

MINUTES OF THE NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON
December 04, 2023

A meeting of the Newport City Council was held on December 04, 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

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES:

Councilmember Zorica moved to approve the agenda and the minutes from the November 20, 2023 Council Meeting; Councilmember Weathers seconded. Motion carried.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Mayor Campbell stated that the crew is plowing snow now and that it is very important to move cars that may be obstructing the plows.

Councilmember Smith stated that there were two cars going the wrong way on Washington and he wonders if this issue will ever be fixed. This is a Department of Transportation issue and would need to be addressed by them.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS:

Administrator Gribi has met with SPOFR Commissioners and they have approved to move forward with a contract between them and the City of Newport. The agreement should be completed to present at the next Council Meeting.

The first plow of the season has occurred. Notices were mailed out with the water bill and have been posted on Facebook to prepare people.

The updated Development Regulations are in review with Commerce and should be to the Council for approval in January.

Department of Ecology is holding up the Sewer Master Plan and a meeting with Ecology will be taking place to hopefully get everything cleared up.

The Department of Transportation has been contacted regarding the compression brake issue coming into Newport on Highway 20.

A Friends and Family Fund has to be run through a non-profit. Administrator Gribi recommends using Rural Resources for this. Councilmember Zorica felt that was a great avenue to move forward and encouraged Administrator Gribi to reach out to them and see if they are willing to take this on.

The next regular meeting will be December 18th at 6:00 PM. The first meeting in January is canceled due to the short turnaround. The books of the City have to be kept open until the 20th to ensure all 2023 bills are paid out of the 2023 budget. The second meeting in January will be continued to January 19th at 8:00 AM to approve final bills.

NEW BUSINESS:

A Pend Oreille County Library District Presentation was conducted by Mandy Walters, Director. 95% of the public feedback has been in favor of a new library being built on the corner of Calispel Avenue and Highway 2. The only opposition was that citizens don't want another vacant building downtown and increased traffic around the schools. Director Walters is estimating a cost between \$6-8 million to build around a 10,000 sq foot library. The new library would have meeting rooms, study space, ADA accessibility, improved parking access, a commercial kitchen and staff workspace. When the Council would like to move forward with a long term lease of the property they just have to let her know and she will proceed with the next step of the project.

A public hearing to review the 2024 preliminary budget and to consider proposed budget amendments to the 2023 fiscal year budget was opened at 6:31 PM. Clerk/Treasurer North stated that all auditor recommendations for ending cash in 2024 are in compliance. Liability insurance has increased an average of 23%. A 3% COLA is included in the proposed budget. The current CPI is 3.1% as of October 2023. The monthly insurance benefit cap needs to be increased to \$1850.00 per month. There will be a 4.1% medical insurance increase for City employees and a 4.4% medical insurance increase for the LEOFF 1 retiree. A change to the allocation of taxes was recommended to ensure that the correct amount of property tax is receipted into the Current Expense budget to cover fire levy revenue. The new split would be 69% current expense and 31% streets. \$145,000 is budgeted to go into reserves. Capital Expenditures were discussed. Overall, the budget has increased by \$562,573 due to increased liability and medical insurance, REET ending cash has increased and the Fire Levy revenue.

Discussion was then held regarding the proposed budget amendments to the 2023 budget. A \$212,900 increase to the sewer budget was discussed due to investment interest received and the beginning cash was more than anticipated. A \$106,000 increase to the water budget was requested to transfer Non-Grant COVID-19 assistance to the water fund to fund water rehab expenses that occurred last year. A \$214,600 budget increase to the current expense budget is requested to cover the purchase of Permit Software to better track building permits. COVID-19 Non-Grant Assistance Funds were used to purchase a chip sealer and a portion of these funds were transferred

to the water department to assist with rehab expenses that occurred last year. Revenue budgeted last year was less than actually received. A \$26,300 increase is being requested to cover the TIB Seal Coat Grant Funds for the project that was awarded in 2023. Overall, the budget for 2023 will increase by \$559,800, making the total 2023 budget \$9,004,611. The above referenced grant and expenditures were previously approved by Council earlier in the year.

There was no public comment. The public hearing closed at 6:47 PM.

Councilmember Sears moved to approve Ordinance 2115 amending the fiscal year 2023 budget; Councilmember Longly seconded. Motion carried.

Councilmember Weathers moved to approve Ordinance 2116 adopting the fiscal year 2024 budget; Councilmember Smith seconded. Motion carried.

Councilmember Weathers moved to approve Resolution 20231204 setting the salaries for each step within each employment classification & establishing a COLA to be used in 2024 for City Employees; Councilmember Zorica seconded. Motion carried.

BILLS & PAYROLL:

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


CLAIMS CHECKS 65999-66011	\$16,219.13
CLAIMS EFT 11/29/2023 Run 1-4	\$104,783.25
DIRECT PAY 11/29/23 Run 1	\$1,300.00
PAYROLL EFTS 1540-1548 & DIRECT DEPOSIT 11/19/2023	\$76,672.94

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:56 PM.

Attest: 

Nickole North, MMC, CPFA
Clerk/Treasurer

By: 

Keith Campbell
Mayor