



September 5, 2019
City Council Meeting
Willamette Activity Center Room 8
47674 School Street
7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

1.0 CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Council Present: Mayor Kathy Holston, Councilors, Christina Hollett, Donald Hadley, Paul Forcum, Bobbie Whitney and Dawn Kinyon

Staff Present: City Administrator Bryan Cutchen, Finance Director Bill Jones, Assistant City Recorder Jackie Sims, Community Services Director Rick Zylstra, Chief Kevin Martin

2.0 Pledge of Allegiance

3.0 Roll Call – Councilor Maxfield was excused

4.0 Additions, Corrections or Adjustments to the Agenda

Remove the August 5, 2019 minutes from the consent agenda

Remove 8.3 from the consent agenda

5.0 Public Comment

Floyd Staley 76854 High Prairie Road- Thanked Bryan for his speedy action on ordinance violations, thanked Councilor Kinyon for helping with citizen rights and thanked the police department for slowing down the speeders through Oakridge.

6.0 Mayor and Council Comments / Announcements / Proclamations

Mayor Holston read the proclamation declaring September as National Preparedness Month

7.0 Council Comments / Announcements

Councilor Whitney asked where we are with the Dead Mountain Echo regarding meeting notices. Rick said we are still bouncing prices and cost factors around with Viki.

8.0 Consent Agenda

8.1 Approval of August 5, 2019 City Council Minutes- Removed from consent agenda

8.2 Appointing Community Services Director to City Administrator Pro-Tem for the period of September 7-14, 2019

Action: I move to appoint Mr. Rick Zylstra as City Administrator Pro Tem for the period of September 7-14, 2019.

Councilor Whitney declared a potential conflict of interest.

Motion: Councilor Hollett
Second: Councilor Hadley
Action: Passed- Unanimous

8.3 SGA Audit- moved to 12.0

9.0 Business from the City Council

9.1 Status of the Oakridge Fire Department

Councilor Kinyon read a statement (see attached) that she wrote regarding the Fire Department, she would like to make a motion on this as well. She asked for feedback from the council and City Administrator.

Councilor Whitney said she recently spoke with Bryan about the Fire Department and right now she does not have a five year picture of where she wants it to look, but she does want it to be fully functioning.

Councilor Forcum said he has been watching the Fire Department go downhill for a long time, it's hard for a community to go on like this.

Councilor Hadley said we all pay our taxes and it's not being used properly, he believes we will see a difference now.

Councilor Hollett said she does not think private would be in the best interest of the city, the quality of care is not as good as what you receive from a city based ambulance. She thinks partnering better with our neighbors from Hazeldell and Westfir and talking about something that has been discussed for years but never really put out there and that would be district options and also our partners to the East, Dexter and Lowell.

Mayor Holston said she does not think that a private fire department or EMS is the way to go. The cost to the community would be horrible. At the same time she recognizes that it is ridiculous to rule out anything, it is on the bottom of the list, she thinks our volunteers are the backbone of what our fire department can and should be. She likes the direction that our City Administrator is moving, she likes the decisions he is making, she likes the leadership he is providing and we need to give him the room to make the changes that are necessary and bring in qualified personnel.

Kevin Martin spoke as a community member, being in public safety for 24 years he personally thinks going private is a bad idea. He saw employees in private that they go through so often, there are always new faces and they don't bond with the community. He loves his community and he doesn't want to see it hurt this way. As a Police Chief and Fire Chief we need the services, but we need the finances too. The full time guys Aric and Scott and working their butts off, we have applicants and have tested for full time people and we do have more applicants for volunteers too. He agrees with Councilor Hollett that we should work with our partners to have a larger fire district that can share funding, share taxes and share resources.

Councilor Whitney said she feels very strongly about partnering.

Bryan said the most important thing is to meet the needs of the citizens of Oakridge. When he got here it was obvious that the Fire/EMS department was one of the first things that needed attention. He has been interviewing retired fire chiefs from Eugene, Goshen all over. It's not just one or the other, there are many solutions to solve the problem that we have here it's just deciding which one is best. In the end we have to have something that the city can afford because right now it can't continue, it is unsustainable without cutting some other expenditure to sustain the fire/EMS but, it is critical and should be the last thing to go. We do have many more volunteer applications and we will go through those very quickly. We brought on our first part time person and he worked yesterday.

He does believe we do need to bring on an interim fire chief for a finite period of time, for about three months, that fire chief can better organize the department. Both Aric and Scott have been working very hard with very little time to do anything but man the ambulance. We do need that administrative support, organization of the volunteer unit, organization of the budget and to provide some mentorship to the next chief or whatever format we take for the future of the fire department. He will ask the city council for approval on that at the next city council meeting. He has interviewed three folks that could possibly do it, he will have a motion and a contract at the next meeting when he returns.

Councilor Whitney said in addition she would like to know what Bryan is looking for in a fire chief.

Bryan said it would be nice if he could help out in an emergency, but what he really wants is someone who can develop a strategic vision, someone who can work with the surrounding fire departments to work maybe possible solutions there. He wants them to be able to look at the fire department budget and perhaps give us a good idea of what we really do need not only for financing but staffing and he'd like to see him be able to look at a study we did in 2018 about staffing and there are a lot of recommendations he'd like him to try and fulfill some of the recommendations.

9.2 Councilor participation in the Lane County Count Committee

Mayor Holston said we have the census coming up, we will begin to be active in that soon and we have meetings that will need to be attended to. It would be nice to be participating in that, if there is a city councilor that would like to participate in this reach out to the City Administrator, this will be done and over with in June when the census is complete.

Bryan said at the next city council meeting he is hoping to have the Regional Representative for the census here to give you a presentation.

Mayor Holston said they can reiterate the importance of the census to the community and the importance of counting every one of us because that translates into both State and Federal dollars.

10.0 Business from the City Administrator

10.1 Police Services Report

Bryan said this is in response to Councilor Kinyon's request for an update on theft in Oakridge.

10.1.1 Report on Thefts in Oakridge

Chief Martin gave a report on the thefts and burglaries in Oakridge. He separated it out in to different beats in town. He also talked about scheduling for the police department and how many officers and reserves we have at this time.

Councilor Kinyon said she appreciates all of the information Chief Martin presented and she would like an opportunity to read a statement that she wrote. (See attached)

Chief Martin said it is not always the District Attorney's fault that people don't stay in jail, he explained the different instances where people are let out.

Because of where we live and in his opinion our criminal justice system is starting to become a place where, his patrol officers feel that the bad guys are now the good guys and the cops are now the bad guys. This last legislative session talked about law and order and some of our legislators want to turn back Measure 11. He knows our money is tight but maybe our council can think about this, if we had our own full misdemeanor court where, we already have a prosecutor, judge and court clerk, but they mostly handle the violations stuff. If we are going to talk about the justice system we should invite our city prosecutor.

Mayor Holston wanted to bring back up Councilor Kinyon's idea of a town hall meeting on this topic. She asked the council to think about this thoroughly on how to get this information out to the community.

Councilor Kinyon said she wants a town hall meeting so they can educate people and also to hear from the citizens because she is hearing a lot talk about people taking matters into their own hands.

Mayor Holston said she has seen that on Facebook, but she doesn't hear that from the average citizen that she talks to.

Councilor Hollett feels really strongly that a town hall would be a good opportunity for us. The community having a space where they can come and get things off their chest and how this is affecting them and she does like the dialogue.

Chief Martin said if we are going to do this we need to have our Judge there, the District Attorney, a Circuit Court Judge, our Prosecutor, we need to have different groups there.

Councilor Kinyon and Councilor Hollett are going to work with the CA and Chief Martin to put together a plan and bring it back to council and then we will go from there.

10.2 Community Services Report

Rick read the Public Works report.

10.3 Selection for LOC Voting Delegate

Bryan said he received a letter from LOC for the annual conference they would like us to appoint a voting delegate to attend the Saturday morning meeting and vote for next year's board for the LOC.

Mayor Holston said we have never appointed a voting delegate at all and we have refrained from voting at the conference, she believes this is something we should start to do. It is an opportunity for councilors or mayor to become more involved in the LOC and see how the process works and what the organization is like. It is not mandatory and she is not going to appoint anyone to do this.

Councilor Hollett said she would love to do this, she spoke to some of the LOC people for extra opportunities for Council President training.

Action: I move we appoint Councilor Hollett to vote on behalf of the City of Oakridge at the 2019 League of Oregon Cities Annual Membership Meeting.

Motion: Councilor Kinyon
Second: Councilor Hadley
Action: Passed-Unanimous

11.0 Reports of Boards, Commissions and Committees- None

12.0 Items Removed from the agenda

8.3 SGA Audit

Bryan said this is just to make the council aware of the price that we are paying for our audit services.

Mayor Holston said we are not asking you to approve the \$20,700 because it's already in the budget and approved. They have already had their first communications back and forth for what they need to get the audit started. Our CPA Summer will be working on this along with our Finance Director Bill.

Councilor Kinyon asked if it is possible to request that Summer Sears not participate in the audit this year. The reason is she closes our books each month and she would like fresh eyes on the project.

Councilor Whitney asked doesn't our Finance Director participate?

Bryan said everyone participates.

Bill said he will be leading the process and Summer will be reporting to him and he will be directing what she is working on. With the chaotic state that the books are in because they haven't been attended to for two or three months and we could definitely use assistance from Summer or someone of her caliber to help prepare for the audit. He met with Summer and she does have a very thorough knowledge of our records. Is there something that he can answer?

Councilor Kinyon said since she closes our books isn't that a conflict that she is auditing herself?

Bryan said all an auditor does is make sure you are following general accounting principles, they are not going to look for fraud, he would really not like to see Summer not on the audit because this city has been late on our audits for the past three or four years and given the fact that we've had a gap in having a finance director it is going to be a challenge to make it on time this year and without the extra help of Summer it is going to be a real challenge and likely be late.

Bill said we will be very hard pressed to get the audit done on time.

Councilor Hadley said he has an email from the State about the finance of our budget and there were red flags.

Bryan said almost all of the audits have red flags, he'd like to see the emails that Councilor Hadley received.

Councilor Kinyon said to clarify what she was speaking along the lines of, the organization that we are engaging with SGA CPAs & Consultants, LLP, she is assuming they have more than one person that does auditing and she is just requesting that we get someone else.

Bryan said they do but the end of year is very difficult to find a CPA this time of year.

Bill asked Councilor Kinyon if there was something they could do to alleviate her concerns you have with Summer working on the audit or helping with audit preparations.

Councilor Hollett said it's just simply what she is saying, Summer closes the books and so it essentially appears that she is auditing her own work.

Mayor Holston said Summer is not part of SGA, she is separate from SGA, we have Summer and we employ Summer and then we have SGA the auditing company. She is providing the information that the auditors want to look at.

Councilor Kinyon thought Summer was part of SGA and that is why she requested that.

13.0 Ordinances, Resolutions and Public Comments

13.1 City of Oakridge Res. 08-2019 A Resolution Creating the City of Oakridge Public Safety Advisory Committee

Bryan said he is anxious to get this committee on board and get them working hard.

Mayor Holston said she is anxious to get them going too, there is plenty for them to be doing and this is a good time considering our communities concerns about public safety.

Action: I move to approve the Resolution establishing the City of Oakridge Public Safety Committee and its Bylaws effective immediately.

Motion: Councilor Kinyon

Second: Councilor Hollett

Councilor Kinyon asked if we can consider making an appointment at the first meeting of October?

Mayor Holston said we usually post them for thirty days. She doesn't think there is anything in the Charter, but that has been our customary action to do thirty days. While she agrees with you she hates to deviate from that.

Councilor Kinyon feels that this is too long.

Councilor Hollett asked if we can post it as open until filled? Larry Sweet has been here several times mentioning he'd like to be on this committee.

Mayor Holston said the problem with posting until filled is interviewing them as they come in as a group or one at a time, it becomes a rolling thing. She would be open to reducing the date to twenty days as long as the council understands that this opens the door to reducing other postings to twenty days as well.

Councilor Kinyon said she likes that idea.

Vote: Passed-Unanimous

14.0 Appointments

14.1 Councilor Appointment to the Parks & Community Services Committee

Rick read the issue.

Councilor Whitney said she is interested in this appointment and she has been on this committee before.

Mayor Holston asked for consensus to appoint Councilor Whitney to the Parks & Community Services Committee. There was consensus.

15.0 Public Comment

Trudy Hammond 47752 Berry Street- She is expressing her gratitude to Bryan for expediting the hiring of the volunteers at the fire department. She spent many months advocating for who she thinks would best fill the position of chief.

Audi Spliethof 47587 Teller Road- He is asking about Planning Commissioner Training on the 25th . He thinks this is something that all of the Planning Commissioners should go to. He would hope that the city would pay for this.

Mayor Holston said Audi should talk to the Chair of the Planning Commission.

Councilor Hollett asked if there is money for Planning Commission Training?

Bryan said there is money in the planning budget.

Councilor Hollett thanked Bryan for conducting the volunteer interviews, it was really good for morale in the community.

Mayor Holston said in July she asked the council to consider housing issues that we are facing in Oakridge and to put into writing what we are lacking or what we need, this is for the county to assist us specifically with our rural communities financially. So far to date she hasn't received anything from anybody, she would like to see something by October 1.

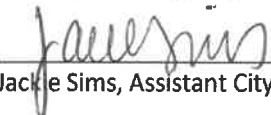
Mayor Holston wants the council to start thinking about five and ten year goals, be specific and include the steps that you believe will be necessary to achieve these goals. We will start our strategic goal setting soon.

Dennis Patterson 47871 W 1st Street- He wanted to mention a topic that might be good for the town hall meeting that is what would be the pros and cons of neighborhood watch committees.

Senator Hayden- He is the State Representative for House District 7. He finds tonights meeting pretty encouraging, he attends about ten of these meetings on a routine schedule. If you build that communication you will find that a lot your concerns are the same as other cities, reach out and make that drive to Lowell, it would really help build that communication and with the League of Oregon Cities.

16.0 Adjourn – 8:38 P.M.

Signed: 
Kathy Holston, Mayor

Signed: 
Jackie Sims, Assistant City Recorder