

CITY OF COSMOPOLIS
Special City Council Meeting
November 4, 2020

Mayor Kyle Pauley presiding

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT

Debbi Moran, Dale Andrews, Candice Makos, Jim Ancich, and Stana Cummings.

STAFF PRESENT

City Administrator Darrin Raines, Attorney Steve Johnson, Police Chief Casey Stratton, Fire Chief Cody Bridges, and Finance Director Julie Pope

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Moran made a motion to accept the agenda. It was seconded by Councilmember Ancich. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilmember Moran to accept the consent agenda. It was seconded by Councilmember Ancich. Motion carried.

CITY OFFICIALS

Police Chief – Chief Stratton stated that the new records clerk will be out of the office soon.

Fire Chief – Chief Bridges stated they have had multiple emergency medical calls since the last meeting. There was also a structure fire upon the hill that was extinguished. He stated GH EMS is hoping to have an EMT class coming up in January. We have two firefighters that want to take the class. We aren't sure of funding at this time. He stated that he met with the Public Safety Committee, the Finance Director, and the Mayor regarding equipment needs and a possible bond issue on the February ballot.

City Administrator – Administrator Raines stated he was working with Mr. & Mrs. Daniels on a few things regarding the River Run RV Park. They are looking at some other properties in town for future development. The Public Works crew has been busy putting in new water meters. They also have put in new sidewalk on second street. The new pumps at Stanford Drive and Franklin Drive have much lower electric bills. They are much more efficient and pump better.

Public Works Superintendent – Superintendent Nations stated that they have been working on the new water meters and sewer taps to install. The three of them are doing as much as they can with their small crew.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Safety – Councilmember Andrews stated that two meetings were held. He commended Chief Bridges for letting the Council know about the calls they are responding to. This helps the Council to recognize the work that they are doing. On Monday, the Committee had a meeting with Mayor Pauley, Administrator Raines, and Finance Director Pope. This was to go over the budget and get on the same page with equipment needs and a proposal for an upcoming bond issue and extend the utility tax to help pay for the fire truck payments for another year. One proposal is to go out for Maintenance & Operations levy due to the budget crunch caused by the pandemic. The other is to go out for a bond to pay for the existing fire truck and purchase additional equipment.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Pauley stated that he had spoken with the Grays Harbor County Auditor. The ballot box was heavily used. If we go out to a bond, we will have to get 40% of the general election turnout. Our number needed to turn out is 292 voters. We would also have to get a 60% of those voters to vote yes. He is meeting next week with the CEO of Cosmo Specialty Fibers to get an update on their timeline. Greater Grays Harbor is doing an event on November 10th. It is called Heroes on the Harbor. It is to highlight First Responders. He asked Chief Bridges to meet with the Public Safety Committee on the costs for the EMT class.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Preliminary General Fund Expenditure Budget** – Finance Director Pope went over the preliminary expenditure budget for the General Fund. She stated that another \$200,000 needed to be cut from the preliminary budget. She asked the Department heads to go over their budget. Next Council meeting we will discuss the other funds.
- B. **Greater Grays Harbor Agreement** – Councilmember Moran made a motion to accept the agreement. Councilmember Ancich seconded. 3 – Nays, 2 – Ayes. Motion failed.
- C. **Fire Equipment Discussion** - Director Pope stated that we need an ordinance passed by the end of this month to get it to the County Auditor for the February Ballot. Mayor Pauley asked

Chief Bridges to get with the Public Safety Committee as soon as possible so that we can put an ordinance together. We need a plan from Public Safety for this to move forward. Councilmember Andrews stated that we need to continue to pay for the Fire Truck. He said we have suggested continuing the Utility Tax through 2021 to help make the payments until a measure can be passed. Administrator Raines and Director Pope presented estimated numbers for 2021 and 2022 budgets for the Fire Department. This included payments for the truck, vehicle maintenance, building maintenance, and equipment needs. Administrator Raines stated that even if we go out to bond for equipment maintenance, we will still be struggling to provide their budgetary needs during the next two years. He stated that another option would be to become a Fire District. This would provide dedicated funding for the Department. This could fund the department the way it needs to be funded. Administrator Raines stated that if we go out for a maintenance and operations levy, this would be only for the Fire Department. Mayor Pauley stated that these are just ideas at this time. Councilmember Andrews asked Chief Bridges to contact him to set up a meeting to discuss these ideas. Councilmember Andrews made a motion to have Attorney Johnson draft an ordinance to keep the 2.5 percent utility tax to pay for the Fire Truck until December 31, 2021. Councilmember Ancich seconded. Motion carried.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Ancich – He asked regarding the surplus equipment for Public Works and the Fire Department. Director Pope stated that she is working on the Public Works equipment. She did not have the information regarding the Fire Department. Chief Bridges said they could move forward with the vehicles but other equipment would have to remain due to budget cuts.

Councilmember Andrews – He thanked everyone that does the best they can for the City during these times.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Steve Davis 825 5th Street - He stated that historically the Fire Department has always included within the City budget. He said at some point, the City had taken the department out and has to go outside through levies and bonds to fund the department. He feels we need to get out of that habit. He said Public Safety and Utilities should be the priority of the City. He feels the insurance costs budgeted are too high for the department. He believes the meal stipend should not be taken out of the budget. He feels that amount of ammunition budgeted for the Police Department is too high. He would like the City to come up with a comprehensive budget that would keep the meals for the Fire Department and keep the department's budget within the City instead of going out to taxpayers to fund it. Councilmember Ancich stated that there has not been a funding change regarding the Fire Department. The only change is the cost of the equipment. He stated that the City does not have \$500,000 to pay for equipment. Mr. Davis stated that within the last 10 years the City has purchased equipment for the Police Department and Public Works without going to bond or putting aside money for the Fire Department's equipment needs. He would like a mechanism to fund future purchases for the department. Administrator Raines stated that recently the City of Hoquiam went out to bond for a Fire Truck. That is what is needed to purchase the big ticket items. That He also stated that the City is trying to find funding to purchase the equipment that the department needs.

Meeting adjourned.

Finance Director

Attest:

Mayor