

# WESTFIR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 7, 2022

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

## MINUTES

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Mayor Melody Cornelius called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m. Councilors D'Lynn Williams, Edward Johnstone, and Kelly Packard were present.

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

Mayor Cornelius was briefly absent due to audio problems. Councilor Williams presided while the Mayor traveled to City Hall. Councilor Williams reported that she, Mayor Cornelius, and Councilor Kelly had a productive in-person meeting at the boat launch park with Ka-Voka Jackson of the Middle Fork Willamette Water Shed Council. She stated that MFWWC was applying for a grant on the City's behalf for invasive species removal and native planting. She said the project would be incorporated into a 10-year plan for the boat launch park.

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

There were no Citizen comments.

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

There were no Councilor comments.

### **RESOLUTION 508 TRANSFER APPROPRIATION:**

Councilor Williams read Resolution 508, transferring \$18,000 from the General Fund's contingency fund to Fire and Police Special Payments in the General Fund per the amended IGAs with the City of Oakridge.

*Mayor Cornelius rejoined the meeting at 5:50 p.m. from Westfir City Hall.*

Mayor Cornelius made a motion to adopt Resolution 508. Councilor Williams seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0.

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

### **APPROVE MINUTES:**

Councilor Williams pointed out an error in the minutes from January 3, and City Recorder Nicole Tritten said that she would correct it.

Mayor Cornelius made a motion to approve the minutes for January 3, 2022, with correction; January 24, 2022; and January 26, 2022. Councilor Johnstone seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0.

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

### **POLICE REPORT:**

Councilor Williams asked if the report of the dog bite was the Houston's dog, about which the City had received numerous complaints. Mayor Cornelius replied that it was a different dog, a white pit bull. The Mayor reported that the Houstons' dog had also been at large, and Councilor Williams reported that she was aware of another four dogs at large. The Mayor said that the City might need to follow up the animal ordinance violations with the responsible parties.

**WATER / SEWER REPORT:**

Robert Archer presented the water and sewer report. There were no problems at either plant. He stated that he would provide the Council with a report of his progress toward wastewater operator certification.

**RESOLUTION 509 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET:**

Mayor Cornelius made a motion to adopt Resolution 509. Councilor Williams seconded, and the motion carried, 4–0.

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

**PORTAL RENTAL APPLICATION:**

Mayor Cornelius stated that Tenkara Bug Out, which submitted the application, was a fly-fishing event that had used the Portal several times in the past. Councilor Packard asked for a description of the event since it wasn't clear from the application. Mayor Cornelius explained that the event was a three-day fly-fishing educational event with vendors showcasing their rods and flies, and with participants being taken up and down the North Fork to practice the technique. Councilor Williams asked Nicole to verify the time of day of the event, which was unclear on the application. The Mayor stated that the Council did not need to vote on the application because the number of attendees was less than 50, and so no site plan was required. Nicole stated that she was uncertain whether a fee applied. Mayor Cornelius said that the Council needed clarification on whether the group was renting the entire Portal or just the large shelter. The Mayor tabled the application until the next meeting, pending more information from the applicant.

**LETTER OF INTEREST FOR COUNCIL POSITION:**

Mayor Cornelius stated that there were three letters of interest for the open Council position, Seat 3, up for reelection in 2024. Nicole reported that Elise O'Brien, who submitted a letter, had a scheduling conflict and would join the meeting later. Mayor Cornelius started the interviews with Katherine Bishop. The Mayor asked Ms. Bishop whether she was able to serve the entire term, and Ms. Bishop stated that she was. The Mayor opened the floor for Ms. Bishop's statement. Ms. Bishop said that she was qualified by having worked in government for many years, up to the present. In addition, she felt that the Westoak area of the City, where she lives, should be represented on the Council. Mayor Cornelius agreed it was important to have wider representation for the area, and she was glad to see two letters of interest from the Westoak area. The other applicant from Westoak Road, Deretta Huey, joined the meeting by phone. After confirming that Ms. Huey was able to serve the entire term, the Mayor opened the floor to Ms. Huey. Ms. Huey stated that she had lived in Westfir for 31 years; that she loved the area; and had done a lot of volunteer work, including with the Oakridge Fire Department and the Oakridge Library Board. She said that she likes to give back to the community, and she loves the quality of life in Westfir. Councilor Williams asked Ms. Huey to consider serving on the budget committee if she was not selected for the Council position.

**CITY RECORDER REPORT:**

Nicole Tritten presented the report and addressed these items:

- She stated that she received a call from Kerry Werner of Lane County informing the City that the County plans to paint the covered bridge this June, weather dependent, with August as a fallback date. Nicole said that she gave Portal event dates to Mr. Werner, so the County could avoid conflicts with planned events, since the bridge will be closed during painting.

- Nicole said that resident and former Mayor, Matt Meske, called the office because he needed a house number for his property along Westfir Road, and the County told him that the City of Westfir would provide it. Nicole stated that neither Matt as former Mayor, nor she as City Recorder, had any knowledge of Westfir establishing house numbers. Nicole said that according to the USPS website, the Postal Service does not create local numbering systems, which is typically done at the municipal level. Nicole asked if anyone on Council knew what entity sets house numbers for Westfir. [Councilor Williams suggested that Nicole check with the Oakridge Post Office. Councilor Packard said that he would contact Jeff Smith, who built his house, to ask how the house number had been determined.] Nicole said that she would follow up with the Oakridge Post Office.
- She reported that she added the bike wash and repair station at the Portal to the CIS insurance property schedule, valued at \$9,037, with equipment comprising \$6,000 of the value. [Mayor Cornelius stated that there had already been vandalism at the repair station: someone cut the air hose to the pump and removed three of the five tools at the fix-it station. The Mayor reported that the City had purchased two extra tool sets for the project with the anticipation of damage or theft. Councilor Packard asked if there was a way to improve security. Mayor Cornelius stated that Portal Operator Tony Schlauch planned to ask Nicole to purchase an extra camera to direct at the bike wash and repair station.]
- Nicole updated the Council about offsite backups. She reported that the first encrypted backup to hard drive had been taken to the safe deposit box at Banner Bank. She said that the free trial version of the cloud backup software CrashPlan had expired, and the City had been charged \$9.99 for the first month of the subscription. She stated that IT volunteer Ken Grimsby led her through a test restore of a file from the cloud backup to her computer. She said that she found the software user-friendly with a nice interface. [Councilor Williams asked whether the City could save money by paying for a full year. Nicole said that she would check. Councilor Johnstone asked how often the backup was happening and whether it impacted her computer resources or Internet bandwidth. Nicole stated that she hadn't noticed any problems. Ken Grimsby messaged Nicole and replied that backups were continuous throughout the day, at least once an hour. He wrote that there was no discount for paying for a year.]

#### **CITY FINANCIAL REVIEW:**

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

- She updated the Council on the audit for 2020–2021. She reported that she had submitted most of the documents that the auditor had requested, but that there were two sticking points. First, she was not able to find a City resolution or ordinance that established the RTMP fund. Second, the auditor needed to compare FICA taxes shown on IRS Form 941 to amounts in the City's accounting file. However, FICA amounts don't appear in the accounting system because wages, taxes, and PERS assessment are added together and then broken out by fund in order to track them in the budget. She said that the auditor was trying to find a workaround with the available documents. [Councilor Johnstone asked if the City was handling payroll expenses in a non-standard way. Nicole said that she wasn't sure. He said that it would be interesting to learn from the auditor if there was a better way to record payroll. Councilor Williams asked if Nicole was able to contact the old auditor and cancel the contract. Nicole stated that she emailed the auditor but did not receive a reply. Councilor Williams suggested that she send a certified letter.]

- Nicole reported that there was a significant increase in water testing costs as of January 1, 2022. For Westfir’s routine tests, the price increased by 14.8% for sewer fund testing costs and 15.9% for water fund testing costs. She noted that this was in addition to a roughly 5% increase at the beginning of 2021. Nicole said that she would keep a close eye on the testing item in the budget. [Mayor Cornelius said that Nicole should be sure to increase amounts for testing in the next budget.]
- She stated that Westfir received a \$200 donation from Lane Electric for the “Westfir Volunteer Fire Department.” Nicole said that she called Lane Electric to explain that the City does not have its own fire department, but contracts with Oakridge for fire services. The Lane Electric representative said it was fine for Westfir to keep the donation. Nicole asked if the Council wanted to keep the funds or donate them to the Oakridge Fire Department. [Mayor Cornelius said that she preferred to donate the funds to the OFD.]

Councilor Johnstone made a motion to donate the \$200 received from Lane Electric to the Oakridge Fire Department. Councilor Williams seconded, and the motion carried, 4–0.

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

Mayor Cornelius made a motion to approve expenditures for February 2022 in the amount of \$28,089.64. Councilor Williams seconded, and the motion carried, 4–0.

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

**LETTER OF INTEREST FOR COUNCIL POSITION (Cont.):**

Elise O’Brien joined the Council meeting around 6:45 p.m. Mayor Cornelius asked Ms. O’Brien whether she was able to commit to the Council through 2024. Ms. O’Brien asked for an overview of the time obligation. Mayor Cornelius listed Council meetings, work sessions, the budget committee, and the Planning Commission. The Mayor opened the floor to Ms. O’Brien. Ms. O’Brien said that she had lived in Westfir on and off for five years and was now here permanently. She stated that she was finishing an undergraduate degree at the U.O. in Planning, Public Policy and Management and was applying to graduate school.

Mayor Cornelius confirmed that Katherine Bishop and Deretta Huey, the other two Council candidates, were still in the meeting. The Mayor said that she would make a motion, and then any discussion could happen after her motion. Mayor Cornelius made a motion to appoint Katherine Bishop to Seat 3 of the Westfir City Council with term ending in 2024, and to add her to the signature card for Banner Bank. Councilor Packard seconded. The Mayor asked if there was any discussion. There was no discussion against Ms. Bishop’s appointment. The motion carried, 4–0.

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

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

At 6:54 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 7:16 p.m. and reconvened the Council meeting.

**EMPLOYEE WAGE RAISES:**

Mayor Cornelius made a motion to increase the hourly wage of Relief City Recorder Arron Cobb to \$14.50, retroactive to January 1, 2022; to increase the hourly wage of Relief City Operator Jackson Stone to \$24.50, retroactive to January 1, 2022; and to increase the hourly wage of City Recorder Nicole Tritten to \$17.00, retroactive to January 1, 2022. Councilor Williams seconded, and the motion carried, 4-0.

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

Councilor Williams made a motion to increase the monthly salary of Portal Operator Anthony Schlauch to \$850, retroactive to January 1, 2022. The motion carried, 3-0. [No second; motion left open.]

**CITIZEN CONCERNS NOT ON AGENDA:**

There were no Citizen concerns.

**COUNCILOR CONCERNS NOT ON AGENDA:**

Mayor Cornelius stated that Jason Nehmer of Oakridge Disc Golf Club needed access to the mill site to build and maintain the disc golf course that had been approved by Council and the mill site owners. As such, the Mayor asked if the City could sign out a mill site gate key to Mr. Nehmer. The Council had no objections as long as Mr. Nehmer signed an agreement stating that he will be responsible for keeping the gate locked.

Councilor Packard reported that some of the photographs on the “Westfir Past and Present” kiosk at the Portal were starting to degrade. He asked if the Council should consider laminating or otherwise protecting the photos. Councilor Johnstone stated that the photos should have been printed on vinyl paper. He said that he would look at the display and make a recommendation to the Council.

**ADJOURN MEETING:**

Mayor Cornelius moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Williams seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

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Melody Cornelius, Mayor

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ATTEST:  
Nicole Tritten, City Recorder

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE