

CITY OF COSMOPOLIS
Regular City Council Meeting
March 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 Jeff Nations, Court Administrator Tracy Dugas, and Finance Director Julie Pope

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Billi Newton – She asked why not all of the Councilmembers are on camera. Mayor Pauley stated that it is not required and is up to the individual councilmembers.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Safety Committee – Councilmember Wenzel stated the first meeting to discuss the Fire chief position and when to conduct interviews and also spoke with Chief Stratton regarding the position of Code Enforcement. On the second meeting, they met with one of the potential candidates.

CITY OFFICIALS

Court Administrator – Administrator Dugas stated that she has conducting some housekeeping measures to keep in compliance with general rule 29. This includes auditing of court records and updating bank account signers. We have some executive branch signers on the account, and it should only be judicial branch members.

City Administrator – Administrator Raines stated the bid opening for the new facility will be on March 30th at 2:00 p.m. Today we had a pre-bid walkthrough with prospective contractors.

Finance Director – Director Pope stated that City Hall reopened on Monday. We have scheduled Spring Clean-up. It will be from April 11th through April 16th. Vouchers will be ready to hand out next Monday.

Police Chief – Chief Stratton stated that we are looking to make Code Enforcement a position that would have multiple duties to fill in for other duties that the City is lacking. Year to date we are average as far as calls go.

Public Works Superintendent – Superintendent Nations stated that Public Works is back to installing meters this month. Their goal is to do 100 per month. Month to date they are at 52. He gave another shout out to citizen Ed Van Syckle for his contributions to the Public Works department. He has been extremely helpful.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Pauley stated the County is struggling to find funding for EMS and Trauma Council. They are discussing ways to find funding. There may be a need to each City to provide some of the funding. Last year we had a City wide garage sale prior to the Spring Clean Up. We are encouraging everyone to do so again. It is not a City ran event. Mayor Pauley stated that he will be on vacation at the end of the month. Councilmember Ancich will be serving as Mayor Pro Tem from March 27th until April 1st. He stated that many cities are performing hybrid meetings. Realistically we would not be able to hold a hybrid meeting due to cost of equipment. Mayor Pauley is appointing Joe Gebauer and Rema Stantin to the Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery Committee.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Per RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) to discuss the qualifications of an applicant for public employment. Mayor Pauley stated it would last twenty-five minutes and we would resume the regular meeting at 7:50. Mayor Pauley resumed the regular meeting at 7:50.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Fire Chief Confirmation** - Mayor Pauley asked the Council to confirm the appointment of Mark Tarabochia as the Fire Chief. Mayor Pauley interviewed him along with the Public Safety Committee and City Administrator. Councilmember Makos made a motion to confirm Mark Tarabochia as the new Fire Chief. Councilmember Wenzel seconded. Motion carried. Mr. Tarabochia thanked the Mayor and Council for the opportunity. He stated that he retired from the Bellingham Fire Department after 34 years of service. He was also a Skagit Fire District Commissioner for 14 years. He is happy to have this opportunity.
- B. Fire & EMS Agreement with City of Aberdeen** – Mayor Pauley stated this agreement follows the end of the Memorandum of Understanding that expired on the 15th. The charges are the same as the citizens of Aberdeen pay for service. This is signed and in effect pending Council confirmation. The Aberdeen City Council approved the agreement with an amendment to state that if any changes are made including the termination of the agreement, it would need to be confirmed by both city councils. Councilmember Makos made a motion to ratify the agreement. Councilmember Cummings seconded. Councilmember Wenzel stated that once we get our Fire Department functioning again that it is assumed we would go back to our previous agreement. Mayor Pauley stated that is what would happen and it would take three days to cancel the agreement as it is written and then be presented to each Council. Attorney Johnson stated that the termination of the agreement does not require Council approval only extension or modification. Mayor Pauley stated that as soon as we are reasonably able to provide services, we will terminate the agreement. Motion carried.
- C. Grant from Grays Harbor Community Foundation** - Administrator Raines stated that Linda Springer from Highlands Park has successfully acquired this grant. It is for \$36,540 and it must be spent this year. It will be spent to improve the Highlands Park up in the Bell addition. The City will be the official recipient of the grant. Councilmember Wenzel made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the agreement. It was seconded by Councilmember Cummings. Councilmember Bridges asked how the funds will be managed. Administrator Raines stated that we will have to show where the funds go and will be audited. We are required to show where the money was spent. Motion carried.
- D. Signers for Court Bank Account** – Mayor Pauley is asking for a motion to add Judge Geoff Arnold to the Court bank account as a signer and remove Finance Director Pope and Mayor Pauley as signers. Councilmember Cummings made a motion to approve. It was seconded Councilmember Ancich. Motion carried.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Wenzel stated he is looking forward to our new fire chief and getting us back on track. He appreciates Linda Springer for acquiring the grants for the park.

Councilmember Bridges thanked Mark for applying for the position. He stated that the City released a document to the public as a response to Fire Association accusations. On one of the line items for failure to pay medical bill for responder. He felt the paragraph was untruthful and slanderous against him. Mayor Pauley stated that we would double check the documentation.

Councilmember Makos stated that the sun is shining in Cosmopolis again and thanked everyone for their hard work during this process.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Linda Springer thanked everyone for their recognition of what the committee is doing to improve the park. The committee was started a few years ago. It is a nonprofit group. She stated that the grant is very specific and cannot be spent on anything else. She thinks it will be a model and will move on to other parks next year.

Joe Gebauer thanked everyone for finding a new Fire Chief. He asked about aid calls now that we have a new chief. Mayor Pauley stated that Aberdeen will still provide ALS and transport.

Steve Davis thanked the friends of the parks for the grant monies. He is optimistic about the new fire chief. On the MOU with Aberdeen, he believes the process regarding this should be at workshop so the public can discuss it especially regarding the pay structure. He stated that he was the other responder on the document that was released by the City. He stated he dropped off his documents and it wasn't taken care of. He stated that he has someone researching each item on the document. Mayor Pauley stated the rate structure is the same as what Aberdeen residents are paying.

Carl Sperring stated that he didn't receive a flyer regarding the city's response to the fire department. Mayor Pauley stated that it wasn't mailed out but is on the city's website.

Ashley Arcangel asked what is the criteria for a committee report during a council meeting. Mayor Pauley stated that the report is based on action items to be presented to the Council or future items.

She would like departments to talk about what they are doing. She stated that she has contacted some city employees but never received a response. She wanted to know if there is a policy regarding response time. Mayor Pauley stated that there is no policy regarding this. Councilmember Bridges stated that there is an access problem in her area. He doesn't agree that a fire truck could go in there and turn around. He heard that a neighbor's driveway that loops around could be used for a turn around. The driveway would have to be clear at all times. He said the roads back there are resident owned and maintained. They are not part of the city's road structure. Mayor Pauley stated that it is not officially a city street. We are researching documentation to find a resolution to this.

Ray Robinson stated that over the last several months he has asked about a current councilmember's state of residence. This councilmember has not responded. He stated that access and transparency isn't there any longer.

Teri Phipps stated that she would encourage a hybrid model for future council meetings if we go back to in person meetings. She sent emails to city councilmembers without acknowledgement or response.

Steve Davis stated that he has only received email responses from Councilmembers Wenzel and Bridges. He encouraged everyone to be courteous to each other.

Carl Sperring stated that face to face meetings are the way to go. He stated that the meeting room in the Fire Hall would provide amply space for social distancing.

Teri Phipps stated that she agreed with Mr. Sperring.

Joe Gebauer asked if we could try an in person meeting to see how many people show up. Mayor Pauley stated that it would still have to be hybrid and we are looking at options.

Bob Smith stated that the elementary school would allow us to use their auditorium. Mayor Pauley stated that we would still need cameras. It is required by the current emergency proclamation.

Mayor Pauley adjourned the meeting.

Finance Director

Attest:

Mayor