

BINGEN CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

March 21, 2017

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Betty J. Barnes at 7:00 p.m. Council members present: Catherine Kiewit, Stephanie Porter, Laura Mann. Council members absent: Izzy Schroder. Staff present: City Administrator Jan Brending and Police Chief Tracy Wyckoff. Audience present: Michelle Scott, Sheriff Bob Songer, Bob Songer Jr., Ryan O'Connor,

Public Comment

Sheriff Bob Songer, Klickitat County

Sheriff Bob Songer said he is present to answer any questions and address comments regarding the signage that has been installed at Dickey Farms.

Catherine Kiewit said she has heard from people in the community that feel the signs are derogatory. She said that she feels anyone who is using drugs would not be able to follow the directions on the signage. Kiewit said she does not feel the signage makes the impact that the Sheriff is seeking. She said the signage makes people feel that Bingen has a drug problem. Kiewit said she is aware that there are people that use drugs and deal drugs in our community.

Laura Mann said she sees the signage as a negative aspect to a situation that could be spun more positively. She said the community should be reaching out to people who need help and that resources should be provided. Mann said she sees Bingen as a community who wants to help.

Stephanie Porter said she also feels it is a very negative spin. She said the focus should be on solutions.

Bob Songer said it was not intended to be negative but is directed towards "druggies." He said he is on the board of the Klickitat County Meth committee for drug treatment and education. Songer said education starts with parents and children and in the schools. He said he has an open door policy for people who need help but he does not have anyone coming to ask for help. Songer said Klickitat County has the potential for some serious problems related to drug use. He said the Sheriff's office has a good relationship with other law enforcement agencies in the Gorge. Songer said a drug user trying to support their habit can become involved in criminal activity.

Laura Mann asked Songer what he feels is the solution.

Sheriff Songer said it is important to work together but denying there is a problem does not work. He said he has also had positive comments regarding the signs. Songer said if he saw the signs in another community he would feel like it is a good place to live.

Laura Mann said she disagrees. She said it is not her goal to chase drug users out of the community but find the resources to help them.

Stephanie Porter said she does not feel the signs will do anything. She said she feels the signs are saying that drug users are a lower class citizen. Porter said a family member had people loving and supporting them and that helped them in their recovery.

Catherine Kiewit said she understands that Songer may be getting positive comments but that is not what the city council is hearing. She said she feels the signs should be taken down. Kiewit said she does not feel there will be any follow through and the signs are just cultivating a specific reaction.

Sheriff Songer said he wants "druggies" to move out of the county.

Catherine Kiewit said people who are using drugs will not read the signs and have the wherewithal to do anything about their problem. She said the signs are targeting a group of people who need support.

Stephanie Porter said the signs do not solve the problem.

Sheriff Songer said there are other smaller signs in the county. He said the only place he has had negative feedback is in Bingen. Songer said he had hoped he would get support for his efforts.

Laura Mann said she is not about to tell anyone to leave the community. She said she feels there are no good treatment options in the area.

Catherine Kiewit said she agrees there are limited resources and that she feels it is important to help residents with the issue. She said she is not against drug enforcement but does not like the way the message is worded.

Laura Mann said there needs to be safe places for addressing issues with drug users. She said the council knows who the law enforcement is and supports them but that a young person strung out on drugs is not going to go and knock on the door of the Sheriff. Mann said they need something else.

Sheriff Songer said he is a strong supporter of treatment but most users do not want treatment.

Catherine Kiewit asked if the county has resources for treatment.

Sheriff Songer said yes but that when they get out they just relapse.

Stephanie Porter said having people that recovering addicts can connect with is important. She suggested the signage could be made more positive and less judgmental. Porter asked if there are sponsors available in Klickitat County.

Laura Mann said she feels the money used for the signs should be spent on lifting people up instead of putting them down. She asked Sheriff Songer how many of the people who support the signs are from the City of Bingen.

Stephanie Porter asked if there are any other signs that are as large as the ones in Bingen.

Sheriff Songer said yes. He said that he and the city council will have to agree to disagree.

Catherine Kiewit said she is part of a new coalition regarding drugs and alcohol. She said the signs do not represent Bingen's viewpoint and that members of the community do not like the signs.

Sheriff Songer said it is his 1st Amendment right to put up the signs.

Catherine Kiewit said she feels the signs are in poor taste.

Sheriff Songer said he will not be bullied. He said drug violators are who he is going after. He said the council can be upset but he will leave them up unless Stan Dickey says he needs to take them down.

Laura Mann said the council represents the citizens of Bingen while Sheriff Songer represents Klickitat County.

Sheriff Songer said he also represents the citizens of Bingen who voted in the election for sheriff.

Catherine Kiewit asked Sheriff Songer if he would be open to different language on the signs.

Sheriff Songer said as long as the language is not too "flowery."

Catherine Kiewit suggested language that cultivated community but still recognizing there is a drug problem would be better.

Sheriff Songer noted that the signs are not on public land but on private property.

Stephanie Porter said she does not feel the council is bullying Sheriff Songer.

Laura Mann said she recognizes Sheriff Songer's 1st Amendment right but feels there are other ways to state the message.

Sheriff Songer said that if it affects the drug user or seller than he has done what he wanted to do.

Catherine Kiewit asked if Sheriff Songer thinks that drug users or dealers will move out of the county.

Sheriff Songer said probably not. He said that he would have thought the council would be outraged over drug issues.

Catherine Kiewit said she feels the city council is very passionate about drug issues in its community.

Police Chief Tracy Wyckoff said he sees both sides of the issue. He said he does not know if the signage will help solve the problem. Chief Wyckoff said it might be possible that drug users or drug dealers might not move into the community if they see the signs. He said that if core drug dealers are offended by the signage then he does not care.

Ryan O'Connor said it is the members of the community who are not drug dealers or users who are offended.

Catherine Kiewit said the message that people are getting when they drive into the community is that Bingen has a drug problem and that their kids will not be safe here. She said that she will tell people who contact her about the signs to contact Sheriff Songer and Dickey Farms. Kiewit said she feels the signage is a commentary of the City of Bingen.

Sheriff Songer said there will be other signs going up and that they will not only be in Bingen.

Stephane Porter said the city council is not against drug enforcement and that the council and the Sheriff are on the same page on that issue. She said she does not feel the signs will work and that they could be better worded – being more optimistic and not flowery. Porter suggested providing a list of resources would be helpful.

Laura Mann said she certainly understands the ramifications of drug use and drug dealing. She said she respects Sheriff Songer's knowledge. Mann said she would like to see more education at the high school level and for parents.

Sheriff Songer said he agrees with that. He said training for parents is a good thing. He said he could put together a list of resources and publish them in the newspaper. Sheriff Songer said it takes people hitting rock bottom before they want help. He said he believes that drug users have recovered only after they have been clean for 5 years because they are highly likely to relapse.

Betty Barnes said she understands both sides of the issue also. She said she has spoken with Stan Dickey about the signs and the backlash towards his business. Barnes said Dickey did not like the comments and actions by certain people and she believes his feet are dug in about allowing the signs on his property. She said that even with certain people calling for a boycott of his business he has actually seen business increase. Barnes said she hopes that a battle is not made of this issue. She said that she understands that it looks like the signs are only in Bingen. Barnes noted the city council supported increasing the sales tax in support of drug enforcement. She said she believes the signs are addressed under free speech and are not regulated by the city's sign ordinance. Barnes said there are a number of things that have been mentioned that could help address the drug problem.

Sheriff Songer said that because the city and he disagree on one issue does not mean that they can't work together. He said he has offered to talk to the chamber or any other group. Sheriff Songer said it is important to realize there are going to be different opinions on the issue. He said he could have used deputies to put the signs up but he and his wife put them up.

Jan Brending asked if any county funds were used for the signs.

Sheriff Songer said he could have used county money but did not.

Laura Mann asked Sheriff Songer if he planned on attending the Klickitat County Commissioner town hall scheduled for March 22 at 7:00 p.m. She said it has been posted on the county's web page as an opportunity for citizens to talk to their county commissioners about any issues.

Sheriff Songer said he was not aware of the meeting. He thanked the council for the opportunity to speak to them and appreciated hearing their side of the issue. Sheriff Songer noted that there is a meeting scheduled at the Pioneer Center with the ACLU and the Klickitat County Democratic party regarding immigration and law enforcement. He said the meeting is scheduled on March 29 at 5:00 p.m. He said it is an open public meeting. Sheriff Songer said there are 9 policy rules that the ACLU would like to see law enforcement follow. He said that it has been mentioned that the signs and the Sheriff's Posse will also be discussed.

Bingen-White Salmon Police Department Update

Chief Tracy Wyckoff said he is sorry for the people who are not in the drug arena are offended by the signs. He said he also understands Sheriff Songer's message. Chief Wyckoff said that maybe someday the message could be revisited.

Chief Wyckoff said the White Salmon city council did not adopt a diversity and inclusiveness resolution and decided to stay neutral on the issue.

Chief Wyckoff said he has hired a lateral from Klickitat County, Frank Randall, who will start April 1st. He said he lives in Centerville which is within the 30-minute response time as required by the department. Wyckoff said he feels Randall will bring some very good things to the department and that he is highly thought of in the law enforcement community.

Chief Wyckoff said Pedro Virgen is now working on his own. He said Lisa George has been out of the office due to some surgery but could be coming back sooner than expected.

Chief Wyckoff said things have been going well and he is moving forward with his retirement at the end of the year. He said he believes that White Salmon will look internally for a replacement and then will go outside the department if necessary. Wyckoff said he would like someone in place before he retires so that he can provide some training. He noted that he is working on rewriting policies and procedures.

Chief Wyckoff said he does understand the council's position on the sign issue. He said that treatment is a good thing but if drug users do not want help then there is not much that can be done. Wyckoff said jurisdictional lines can be a problem in providing help to individuals along with a number of issues regarding mental evaluations while someone is on drugs. He said that he hopes the council and the groups that are meeting about the issues do not get frustrated in how slow things move.

Catherine Kiewit said the organization that she is part of is working with the Yakama Nation and the youth of the county. She asked Chief Wyckoff if drugs are passing through on Highway 14 or are being dealt by residents of the community.

Chief Wyckoff said both. He said there is a lot meth and marijuana users in the area. He said that he is seeing more violent individuals due to increased marijuana usage. Wyckoff said marijuana is more prevalent since it is legalized. He said the department has talked to a couple of people who carry medical marijuana cards and are growing. Wyckoff said some of them actually invite the officers into their homes to show them what they are growing while others say it is none of the department's business.

Catherine Kiewit asked if many of the issues are coming from marijuana usage versus other drugs.

Chief Wyckoff said he is not sure but maybe 60% of it is attributable to marijuana.

Laura Mann asked if people who are committing crimes in the community are high.

Chief Wyckoff said that many are under the influence of some mind-altering substance. He said people who have a drug problem usually do not have the finances to support their habit and therefore begin committing crimes to finance the habit. Wyckoff said he is seeing an increase of people under the influence driving.

Stephane Porter asked who is the mental health organization in Klickitat County.

Chief Wyckoff said it is Comprehensive Mental Health located in White Salmon. He said that sometimes his officers have to wait for hours before someone is available to come and evaluate an individual. Wyckoff said that ties up his officers and he has thought of charging Mental Health for the time the officer has to wait for someone to respond.

Laura Mann asked if individuals could be trained to come and sit with individuals while waiting for a mental health response.

Chief Wyckoff said that could be a problem because many individuals can be violent. He said he has been seeking solutions. Wyckoff said that in the summer instances can increase to a couple of times of month due to the increase in transient individuals.

Ryan O'Connor said he picked up an individual this winter at the bridge and ended up taking them to Hood River because the Bingen-White Salmon area does not have a shelter.

Chief Wyckoff said there are some people who live in the Bingen-White Salmon area in the summer and use the shelter in Hood River in the winter. He noted that his officers will be going through crisis intervention training as mandated by the state.

Council Vacancy – Ryan O’Connor

Catherine Kiewit said she is thrilled that Ryan O’Connor has applied for the vacant council position. She said she feels his technical background will be helpful to the city. Kiewit asked O’Connor if there are certain things about Bingen that he would like to change or areas that he is particularly interested in.

Ryan O’Connor said he is generally happy with the way things are in Bingen. He said he likes that Bingen is in close proximity to work. O’Connor said the one thing he would like to see is no more train honking.

Catherine Kiewit said the council all loves Bingen and has a lot of pride for the community. She said she feels the council works well together even though they do not all necessarily believe in the same things. Kiewit said the council always puts the community first and comes to a consensus on what is best for the community.

Ryan O’Connor said he has no specific agenda. He said he is curious about people’s interests and wants to offer his opinion to guide activities to improve Bingen.

Betty Barnes said the council thinks independently but also works as a team. She said she feels the council is open-minded and always comes to mature decisions. Barnes noted that even when there is disagreement council members and herself are always supportive of the ultimate decision.

Laura Mann said she believes O’Connor’s experience will be helpful on a number of things.

Stephanie Porter said she thinks it will be good to have a guy’s perspective on the council.

Catherine Kiewit moved to appoint Ryan O’Connor to council position #1 replacing Dan Armstrong. Laura Mann seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 7, 2017

Changes to the minutes of the March 7, 2017 regular council meeting were noted as follows:

Page 1, 3rd paragraph should read: “Tammy Kaufman provided information to the city council regarding the capitol events sponsored by OneGorge in Salem and Olympia.”

Page 1, 4th paragraph, 2nd sentence should read: “She noted that the Hood River ban on plastic and paper bags began on March 1st.”

Page 1, 5th paragraph, last sentence should read: “Kaufman said because of the need to rent equipment this year, Community Pride will be requiring a fee of \$10.00 per load.”

Page 1, 6th paragraph should read: “Catherine Kiewit asked if the bins have been donated in the past.”

Page 1, 10th paragraph should read “Ryan O’Connor said it would be helpful to share what the \$10 price per load is used for.”

Stephanie Porter moved to approve the meeting minutes of the regular council meeting of March 7, 2017 as corrected. Laura Mann seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

Public Hearing – Proposed 2017 Budget Amendments

Betty Barnes opened the public hearing regarding proposed amendments to the 2017 budget.

Jan Brending reviewed the proposed amendments noting that beginning balances were amended to match actual and that funding for carryover projects is provided.

Betty Barnes closed the public hearing.

Proposed Ordinance 2017-01-672, Amending the 2017 Budget

Catherine Kiewit moved to adopt Ordinance 2017-01-672, amending the 2017 budget. Stephanie Porter seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

Small Works Roster Contract Change Order – Precision Service & Electric LLC

Jan Brending reviewed the proposed change order for the small works contract with Precision Service & Electric. She said the change order extends the ends of the contract from December 31, 2016 to April 30, 2017 and adds \$8,988.37 to the price of the contract. Brending noted that the project has taken longer mainly due to weather issues and addressing the fire hall exhaust system retrofit. She noted that costs for

several items were not identified in the original time and materials bid, including the fire hall exhaust system, due to unknowns.

Stephanie Porter moved to approve Change Order 1 for the contract with Precision Service & Electric LLC extending the date of the contract to April 30, 2017 and adding \$8,988.37 to the contract cost. Catherine Kiewit seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

Treasurer's Report – February 2017

Jan Brending presented the Treasurer's Report for February 2017.

Laura Mann moved to accept the February 2017 treasurer's report. Stephanie Porter seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

Old Business

LED Lighting Project Update

Jan Brending provided an update to the city council regarding the LED lighting project. She said the project is moving forward with the City of Goldendale drafting the bid documents. Brending said the PUD will issue the bid and hold the contract for replacing the lights which should be completed this spring/summer.

Brending said an issue with the decorative light the city chose has come up. She said the supplier has some concerns there may be problems in retrofitting the 18" Amerlux light to fit on the poles and brackets the city has and could end up costing more than another more effective choice. Brending said the supplier is recommending using a 21" Cyclone fixture which is closer in size to the existing fixtures in place. She said the only issue is that the style is slightly different than the ones the city is currently using. Brending provided update cost information to the council showing that the Cyclone fixture is now cheaper than the 18" Amerlux fixture. She said she has also been asked to confirm that the city prefers the warm light range versus the blue/white light.

Catherine Kiewit said she was always concerned about using the smaller size fixture and likes the idea of the larger one. She said she is not concerned about the slight difference in design.

There was a consensus of the council to use the 21" Cyclone fixture instead of the 18" Amerlux fixture and to go with warm light.

Mayor's Update and Council Comments

Community Pride

Jan Brending said she attended the recent Community Pride meeting. She said there will be a \$10 per load charge. Brending noted however that the City of Bingen public works' loads will not be charged. She said that includes yard and garden debris and other items the city picks up and takes to the site. Brending said the group did discuss obtaining business sponsorship of vouchers for those who cannot afford the \$10 and that the vouchers would be made available at Gorge Action Programs.

The council suggested making sure that any vouchers that are not given out prior to the event are taken to the site to be used for people who show up without the \$10.

Conditional Use Permit

Betty Barnes said the city has received a conditional use permit application for expanding an existing conditional use permit at the Bingen School Inn. She said a public hearing will be held on April 18. Barnes asked council members to refrain from discussing the proposed application and use to avoid ex parte contact and conflict of interest.

Jan Brending said public notice will be mailed out to surrounding property owners on March 30 and she can provide the council information at that time also.

Park Restrooms

Jan Brending said Catherine Kiewit had contacted her about the possibility of purchasing some bathroom stalls from Rebuild-It in Hood River. She said she and David Spratt checked out the stalls today but found they were in no better condition than those already in the city restrooms at the park. Brending said she plans on costing out several options for the park restrooms including building solid walls with tiling instead of using stalls. She said this is done in a number of rest area bathrooms that she has visited for ease of cleaning. Brending said she is looking for options that make the restrooms look nice, help prevent vandalism and provide ease of cleaning and repair if there is vandalism.

Chips Bar and Grill

Betty Barnes reported that Chips Bar and Grill will be reopening under the ownership of Diane and Larry Murphy. She said they hope to open in May. Barnes said that initially there will be no gambling.

Pine Shed Ribs

Betty Barnes said Pine Shed Ribs should be opening in April.

Recycling Center

Catherine Kiewit said the council had previously discussed leaving the recycling center open 24/7 utilizing the camera to address issues and closing the bins when full.

Betty Barnes said she has spoken to staff about the desire and feels there are several issues that might need to be addressed. She said she is concerned about lighting and the fact that the site is not level. Barnes said this may cause some liability issues. She said the camera is not working at night due to the lack of lighting. Barnes said the public works crew is also going to move the camera to the park to see how it works at night there because there may be some additional need for lighting at that location also.

Jan Brending noted that when she was speaking to an individual about the hours of the recycling center they mentioned some safety concerns about keeping the center open at night.

Catherine Kiewit asked if staff could check to see if automatic timers could be installed for opening and closing the gate.

City Tour

Ryan O’Connor was encouraged to arrange a time to tour the city with the public works department.

Voucher Approval

Vouchers audited and certified as required by RCW 42.24.080 and expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090 as of this date March 21, 2017. The council by unanimous vote does approve for payment the following list: checks 19068-19094 (dated 03/21/2017) totaling \$17,910.88. General Fund – \$9,486.66; Street - \$1,837.26; Water Fund - \$802.13; Sewer Fund- \$243.05; Treatment Plant Fund - \$5,541.78.

Vouchers audited and certified as required by RCW 42.24.080 and expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090 as of this date March 21, 2017. The council by unanimous vote does approve for payment the following list: EFT, payroll checks 19063-19067 (dated 03/15/2017) totaling \$14,940.29. General Fund – \$6,475.32; Street - \$2,493.94; Water Fund - \$1,779.17; Sewer Fund- \$306.41; Treatment Plant Fund - \$3,885.45.

The council adjourned 10:10 p.m.

City Clerk

Mayor