

**MINUTES OF THE NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON**  
**April 19, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Newport City Council was held on April 19, 2021 at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers, City Hall, 200 S. Washington Avenue, Newport, Washington, with the following present via ZOOM due to the Coronavirus pandemic:

	Shirley Sands	Mayor
	Russ Pelleberg	City Administrator
	Nickole North	Clerk/Treasurer
	Mark Duxbury	Police Chief
	David North	Public Works Director
	Kendel Froese	Assistant City Attorney
Kenneth Smith		Councilmember
Nancy Hawks-Thompson		Councilmember
Jami Sears		Councilmember
Mark Zorica		Councilmember
Keith Campbell		Mayor Pro Tem

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Mayor Sands called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Clerk/Treasurer North swore in Jami Sears as Councilmember Position #3 for the balance of an unexpired term. This was followed by roll call and the pledge of allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES:**

Councilmember Thompson moved to approve the agenda and the minutes from the April 05, 2021 Council Meeting as written; Councilmember Smith seconded. Motion carried.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

Mayor Sands congratulated city wastewater employee Brian Eggleston for passing his test to be certified as a WWTP Group II Operator.

Mayor Sands gave a recap of a report submitted to the City Council from North East Tri County Health Director Matt Shanz:

- Cases increasing in surrounding counties and in N. Idaho. Just starting to see increased numbers in Pend Oreille County.
- N. Idaho reporting increased rate of positivity meaning there is more disease activity occurring now than in the last several weeks.
- Hospitalizations are also increasing in Spokane medical catchment area and N. Idaho.
- We suspect that some of the outbreaks we are seeing locally are a result of variants that are more easily spread from person to person.
- Vaccination opportunities abound and there are lots of openings for Newport residents to sign up for at [www.netchd.org](http://www.netchd.org). This said, the team that has been helping put on these clinics will be demobilizing in the next several weeks and now is the time to be

vaccinated. It's free and easy to get vaccinated. Once the team is gone, we will have reduced capacity to offer these clinics.

Mayor Sands invited citizens to attend the Newport Hospital free COVID-19 shot clinic at the Newport Rodeo Grounds tomorrow. It is free and easy.

### **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:**

Jason McQuinn, Owner of Camp Bear Paw, 581 Bear Paw Drive, Newport, WA stated that they have big plans for Summer. He is hoping to team up with the City of Newport to make a yearly event called "Freedom Fest". Councilmember Smith told him to contact Public Utility District regarding putting a banner over Washington Avenue advertising the event. Mr. McQuinn stated that they will be having thirteen of some of the biggest Christian bands at the event as well as camping and if all goes well a spectacular firework show. He is working with Tri-County Health and is trying to make sure that they have all required permits for the event. Mr. McQuinn was asked to reach out to City Administrator Pelleberg to advertise the event on the City's Facebook Page. It was suggested that he tag porta.us on Facebook as well and all of their followers would be able to see the event.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Councilmember Smith moved to support the efforts of local internet access and to have the City Attorney revise the letter of support pending review by administration and signature of the Mayor; Councilmember Campbell seconded. Motion carried.

Councilmember Campbell moved to approve Ordinance 2083 annexing certain real property located at 75 Silver Birch Ct., Newport, carried under Assessor #453124410002, Pend Oreille County Washington to said City, designating the zone of the annexed property R-3 multi-family as recommended by the Newport City Planning Commission, directing modification of the Official Zoning Map and fixing the effective date of annexation; Councilmember Zorica seconded. Motion carried.

A presentation of non-conforming land uses was given by Planning Consultant Gregg Dohrn. After a great deal of discussion with the Mayor and Council, Mr. Dohrn felt like he had good direction from them to assist Administration as issues come up. It was the consensus of the Council to gradually work with citizens, educate them and work together to resolve situations rather than start off with a heavy-handed approach. Mayor Sands agrees with that approach however she feels that if there is noncompliance there should be some consequences.

### **CITY ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS:**

City Administrator Pelleberg stated that he has been really busy with developers. A large piece of property has been purchased in the City. There are some additional new businesses in the City. He thanked Planning Consultants Gregg Dohrn and Alicia Ayars and stated that it was great to have their expertise. A new water operator has been hired and will be on board next month.

City Assistant Attorney Froese stated that the 25-year franchise agreement with Public Utility District (PUD) was entered into in 1996 and will be expiring this year. There will be some choices that the Council will need to make regarding whether they would like to enter a renewal of the franchise with PUD or the City could acquire and operate its own electric utility. If the Council chooses to have the City operate its own electric utility this would need to go to the vote of the people. The workshop on May 03<sup>rd</sup> will have a formal presentation regarding this matter.

City Assistant Attorney Froese asked for a clarification on why the Council would like workshops. City Administrator Pelleberg asked to be able to interact with staff. Staff can tell the Council what they are working on without public comment. Workshops are public meetings and citizens can listen but are not allowed to comment. Councilmember Thompson stated that she feels the Council needs to be very well informed and she feels that workshops will give the Council better knowledge. Councilmember Zorica stated that he would like to hear from staff and see if there are things the Council can do to help them.

### **STAFF COMMENTS:**

Police Chief Duxbury gave a law enforcement update. There were 178 law enforcement calls in the City of Newport in March. Chief Duxbury stated that he will be introducing the new Community Resource Officer Kathryn Bowman at the next regular Council Meeting. She was hired effective April 1<sup>st</sup>. Kathryn is a former Bonner County Dispatcher. She is completing her training and is really motivated. She will be contacting, seeking cooperation and compliance from citizens in Newport. He also stated that the parade through the City on April 3<sup>rd</sup> was mostly uneventful. There were only two incidents. One was the City Stage in the Newport City Park was spray painted and there was traffic going the wrong way on Washington Avenue. Washington State Patrol, Newport PD and four addition Deputies from the Sheriff's Office were present to help protect citizens and businesses.

Clerk/Treasurer North gave a financial update. Cash and Investments as of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021 was \$3.1 million. Sales tax in March was \$77,742. Fuel tax continues to decline. REET City Assistance increased and interest increased. There are currently around 23 delinquent accounts with approximately \$27,828 past due. Ms. North stated that she just completed a Washington State Department of Retirement Audit. There were two small issues found. One was that on call pay for LEOFF employees should not be reported as hours worked since the Officers are not technically working during that time. The other was every new employee must be checked to see if they have retired from Washington State Department of Retirement including elected officials. Elected officials were not being checked since the City doesn't pay into retirement for them. She also let the Council know of two new programs being offered in our community for the Council to pass on to citizens needing assistance. One is through Rural Resources and is called Foundational Community Support to assist with obtaining and maintaining housing of their choice. Care Coordinators work one on one with participants to help participants fill out paperwork, obtain necessary documentation, apply for waiting lists, look for housing, find work and enroll in services for physical and mental health, energy assistance, food assistance and many more. Contact Caneel Johnson 509-690-9004. The other program is a Treasury Rent Assistance Program that was funded by a large grant. The grant was received by Pend Oreille County from the Treasury Department to be distributed through Family Crisis Network. This funding is to be used specifically for renters who are behind on rent and/or utilities. Family Crisis Network can be contacted at 509-447-2274.

Public Works Director David North gave a public works update. Restrooms will be opening soon when freezing at night stops. Wastewater and Water Treatment Plant Superintendent Josh Howard has been taking care of the plants and is doing an awesome job. SCADA is in place and it is amazing how good it works. Excavation to extend the sewer line for the RV Park should be completed by Rodeo and will begin next week. Road restrictions came off today. A regular bathroom instead of a vault type will be in the Newport City Park soon. Councilmember Thompson asked what the status of repairing Scott Street is. She was informed that Scott Street is on top of the Six Year Transportation List of projects to complete. This project will go from Highway 2 to Spruce Street.

Fire District 4 Commissioner Sheffler stated that she was happy to announce the hiring of their new Fire Chief Robert Webber. Chief Webber gave a fire report for the month of March. There were 15 total calls in Newport. Five were fire alarms and ten were medical. Several trainings have taken place in March. MSA G1 Air Packs and Masks came in the beginning of March and Fit testing was March 15<sup>th</sup>. Within the last month the Fire District has received grant equipment worth about \$25,000. CPR class for the City employees has been scheduled for April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 AM.


**BILLS & PAYROLL:**

Councilmember Thompson moved to approve the bills and payroll; Councilmember Zorica seconded. Motion carried.

CLAIMS CHECKS 64108-64142	\$40,406.04
CLAIMS EFT 04/14/21 RUN 1-8	\$25,126.12
CLAIMS DIRECT PAY 04/14/21 RUN 1-8	\$9,100.00
PAYROLL EFTS 1095-1101: Dir Deposit Run 04/07/21	\$71,142.86

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Attest:   
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Nickole North, MMC, CPFA  
Clerk/Treasurer

By:   
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Shirley Sands  
Mayor