

CITY OF WHEELER

CITY COUNCIL – APRIL MEETING MINUTES

April 16th, 2024

Call to Order

Mayor Kemp called the meeting to order at 6:10 PM.

Roll Call

Present onsite:

City Council: Councilor Deanne Ragnell, Councilor Heidi Stacks, Councilor Gordon Taylor, Councilor Karen Matthews, Councilor Walt Porter, Mayor Clif Kemp

City Staff: Pax Broder

Guests: Edith Rohde, Tyler Reed, Lee Hiltenbrand

Present via Zoom: “whmat”

Guests:

Consent Calendar

Councilor Stacks mentioned that on the draft Minutes of 3-14-24 there was a date that needed to be changed from “2008” to “2016”.

Councilor Matthews **made a motion to accept the Minutes of 3-14-24 as amended, the Minutes of 3-19-24, and the Minutes of 4-9-24.** Councilor Ragnell **seconded the motion. The motion was passed 5-0** (Yes: Matthews, Ragnell, Taylor, Stacks, Porter; No: none).

Pax read the March Finance Manager Report. *A copy is included in the agenda packet.*

Councilor Matthews **made a motion to accept the March Financial Report.** Councilor Stacks **seconded the motion. The motion was passed 5-0** (Yes: Matthews, Ragnell, Taylor, Stacks, Porter; No: none).

Presentations, Guests, Announcements

Lee Hiltenbrand – Mass Care Lead for EVCNB

A copy of the presentation is available in the Agenda Packet.

Tyler Reed – Neah-Kah-Nie School District

A copy of the presentation is available in the Agenda Packet.

Councilor Stacks informed Mr. Reed about the evacuation plan for the Neah-Kah-Nie School District last done in 2018 and offered him a hard copy of it. She mentioned that it is super important to us to know where our children will be in an emergency. Mr. Reed mentioned that every year there is budget to buy emergency supplies, they are working on a grant for a container, and their woodshop class builds structures to help store supplies.

Councilor Matthews stated that one of the programs she had worked on over the years was getting children environmental education. She encourages outdoor education as there is an incredible value in

children learning about the natural world and how they interconnect with it. Mr. Reed said the school district is very fortunate to have some of the best science teachers in the country. He mentioned in one class they dissect oysters, and in another class they learn how to cook them!

Mayor Kemp asked about active recruitment for multilingual teachers. Mr. Reed said he had recruited from Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Spain and got some teachers here through the visa application process. They can also incentivize teachers to learn a second language. There is a district coordinator that can provide services to families where English isn't the primary language. They move a person around instead of moving the children around.

Mayor Kemp asked why the school district didn't qualify for state funding. Mr. Reed said that they were disqualified due to the amount of property tax and timber revenue they receive, but they are allowed to apply for grants from the State.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

None.

City Manager and Public Works Department Report

The City Manager report was summarized. *A copy is available in the Agenda Packet.*

Councilor Stacks asked that landslides and fire danger also be indicated on the grant essay questions for the OREM grant.

The Public Works report was summarized. *A copy is available in the Agenda Packet.*

Councilor Matthews mentioned that there will need to be some bank stabilization done where the trees had been removed next to City Hall. She said she would reach out to Phil and recommend some plantings.

Councilor Ragnell asked for clarification on the new Gateway Signs. Pax mentioned that Wheeler is "first on the list" once the Tillamook Coast Visitors Association budget is approved. Mayor Kemp asked who was going to take control of the old sign when it comes down. Councilor Ragnell mentioned it would go to the City. Mayor Kemp suggested the Council begin thinking about what they'd like to do with the old sign. He then questioned if there was intent to reclaim the old "Whee" letters sign. Councilor Matthews said that it had been determined that the sign would need to be remade, it was in too bad of shape to be revitalized. In the spring the City Council ultimately decided the City didn't want the sign and ownership of it had been released.

Old Business

a. Nuisance Updates –

Councilor Stacks said she did a "walk about town" with Councilor Matthews and noticed that the City needs some weeding and pressure washing in front of the businesses. Some had hazards that may need to be taken care of, particularly down on the waterfront. At 50 Rector there has been one boat and one car removed. There had been a discussion regarding the difference between an ADU and a camping trailer, and how to reach out to people to ask them to meet code. Most people are responsive to simple communication from the City. Follow-up letters have gone out to 675 Nehalem Blvd and 133 Hall Street. Councilor

Matthews asked who in the City had the responsibility for weeds growing through the sidewalks. Pax said he would look into it further. *Pax later confirmed that the ordinances state that “the owner of land abutting a sidewalk shall maintain the sidewalk in good repair and safe condition.”* Councilor Matthews stated that the hole in the foundation under 675 Nehalem Blvd is a hazard and a child or dog could climb in there and requested that this be mentioned in the next letter. Councilor Taylor said there has been damage reported by the Old Wheeler Hotel from the City pressure washing (some paint had chipped off). Councilor Matthews mentioned this may have been from the storm clean up. Councilor Stacks said she is working on a draft letter to the businesses to ask for their help in cleaning up downtown. Councilor Ragnell mentioned that pressure washing on the roads must be done if the off-hours so that rocks don’t get knocked into cars. There was an issue with this a couple of years ago.

- b. *Resolution No. 2024-06 – Chain of Command*
The resolution was read in full.

Councilor Matthews asked for clarification on where the phone tree would be posted. Pax stated that it hangs next to the calendar on the wall in the front office (next to the alarm panel). She mentioned that she doesn’t always know 24 hours in advance that she will be leaving town.

Councilor Matthews **made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2024-06 Chain of Command in an Emergency Event.** Councilor Taylor **seconded the motion.** **The motion was passed 5-0** (Yes: Matthews, Ragnell, Taylor, Stacks, Porter; No: none).

- c. *Wheeler Clean Up Day – June 15, 2024 –*
Pax wished to confirm that the Council liked June 15, 2024 as the date and Mary Leverette as the captain. Recology has a way to request a “charitable donation” of the trash containers. Mayor Kemp said he would speak to Dart’s about possibly arranging a trailer to remove scrap metal from there as well.

New Business

- a. *March Police Safety Report -*
Mayor Kemp mentioned that warnings are down and citations are up. Councilor Matthews indicated that she has seen the police driving through the neighborhood more as well. Councilor Stacks stated she did get “flashed” from 291 Pennsylvania Ave at 1:30pm in the afternoon. Councilor Matthews indicated that she hears noise from 291 Pennsylvania Ave all the time.
- b. *Water Bill Leak Adjustment Applications –*
Councilor Matthews said we made an agreement to consider adjusting these water bills, but also stated we need proof the repairs were made.

Pax mentioned that at 67 Spruce the City was able to calculate how much water was lost to the leak due to the way usage is tracked in the Kamstrup system. The existing water line is to be abandoned and an entirely new line will be put in, which hasn’t happened yet. Councilor Stacks mentioned that these folks have paid a lot of money to do repairs on Rector Street. Pax mentioned that their account is also in good standing and has been historically.

Pax mentioned that at 640 Marine Drive there was a leak due to an ice event back in January. The account is in good standing and the Kamstrup software also indicates the leak has stopped.

Pax stated that the Paradise Cove water bill has been in delinquency status since before his tenure with the City began. They use about a fifth of all the water that comes into Wheeler, and they have struggled with payment even more since the new water rates took effect last July. They often make a payment at the last minute to avoid having the water shut off. They have also had numerous leaks in their system that they have been struggling to locate and repair, and they seem to still be leaking water currently (they are actively using around 400 gallons per hour). They experienced a significant water leak near their reception kiosk in November, but the repair they made didn't hold and in February it blew out their roadway. They have a temporary jumper line in place now to provide water access to the lower portion of the park, but haven't made a permanent repair yet and seem to have additional smaller leaks that haven't been addressed.

Councilor Matthews asked if the ordinance states that the City needs proof of the repair and if it limits adjustments to only one per year. Pax stated that the ordinance allows an adjustment "for one billing period only," and that Public Works must "confirm that the repair has been satisfactorily completed" (they can use our computer software to confirm that a leak has stopped).

Councilor Matthews indicated that in the first two applications the accounts are in good standing and the computer software has confirmed the leaks have stopped.

Councilor Taylor asked if we are requiring that someone be up to date on their bills in order to qualify for this type of billing adjustment, and if that requirement is appropriate. If someone is struggling with their bill already, we are making it even harder for them to pay by not allowing forgiveness for a leak. Councilor Porter mentioned that Paradise Cove has folks coming in with vacation rigs and that some of them brag about how cheap it is to stay there. Perhaps they need to increase their prices. Councilor Stacks felt that there were likely 50 people living at Paradise Cove. She questioned if it was appropriate to shut off their water if they paid their bills to Paradise Cove but Paradise Cove failed to pay the City water bill. Councilor Matthews stated that if their system isn't up to date and they aren't charging their customers enough, those aren't City problems.

Mayor Kemp asked how the customers are informed of the process. Pax replied that customers are told up front that up to 50% of the estimated water lost due to the leak could potentially be forgiven from the bill if the City Council approves it.

Councilor Matthews made a motion to approve the Water Leak Billing Adjustment for 67 Spruce St. Councilor Taylor seconded the motion. The motion was passed 5-0 (Yes: Matthews, Ragnell, Taylor, Stacks, Porter; No: none).

Councilor Stacks made a motion to approve the Water Leak Billing Adjustment for 640 Marine Dr. Councilor Ragnell seconded the motion. The motion was passed 5-0 (Yes: Matthews, Ragnell, Taylor, Stacks, Porter; No: none).

The Council decided that they may reconsider Paradise Cove’s application if and when they can provide proof that permanent repairs have been made, the leaks are solved, and the account is out of delinquency.

Councilor Matthews **made a motion to deny the Water Leak Billing Adjustment for Paradise Cove.** Councilor Taylor **seconded the motion.** **The motion was passed 5-0** (Yes: Matthews, Ragnell, Taylor, Stacks, Porter; No: none).

- c. *Resolution No. 2024-07 – Recreational Immunity*
The resolution was read in full.

Councilor Matthews **made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2024-07 Recreational Immunity.** Councilor Stacks **seconded the motion.** **The motion was passed 5-0** (Yes: Matthews, Ragnell, Taylor, Stacks, Porter; No: none).

- d. *Resolution No. 2024-08 – Budget Adjustment – Parks*
The resolution was read in full.

Councilor Matthews asked for clarification on how the funds were being split between the parks. Pax stated that the signs, gravel, and pressure washing for Waterfront Park were not that expensive, so a heavier portion of the funds were to be put towards Upper Park for the purchase of bark chips, which CIS had approved as a use for any excess funds.

Councilor Stacks **made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2024-08 Budget Adjustment - Parks.** Councilor Ragnell **seconded the motion.** **The motion was passed 5-0** (Yes: Matthews, Ragnell, Taylor, Stacks, Porter; No: none).

- e. *Paint Estimates for City Hall –*

Pax stated that this project was too big for Public Works to take on as they have the lead service line inventory project that must be completed by October. The City received three estimates to paint City Hall which vary from \$18,000-\$30,000. Councilor Stacks asked if the painting would include sealing City Hall from water leaks in the front office. Pax said that would be a separate project and the paint estimates don’t include it. The hope was that Public Works could do some excavating around the building to try to determine the source of the leaks and repair them in-house. Councilor Matthews said she has sticker shock after looking at the estimates didn’t think it wise to proceed with the full paint job. Five years ago they spot painted areas that were peeling. However, she indicated that if the City is going to enforce peeling paint elsewhere in the City, then City Hall’s peeling paint should be addressed, too. She didn’t feel that painting the whole building was justified. Councilor Ragnell asked about potentially selling the City Hall building and relocating somewhere else. She felt that when the new clinic goes in next door, there could be potential for the City Hall building to be sold to another medical company that needs to be near the clinic and Highway 101. She wondered if the City could rent one of the other empty buildings in town.

Councilor Stacks said the City could never sell this building because it isn’t ADA accessible, it would have to be raised. Councilor Ragnell clarified that she meant the lot and location more than the building itself.

Councilor Taylor wondered if the building is taking active damage from neglect and if

painting would help solve that. Councilor Matthews said the quotes didn't have a whole lot of that kind of repair work indicated. They are not addressing failing mortar and other damage.

Councilor Matthew's stated that the Public Works staff could do some cleaning and touch-up paint for aesthetics, but stated that we also need to evaluate for damage. Mayor Kemp asked if there had been any discussion in the past about adding an awning over the back door. He also suggested adding a French drain to help divert water away. Councilor Matthews suggested having a workshop to discuss City Hall repairs in general. Mayor Kemp said that if this building was going to be used long-term for City Hall, it may be nice to color match the paint to the Depot and the new restroom building for some cohesion between City structures.

Committee Reports

- a. *Waterfront Development Citizens Advisory Committee* –
This committee meets on the first and third Thursday of the month. They have been brainstorming ideas and have been going through written and pictorial documents.
- b. *Parks & Recreation* –
They have resumed meeting every Friday at 1pm. They have mostly worked in Waterfront Park, however they have done some additional weeding and pruning in Upper Park too. Next up will be fertilizing roses. Councilor Matthews met with Phil and Pax last week and suggested moving the ADA parking space to the other side of the public restrooms. It would be more visible and would have less interference with the boat trailer parking. Pax mentioned that the City may be able to use restricted transient lodging tax revenue to fund any shortfalls on the restroom project. The \$2,000.00 grant from Nehalem Bay Garden Club will be discussed at the next sit-down meeting as it would go into "cash on hand" next year if not spent this fiscal year.
- c. *WET* –
Councilor Stacks said they elected Mary Leverette as their Vice Chair. Pax has been working on the OREM Grant for Conex containers full of emergency supplies that can be placed around town. Today the emergency trailer was moved to the end of Bayview after the City was asked to move it by the Nehalem Bay Health District. The WET Team hopes to have a new member sign up soon! The "Food Tsunami" is next Saturday, and the intention is to put a barrel at the Post Office for early donations.
- d. *Port of Nehalem* –
Councilor Porter said they put their boat in the water. They are going to offer two \$2,500.00 scholarships next year for ongoing education for children in our district.
- e. *Planning Commission* –
Pax read the Planning Commission Report. A copy is included in the Agenda Packet.

Mayor and Councilor Comments

Councilor Matthews mentioned that the parking proposal letter that was sent out to the businesses was not well received. Councilor Stacks said "they hated it." The businesses south of the train depot were concerned that charging for parking in the depot spaces would prevent customers from coming to them.

The businesses may be drafting a response letter back to the City now. Councilor Ragnell mentioned that the depot spaces were being taken up by folks using the boat launch and that last year there was a proposal to charge them for parking. Councilor Stacks recommended waiting for more feedback from the businesses before continuing the discussion. The businesses didn't like the idea of a 2-hour limit on parking along Highway 101. The only one happy was the liquor store, as they want two 15-minute parking spots in front of their shop. It was suggested that this be discussed in a workshop as well. Mayor Kemp said that if the majority of the business owners don't like it, that's fine and we'll just move on.

Adjournment

Mayor Kemp called the meeting to close at 8:35 PM.

Dated: April 16, 2024



Clif Kemp, Mayor



Pax Broder, City Manager/Recorder

Recorder: Pax Broder