

WESTFIR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, March 4, 2024, 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. Those present in person stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilor Edward Johnstone joined via video at 5:32 p.m.

MAYOR'S MINUTE:

Mayor Williams stated that the job openings at the City had been filled with Josh Nelson hired as Relief City Operator and Bill Desser hired as Portal Maintenance Operator.

CITIZEN COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:

There were no citizen comments.

COUNCILOR COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:

There were no Councilor comments.

WATER BILL REDUCTION REQUEST:

Westfir resident Corrine Hunt stated that the water leak at her home had been repaired, and that she had submitted a copy of the repair invoice to City Hall. Mayor Williams confirmed that she had reviewed the repair invoice.

Councilor Packard moved to reduce the February water bill of Corrine Hunt from \$984.24 to \$379.17. Councilor Bishop seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0.

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

CASCADE CREAM PUFF/ALPINE EPIC PORTAL RENTAL APPLICATION:

The race director, Michelle Emmons, present in person, briefly described the mountain bike race, the Alpine Epic, formerly known as the Cascade Cream Puff. Ms. Emmons referred to the Westfir RTMP funding request that she submitted to Council, stating that 38% of participants in the race came from out of state. She noted that the race proceeds benefit the Oakridge Trails Alliance. Ms. Emmons described trail work the Alliance had been working on for the past couple of years.

Mayor Williams made a motion to approve the Portal rental application of the Alpine Epic MTB Endurance Race in June 2024, pending receipt of all application materials. 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 an RTMP grant of \$2,700 to the Alpine Epic bike race in June 2024. Councilor Packard seconded, and the motion carried, 5-0.

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

TRAILS ALLIANCE UPDATE:

Ms. Emmons described trail work the Alliance is doing within Oakridge City boundaries to make trails accessible without a car and for people with mobility issues.

KEG & CASK FESTIVAL RTMP GRANT REQUEST:

Mayor Williams introduced Amy Kelley, who runs the local food pantry, and noted that the Keg & Cask Festival is the primary fundraiser for the food pantry. Ms. Kelley stated that the Festival was in its 16th year and was facing funding challenges because of increased costs for advertising and music. The Council reviewed the Festival’s RTMP application and request for funding.

Councilor Huey made a motion to approve an RTMP grant of \$2,500 to the 2024 Oakridge Keg & Cask Festival. Councilor Johnstone seconded, and the motion carried, 5–0.

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

WESTFIR EASTER EGG HUNT:

Barbara Desser, Westfir resident and volunteer organizer, stated that Westfir was holding the Easter Egg Hunt for the first time in four years. She said the event would take place at Portal Park but not on the mill site. She described the activities she had planned for the event. The Mayor asked if the budget was sufficient, and Ms. Desser said it was and that she had purchased some supplies for next year as well. Ms. Desser stated that the event was scheduled for Saturday, March 30, at 10 a.m.

PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT:

Mayor Williams gave the report. She said a group of Oakridge residents attended who were angry about thefts happening locally. She stated that Chief Martin said that the City of Oakridge could no longer sponsor Neighborhood Watch due to the risk of lawsuits. Mayor Williams reviewed the OPD January report, which had been given to the Council. She gave a brief update on the Mobile Crisis Services of Lane County project, a planned mobile unit to help people with mental health crises. Chief Scott Hollett, present by video, provided more details about the Mobile Crisis Services unit.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT (OFD):

Chief Hollett gave the report. He stated that he had been working on grants, including a grant for two new ambulances. Mayor Williams asked whether a date had been set for a joint meeting with Oakridge, Hazeldell and Westfir about a consolidated fire district. She noted that Westfir planned to make no changes to its status. Chief Hollett replied that the meeting had been postponed but would be rescheduled. Councilor Packard asked about the status of repairs on the Westfir fire engine. Chief Hollett stated that he was waiting to hear back from the mechanic about the remaining cost for the engine to pass the pump test. Nicole stated that Westfir has been unexpectedly billed \$1,045 by the mechanic, which was in addition to \$1,566 in repairs still pending. Chief Hollett stated that he could provide doses of Narcan to the City of Westfir at no charge.

WATER MANAGEMENT & CONSERVATION PLAN CONTRACT:

Mayor Williams stated that Westfir was notified in September 2023 [by the Oregon Water Resources Department] that the City’s Water Management and Conservation plan had to be updated by March 8, 2024. Nicole stated that the City Engineer had recommended GSI Water Solutions (GSI), and that the Council had reviewed a Scope of Services by GSI at the last work session. Nicole noted that the work

would be paid for with ARPA funds. She stated that GSI would complete the work by September 8, 2024, the date after which the State’s approval of the City’s WMCP would expire.

Mayor Williams made a motion to approve the professional services agreement with GSI Water Solutions, Inc., in the amount of \$11,595, to update the City’s Water Management and Conservation Plan. Councilor Bishop seconded, and the motion carried, 5–0.

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

LETTER OF OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED QUARRY:

A draft copy of a letter from the Oakridge City Council to the Lane County Board of Commissioners in opposition to the Hazeldell quarry on TV Butte was reviewed by the Westfir City Council. Councilors Huey and Johnstone stated that they would like to sign the letter. Nicole said that she would contact Oakridge City Administrator James Cleavenger about whether Westfir Councilors could sign on to the letter or should draft their own letter.

MAYOR’S ROUNDUP:

Mayor Williams gave the report. She stated that the University of Oregon had applied for permits to perform the Heritage Survey at Boat Launch/Turtle Island Park. She also stated that the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council was organizing a community planting at the site on March 26 and April 6. She noted that the Regional Solutions Teams meeting with Courtney Flathers of the Governor’s office and representatives of other State agencies had been rescheduled for March 18, and that she and Nicole would attend. She reported that the USFS was analyzing the site beyond the railroad trestle on North Fork Road for parking by the bike shuttle companies, but it would be another year before the analysis was complete. She noted that the mill site owners were still allowing the shuttles to park on their property, adjacent to the Portal, for this year.

WATER/SEWER REPORT:

City Operator Bobby Archer, present by video, gave the report. He stated that there were no problems at either plant. He reported that the new Relief City Operator was performing well. Mayor Williams asked him to check on the state of Hemlock Park since she heard that someone was using it as a personal dog park.

APPROVE MINUTES:

Councilor Huey made a motion to approve the Council meeting minutes for February 5, 2024; February 16, 2024; February 21, 2024; and February 28, 2024. Councilor Packard 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:

- That Statement of Economic Interest filings were due by April 15.
- The status of the existing waterline evaluation project.

- The Budget Committee only has two citizen electors. She stated that she had published a call for members in the January, February and March newsletters; on the City’s Facebook page on February 12; and she put up notices at City Hall, the Post Office and Portal Park. [Councilor Packard stated that he had called a resident who expressed interest, but they were unable to serve. Councilor Bishop asked if it was necessary for the elector to serve for three years.] Nicole stated that in the March newsletter she had encouraged residents to apply even if they could serve for only one year.

CITY FINANCIAL REVIEW:

Nicole Tritten submitted the cash deposits, bank statement, bank reconciliation, profit & loss report, and expenditure sheet, and addressed these items:

- She submitted the Council-approved Plan of Action letter for the 2022–2023 audit to the Secretary of State on February 9.
- Nicole reminded the Council that for fiscal year 2023–2024, the City would undergo an Agreed Upon Procedures (AUP) examination instead of an audit. She reported that she attended a short webinar by the City’s auditor about the process. She said that she was concerned by what she learned because the findings would be either affirmative or negative, with no context provided, and the auditor would provide no recommendations. She noted that they were using an AUP process because it cost \$2,000 less than the audit.
- She recommended that the City hire a professional security company to install or upgrade cameras at Portal Park. [The Council approved the idea. Councilors Packard and Johnstone offered to contact security companies and research cameras.]
- Nicole reported that the City had spent \$3,300 on mileage reimbursement this fiscal year, split between the Water and Sewer Funds, and was on track to spend around \$4,900. She suggested to the Council that they might want to consider the purchase of a new City truck.

MARCH EXPENDITURES:

Mayor Williams made a motion to approve expenditures for March 2024 in the amount of \$28,580.13. Councilor Packard seconded, and the motion carried, 5–0.

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

COUNCILOR CONCERNS NOT ON AGENDA:

Councilor Johnstone gave an update on the problem of feral cats in the Westoak Road area near the covered bridge. He reported that there was a plan to trap and relocate as many feral cats as possible in the coming weeks. He stated that the cats had already been spayed or neutered, as far as he knew.

CITIZEN CONCERNS NOT ON AGENDA:

Westfir resident Melody Cornelius, present by video, stated that the City was legally liable for employment discrimination against her, because rather than making a counteroffer when she turned down the Portal Maintenance position at \$15.50 an hour, the Council hired a man in the position for \$16.00 an hour.

Mayor Williams stated that the Council still needed to pass an ordinance to address the use of fireworks in City limits.

ADJOURN MEETING:

Mayor Williams moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Packard seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

D'Lynn Williams, Mayor

ATTEST:
Nicole Tritten, City Recorder

DATE