

**CITY OF COSMOPOLIS**  
**Regular City Council Meeting**  
**February 16, 2022**

**Mayor Kyle Pauley presiding.**

**COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT**

Candice Makos, Stana Cummings, Cody Bridges, Jim Ancich, and Miles Wenzel.

**STAFF PRESENT**

Attorney Steve Johnson, Police Chief Casey Stratton, City Administrator Darrin Raines, Public Works Superintendent, and Finance Director Julie Pope

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Councilmember Makos made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilmember Wenzel seconded. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Walt Peterson** – He asked where the Pledge of Allegiance was. Mayor Pauley stated that with the virtual meetings that we do not have access to a flag.

**Terri Phipps** – She stated that the meeting minutes from January had not been posted to the website as of noon today. Mayor Pauley stated meeting minutes are not official until approved by the Council. They will be approved at this meeting and then posted.

**Steve Davis** - In the meeting minutes from January, the comments are shortened. He feels the statement made by Candice Makos should be more in line with the comments she made. They should be more reflective of what was actually said. Mayor Pauley said the audio of the meeting is available to the public.

**Joseph Gebauer** – He asked if we would be mentioning the Fire Department tonight. Mayor Pauley stated that it is most of the agenda.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Councilmember Ancich made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilmember Makos seconded. Motion carried.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Public Safety Committee** – Councilmember Wenzel stated that three meetings were held. On January 25<sup>th</sup>, they discussed getting AED's for the Police Department. We will be buying one to start with. The Police have also have to replace two tasers that were no longer working and had to replace body armor that was expired. For the Fire Department, we talked about applying for a grant, but we were not able to do so. Other items are on the agenda. We talked about recruitment for the Fire Chief and volunteer Firefighters. We also discussed a Cost Recovery program. Other agencies utilize this service. ON February 9<sup>th</sup>, we discussed a funding source for the Fire Chief position. We discussed Fire Coverage beyond February 15<sup>th</sup> which will be discussed tonight. We discussed the job description and stipend for the Fire Chief position. The possibility of Legislative funding for the Fire Department and other avenues of funding to prevent taxing the Citizens.

**Finance Subcommittee** - Councilmember Wenzel stated that they discussed the Lodging Tax Committee. He recommends that we use the Council for the committee. We also discussed the Cost Recovery Program for Fire and Aid calls.

**CITY OFFICIALS**

**City Administrator Darrin Raines** – Administrator Raines discussed the next phase of the Mill Creek Flood Control improvements. This is a \$145,000 grant that we received and should start in March. We need to get a Stormwater Plan that would work in conjunction with Aberdeen. This will help to get funding. Bid opening for the new municipal building will be on March 30<sup>th</sup> at 2:00p.m. at City Hall.

**Finance Director Julie Pope** – Director Pope showed the January 2022 revenues in comparison to the previous three fiscal years. We are approximately \$28,000 from pre-pandemic levels.

## **MAYOR'S REPORT**

Mayor Pauley stated that the MOU with the City of Aberdeen did expire on February 15, 2022. A new agreement was presented and signed yesterday under the Declaration of Emergency by Mayor Pauley. It was presented too late to be on this agenda. It will be presented to the Council at a special meeting soon. It provides continuous coverage until a full staff of volunteers can be trained and has a significant cost. We will current fund it from the current Fire Department budget and ARPA funds. No new taxes at this time. We are hoping to keep it that way. Due to Governor Inslee's proclamation, we are not returning to in person meetings just yet. We would have to have an online component along with and the City does not have the funding to do both at this time. City Hall being closed was due to the social distancing and mask requirements. We are fortunate to have the drive through window. Most other districts do not have that. A citizen can always call and schedule an appointment to come inside. This will remain in place until the restrictions subside. There have been questions as to why we are using Zoom webinar format instead of the meeting format. The webinar allows to conduct business in an efficient manner. As we search for volunteers for the Fire Department, we are also finding other areas that need attention. This is why we have a Fire chief stipend on the agenda. Mayor Pauley read a proclamation naming March American Red Cross month.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Fire Chief Job Description** – Mayor Pauley stated that the Public Safety Committee looked at the job description. Councilmember Wenzel made a motion to approve the Job Description. Councilmember Makos seconded. Councilmember Wenzel stated that we are starting from the ground up. Administrator Raines looked at job descriptions from other departments our size. Councilmember Ancich said there is no Fire Department so what would they be chief of. Councilmember Wenzel stated we need to start with the Chief. Councilmember Bridges said that it is missing a lot of things and is too vague. Councilmember Bridges stated that there should not be a vote on this tonight as there is too much missing. Councilmember Bridges made a motion to table until it has had more review and input. Councilmember Ancich seconded. Motion failed. 2-aye, 3-no. Original motion vote – 3-aye, 2-no. Motion carried.
- B. Fire Chief Compensation** – Mayor Pauley stated that due to the amount work to restart the department compensation would be required. We looked at comparable cities across the state for monthly stipends. \$1,000-\$1,500 per month is consistent across the State. As part of the American Rescue Plan Act, funds are available to be used for this until we can find additional outside funding. We are looking at a number of different options. This will not be coming out of another department or additional taxes at this time. Councilmember Wenzel made a motion to make a stipend of \$1,500 per month for a Fire Chief Stipend. Councilmember Makos seconded. Councilmember Bridges asked how this would be paid, monthly, hourly. Mayor Pauley stated that this is a monthly stipend. Councilmember Bridges how far away can the Fire Chief live. Mayor Pauley stated that there is no requirement to live in Cosmopolis. 3-aye, 2-no. Motion carried.
- C. Ordinance 1375 (Fire Department Practice Fund)** – Attorney Steve Johnson this ordinance repeals 2.40.090 of the Municipal Code. This is the annual fund for the practice drills for the Firefighter Association. Councilmember Makos made a motion to approve the ordinance. Councilmember Cummings seconded. Councilmember Wenzel that since the Fire Association is no longer affiliated with the City because they resigned, we shouldn't pay the Association these funds. If the ordinance stays in place, we would be required to pay these funds. Once we establish a new Fire Department, the funds could be put back into place with a new ordinance. 3 aye, 2 no. Motion carried.
- D. Ordinance 1376 (Volunteer Firefighter Association)** – Attorney Johnson read the ordinance. This ordinance repeals 2.40.040 of the Cosmopolis Municipal Code. This removes the Cosmopolis Firefighter Association from the Municipal Code. Mayor Pauley stated that the Association is not part of the City and the City has no authority over them. Therefore, they should not be in the Municipal Code. Councilmember Makos made a motion to approve the ordinance. Councilmember Wenzel seconded. Vote: 3-aye, 2 – no. Motion carried.

## **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

**Councilmember Ancich** – Councilmember Ancich stated that there has been no discussion of these items until tonight.

**Councilmember Bridges** – Councilmember Bridges stated that he agrees with Councilmember Ancich. He sent emails to keep the discussion going but it feels like the lack of communication is ongoing. He said there has been no reaching out for anything. Mayor Pauley stated that we are not able to send an email out for discussion to all of the Council as it becomes a public meeting and violates the OPMA.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Carl Sperring** – He stated that he can't see all Council members present. If they can't see them, then they aren't present. He asked what the MOU with Aberdeen will cost. Mayor Pauley stated that he couldn't get an exact cost at this time. Mr. Sperring asked if the job description was looked at by a Fire professional. Mr. Sperring that a trainer must be a certified trainer. He would also like more communication from the City to the public.

**Joseph Gebauer** – He asked if we had asked if anyone from Aberdeen would like to be Fire Chief. Mayor Pauley stated that he has talked with multiple agencies.

**Billi Newton** - She stated that there is a lack of transparency to the Citizens. She also asked about the new Stormwater fee on the utility bills. She told it was being used for employee raises. She was told that by one of the Councilmembers. Mayor Pauley stated that the agreement with Aberdeen wasn't finalized until this morning so there was no time to send out a notice in the utility bills. Administrator Raines explained the Stormwater fee and that it is not being used to pay employee raises. There was many Council meetings and workshops related to this fee. This is a separate utility just like water and sewer. Its funds can only be spent on Stormwater related expenses.

**Linda Springer** – She appreciated the comment regarding letters being sent out to provide information to the Citizens. She understands that RCW's and guidelines must be followed. Communication would be helpful. She said that the job description was researched and is important to getting a Fire Chief in place. Her hope is that this happens. The hearsay and comments are tearing the City down. We are lucky to have a safe community. Mayor Pauley stated that City Staff and the Public Safety Committee are working hard to make sure the Citizens have protections in place and he apologizes for not getting information out to the public in a timely fashion.

**Ms. Sorenson** – She is concerned about transparency from the Mayor and Administration. She thinks the job description should be looked at a little bit closer. She would like the Council to take a closer look at it.

**Teri Phipps** – She said we didn't get a notice because the MOU wasn't signed until the 11<sup>th</sup> hour. She said the Fire Department gave notice ten months ago and only now are we putting out a notice for a Fire Chief. We can't put together a Fire Department in less than two years. We had people who were trained and ready to go. She said that every other department in the State is open to the public. City Hall should be open.

**Billi Newton** – She asked if the Fire Department and City have tried to get together or if we have tried to get an arbitrator. She wanted to know if we have tried to contact prior members for the Fire Chief position. Mayor Pauley stated that the City Administrator, Council, and himself have spoken to prior members. He said they were willing to come to the table only if he resigns. Mayor Pauley stated that he will not resign, but is more than willing to work with prior members.

**Joseph Gebauer** – He wants to know if any of the volunteers would like to be chief. Mayor Pauley stated that no volunteers have been willing at this time.

**Teri Phipps** – Ms. Phipps believes a town hall would be a great idea. She stated that Kyle should consider resigning if the volunteers would be willing to come back. Mayor Pauley stated if the only condition for them coming to the table is for him to resign, it is not an option.

**Cheryl Turner** – Ms. Turner said thank you for working hard as this is a difficult situation. She stated that the Fire Department had not be responding to calls prior to this happening. She stated that meeting minutes are posted down at the Post Office and are stamped draft. Mayor Pauley stated that there has been no indication that the department had not been responding to calls. Councilmember Bridges says that the meeting minutes are behind glass and cannot be seen in their entirety.

**Casey Stratton** – Mr. Stratton stated he doesn't do social media but his family and friends do. They inform him of the conversations. He is witnessing the dissolution of a community no matter which side you are on. The distortion of fact is due to fear and ignorance. A town hall meeting would not be a good idea. He feels it would be unproductive arguing and heated discussion with no willing to listen. He condemns the stand to force our mayor to resign. He feels this borders on bribery and mob mentality. Please listen to fact and if you don't have it, you can seek it out. It is readily available.

**Ray Robinson** – Mr. Robinson stated that he agreed with Mr. Stratton. He stated that Public Works was outstanding that helped with the sewer blockage. He said he read the January meeting minutes online earlier today.

**Steve Davis** – Mr. Davis stated that he agrees with most everything Mr. Stratton said. He does believe the Town Hall would be helpful. He said the meeting minutes at the Post Office were drafted and not approved. He would encourage the City Staff to post them timely. He thanked Mayor Pauley for standing up for the Fire Department regarding the volunteers responding to calls. He would like to rewrite the City's organizational chart so that the Fire Department would not report to the Mayor. He

feels the City Administrator should be in charge of HR and the Mayor should not handle it. He would like a Public Safety Committee meeting next Wednesday with the Mayor, City Administrator, Public Safety Committee, and three representatives from the former Fire Department.

Mayor Pauley adjourned the meeting.

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Finance Director

Attest:

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Mayor