

**City of Cosmopolis
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 4, 2017**

Mayor Frank Chestnut presiding.

Councilmembers present: Debbi Moran, Kyle Pauley, Carl Sperring, and Jonathan Fischer.

Staff Present: City Administrator Darrin Raines, Attorney Steve Johnson, Police Chief Casey Stratton, Fire Chief David Dutton, and Clerk-Treasurer Julie Pope

Motion to Excuse Councilmember Ancich. Moved by Councilmember Sperring and Seconded by Councilmember Pauley. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Councilmember Moran and seconded by Councilmember Sperring. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

It was moved by Councilmember Sperring and seconded by Councilmember Pauley to approve the consent agenda consisting of the regular meeting and workshop minutes and vouchers # thru # in the amount of \$. Motion carried.

TOWN HALL

Mayor's Opening Statement

Mayor Chestnut stated that the reason for calling the Town Hall meeting to order is to update the community on the happenings within the City. Also, we are going to discuss personnel changes, financial changes, policy changes, and equipment changes.

Mill Creek Dam: The Mill Creek Dam project is in full swing and is going well. The park will remain closed until completion of the project. He stated that there is a construction camera that uploads pictures of the construction project. This can be accessed on the City's website.

Personnel Changes: Mayor Chestnut stated that Cheryl Turner retired as Finance Director in February of this year. Julie Pope was then promoted to Clerk-Treasurer. Cheryl Chrt was hired to fill the empty Deputy Clerk position. Candice Makos will be retiring at the end of this year. We will fill the position with a part-time person. Our long time City Attorney, Steve Hyde, also retired this year. We worked with the City of Hoquiam to contract services for their City Attorney, Steve Johnson. Due to the Public Safety sales tax that was voted in last year, we are able to keep Officer Jackie Mitchell. After Finance Director Turner retired, Mayor Chestnut decided to bring on a City Administrator. The City Administrator would replace the Public Works Director and Finance Director. Due to the Mayor being part-time, it makes sense to have a full time employee to run the City administratively. The Mayor would also like to bring Code Enforcement in house.

Administrative Changes

City Administrator Raines: We went from four full-time positions within City Hall and Police Department to essentially three full-time positions. We will have all employees located in City Hall to make things easier for citizens to access. With those changes and the retirement of Attorney Steve Hyde, this will save the City approximately \$84,000 per year. We are looking at other savings through employee benefit packages that won't affect the employees. Between the City Administrator and Clerk-Treasurer, we are looking at finding ways to prevent the City from being dependent on Cosmo Specialty Fibers. The City has lowered the B&O tax floor from \$125,000 per year to \$20,000 per year. We placed a Utility Tax on garbage. We were the only City who had not instituted one. We raised the fees on delinquent accounts for water and sewer services. We are working on several financial policies to set up financial goals for the City.

Financial Changes

Clerk-Treasurer Pope: She stated that the revenues within the City has been greatly improved. She stated that the B&O tax reduction ended the first of this year. The rate went from .001487 to .002. Sales Taxes are way up statewide. We have accumulated as much year to date as we did all of last year. The City will be debt free as of 2020. The Clerk-Treasurer and the City Administrator are going through everything within the City to find ways to save money.

Mayor Chestnut: The Police Department is represented by a Union. Their contract was settled earlier this year. As part of this bargaining session, we were able to negotiate a benefit package for the officers that will save the City approximately \$85-86,000 per year.

Mill Creek Dam

City Administrator Raines: This project is nine years in the works. The project is running about one month behind. We are running within the contingency budget, but is about \$200,000 more than was bid. As of today, the fish weirs are completely poured. The concrete work will be completely done about the 19th or 20th of this month. Some of the landscaping will be completed in December. There are time lapsed pictures of the project that can be accessed on the City's website. It will be a state of the art dam. There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony sometime in the future.

Equipment Changes

City Administrator Raines: Last year we instituted a 5% utility tax on water and sewer to help fund equipment replacement purchases. This is for vehicles, computers, and other equipment. With this, we have outfitted the Police Department, Fire Department, and Public Works Department with radios. With the dump truck being paid off early, we are taking those funds and some additional funds from the utility tax to purchase new vehicles for the Police Department, Public Works and a general City vehicle. By doing so, we save the repair costs for the aging fleet and better gas mileage. The savings alone will pay for one of the vehicles.

Police Chief Casey Stratton: Maintenance for the Police vehicles were getting out of hand. We had a very old and ailing fleet. Last year, we purchased a new Tahoe through municipal financing. Through the equipment funding and 3 tenths of one percent, we were able to acquire one more new vehicle. With the Taholah Police Department, we were able to acquire three 2010 Dodge Chargers in exchange for 240 hours of Deputy Chief Layman's firearms instruction. Now having five vehicles, the City constructed an officer vehicle take home policy. Having been able to retain Officer Mitchell, we have saved a lot of money in overtime costs for the department and our maintenance budget is greatly reduced. Also, we have modified the Police facility. In redoing the Patrol office and the floors, it cost the City less than \$10,000. This was able to happen with the Court being moved over to the Fire Hall. The Department is in need of new bullet proof vests and new in car radios that will meet the required standard.

Fire Chief David Dutton: Chief Dutton stated the Department has 18 volunteers and six response vehicles. Each vehicle is used for different tasks. We provide mutual support for the City and the surrounding areas. We purchased engine 22 from the City of Elma for \$18,000. We also purchased Support 24 from the City of Raymond. This would provide safety and additional seating for the department's personnel. We also purchased Rescue #26 which is a rescue boat to provide marine support for mutual aid calls. There were countless volunteer hours used to prepare these vehicles for use. The Fire Department was awarded an \$172,000 grant from FEMA for air compressor, fill bottle station, 16 SCBA air packs, 16 spare bottles, and a mobile fill station. We have another request for a grant through FEMA for a fire truck.

Mayor Chestnut: In terms of the fire equipment, we were able to obtain the rescue vehicle and aid car from the City of Raymond for a total of \$13,000. The funds came from a dedicated equipment fund and not the general fund. The City Administrator made a point about most of the City's revenue being reliant on the pulp mill. Over 50% of the City's revenue comes from the mill. The Council decided we needed take a look at economic diversity. They came up with annexation, a boat launch and rv park, a marijuana store, and other ideas. We will continue to look into these ideas and others. Mayor Chestnut thanked the School District for letting us hold the meeting here tonight.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Anonymous: She stated that she is not a citizen of Cosmopolis. She thanked the Mayor for having the Town Hall Meeting. She thanked the City for thinking out of the box and for seeking grants. She would like to see the City put tonight's information onto the City's website. She stated that the 2014 audit is in the past. She noted that the City raised the utility tax and lowered the B&O floor. This is on the backs of the citizens. She believes in volunteers and grants. It's time to look to the future.

Bill Simpson, 206 Holly Lane: Mr. Simpson thinks it's a great community. Everyone here has been fantastic. He appreciates the quick response of the Fire Department.

Richard Vessey, Aberdeen: Thanked Clerk-Treasurer Pope for her military service and to the First Responders for their service. Mr. Vessey stated that he can smell odors from the Cosmo Specialty Fibers pulp mill. He feels the odor will convince people to avoid the area. He started calling the Department of Ecology. The Department of Ecology stated that there was equipment down that was causing the odor. He states that there are things they can do to better the air quality but they don't because of costs. He would like the City to approach them regarding this. He stated that this affects everyone including the children at the school.

Cheri Patterson, Superintendent Cosmopolis School: She gave Mr. Vessey a phone number to call regarding the odor at the mill. It is the environmental line at Cosmo.

Dale Andrews, 305 G Street: Asked City Administrator Raines to elaborate on the overrun for the Mill Creek Dam project. City Administrator Raines stated that the overrun was due to the bedrock which was 8 feet deeper than expected.

Vickie Raines, 526 Troon Avenue: She recommends that citizens call the Olympic Regional Clear Air Agency regarding the odors for Cosmo Specialty Fibers. She asked City Administrator Raines if the overrun is still within the range of the project costs. City Administrator Raines stated that we had factored in a contingency in case of unexpected costs. She thanked City Administrator Raines and the Mayor for bringing the project to fruition. She also thanks former City Attorney Steve Hyde for his years of service to the City. She thanked the City staff for their hard work.

Council Comments

Kyle Pauley: Councilmember Pauley stated he had two things accomplished in his tenure on the Council. First was the Mill Creek Dam project and the second was adding more business to Cosmopolis. The Dam will be completed this month and Burkhamer Properties is going to be moving in on First Street. There will be some new additions and upgrades to the parks.

Carl Sperring: Councilmember Sperring stated it's the little things that make the community. He commented on the Volunteer Fire Department, the Police Reserves, and the Cosmopolis School.

Debbi Moran: Councilmember Moran thanked everyone that came to the meeting. She thanked Commissioner Vickie Raines for her help with the Mill Creek Dam.

Jonathan Fischer: Councilmember Fischer stated that he believes that Mayor Chestnut comments regarding what he inherited had to do with the economy not the previous administration. He stated the Staff has come up with wonderful ideas to help the City reduce expenses.

Mayor Closing Comments

Mayor Chestnut stated we need to update facilities. City Hall is an old bank that is not set up properly for a functioning government building. The Police Department building is a modular that was donated by Weyerhaeuser. This was meant to be a temporary building. It does not have the space needed to adequately run a police department. Mayor Chestnut would like for everyone to think about finding a way to fund a City Hall/Police Department. There are many different options for the building. In a couple of months, the City will send out a survey. He thanked everyone for coming tonight.

Meeting adjourned.

Clerk-Treasurer

Attest:

Mayor