Court was trying to arrange another arraignment date by letter since she could not contact the defendant by phone. Nicole stated that the City had an earlier case still pending against one of the owners of the dog. [Councilor Williams inquired whether the dog had bitten a person. Nicole replied that it had not, but noted Mayor Cornelius' concern about the City having knowledge of the dog and not having acted.]

CITY FINANCIAL REVIEW:

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

- She reported that she had taken all the documentation to the City's accountant to prepare the financial reports for FY2020–2021. She said that she informed the accountant that the City plans to change auditors.
- Nicole stated that she would be issuing a couple of citations for ordinance violations, but she was uncertain about citing for Occupied Recreational Vehicle since the resident claimed there was no occupation, and there was no visual evidence. [The Council decided against citing for occupied RV due to a lack of proof, but that all the other citations could go forward.]

Councilor Johnstone made a motion to approve expenditures for October 2021 in the amount of \$48,020.85. Councilor Williams seconded, and the motion carried, 4–0.

AYES: Williams, Davis, Johnstone, Packard **NAYS:** 0 **ABSTENTIONS:** 0

CITIZEN CONCERNS NOT ON AGENDA:

Jason Nehmer introduced himself as the President of the Oakridge Disc Golf Club and Vice President of the Oakridge Westfir Area Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Nehmer submitted an application to hold the Headwaters Festival launch at the Westfir Portal and the mill site. The activities would include throwing pumpkins with a trebuchet and a disc golf clinic. He stated that he had received permission from mill site owner, Ralph Christensen, to hold the event. Mr. Nehmer asked whether the Portal rental fee could be waived. Councilor Williams asked whether the event would use the entire Portal. Mr. Nehmer said that the event would take place almost entirely on the mill site and that it wouldn't conflict with the movie showing in the evening. Councilor Williams proposed that the Council waive the Portal use fee but require the refundable cleaning deposit of \$50.

Councilor Williams made a motion to approve the application of the Headwaters Festival launch,

pending receipt of the \$50 cleaning deposit. Councilor Johnstone seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0.

AYES: Williams, Davis, Johnstone, Packard **NAYS:** 0 **ABSTENTIONS:** 0

The Council reviewed a late-arriving email from Mrs. Tim Tonkin at 76884 W. 20th Street. Nicole read part of the email into the record. Mrs. Tonkin requested that their household be exempted from City ordinance restrictions against occupied RVs because they had family visiting due to a death in the family. The Council instructed Nicole to express their condolences for the family's loss but to state that the rules would not be suspended given that the RVs had been present more than two weeks.

COUNCILOR CONCERNS NOT ON AGENDA:

There were no Councilor concerns.

ADJOURN MEETING:

Councilor Johnstone moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Packard seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

AYES: Williams, Davis, Johnstone, Packard **NAYS:** 0 **ABSTENTIONS:** 0

Respectfully submitted,

D'Lynn Williams, Council President

ATTEST:
Nicole Tritten, City Recorder

DATE