

WESTFIR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, January 6, 2025, 5:30 p.m.
In person at City Hall and via audio/video teleconference

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Outgoing Mayor D'Lynn Williams called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Councilor Deretta Huey, Councilor-elect Linda M. Love and Councilor-elect Richard Watson were present in person, as was City Recorder Nicole Tritten. City Operator Bobby Archer was present via video. Those present in person stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

MAYOR'S MINUTE:

Mayor Williams expressed thanks for the support she had received in her ten years on the Council. She stated that the outgoing Council had accomplished a lot, and there were many things in progress. She noted that the Park Management Plan for the boat launch (confluence) park was approved by the Council in December, and the heritage survey for the site had been completed. She stated that Westfir still needed a mayor and one councilor. Mayor Williams departed the meeting at 5:32 p.m.

SWEAR IN NEW COUNCILORS:

Linda M. Love took the oath of office, and Nicole notarized the oath. Richard Watson took the oath of office, and Nicole notarized the oath. With the new Councilors sworn in, a quorum was present.

ELECT COUNCIL PRESIDENT:

Councilor Huey volunteered to be Council President, being the senior member of the Council. Councilor Love moved to elect Councilor Deretta Huey as Westfir City Council President. Councilor Watson seconded, and the motion carried, 3–0.

AYES: Huey, Love, Watson **NAYS:** 0 **ABSTENTIONS:** 0

Per the City of Westfir Charter, in the absence of the mayor, Council President Huey chaired the meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Westfir resident Randy Stark, present in person, commented on the stormwater accumulation agenda item. He pointed out that the area was not owned by the City, and he didn't see how the City had any ability to take action on the problem.

COUNCILOR COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS:

There were no Councilor comments.

OUTGOING MAYOR'S ROUNDUP:

The Council reviewed a brief report from former Mayor Williams. Nicole stated that the Councilors could reach out to the former mayor if they had questions.

OAKRIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT:

Fire Chief Scott Hollett was present via phone. The Council reviewed the November 2024 Fire and EMS report. Chief Hollett reported that a small repair was done on the Westfir engine and that a staff member needed reimbursement of \$50 from Westfir for the repair. Councilor Watson asked Chief

Hollett about disaster preparedness and emergency management. Chief Hollett stated that the City of Oakridge had developed a draft response plan in collaboration with the Southern Willamette Forest Collaborative. He noted that the Oakridge Fire Department (OFD) was also working to develop a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Councilor Watson stated that he was interested in representing Westfir in the disaster-preparedness group. Chief Hollett reported that there was a significant increase in emergency calls in 2024 compared to 2023. Councilor Watson asked about staffing levels at OFD. Chief Hollett stated that OFD was fully staffed after training a new group of volunteers. He noted that OFD was still hoping to recruit Westfir volunteers.

WATER BILL FORGIVENESS REQUEST:

City Recorder Nicole Tritten stated that she had a conflict of interest in the matter of the water bill forgiveness request by Kenneth Grimsby because he was a member of her household. She further stated that, except to describe how water forgiveness requests had been handled in the past, she would make no recommendation to the Council. She requested that the City Council give her specific instruction on how the matter should be handled. She provided a written copy of her statement to the Council, along with a description of how water bill forgiveness requests were addressed in the past. Councilor Huey read aloud the eight-point description of how water bill forgiveness was usually handled.

Councilor Huey stated that the Council had received a letter from Mr. Grimsby describing the waterline leak and requesting a reduction on the bill. She recognized Kenneth Grimsby, present in person. Mr. Grimsby stated that the repair of the broken water line was completed a couple of days after the meter was read, so the water loss spanned two billing cycles. The Council reviewed a copy of his November and December bills and a repair invoice. Mr. Grimsby stated that he checked his water meter after the repair, and based on the reading, was confident that the repair was successful.

Councilor Huey made a motion to forgive \$499 (50% of the \$998 overage) on Kenneth Grimsby's water bill. Councilor Watson seconded, and the motion carried, 3-0.

AYES: Huey, Love, Watson **NAYS:** 0 **ABSTENTIONS:** 0

Mr. Grimsby departed the meeting at 6:01 p.m. Nicole reminded the Council that she needed instruction on how to handle the matter given the conflict of interest. She suggested that the task could be delegated to Relief City Recorder Jessica Snyder, with a Council member supervising. Councilor Huey offered to oversee the adjustment to the bill.

STORMWATER ACCUMULATION ON 1st & 2nd STREET:

Westfir homeowner Adam Kennedy, present in person, familiarized the new Council with the problem of stormwater accumulation in the 1st and 2nd Street neighborhood; and his ongoing work to investigate and abate the source of the problem. He gave reports to the previous Council at the October and December 2024 meetings. Westfir resident Greg Lockner, present in person, questioned whether a City water main leak was contributing because water continued to pool for a couple days after rain had ceased. Bobby stated that he didn't think there was a City waterline leak, based on normal readings at the water plant, but said that he would take another look. Mr. Kennedy reported that he had closed 2nd Street (privately owned) and had a 200-foot fire hose running from the low spot on his property to McLane Creek to pump the standing water. Mr. Kennedy stated that, based on County stormwater data, a large number of upstream culverts were draining into McLane Creek; that no agency manages McLane Creek; and that the culvert in Westfir was insufficient for the amount of stormwater drainage. He said that the County response was that the culvert is not undersized, and there is no evidence of a link between McLane Creek and the flooding in Westfir.

Mr. Kennedy said that his next step was to take the problem to the state or federal level. He pointed out that the Lane County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, updated in October 2023, lists “Drainage improvements for 1st/2nd Street Loop” in the section on mitigation projects for Westfir. He stated that in order to be considered for FEMA funding to address the problem, Westfir needs a Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (NHMP). His position is that Westfir should pursue an NHMP.

ANNUAL TMDL REPORT:

Nicole read a definition of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) to the new Council. She explained that the City of Westfir is obligated under EPA rules administered by Oregon DEQ to work to protect water quality in the City’s section of the Middle Fork by minimizing harmful runoff, including bacteria, mercury and other pollutants. The Council reviewed a draft copy of the TMDL Report for 2024, due to DEQ by February 1. Nicole discussed benchmarks of the plan completed or maintained in 2024 and items that were still pending.

WATER/SEWER REPORT:

City Operator Bobby Archer presented the report. He addressed permit noncompliance for levels of E. coli at the wastewater plant, which Nicole mentioned in the TMDL report. He stated that he would work with Max Baker, the City’s Certified Operator, to isolate and resolve the problem at the plant. He reported no problems at the water plant. Bobby left the meeting after giving the report.

APPROVE MINUTES:

Councilor Huey made a motion to approve the Council meeting minutes for December 4, 2024; December 11, 2024; December 12, 2024; and December 30, 2024. Councilor Watson seconded, and the motion carried, 3–0.

AYES: Huey, Love, Watson **NAYS:** 0 **ABSTENTIONS:** 0

CITY RECORDER REPORT:

Nicole Tritten presented the report and addressed these items:

- New Council matters: Nicole discussed records retention; City email addresses; and the Elected Essentials class offered by League of Oregon Cities.
- The Relief Operator position is open, but no applications have been received. She started advertising the position on December 13. She stated that the matter was urgent because Bobby would have no days off without backup. She said that the Josh, the Relief Operator who resigned, is staying in the position for now, but he has a full-time job.
- Water Conservation and Management Plan: Nicole reported that the 10-year Plan was approved by the Council on December 30. She stated that because the City’s water loss was greater than 15%, an analysis identifying potential water loss factors and corrective actions must be submitted to the Oregon Water Resources Department by December 16, 2026. She noted that the first step to address the water loss is installing water meters at City facilities that don’t have them. She stated that a water meter was installed at Hemlock Park in 2024, and there were plans to install meters at City Hall and the water plant.

CITY FINANCIAL REVIEW:

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

- She discussed the problem of insufficient funding for the certified consultant for the Sewer Fund in the current fiscal year budget.
- The Agreed Upon Procedures report for 2023–2024 was completed by the auditor by the December 31, 2024, deadline. A copy of the revenues and expenditures report from the State was provided for Council review.
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA): Nicole stated that ARPA funds had to be spent or obligated by December 31, 2024. Nicole reported that of the City’s \$59,304 of ARPA funds, \$32,904 had been spent; \$17,149 had been obligated for the Wastewater Facilities Plan; and the remaining \$9,103 had been obligated for water tank cleaning and inspection. She noted that obligated funds must be spent by December 31, 2026.

JANUARY EXPENDITURES:

Councilor Love made a motion to approve expenditures for January 2025 in the amount of \$103,916.08. Councilor Huey seconded, and the motion carried, 3–0.

AYES: Huey, Love, Watson **NAYS:** 0 **ABSTENTIONS:** 0

CITIZEN CONCERNS NOT ON AGENDA:

Randy Stark suggested placing boulders to block vehicle trespass at the wastewater plant from the railroad side. He pointed out that boulders had been placed at the water plant to prevent vehicle trespass at that site.

COUNCILOR CONCERNS NOT ON AGENDA:

Councilor Huey encouraged the Councilors to recruit for the open Mayor and Council seats.

RECESS MEETING FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO ORS 192.660(2)(a):

The Executive Session, scheduled to review applications for the Relief Operator position, was tabled because there were no applications for the position.

ADJOURN MEETING:

Council President Huey moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Love seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

AYES: Huey, Love, Watson **NAYS:** 0 **ABSTENTIONS:** 0

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Watson, Mayor

ATTEST:
Nicole Tritten, City Recorder

DATE

The January 6, 2025, minutes were signed by the Mayor and City Recorder on February 5, 2025.