

## **MINUTES OF THE NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 8, 2026**

A meeting of the Newport City Council was held on September 8, 2026, at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers, City Hall, 200 S. Washington Avenue, Newport, Washington, with the following present:

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| Keith Campbell   | Mayor              |
| Abby Gribi       | City Administrator |
| Theresa Schoener | Clerk/Treasurer    |

|                  |               |
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| Nathan Weathers  | Councilmember |
| Elizabeth Spring | Councilmember |
| Jami Sears       | Councilmember |
| Mark Zorica      | Mayor Pro Tem |
| Mark Collins     | Councilmember |

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

Councilmember Weathers requested an amendment to the agenda to include an opportunity for members of the public participating online to ask questions or provide public comments. He stated the importance of making sure that individuals unable to attend in person could engage.

Councilmember Collins moved to approve the amendment to the agenda. Councilmember Weathers seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MINUTES:**

Councilmember Zorica moved to approve the agenda and the minutes from August 17, 2026, Council Meeting. Councilmember Collins seconded. Motion carried.

### **MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

Mayor Campbell noted that fall and football season was upon us but hoping for an extended summer.

Councilmember Springs wanted to remind everyone that school is back in session and to be mindful of all the children that are walking to and from school each day.

### **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:**

Marie Balak with South Pend Oreille Fire came to announce that SPOFR will be having a 25<sup>th</sup> memorial for 911 on September 11, 2026, at 11:00am at Veterans Park.

### **CITY ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS:**

Administrator Gribi updated the Council on this year's roadwork, letting them know that it is coming to a wrap for the season.

The City's Fall Cleanup day will be on October 10<sup>th</sup> at the City's property off Gun Club Rd. We will post it online and include a message on the bills to let the community know. More information to come.

Administrator Gribi will be meeting with Representative Engell in Newport and giving him a tour of our Wastewater Facilities on October 27<sup>th</sup>.

Washington State of Ecology is opening funding requests. She will update Council at the next meeting.

There will be a joint workshop with Council regarding the Comprehensive Plan on September 28, 2026, at 5:30pm. This will be at the regularly scheduled Planning Commissions meeting.

We have received an advance resignation notice for Council Seat #3 effective October 12<sup>th</sup> from Councilmember Sears. We will be putting out a notice for an open Council Position.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Ray Hanson, President of the Newport Rodeo Association provided an update on the 2026 Newport Rodeo and Rough Stock Events. This year they celebrated the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of America. Attendance was sold out for both Friday and Saturday nights. There were no injuries to report this year and no incidences in the beer garden. They had a lot of good contestants. There were also a lot of comments on the facility and the improvements made.

In July the Rodeo hosted the first mounted shooting event. It was a free event and had a lot of walk-ins from around the community.

Rough Stock Rodeo's attendance was lower than expected this year, possibly due to the fires occurring in the local area. Although ticket sales were higher, actual attendance did not match the number of tickets sold. The Association was also asked to be available to assist with fire-related displacement by offering the facility as a potential shelter. They expressed willingness to do so; however, the facility ultimately was not needed for that purpose.

Councilmember Zorica moved to approve Resolution 20260908 Designating PumpTech as a sole source provider for Grunfos Pumps and Providing for other matters properly related thereto. With the amendment of correcting section 4 as Councilmember Weathers noted a scrivener's error. Councilmember Collins seconded. Motion carried.

Councilmember Weathers moved to approve the Client Service Agreement for the Newport Hospital and Health Services. Councilmember Zorica seconded. Motioned carried. Councilmember Collins abstained from voting.

## **BILLS & PAYROLL:**

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

|                                                                 |              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| CLAIMS CHECKS 67672 - 67692                                     | \$70, 159.09 |
| CLAIMS EFT 2026 Sept 1 <sup>st</sup> Mtg: 1-4                   | \$1, 900.05  |
| CLAIMS DIR PAY 2026 Sept 1 <sup>st</sup> Mtg:1-4                | \$1, 595.00  |
| PAYROLL EFT PR 2026 Aug 2nd 1-10: Direct Deposit Run 08/18/2026 | \$99, 872.33 |

## **ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 PM.

## **WORKSHOP:**

The workshop opened with the Administrator Gribi introducing Tim Kurs from the WSDOT Traffic Office. Tim noted he has been with WSDOT for four years.

Discussion on Couplet and Business Visibility:

Councilmember Zorica stated that local business owners are concerned that tourists cannot see City businesses due to the current couplet configuration. Tim explained that changes are possible, but a traffic study would be required to evaluate potential impacts to traffic flow and safety. He advised that if the City chooses to pursue a study, WSDOT should review the draft scope before any agreements are signed.

Councilmember Weathers asked what other towns are experiencing when reverting their couplet. Tim reported mixed feedback from larger cities and stated that installing traffic signals is not logical here at current traffic volumes.

ADA Parking and Designated Parking

Questions were raised regarding ADA parking availability. Tim noted he would clarify State responsibility under RCW but believes responsibility rests with whoever created the project. He confirmed that cities can designate parking spaces, but WSDOT must approve them. Administrator Gribi added that larger-scale changes require more testing and review. Mayor Campbell stated that sidewalks and ADA parking would need to be brought up to grade if modifications were made. Tim noted ADA issues and one-way traffic could potentially be addressed in a future paving project.

Traffic Volumes and Data

Tim stated the current traffic volume of approximately 9,000 is adequate for existing infrastructure. Councilmember Zorica asked who deploys traffic counters, expressing interest in studying summer versus winter traffic due to concerns that businesses are not being noticed. Councilmember Collins highlighted the expense of changes and inquired about external funding sources. Tim said TIB funding may be favorable, but the ends of the one-way roads are a key challenge.

### Funding and Planning

Administrator Gribi reported that the City adopted a Complete Streets Plan, and as related projects are finished, they could be incorporated into TIB funding and integrated into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan and traffic safety plans. Councilmember Collins emphasized the cost of planning and the possibility that WSDOT could still deny changes, underscoring the need for a clear plan and secured funding. Administrator Gribi reiterated the importance of sharing scope with WSDOT before signing agreements. She noted her current project focus has been infrastructure and the wastewater plant.

### Public Comment and Project Timelines

A member of the public, Rob Owens, commented on the timeline of past couplet changes. Tim stated that such projects could take around a few years but depend on funding and could be combined with multiple improvements. Councilmember Collins stressed forward planning and funding, expressing no downside to adjusting street directions. Administrator Gribi suggested issuing a request for proposals to determine scope and cost.

### Crosswalks and Safety Features

Councilmember Zorica asked about additional crosswalk lights. Tim explained past crosswalk light installations came from an unusual funding circumstance. Councilmember Zorica stated the improvements had been beneficial. Tim noted that rectangular flashing beacons (RFBs) fall under lower threshold requirements, while stoplights require significantly higher thresholds. Councilmember Weathers asked how thresholds are determined; Tim replied that crash data is collected at WSDOT headquarters and can be requested.

A local business owner commented that pedestrians getting hit happen all the time at the corner of her business. Councilmember Collins suggested low-cost traffic flags. Tim confirmed these are allowed under RCW and can be purchased from state vendors.

### Parking, Snow Removal, and Shoulder Safety

Tim clarified that the state maintains roads from curb to curb and the City may designate parking with WSDOT review. Councilmember Zorica suggested adjusting parking spaces for visibility. He also asked who clears snow from sidewalks; Administrator Gribi stated that abutting property owners are responsible. Councilmember Sears raised concerns about shoulder parking near the highway; Tim advised coordinating with WSP for enforcement because RCW prohibits parking on public highways.

### Next Steps and Couplet Considerations

Councilmember Zorica asked about next steps for addressing the couplet. Tim recommended gathering public input after ideas and plans. Councilmember Collins reiterated the need to develop a plan, conduct studies, and explore funding options. Councilmember Zorica inquired whether WSDOT would consider converting S. Washington into a city street. Tim said it is possible and would require working with the state on a proposal to change highway routes.

The Council thanked Tim for attending.

The workshop concluded at 7:13 PM.

Attest:   
Theresa Schoener  
Clerk/Treasurer

By:   
Keith Campbell  
Mayor