

WESTFIR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, October 2, 2023, 5:30 p.m.
In person at City Hall and via audio/video teleconference

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor D'Lynn Williams called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Councilors Kelly Packard, Katherine Bishop and Deretta Huey were present in person, as was City Recorder Nicole Tritten. Councilor Edward Johnstone was present via video. Those present in person stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

MAYOR'S MINUTE:

Mayor Williams noted that a Relief City Recorder had been hired, and so the City was fully staffed.

CITIZEN COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Westfir resident Melody Cornelius addressed the agenda item "Fire Chief Water/Sewer Stipend". She stated that she disagreed with the precedent of compensating volunteers. She asked the Council to step back from compensating a volunteer for a department that did not exist. She went on to express her disagreement with the Council pursuing a volunteer fire department when one could not be sustained in the past. She stated that the Council would do better to support the Oakridge Fire Department and to work with the whole community to fund emergency services.

COUNCILOR COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:

There were no Councilor comments.

REFINEMENT PLAN FOR THE MILL SITE:

Attorney Gary Darnielle of Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) was present via video. Mr. Darnielle offered LCOG's assistance to the City to find funding to develop a Facilities Plan for the mill site. He stated that a Facilities Plan was required to allow the City to apply for grants to extend water and sewer lines to the mill site. The Council accepted Mr. Darnielle's proposal. Mr. Darnielle left the meeting at 5:43 p.m.

ADOPT HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN:

Mayor Williams reported that she had not received the final version of the plan from the County. She provided the Council with a copy of a two-paragraph addendum to the plan for Westfir. She stated that she would like the Council to vote to approve the plan now because the previous five-year plan was expiring this month.

Councilor Johnstone made a motion to adopt the Lane County Hazard Mitigation Plan for 2023–2028. Councilor Packard seconded, and the motion carried, 5–0.

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

ADOPT TMDL 5-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

Mayor Williams made a motion to adopt the TMDL Implementation Plan for 2023–2028 with the revised mercury TMDL. Councilor Packard seconded, and the motion carried, 5–0.

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

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mayor Williams presented the report. The Oakridge Fire and Police Department reports for August were provided to the Council. She reported that the Oakridge Municipal Court Clerk agreed to post the dockets on the City of Oakridge website; that Oakridge was looking into hiring a collection agency for court fines; and that Oakridge was hiring another police officer, and Mayor Williams agreed to be on the hiring committee.

MAYOR'S ROUNDUP:

Mayor Williams gave the report, working from a list she had provided to the Council. She discussed riparian photo points for the TMDL; the confluence park improvement project; Community Recreation Committee activity; code enforcement and crime; Chamber of Commerce activity; and three letters of support she had written.

WESTFIR FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT:

Councilor Packard responded to Ms. Cornelius' comments, defending the necessity of a Westfir Fire Department and the Council's process. Chief McKee stated that he wanted to respond to Ms. Cornelius' comments. Mayor Williams replied that she preferred to table the matter for a work session. Councilor Packard discussed two bids he received for a modular building to house the City's fire engine at City Hall. Copies of the bids were provided to the Council. Chief McKee stated for the record that he strongly disagreed with not being able to respond to the public comment. He reported that he would have a meeting with the State Fire Marshal in Salem, and he believed the City was close to receiving a provisional FDIN. The Council discussed the cost of installing a metal roll up door on the City Hall shop that was converted to Fire Department training and storage.

Mayor Williams made a motion to spend up to \$4,000 from the General Fund for a metal door at City Hall. Councilor Bishop seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0.

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

FIRE CHIEF WATER/SEWER STIPEND:

Mayor Williams tabled the issue for discussion at a work session.

PORTAL PARK REPORT:

Portal Maintenance Operator Tony Schlauch, present via video, gave the report. He stated that someone started a fire in front of the men's restroom, which he had reported to the police. He described preparations for the Fall.

WATER/SEWER REPORT:

City Operator Bobby Archer, present via video, gave the report. He reported on a leak in the City's water line that was caused by the repair of a resident's line by a third party. He stated that he was trying to contact the resident to find the responsible party to reimburse the City's cost to fix the line. He reported no problems at either plant.

APPROVE MINUTES:

Councilor Johnstone made a motion to approve the Council meeting minutes for September 11, 2023, and the Planning Commission meeting minutes for September 11, 2023. Councilor Huey seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0.

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

Mayor Williams made a motion to approve the special meeting minutes for September 25, 2023. Councilor Bishop seconded, and the motion carried, 5–0.

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

CITY RECORDER REPORT:

Nicole Tritten presented the report and addressed these items:

- A citation she issued for unlicensed dogs and whether the Council wanted to proceed to court even though the resident had licensed the dogs after receiving the citation. [There being no complaints against the dogs, the Council was not opposed to dismissing the case.]
- A volunteer stewardship event being held by Oakridge Trails Alliance at the Trans Cascadia site on October 5–8. [Nick Gibson of Trans Cascadia Excursions was present in person and explained the event. He stated that they planned to have volunteers camp on site as being more convenient to the event than camping elsewhere. The Mayor asked if the Council had any concerns. Councilor Bishop stated that she wanted to see dogs on leash. Nick Gibson departed the meeting after his comments.]

CITY FINANCIAL REVIEW:

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

- She reported that she did not provide the bank reconciliation and profit & loss reports in today’s packet because she hadn’t been able to reconcile payroll. She stated that she wanted to reconcile the payroll before generating the reports rather than pushing the problem to the next month. She told the Council she would email the documents this week.
- A significant increase in the cost of audit services for the next three-year contract. She reported that she asked the auditor if the City could use the exemption for entities with expenditures between \$250,001 and one million dollars, and instead file an Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) report, and if so, whether the auditor would perform that service.
- Whether the City or Trans Cascadia Excursions should cover the cost of the City attorney’s fee to issue advice on the recusal of two Planning Commissioners.

Mayor Williams made a motion to cover the cost for attorney advice on recusal. Councilor Packard seconded, and the motion carried, 5–0.

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

OCTOBER EXPENDITURES:

Mayor Williams made a motion to approve expenditures for October 2023 in the amount of \$78,055.34. Councilor Johnstone seconded, and the motion carried, 5–0.

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

CITIZEN CONCERNS NOT ON AGENDA:

Jamie Przybysz asked for a reduction in her September water bill for 181,000 gallons of usage that was caused by a leak. Ms. Przybysz stated that the leak had been repaired by her husband, Chris.

Mayor Williams made a motion to reduce the September water bill for the Przybysz household to \$152, Councilor Packard seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0.

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

CITIZEN CONCERNS NOT ON AGENDA:

Melody Cornelius stated that she would like to hear what the City attorney advised on the recusal of the two Planning Commissioners from voting on the Trans Cascadia development plan. She then expressed disappointment with the direction that the City Council had taken in not supporting recreation-based businesses in Westfir. In particular, she expressed anger that the Planning Commission/City Council did not support the Trans Cascadia Excursions project, which she believed could have made Westfir a destination and given the City a promising future.

Nick Gibson re-joined the meeting via video. He expressed his own disappointment, saying that he believed the Council had put individual interests above the community in not supporting the TCE project.

COUNCILOR CONCERNS NOT ON AGENDA:

The Mayor read from the City attorney’s email message, which stated that the two commissioners should recuse themselves from voting on the TCE application. The Mayor then reported that TCE had withdrawn its application. Councilor Huey reported that she had forwarded the attorney’s email to the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC). Copies were provided to the Council of both the attorney’s email message and Councilor Huey’s email to OGEC. Councilor Huey’s interpretation of the OGEC message was that she and Councilor Bishop could vote because they did not have a conflict of interest. Nicole pointed out that bias and conflict of interest were not the same considerations.

Councilor Packard addressed the issue of nuisance abatement and administrative warrants. Councilor Johnstone expressed concern about pursuing unfunded projects like the fire department.

Nicole stated that she provided a copy of an email message in the day’s Council packet from resident Rick Watson, which complimented the City Council.

ADJOURN MEETING:

Mayor Williams adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m. after confirming there was no further discussion from the Council.

Respectfully submitted,

D’Lynn Williams, Mayor

ATTEST:
Nicole Tritten, City Recorder

DATE