

BINGEN CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

May 16, 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, Ryan O'Connor. Council members absent: Izzy Schroder. Staff present: City Deputy Clerk Cheyenne Willey, City Attorney Chris Lanz and Bingen-White Salmon Police Chief Tracy Wyckoff. Audience present: Michelle Scott, Jim Smith.

Bingen-White Salmon Police Department Update

Lexipol

Chief Tracy Wyckoff said the department has contracted with a company called Lexipol to revamp department policies and procedures. Wyckoff said the updates will be completed before October 2017, or shortly thereafter. He said Lexipol works with departments to update policies, continues to provide daily communication regarding any new changes, and maintains applicable training modules. Wyckoff explained that any future policy or procedural changes will be automatically adopted by the department through Lexipol's service, removing any gray areas as legislation changes. He said the service is a benefit to the department and to both cities. Wyckoff mentioned that Lexipol currently works with law enforcement at the state level as well as many local departments throughout Washington. He said a grant received from the Association of Washington Cities will cover the annual fee for the service and help offset the initial costs.

Body Cameras

Wyckoff stated that he initially had some hesitation regarding the use of body cameras due to public records concerns, as all released footage would need sensitive information redacted. He said the department is already inundated with public records requests, but they do have a program that helps with redaction. Wyckoff said he learned that under current legislation, body camera footage can only be obtained by an involved party or their attorney, after first going before a judge to justify their request. Wyckoff said the public records restrictions combined with a recent situation where an officer would have benefitted from having video evidence ultimately made him decide to pursue the body cameras.

Wyckoff said he has been looking at two different options for body cameras: one made by Axon (Taser) and one made by Motorola. He said the body cameras made by Axon (Taser) feature a mobile application instead of a screen, which he pointed out may be convenient, but also adds another component that could possibly fail. Wyckoff said the Motorola option features a camera with a screen for immediate review and tagging of an event. He said the screen is very user-friendly and would be beneficial in the field. Wyckoff said samples of the Axon (Taser) cameras have been provided to the department for a 30-day trial, and that he would be able to test the Motorola cameras in person at a conference in Spokane next week.

Wyckoff mentioned that the Department of Homeland Security has available portable radios with wireless microphones that function up to 1000' away from an in-car radio, which would eliminate many 'dead spots' locally. He said the wireless microphone portables are made by Motorola, but currently the department uses radios made by Kenmore. Wyckoff stated that he looks forward to being able to integrate the department's electronics, and if Motorola wireless microphone radios are going to be obtained then maybe the best body camera option would be the Motorola version.

Retirement Announcement

Chief Wyckoff provided a formal notice of retirement to the council, stating that he plans to retire in October of 2017. He said he would like to encourage hiring another officer after he retires in order to maintain the current staffing. Wyckoff said the department currently employs four officers, one sergeant, one chief, and one police clerk. He explained that the additional officer provides sufficient coverage to enable the chief to perform his or her duties, instead of being relied upon as a patrol officer. He said having the current amount of staff enables the officers to work more effectively, provide better follow-up, and take more calls. He said it also allows for officers to take time off, prevents fatigue, increases career longevity, and improves employee satisfaction. Wyckoff stated that the additional officer is necessary for a well-rounded department, and that it would be best for his replacement to have the resources they will need going forward

Wyckoff said the department is currently accepting internal applicants for the position of Police Chief, but if no suitable replacement is found the position will be advertised. Wyckoff said he will immediately begin to work with his replacement if found internally, and if an external applicant is selected he will train and work with his successor even after he leaves if need be. Wyckoff expressed his commitment to a smooth transition.

Betty Barnes added that it has been a long-term goal for the department to have sufficient staff levels to operate efficiently.

Stephanie Porter mentioned that she thought the recent addition of another officer has been very noticeable in a positive way.

Wyckoff agreed that visibility is key and noted that presence helps with prevention.

Animal Control

Chief Wyckoff said he has been helping Animal Control Officer Mike Solomon to learn the Spillman system and procedures of the department. He said the department is available to assist Solomon as he gets more familiar with the system. He noted that Solomon has already issued two citations for dogs running at large. Wyckoff said Solomon is doing exceptionally well and he really enjoys working with him. He said he is confident Solomon will do the right thing for the city.

Betty Barnes mentioned that Solomon has not had a whole lot of designated animal control time yet. Barnes said she, City Administrator Jan Brending, and Solomon have been working together to arrange for a week to be set aside and dedicated to animal control.

Camera, Illegal Drugs

Betty Barnes asked Chief Wyckoff about the apparent drugs found in the women's restroom at Daubenspeck Park.

Wyckoff said the substance in the bag tested positive as methamphetamine. He added that occasionally officers encounter small amounts of illicit substances, but that this find was comparatively large. Wyckoff said he would contact Public Works Superintendent David Spratt about obtaining access to the camera feed that covers the park restrooms.

Catherine Kiewit asked if the video footage showed a person or vehicle at the bathroom before the drugs were found, if the camera had a good view of the area, and if the picture quality was high enough to use for identification of suspects.

Wyckoff said the footage shows a car by the restrooms shortly before the drugs were found, but the license plate is illegible. Based on the footage Wyckoff said they have been unable to determine if the car belongs to a suspect. He said the camera is well placed and that the quality is more than adequate.

Barnes asked if poor lighting in the evening was something that should be addressed.

Wyckoff said the cameras located at the Park and Ride in White Salmon are excellent in the dark, but were substantially more expensive than the one purchased by Bingen. He said the cameras are sufficient for their purpose.

Additional Comments

Chief Wyckoff said there are a few department vehicles in the shop but are under warranty and they will be back in service soon.

Wyckoff said it will be a couple of months until the new office space is ready but he felt that the changes have been cost-effective and will be conducive to a good working environment. He said the only real downfall is the parking situation. Wyckoff explained that there would be no designated parking spaces on Jewett Boulevard and that the officers and staff will be parking behind White Salmon City Hall. He said the distance from the office to the vehicles is not that different from the distance they would have to cover if the department were housed inside a larger building. Wyckoff stated that the department will utilize street parking if necessary for safety reasons.

Wyckoff said it was a hard decision to leave the Bingen-White Salmon Police Department, but that it is time for him to spend time with family. He said the City of Bingen has been a pleasure to work with, and he appreciates the support he has received during his time here. He said it is great that the community believes in what he is doing.

Approval of Minutes – May 2, 2017

Changes to the minutes of the May 2, 2017 regular council meeting were noted as follows:

Page 3, 10th paragraph, 2nd sentence should read: "She said it would be one of the biggest decisions Bingen has ever made and it is not a light decision."

Page 3, 10th paragraph, 5th sentence should read: “Schroder said she feels there are a number of reasons why the time is not right to consider consolidation.”

Page 3, 10th paragraph, 6th sentence should read: “She stated that both councils are up for reelection which could result in new priorities and new agendas, Bingen will be transitioning to a new administration in several years and the police force will also be in transition with a new police chief in the near future.”

Page 4, 3rd paragraph should read: “Stephanie Porter said it is her understanding that the joint workshop will not be a decision-making meeting and is informational only. She said no one has approached her about combining the two cities but she does not think everyone would be opposed to the idea. Porter said she feels the council members need to be ambassadors for the community by exploring options and getting feedback from residents.”

Page 4, 11th paragraph, 4th sentence should read: “She said the only way to determine whether the city qualifies is through an income survey.”

Stephanie Porter moved to approve the meeting minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of the city council on May 2, 2017 as corrected. Laura Mann seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

Klickitat Public Utility District (PUD) No. 1 Annual Business Update, Jim Smith

Jim Smith provided an overview of topics pertinent to Bingen’s electricity service.

Rates

Smith noted that there was no rate increase in January of 2017, and informed the council that there would also be no rate increase going forward through the remainder of 2017. He said about half of the PUD’s budget goes toward buying power for resale, and half covers operating costs. He stated that rate increases assessed by Bonneville Power Association (BPA) are the main cause behind rate increases for PUD customers. Smith said a 6-7% annual rate increase from BPA roughly translates into a 3% rate increase for utility customers.

Catherine Kiewit asked if Smith thinks more residents will begin to use their own solar panel systems as rates continue to rise.

Smith responded that the PUD needs to look at improving their function as an effective “battery” for those customers who generate their own power.

Ryan O’Connor asked if the PUD has examined energy storage as a potential project.

Smith said the market for that does not really exist here and that it is cost-prohibitive at about \$2 billion.

Kiewit asked about the timeline for the installation of LED lighting.

Smith said a call for bids should take place in early June 2017, and that the lights will most likely be installed in the City of Goldendale first.

Staffing

Smith said in 2012 it was necessary to lay off 10% of staff, which equated to seven employees. He said since then, two of those seven have been hired back. He said there are two new staking engineers, one of them being relocated from Goldendale to the west side of the county.

Growth and Change

Smith stated that the current day-to-day operating costs are equivalent to those of 2009. He said power generation projects such as hydroelectric and wind energy can no longer subsidize rates because the market demand has gone down. He said renewable energy from California is pushing the cost of surplus energy down. Smith said much of the drop in cost can be attributed to the fact that solar energy has a one-time start up cost, and then costs nothing after that.

Smith said the direction that the PUD is taking is very different from the past. He said gas is being harnessed from the Roosevelt landfill to be sold as transportation fuel, which is far more valuable than converting it into power to be sold. He said the price of the resource as electricity is about \$35.00 per unit, whereas the price for the same resource being sold as gas is \$105 per unit. Smith explained that a contract was signed with BP last week which states that BP will buy the natural gas created by the landfill, and features an unequivocal guarantee of purchase. He said the PUD will be taking a loan in the amount of \$35 million dollars, to be paid back in 5 years with the revenue from the BP contract. He said

in addition to the loan repayment, the contract with BP will cover the operating costs as well as provide an extra \$1 million per year above the current revenue. According to Smith, the project will be online by the end of 2017, with the big changes slated to happen in 2019.

Smith informed the council of plans to add new transformers to the existing substation by Skyline Hospital, which will then be able to handle more than the Goldendale area substation and will provide plenty of capacity as the Port of Klickitat, Bingen, and White Salmon continue to develop.

Smith also mentioned that Klickitat PUD pays BPA, who pays Pacific Corp. for use of the line across the White Salmon River. He said since Klickitat PUD does not have ownership of the line they are not allowed to repair it. He noted that since Condit Dam has been removed there is no incentive for Pacific Corp. to maintain the line, especially since Klickitat PUD is not a direct customer. He said Klickitat PUD is working on negotiating a way to purchase the line so that maintenance can be performed on schedule and any issues that arise can be mitigated sooner and repaired by Klickitat PUD crews. Smith stated that there were two outages on that specific line in the last year: a breaker went down and power was out for about an hour, and in a second instance BPA had a failure and power ended up being rerouted through Hood River to restore service.

Winter

Smith said the ice storms this winter were more heavily concentrated to the west and that the county sustained very little damage. He noted that the PUD sent a crew to Skamania County to help with their storm damage and that the crew worked 56 of the 72 hours they spent there. He said energy efficiency savings became very noticeable for customers this winter, as there were about ten weeks of sustained cold instead of the usual one or two.

Proposed Resolution 2017-007, Authorizing Surplus of Equipment No Longer Useable to the City The council discussed the process of direct sale versus auction.

Scrap Metal

Betty Barnes said the scrap metal referred to in the resolution was originally used for the sewer system and will not be used in any future projects. She said that selling it would create a lot of free space that could be used for a variety of things.

Laura Mann asked how the scrap metal should be weighed.

Barnes suggested that it may be possible to dismantle some pieces to make them easier to weigh.

The council discussed the feasibility of weighing the scrap metal. It was suggested that the SDS Lumber scales may be an option, and that the process could be determined when and if it became necessary.

Firearms

Catherine Kiewit asked for clarification on the requirement for a licensed arms dealer being involved in the sale of the firearms.

Barnes said she spoke to Klickitat County Sheriff Bob Songer, and the person purchasing the weapon would be the one to pay for the background check through the licensed dealer.

Kiewit asked where the firearms came from.

Barnes explained that they were left over from when Bingen had its own police department.

Kiewit asked why these items should be sold through direct sale instead of via auction.

Barnes stated that the direct sale method was chosen to save time, and for liability reasons.

Kiewit said she felt that a background check should resolve any concerns over liability, and that she felt more inclined to hold an auction rather than proceed with the direct sale.

Stephanie Porter asked if consignment sales were an option, so that the firearms could be sold through a dealer.

Barnes said that consignment would drive the price too high and would make the items difficult to sell.

Catherine Kiewit made a motion to table Resolution 2017-007, Authorizing Surplus of Equipment No Longer Useable to the City pending further discussion. Stephanie Porter seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mayor's Update and Council Comments

Mosaic Damage

Catherine Kiewit said she has been in touch with the organization that was involved with the mosaic in Daubenspeck Park, and that they are aware of the damage to the tiles. She said that she contacted the tile manufacturer as well, and is waiting to hear back.

Animal Control

Catherine Kiewit mentioned that she would like to see monthly reports submitted to the council by the animal control officer.

Betty Barnes agreed that a monthly report would be beneficial for the council.

Humboldt Street

Catherine Kiewit asked if there are any plans for the street committee to revisit the Humboldt Street grant project.

Betty Barnes said that an income survey will need to occur before revisiting that project.

Water

The council discussed the memo provided regarding the 2016 Water Use Efficiency Report and noted that they would like to return to the discussion when City Administrator Jan Brending is in attendance so that she could provide some context for the ratios shown and also provide some history on Bingen's water system for Ryan O'Connor's benefit.

Other Comments

Betty Barnes noted that some of the downtown pavers are shifting, and that she will call that to the attention of the public works department.

Stephanie Porter asked if a report from the speed trailer was available.

Barnes said that the trailer is still in use measuring vehicle speeds.

The council discussed rescheduling the first meeting in July 2017 from July 4th to July 5th.

Staff and Committee Reports

Leadership Meeting

Betty Barnes reported that she had attended a leadership meeting hosted by Insitu, and that the main message had been that teamwork is key, and everyone plays an integral part. She said the turnout was impressive and that it was a fairly large event.

Overpass

Laura Mann asked Mayor Barnes how the meeting with Senator King went.

Barnes said she met with Senator King and Representative Johnson. She explained that they visited the various locations suggested for the overpass project. Barnes noted that they discussed possibly choosing a location that is closer to town and that Senator King and Representative Johnson planned to check on the feasibility of such a location with the Washington State Department of Transportation. She said she felt that everything sounded positive, and that Senator King and Representative Johnson will update her on any progress or results.

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 May 16, 2017. The council by unanimous vote does approve for payment the following list: EFT, payroll checks 19183-19186 (dated 05/15/2017) totaling \$15,820.95. General Fund - \$6,889.50; Street - \$2,700.02; Water Fund - \$1,824.31; Sewer Fund - \$334.67; Treatment Plant Fund - \$4,072.45.

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 May 16, 2017. The council by unanimous vote does approve for payment the following list: checks 19187-19211 (dated 05/16/2017) totaling

\$14,513.61. General Fund - \$5,873.19; Street - \$1,412.81; Water Fund - \$3,109.20; Sewer Fund- \$2,422.60; Treatment Plant Fund - \$1,212.81; Water Construction & Maintenance Fund - \$483.00.

The council adjourned 9:20 p.m.

City Clerk

Mayor