

BINGEN CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

June 20, 2017

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Betty J. Barnes at 7:00 p.m. Council members present: Catherine Kiewit, Stephanie Porter, Izzy Schroder, Ryan O'Connor, Laura Mann. Staff present: City Administrator Jan Brending, City Attorney Chris Lanz, Police Chief Tracy Wyckoff. Audience present: Ken Parker, Phil Jones, Tammy Kaufman.

Bingen-White Salmon Police Department Update

Tracy Wyckoff reported there are no major issues. He said Mayor Poucher has offered the position of police chief to Mike Hepner who has accepted. Wyckoff said he believes it will be a smooth transition and that Bingen will be pleased.

Izzy Schroder said Mike Hepner is very respected in the community.

Catherine Kiewit asked if Hepner's position will be backfilled.

Wyckoff said he has suggested to White Salmon that the position is needed. He said without the position it is difficult to cover things such as illnesses, vacation and military leave. Wyckoff said he does not think, that at this time, White Salmon will fill the vacant position. He said the department has great employees. Wyckoff noted that Pedro Virgen is doing really well and is an asset to the department that in that he is bilingual.

Ryan O'Connor asked what drives the number of officers that are on duty.

Wyckoff said with 5 officers there is more flexibility to provide overlap. He said during the day there are usually 2 officers on duty. Wyckoff noted that the department has been short 2 officers during the majority of his time with the city.

Jan Brending noted that in a discussion with Leana Johnson she expressed Bingen's support for 5 officers. She noted that there are changes occurring to how the city's share of retirement for police officers will be calculated. Brending said in the past the state has paid a portion of the city's share but that will no longer happen beginning July 1, 2017. She said it could have a significant impact on the department's budget. Brending said that it is her understanding that when renegotiating the interlocal agreement last year, it was based on 6 employees for the department not 7.

Izzy Schroder asked if Washington State Patrol provides assistance to the police department.

Wyckoff said in some ways yes, but they do not provide assistance in criminal activity.

Betty Barnes noted that there has been an increase in reckless driving in Bingen. She said she feels there is more than she has seen in the past.

Wyckoff said he has not been running traffic lately but believes the issue is being addressed. He said with summer here individuals do get more rambunctious. Wyckoff said he pushes the officers to do as much traffic as they can. He said he knows stops are being made.

Ryan O'Connor asked if the county assists the city.

Wyckoff said the city and the county back each other up in mutual aid. He said there are a number of deputies who live in this part of the county but does not have information about their schedule.

Catherine Kiewit said the 4th of July is coming up and that fireworks are banned in Bingen.

Wyckoff said there will be 3 officers on duty on the 4th. He said he will stay on duty until the fireworks at the Port are over. Wyckoff said he has the officers spend more time in Bingen due to the ban of fireworks.

Catherine Kiewit asked staff to post flyers on stop signs that fireworks are banned in Bingen.

Approval of Minutes – May 31, 2017

Changes to the minutes of the May 31, 2017 joint council workshop were noted as follows:

Page 2, 5th paragraph, last sentence should read “It was noted there may be a concern that the Bingen area might not see its fair share of funding for projects.”

Page 2, 8th paragraph should read “Both city councils will discuss the topic at their council meetings on Tuesday June 20 for the City of Bingen and Wednesday, June 21st for the City of White Salmon.”

Stephanie Porter moved to approve the meeting minutes of the May 31, 2017 joint council workshop as corrected. Izzy Schroder seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

Approval of Minutes – June 6, 2017

Changes to the minutes of the June 6, 2017 regular council meeting were noted as follows:

Page 1, 3rd paragraph, 2nd sentence should read “He said the board has completed interviews for the operations manager position and have made an offer.”

Page 3, 4th paragraph, last sentence should read “She said, in addition, there may need to be some funding used as city hall either rehabilitating the existing heating/air conditioning unit or replacing it, and the purchase of a new telephone system.”

Page 3, 7th paragraph should read “Stephanie Porter suggested replacing the slide on the 2-5 age playground piece with something like a rock climbing wall.”

Page 4, 9th paragraph, last sentence should read “The council directed staff to advertise the bid in The Enterprise, Gorge Net classifieds and Craigslist.

Page 5, 1st paragraph, add the following sentence “Stephanie Porter noted she will not be present as she will be out of town.”

Catherine Kiewit moved to approve the meeting minutes of the June 6, 2017 regular council meeting as corrected. Stephanie Porter seconded the motion.

Proposed Ordinance 2017-04-675, Amending BMC 6.04, Dogs

Betty Barnes said the changes requested by the council have been provided.

Ryan O’Connor said he made a search of the internet regarding the cost of dog bites. He said the average cost to treat a dog bite is between \$20,000 and \$40,000.

The council discussed the limits of the insurance provision for keeping a potentially dangerous dog in Bingen.

Catherine Kiewit said she would support \$100,000 for the insurance requirement versus the \$250,000.

Changes to the proposed ordinance were noted as follows:

- Section 6.04.120C3a and b – replace \$250,000 with \$100,000
- Section 6.04.127 renumber correctly D should be C, E should be D, F should be E and G should be F
- Section 6.04.160 renumber correctly, D should be C, E should be D, F should be E

Izzy Schroder moved to adopt Ordinance 2017-04-675 amending Bingen Municipal Code 6.04, Dogs as corrected. Catherine Kiewit seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

Ryan O’Connor noted that he was recently walking and two dogs came out into the street acting aggressively.

Council members asked if Mike Solomon, Animal Control could do some of his patrol on foot so as to possibly catch dogs in similar situations.

Combining the Cities of Bingen and White Salmon

Catherine Kiewit said she would like to hear from the public who is in attendance.

Phil Jones, Bingen

Phil Jones said he is against combining the two cities. He said he likes living in a small town and feels that bigger towns tend to get bigger. Jones said he feels his position is a common sentiment amongst the people he has spoken to.

Tammy Kaufman, Insitu

Tammy Kaufman said Insitu has no official position but that from a business perspective it would be nice to deal with one city.

Izzy Schroder asked if anyone has said they are in favor of combining the two cities.

Ryan O'Connor said he has received some secondhand information that some small businesses wish there was one city so they didn't have to deal with multiple agencies.

Laura Mann said she has heard from some Bingen residents that say it makes sense. She said she has also heard from others who don't live in either city express their opinion. Mann said no one approached her regarding combining the two cities. She said when solicited opinions were offered.

Betty Barnes said there are several business owners in Bingen including several large businesses who are not in favor of combining the two cities while she has heard from several that are in favor. She noted that most business owners do not live in Bingen but it was her understanding that the council wanted to hear what business owners think. Barnes said some residents think the idea makes sense while others think we are crazy for even considering it.

Stephanie Porter said that she has also heard from people are not interested at all or some who are interested but have not said they are definitely for it. She said some people do not see the need. Porter said some have expressed that the two communities are different and that if the two cities combine the Bingen culture will be lost.

Ryan O'Connor said that he feels the pros are intangible. He said he has heard concerns that if the cities are consolidated that Bingen would not be addressed appropriately.

Laura Mann said she feels the cons are not easy to quantify.

O'Connor said he feels the cons are easier to state.

Laura Mann said she feels the reverse is true, it being easier to state the pros but harder to express the feelings that lead to the cons.

Izzy Schroder said that most of her closest friends are White Salmon residents. She said she has not spoken to one person who has expressed they are in favor of consolidating the two cities. Schroder said individuals she has spoken to are either not interested or are going along with the idea, i.e. they are apathetic about combining the two cities. She said she does not see anyone who is passionate about the idea and there are no strong leaders who are in favor. Schroder said she has no new information that would make her want to go further. She said she loves White Salmon and Bingen and loves the idea that they are sister cities. Schroder said she made a choice to live in Bingen because of what Bingen is.

Chris Lanz said he can identify with and respect every thing he has heard. He said he also heard similar things on the street. Lanz said until there is a motivator to show the way then why pursue it now.

Laura Mann said that it is good to hear what people have to say. She noted the information that was provided by Shelley Baxter saying she was surprised by the results of the informal poll. Mann said she feels the people should get a voice. She said it is hard to get people to come to council meetings.

Izzy Schroder said she does not feel that it is necessary to do a survey. She said she feels it is forcing ideas down the residents' throats. Schroder said she wouldn't mind doing a different survey that is measurable and addresses the quality of life in Bingen.

Phil Jones noted that the topic of combining the two cities strongly motivated him to attend the council meeting.

Catherine Kiewit said she is not feel the grassroots support for the idea. She said when Bingen has had ideas that have been successful there has been a lot of grassroots support, i.e. the skatepark. Kiewit said that until the community says combining the two cities is a priority then it shouldn't be pursued.

The council discussed recent council position vacancies and a possible increase in pay to attract more candidates. Staff will present information to the council at its next meeting regarding the procedure for increasing council salaries.

Jan Brending said that if the council is truly not interested in pursuing combining the two cities then it does not make sense to develop a survey addressing that topic. She said the council could send out a survey at a later date addressing things that are important to the City of Bingen.

Izzy Schroder moved to cease pursuing combining the two cities at this time. Stephanie Porter seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

Catherine Kiewit thanked Jan Brending for the time and information she has presented.

Ryan O'Connor said he is impressed with all the documentation that is prepared for each council meeting.

Treasurer's Report – April 2017

Jan Brending presented the corrected treasurer's report for April 2017.

Stephanie Porter moved to accept the treasurer's report for April 2017, as corrected. Izzy Schroder seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

Treasurer's Report – May 2017

Jan Brending presented the treasurer's report for May 2017.

Izzy Schroder moved to accept the treasurer's report for May 2017. Stephanie Porter seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

Mayor's Update and Council Comments

July 5th Meeting

Izzy Schroder noted that she will be calling in for the July 5th special meeting.

Radio Tierra Independence Eve Celebration

Betty Barnes said that the mayors of Bingen, White Salmon and Hood River along with Radio Tierra will again be sponsoring the Independence Eve Celebration held on July 3 at the Bingen Theater from 7 to 9 p.m.

Council Resignation

Stephanie Porter said she will be moving to White Salmon and resigning from the council as of July 31st.

Jan Brending said the position will be advertised in The Enterprise. She said council can consider applications at its second meeting in July.

Skyline Hospital Rollout

Betty Barnes reported that she attended a "rollout meeting" with Skyline Hospital. She said the hospital conducted some interviews with people in the community to what kinds of things were needed for service and how to use the space currently being utilized by North Shore Medical who will be moving to their new space. Barnes said the hospital is considering opening its own clinic and is looking into a remodel of the hospital particularly the emergency room area. She noted that the hospital is renegotiating its bonds for a cheaper interest rate.

Catherine Kiewit noted that services associated with a hospital are usually billed at a higher rate than those associated with a clinic.

Transportation Projects

Jan Brending said she has meet with the Transportation Improvement Board engineers to review the Humboldt Street project. She said they are recommending that the project be scaled back by not including the sidewalks on Cedar Street.

Council members discussed the project with staff noting that the Bingen School Inn improvements should make a difference in the grant application.

Brending noted she made the TIB engineers aware of the upcoming improvements. She said that she will be presenting the TIB grant application to the council for submittal authorization at a future council meeting.

Council members asked staff to investigate the undergrounding of utilities in the areas where the road would be reconstructed and sidewalks installed.

Brending said the city is in the process of seeking requests for qualifications for looking at possible stormwater solutions on East Jefferson and options for traffic calming.

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 June 20, 2017. The council by unanimous vote does approve for payment the following list: EFT, checks 19275-19298 (dated 06/20/2017) totaling \$8,942.14. General Fund - \$2,386.73; Street - \$458.66; Water Fund - \$2,360.59; Sewer Fund - \$389.16; Treatment Plant Fund - \$590.52; Water Construction & Maintenance Fund - \$2,756.48.

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 June 6, 2017. The council by unanimous vote does approve for payment the following list: payroll checks 19274 (dated 05/31/2017) totaling \$377.50. General Fund - \$377.50.

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 June 6, 2017. The council by unanimous vote does approve for payment the following list: EFT, payroll checks 19259-19273 (dated 06/15/2017) totaling \$16,132.75. General Fund - \$6,752.44; Street - \$2,700.48; Water Fund - \$1,821.51; Sewer Fund - \$333.69; Treatment Plant Fund - \$4,524.63.

The council adjourned 10:05 p.m.

City Clerk

Mayor