

WESTFIR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, July 11, 2022, at 5:30 p.m.
In person at City Hall and via audio/video teleconference

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Melody Cornelius called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Councilors D'Lynn Williams and Kelly Packard were present in person. Councilors Katherine Bishop and Edward Johnstone were present via Zoom. All stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

MAYOR'S MINUTE:

Mayor Cornelius said that she hoped everyone enjoyed the Fourth of July holiday. She noted that the weather was heating up, and it was time to be fire conscious. She stated that Westfir follows fire restrictions set by the Forest Service.

CITIZEN COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:

There were no Citizen comments.

COUNCILOR COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:

There were no Councilor comments.

WESTFIR POLICE IGA / CODE ENFORCEMENT:

Oakridge Police Chief Kevin Martin and Administrative Sergeant Mikal McPherson joined the meeting remotely. Chief Martin confirmed that the police and fire IGAs had been approved by the Oakridge City Council. Mayor Cornelius stated that Westfir was interested in pursuing a joint code enforcement process with Oakridge and possibly Lowell. It was decided that Councilor Packard would act as Westfir's representative in the discussions. Mayor Cornelius asked how many officers OPD had on staff at the moment. Chief Martin reported that it was just himself and Officer Miller, but that two laterals (already certified officers) would be able to start work in a few weeks. He stated that one sergeant and two patrol officers from Coburg were filling in a couple days a week. He said that for Westfir, the Coburg officers were handling emergency calls, while he and Officer Miller were handling routine calls. Mayor Cornelius asked Officer McPherson about Westfir hours for June, which Chief Martin had told City Recorder Nicole Tritten were far higher than the 20 hours per month specified in the IGA. Officer McPherson stated that she had tallied 70 hours and counting because of a major investigation in Westfir. She stated that Oakridge would be billing Westfir for the excess hours. Mayor Cornelius asked Officer Martin whether OPD could assist Westfir with nuisance abatement on private property. Officer Martin stated that OPD could not abate on private property in Oakridge because their city charter did not allow administrative warrants. He said that Westfir would need a clause in its charter that allowed administrative warrants, so the city could legally trespass. In order to assist Westfir with nuisance abatement, OPD would need a letter of guidance from the Westfir city attorney.

FIRE AND EMS PROPOSAL:

The Mayor recognized Westfir resident James McKee. Mr. McKee expressed concern about the amount the City was paying for fire service given that the service might not be available when needed because Oakridge didn't have any volunteer firefighters. Mr. McKee stated that he had submitted a letter to the City about a year ago offering to volunteer his expert services as Fire Chief for Westfir and using the funds that would have been paid to Oakridge to develop reliable programs in Westfir. He said that he

received no response to the letter. Mayor Cornelius and Councilor Williams stated that they had not seen the letter. Mr. McKee said that Nicole told him that she had not received the letter. Further, Mr. McKee recommended that Westfir implement “Vial of Life,” a voluntary program that provides vital information to EMS in a medical emergency when the person is incapacitated. Councilor Johnstone volunteered to research how to implement the program.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON UPDATE TO LAND DEVELOPMENT FEES PER ORS 294.160:

There were no public comments.

RESOLUTION 514: UPDATE LAND DEVELOPMENT FEES:

Mayor Cornelius made a motion to adopt Resolution 514, updating land development application and appeal fees and repealing resolution 317. Councilor Williams seconded, and the motion carried, 5–0.

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

RESOLUTIONS 515, 516, 517, 518, 519: SET EMPLOYEE WAGES AND TITLES:

Mayor Cornelius stated that when the Council approved wage increases for employees in February 2022, they did not pass the required resolutions. She stated that these resolutions were to make official the Council decision on wages for 2022. Mayor Cornelius moved to adopt Resolutions 515, 516, 517, 518, and 519. Councilor Johnstone seconded, and the motion carried, 5–0.

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

POLICE REPORT:

The June police report was not available.

WATER / SEWER REPORT:

Bobby Archer presented the water and sewer report. There were no problems at either plant. Bobby requested a couple of City-branded shirts and a hat to make his position as a City employee visible to the public. Mayor Cornelius stated that the City used to have shirts and hats that were given to public works employees, but the City had run out. Nicole noted that she had been unable to locate the logo that was used on clothing items in the past. Councilor Johnstone volunteered to look into options. Councilor Williams asked Bobby for an update on his studies. He reported that it would be a couple more weeks before he completed the chapter tests and noted that he was being careful not to exceed his usual monthly hours. Mayor Cornelius assured Bobby that he didn’t have to be concerned about exceeding or falling below his normal hours in any given month because the expense was budgeted for the fiscal year.

APPROVE MINUTES:

Councilor Williams made a motion to approve the Council meeting minutes from June 6, 2022; June 14, 2022; and June 30, 2022. Councilor Packard seconded, and the motion carried, 5–0.

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

PORTAL APPLICATION: WEDDING:

Councilor Williams made a motion to approve the Portal rental application of the Matt & Liz wedding on July 15, 2023. Councilor Packard seconded, and the motion carried, 5–0.

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

CITY RECORDER REPORT:

Nicole Tritten presented the report and addressed these items:

- Nicole reported that Henry Hearley and Gary Darnielle at LCOG were working on an RFP for an Engineer of Record for the City. She said that they would use member hours beginning in July since most of the member hours for the FY just ended had been used.
- She addressed an email she received from Russ Dodge, the Certified Water Rights Examiner contracted by the City, stating that he could not file an Extension of Beneficial Use for the City but would file Beneficial Use Certification as originally planned. Nicole stated that she asked for a timeline and cost but did not hear back. [Councilor Williams expressed concern that the City would lose the 8.98 CFS that the City has rights to but does not currently use. She said that the water would be needed for future mill site development. Councilor Packard offered to call Mr. Dodge to express the Council's concern about losing water rights. Councilor Williams suggested that Councilor Packard tell Mr. Dodge about the Housing Needs Analysis currently being done for the Oakridge/Westfir area as an example of future water needs.]
- Nicole stated that the office would have to be closed in the morning on Wednesday, July 13 because she had to be in court by 10 a.m. and had no Relief Recorder to fill in. [The Mayor suggested that Nicole close the office from 9 a.m. until noon.]
- She reported that she sent a noxious growth abatement letter to Umpqua Bank for 46794 Sunset Avenue. Nicole said that she had not heard back before the 10-day deadline. She asked the Council if the City should go ahead and abate. She noted that the bank had abated junk and noxious growth when they were notified in 2021. [The Mayor said that the City should go ahead and abate the growth and bill the bank. If the bank did not pay, then the City would put a lien on the property.]
- Nicole said that she would like to set a date to interview the Relief Recorder applicant next week. [The Mayor said that they would schedule the interview after the meeting.]
- She reported that she was asked by a member of the public whether the City has a written policy on the release of citizen complaints. Nicole said that she was unaware of a written policy, but her understanding was that complaints are confidential until the case goes to court. She questioned whether anonymous complaints could be released before going to court. [Mayor Cornelius stated that she thought, for the sake of consistency, that anonymous complaints should be handled in the same way as signed complaints. She said that she would prefer to move to a model of code enforcement that was not complaint based, so that citizens were not subject to harassment or retribution for making complaints to the City.] Nicole stated that she was also asked whether a complaint could be released as discovery in a separate case. [The Council agreed that the question should be referred to the City attorney.]
- Nicole asked the Council whether they wanted to consider a resolution to ban fireworks or to have an emergency resolution prepared for years when the fire danger is high. [The Mayor agreed that it was a good idea for the City to be prepared to ban fireworks in high fire danger years. Councilor Johnstone thought an outright ban would not go over well, but having an emergency resolution ready to implement as appropriate would be prudent.] Nicole asked what time of year the Council should consider the ban. [The Mayor suggested in time to publicize the ban in the July newsletter. Councilor Williams said that she would look for sample resolutions.]

CITY FINANCIAL REVIEW:

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

- Nicole stated that Bobby had requested an increase in mileage reimbursement because of increased gas prices. She said that the IRS raised the standard mileage rate to 62.5 center per mile for July 1, 2022–December 31, 2022. [The Council agreed to the increase for all employees. The Mayor stated that a motion was required because a rate was being changed.]

Councilor Williams moved to increase the standard mileage reimbursement rate for City employees to 62.5 cents per mile for the fiscal year through December 31, 2022. Councilor Packard seconded, and the motion carried, 5–0.

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

- She reported that the attorney fees to write Resolution 514 updating land use planning fees had been substantial, at \$1,120, but that part of the expense could be categorized as a legal expense in the DLCD fund. [The Mayor suggested that Nicole use the balance of \$400 available in the fund toward the legal fees.]

Nicole reported that property and liability insurance cost a couple hundred dollars more than was budgeted for the current fiscal year due to cyber security coverage that had not been included in the previous year. Mayor Cornelius noted that she and Nicole had opted to go ahead with the cyber coverage because the decision was time sensitive. The Mayor asked for input from the Council. The Council was supportive of keeping the cyber security coverage. Nicole suggested that one of the Councilors might want to read the policy and find out what was covered. Councilor Johnstone volunteered to read the policy.

Councilor Williams made a motion to approve expenditures for July 2022 in the amount of \$52,014.89. Councilor Bishop seconded, and the motion carried, 5–0.

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

CITIZEN CONCERNS NOT ON AGENDA:

The Mayor recognized resident Richard Watson. Mr. Watson said that he was impressed by what the Council did with limited resources. He said that he would like to help, but he was not available year-round. The Mayor mentioned that the City needed volunteers to organize community events, including the Bridge Lighting Festival, which was not held in 2021 for lack of a volunteer coordinator. The Mayor also suggested that the City could use a citizen advisory committee to do research and report back to Council. Mr. Watson also offered to give the City six parking bollards. The Mayor said that she thought the City could use the bollards.

COUNCILOR CONCERNS NOT ON AGENDA:

Councilor Packard stated that he would like to explore the idea of a citizen advisory committee of 3 to 4 people, both to pursue projects the Council doesn't have time for, but also to report citizen concerns to the Council.

Mayor Cornelius reported that she heard from Oakridge Mayor Chrissy Hollett that the Special District Subcommittee for Emergency Services was going to start meeting, and the Mayor said that she couldn't remember which Councilor had volunteered. Councilor Packard stated that he had volunteered, and the Mayor said that she would forward his contact details to the Oakridge Mayor.

Councilor Williams passed out a brochure called “The Joy of Cooking Invasives” and said that invasive knotweed could be eaten. She mentioned that resident Helaine Truthstone had recommended herbicide treatment for knotweed on City property. Councilor Williams stated that she would prefer not to use herbicides on the knotweed and Mayor Cornelius agreed.

ADJOURN MEETING:

Mayor Cornelius moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Packard seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

D'Lynn Williams, Council President

ATTEST:
Nicole Tritten, City Recorder

DATE