

BINGEN CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

February 21, 2017

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Betty J. Barnes at 7:00 p.m. Council members present: Catherine Kiewit, Dan Armstrong, Stephanie Porter, Izzy Schroder. Staff present: City Attorney Chris Lanz, Deputy Clerk Cheyenne Willey, Public Works Maintenance/Animal Control Officer Michael Solomon. Audience present: Michelle Scott.

Council Member Vacancy

Catherine Kiewit reported that Becky Pyle is no longer planning to apply for the vacant seat. She asked if it was possible to not accept Dan Armstrong's resignation.

Armstrong stated that is was a nice gesture but he feels that it is time for him to resign. He explained he is already very busy with work and headed toward an even busier summer. He said last year he worked 13 hour days and felt overcommitted.

Izzy Schroder asked if there was a plan for filling Armstrong's seat.

Betty Barnes said she spoke about it earlier that morning on the radio, but that she will need to discuss the situation with City Attorney Chris Lanz.

Kiewit said she felt that the ads taken out in the paper are lost on many residents. She asked if writing a letter to the editor would be helpful. She asked Deputy Clerk Cheyenne Willey to find out how much time is left in Armstrong's term.

Barnes suggested focusing on the initial vacancy first, and then filling Armstrong's seat second.

Schroder mentioned that her husband would apply, but she was not sure if spouses presented a conflict of interest.

Stephanie Porter announced that she may be moving outside of city limits as soon as March, and that she would know by February 28th, 2017. She said she was reluctant to share the information before knowing it was a certainty, but she felt it was necessary to make the council aware of the possibility.

Barnes confirmed that the meeting of March 7th, 2017 would be Armstrong's final meeting.

Kiewit said she will continue to do outreach in the community. She asked Deputy Clerk Willey if she had been able to speak to anyone about the vacancy.

Willey said that yes she had. She said she had given information to a handful of interested residents, but explained that it was difficult to discuss the topic with residents coming in to pay their utility bills due to the nature of the interaction. She said that of the few residents who pay their bill in person, they are usually on breaks from work, or have other time constraints. She mentioned that of the people she would approach, most are already overcommitted or do not meet the requirements.

Schroder asked if the March 21st, 2017 meeting could be moved to March 24th, 2017 so that she could attend and there would be a quorum.

Barnes said she would talk to City Administrator Jan Breeding about postponing the meeting.

Bingen White Salmon Police Department Update

Betty Barnes said she was told by Chief Tracy Wyckoff that they are currently processing a lateral applicant to the department.

Approval of Minutes – February 7th, 2017

Catherine Kiewit moved to approve the meeting minutes of the February 7th, 2017 regular council meeting as presented. Stephanie Porter seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

Mike Solomon, Public Works Maintenance/Animal Control Officer - Introduction

Betty Barnes introduced Mike Solomon, new Public Works Maintenance crew member and Animal Control Officer.

Solomon thanked the council for inviting him and explained the he moved to the area in 1964 and grew up here. He said he was employed locally in the garbage and recycle industry for 30 years and he

considers Bingen and White Salmon home. Solomon said he is excited to begin working for the city in the animal control capacity.

Solomon mentioned that he has already noticed some animal control-related issues, including improper disposal of animal waste on the east end of Steuben Street. He said several residents have also expressed their desire for an off-leash dog park within the city. Solomon stated that he supports this idea since there is not anywhere in the city aside from private property that is exempt from the leash law. He added that dog parks are usually self-policing, as those who use it tend to take care of it since they choose to spend time there. He said he was not sure what it would require from the city, but that he would like to look into it if possible.

Catherine Kiewit asked if he enjoyed using the all-terrain vehicle.

Solomon replied yes, he thinks it is very useful, especially during snowstorms since the city does not have an adequate plow for steep streets.

Solomon said he thought the backhoes were in very good condition and he has enjoyed maintaining them. He went on to say that a better plow truck could effectively replace the outdated sander and plow. Solomon stated that the sander truck gave the public works crew a lot of issues this winter and mentioned that continuing to repair the old plow and sander is not very cost-effective. He said when the cost of necessary repairs approaches the cost of a new vehicle that could easily perform both sanding and plowing as well as other functions, it seems more appropriate to purchase the new vehicle. He reminded the council that plowing does no good unless accompanied by sanding.

Barnes pointed out that Bingen used the City of White Salmon for sanding services this winter, which should be considered when looking at the overall cost of repairs.

Solomon said the public works crew also sanded by hand where slick roadways caused safety concerns. He said Public Works Superintendent David Spratt knows exactly what equipment the city needs. Solomon also mentioned that bigger cities often upgrade their equipment well before the lifespan is reached, which might provide an opportunity for Bingen to acquire a relatively new, used piece of equipment.

Kiewit said she appreciated the comments about the heavy equipment. She said it is easy to get used to the equipment the city has and to just keep repairing it. She asked if there was a dollar amount threshold that determined if buying a piece of equipment had to be bid out.

Barnes said she was not sure, but will look into it.

Recycling Center

Betty Barnes explained she is aware of a growing concern over the Republic Services recycling bins at the public works shop. She said that since there is no curbside glass recycling available for Bingen residents, she wondered if the glass receptacle could be made accessible for use even when the standard bins were full. She suggested putting the receptacle along the south side of the concrete wall along Marina Road.

Mike Solomon said that her idea was a good one, but that he saw a potential problem with that location since cars drive so fast through that stretch of road and there is not much of a pull-off available. He also reminded the council of the littering problems that have happened in the past, where people leave their recyclables strewn on the ground when they see the bins are full, or even leave non-recyclable items.

Catherine Kiewit mentioned that she has gotten positive feedback about the new signage installed by the bins, and she hopes that the signs combined with the new public awareness will be helpful in preventing that type of behavior.

Solomon agreed that since the new signs were installed and local paper and news media articles have highlighted the issue, there has been an improvement.

Kiewit said she felt that the open hours of 7:30 am – 4:00 pm were inconvenient for those who work during the day.

Solomon asked if the gates should be left open during non-business hours.

Barnes said that that used to be the norm, but then misuse of the facility became overwhelming.

Kiewit asked if leaving the gates open could be tried again, in conjunction with the new signage and the use of the new security camera.

Izzy Schroder said she would like to give it another go, and stated that it was not fair for the service to be restricted for the entire population due to misuse by a few individuals.

Barnes said she would like to talk to Public Works Superintendent David Spratt about it. She suggested a trial run leaving the gates open, and confirmed with Solomon that the camera was in position.

AWC Center for Quality Communities Scholarship – Review and Action

Betty Barnes stated that Tyler Mann was the only applicant for the Bingen nomination.

Izzy Schroder made a motion to nominate Tyler Mann for the AWC Center for Quality Communities Scholarship. Stephanie Porter seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mayor's Update and Council Comments

Winter Street Maintenance

Betty Barnes reported that she received a lot of positive comments about the winter street maintenance from both the public and the council members.

Kiewit commented on the amount of snow the city received this winter.

The council agreed that the storms were handled well and thanked the public works crew for their efforts on behalf of Bingen residents.

Daubenspeck Park Projects

Betty Barnes said that City Administrator Jan Brending is out of town attending a software conference and unable to provide the numbers for the park projects the council is interested in.

Stephanie Porter asked if the codes for the park bathroom locks are changed often. She mentioned her young son had stumbled across the correct combination for the lock and she wondered if they should be changed regularly.

Barnes said she was not sure but it could be looked into.

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 February 21, 2017. The council by unanimous vote does approve for payment the following list: checks 19008-19011 (dated 02/15/2017) totaling \$18,000.81. General Fund – \$7,003.18; Street - \$3,613.48; Water Fund - \$2,068.04; Sewer Fund- \$362.70; Treatment Plant Fund - \$4,953.41.

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 February 21, 2017. The council by unanimous vote does approve for payment the following list: checks 19012-19028 (dated 02/21/2017) totaling \$36,309.47. General Fund – \$27,776.49; Street - \$1,962.68; Water Fund - \$2,121.29; Sewer Fund- \$366.65; Treatment Plant Fund - \$4,082.36.

The council adjourned at 8:10 pm.

City Clerk

Mayor