

MINUTES OF THE NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON

April 17, 2023

A regular meeting of the Newport City Council was held on April 17, 2023, at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers, City Hall, 200 S. Washington Avenue, Newport, Washington, with the following present:

	Keith Campbell	Mayor
	Abby Gribi	City Administrator
	Nickole North	Clerk/Treasurer
Kenneth Smith		Councilmember
Nathan Weathers		Councilmember
Jami Sears		Councilmember
Mark Zorica		Mayor Pro Tem
Nathan Longly		Councilmember

Mayor Campbell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. This was followed by roll call and the pledge of allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES:

Councilmember Longly moved to approve the agenda and the minutes from the April 03, 2023 Council Meeting; Councilmember Weathers seconded. Motion carried.

MAYOR & COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Mayor Campbell reminded everyone interested in helping clean up the town to attend Zeke Stutzman's Community Earth Day Trash Pickup Day on Saturday, April 22nd from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM with everyone interested in participating meeting at Stratton Elementary East Parking Lot. Zeke is an 8 year old boy who is organizing this event to help clean up our community.

Councilmember Longly thanked everyone who helped out with the Easter Egg Hunt. The event was awesome and there was positive feedback. He gave special thanks to Newport Rodeo Association for their continued support as well as the Library and Chamber of Commerce.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS:

City Administrator Gribi met with Newport Rodeo President Ray Hanson regarding a fence at the RV Park. The rodeo members are wanting to do the project. Administrator Gribi also met with Cathy McMorris Rogers. She let the Council know that there would be an Economic Development Council meeting held in the City Hall Council Chambers Wednesday. She asked if the Council would be ok with the Pend Oreille County Planning Meetings to be held in Council Chambers when the meetings were held in this area. The Mayor and Council gave their permission and stated they would be happy to help. In addition, two possible locations for vehicle charging stations have been located behind City Hall at the Cell Tower.

Councilmember Zorica moved to purchase shoring equipment for \$10,000, updates to police portion of the Public Safety Building for \$10,000 and \$103,000 for a water reclamation system at the Wastewater Treatment Plant with the remaining ARPA funds; Councilmember Longly seconded. Motion carried.

Due to a lack of communication on their end, the Pend Oreille County Public Works Director let Administrator Gribi know that the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) funded project to the City with the County as a partner in the amount of \$400,000 will not be able to be completed this year. The County offered for the City to piggyback on their projects this year if that would help. The funding agency (TIB) stated that this would not reflect poorly on the City and they will work with the City to fund the project next year without the County as a partner. The project and funds were pulled for this year. Councilmember Zorica suggested that Pend Oreille County Commissioner Smiley and TIB sit down and repair their relationship for funding opportunities moving forward.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Police Chief Nelson stated that he has been here three months and everything is running smoothly. There were 88 calls for service in January, 85 in February and 111 in March. He has noticed that there is large juvenile crime activity in the City. He is working with the schools to offer a positive extracurricular activity for those kids that are not in sports. There has been a new officer hired and he is doing pretty good and will be out on his own within two months. Former Police Chief Duxbury worked one shift as a reserve. Chief Nelson has been going through equipment and is looking at a way to get Sector. He is catching the Officers up on training and updating policies. He also stated that they have a lot of dog calls in the City as well.

Fire Chief Webber gave a fire update stating that there were 47 calls last month with 28 being in Newport and they have received 381 hours of training.

Public Works Director North stated that they have been working on getting the parks cleaned up, sidewalks swept and maintaining the sweeper. The RV Park bathroom should be delivered by the end of the month. Lights have been fixed, wells continued to get maintained and signs are being straightened downtown. The meter routes have been consolidated into two routes instead of three and there will be cross training on the routes. Fire Engine One has a fuel leak and is out of service until he can get it fixed. Councilmember Zorica asked about the status of the Farmers Market and was told that they were met with and a location has been agreed on. Councilmember Weathers let Mr. North know that a water lid needs to be replaced in the area of Riverbend Insurance and the New Health Building. Director North stated that would be replaced tomorrow.

Wastewater/Water Plant Superintendent Howard stated that he is working on yearly maintenance of the wells and stated that the water plant does pretty good running itself. The booster pump is also getting maintained. The capacity of the water plant can handle another well or Well C being routed to it. There is room for growth. There have been several plugged sewer lines on the southside. They will be out jet rodding the lines and with the new vac truck they are able to push and then suck out all debris instead of just pushing them up the line. They are working on getting

the whole south side of town done this year. The Wastewater Treatment Plant has had two violations at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. They have started their annual maintenance on the water filtration system.

Clerk/Treasurer North gave a financial update. The ending cash and investments as of the end of March was \$3,953,525 which was \$37,905 more at the end of the first quarter vs last year. Sales tax at the end of the first quarter was \$151,112 which was \$24,411 more than last year. Property tax was \$19,565 which was \$808 more than last year. There are currently 15 delinquent accounts resulting in \$20,657 past due. Six of these are off for non-payment and two are on payment plans. Rural Resources grants have been very helpful to several citizens. This program is still available. Ms. North has been completing annual reports for ARPA, JLARC (hotel/motel) and USDA for bonds in the first quarter and will be working on the annual report for the state auditor which will be coming before them next month for approval to submit.

NEW BUSINESS:

Councilmember Weathers moved to amend Ordinance 2112 removing the discretion of designation of the funds to be used for a different City purpose; Councilmember Smith seconded. Motion carried. Councilmember Zorica moved to approve Ordinance 2112 as amended; Councilmember Weathers seconded. Motion carried.

BILLS & PAYROLL:

Councilmember Smith moved to approve the bills and payroll; Councilmember Sears seconded. Motion carried.

CLAIMS CHECKS 65592-65614	\$28,034.93
CLAIMS EFT 04/10/2023 Run 1-13	\$35,626.50
CLAIMS DIRECT PAY 04/10/2023 Run 1-6	\$9,200.00
PAYROLL E-CHECKS 1411-1418; Dir Deposit Run 04/05/2023	\$69,824.04

WORKSHOP:

The Council went into a workshop at 7:26 PM to further discuss revenue solutions for the Street Fund. Administrator Gribi recommended an advisory vote be placed on the next ballot to see if citizens are willing to pay for fire service. She gave a sample to the Council for their review. She is to have a resolution regarding this brought before the Council at the next Council Meeting to be able to put it on the ballot. The School Resource Officer position was discussed. The City needs to come up with around \$30,000 more to fund this position year around. She stated that a full time employee may need to be cut from the street budget as they are overstaffed for cities our size. A transportation benefit district was discussed to help with water and street maintenance. Currently the City is anticipating receiving around \$585,000 this year in sales tax with \$235,000 going to the Street fund and \$353,000 to Current Expense. If a criminal justice sales tax of .1% is enforced it would bring in less than \$1,000 per year. The City only has around 25 cents left until it meets the \$5.90 cap for a levy rate property tax. This amount can exceed \$5.90 in certain circumstances but would need to go to a vote of the people. Currently the City's property tax includes a portion to


the County, a portion to the City, two portions to the State, and portions to the school, library, and cemetery as junior tax districts. If the City adds 25 cents it would generate around just under \$50,000 in revenue each year. Another option would be to increase the water and sewer utility rate to 20% each which would generate around \$60,000 in revenues. Further discussion regarding this topic will take place in a workshop the second meeting in May. The Council came out of the workshop at 8:04 PM.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 PM.

Attest: 

Nickole North, MMC, CPFA
Clerk/Treasurer

By: 

Keith Campbell
Mayor