**BINGEN CITY COUNCIL MINUTES**

**March 5, 2024**

**Meeting Via Teleconference and In-Person**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Catherine Kiewit at 6:00 p.m.

Council members present: Phil Jones, Ryan O’Connor, Brittany Spratt, Michael Stahl and Craig Trummel. Staff present: City Attorney Chris Lanz, City Administrator Krista Loney. Audience present: Tony Gilmer, Tammara Tippel, Patricia Arnold, Steve Rauner, Michael Shields.

**Public Comment**

Tony Gilmer, Bingen’s representative to the Ambulance District, attended Council to provide a 2023 review. The ambulance district maintains 911 responses for three ambulances and adds a fourth ambulance when the staffing is available. The Ambulance District purchased a property in Goldendale and just completed collective bargaining with the union for the fourth collective bargaining agreement. Gilmer stated that wages are only now reaching competitive levels. The 2024 goal is to maintain staffing and provide 24/7 life-saving services while also building community and actively pursuing a levy. 2023 had 2634 calls for aid which is a consistent 2% increase. Goldendale receives a large percentage of the Ambulance District’s efforts. When an ambulance is taken out of service for a transfer, Goldendale has no backup ambulance service.

Mayor Kiewit asked Gilmer when the current levy expires. Mr. Gilmer stated that it expires in July and that the new levy will be going on the ballot prior to November. Mayor Kiewit shared that Bingen is likely going to pursue a levy lid lift for fire and police services in 2025.

Mayor Kiewit asked Gilmer what the purpose is for the property that was just purchased in Goldendale. Gilmer stated that the Goldendale property is for a station. There are three stations in the County, including one in Dallesport which is a garage. The funds that are being spent to lease or rent space could be put toward a new station. The station will be setup for two ambulances and two crews to work 48-hour shifts.

Mayor Kiewit asked Gilmer if the Ambulance District has searched for grants to fund construction. Gilmer stated that they have searched for grant opportunities. Mayor Kiewit mentioned a USDA Rural Development grant that funds facilities as an option.

Michael Shields attended Council to share concerns about the sulfur smell of the water lately. City Administrator Loney explained that RadComp, Bingen’s IT company, alerted David Spratt on February 22 that the scada system that controls the water had lost communication. Spratt went immediately to the SR-14 intertie vault and found that water was leaking from the White Salmon valve. Spratt called Andrew Dirks. White Salmon Public Works, who immediately sent Jason from White Salmon Public Works to take a look. The water from White Salmon was turned off at the intertie. The water at that time was several inches deep in the electrical cabinet, the modem was destroyed by the water and the PLC would not turn on. Bingen has been providing water out of Bingen wells only since February 22, 2024. The BUS and PLC need to be replaced by an electrician, and then the Bingen valve will be serviced. Once all the repairs are complete the water from White Salmon will be returned.

**Bingen Fire Update**

Chief Spratt attended Council to share the February 2024 fire responses: 2 in Bingen, 19 mutual aid. Chief Spratt also shared the preparation plan for Wilcox and Flegel. Mayor Kiewit asked if there need to be changes or improvements at Wilcox and Flegel’s tanks to protect them. Chief Spratt stated that he can make recommendations. Mayor Kiewit asked that Chief Spratt double-check that there aren’t barriers required to prevent a crash into the tanks. Councilor O’Connor asked if the building inspector should inspect the tanks to make sure the protection is adequate. Administrator Loney will ask Arnold Bell with Skamania County Building.

Administrator Loney asked about the status of ordering new wildland turnouts under the DNR grant. Chief Spratt stated that he is currently collecting sizes.

**Meeting Minutes – 2/20/2024**

Mayor Kiewit asked the word “forever: at the end of the fourth paragraph about Art of Community be changed to “in a permanent capacity.” Councilor Spratt corrected “paring” to “parking” in the first police update paragraph, and “here” to “her” in the third paragraph of the same section. Councilor Spratt made a motion to adopt the March 5, 2024 meeting minutes as corrected. Councilor O’Connor provided the second and the motion carried.

**Lower White Salmon Coalition Presentation**

Pat Arnold and Steve Rauner attended to provide an update on the work of the Lower White Salmon Coalition (LWSC). Pat provided beautiful printed informational packets for council. LWSC issued their mission: The 6-mile, 550-acre sweep of the Lower White Salmon River, owned and controlled by PacifiCorp for over a century, is a critical segment of White Salmon and Columbia River watersheds. The Lower White Salmon Coalition is devoted to creating a long-range strategy to transfer these lands to new ownership and wisely, sustainably manage them in perpetuity. The goals of the LWSC include:

* Stewardship, restoration, and enhancement of habitat
* Native American treaty rights and cultural resources
* Preservation and reuse of the Condit powerhouse buildings
* Hiking, sport fishing, whitewater boating
* Ownership for Cabin Owners of Northwest Lake Association
* Ownership of undeveloped lands to conservation entities
* Recovery of native salmon, trout, and lamprey

Pat shared an early map of the tribal people who were disturbed by the build on the Condit dam. The land that LWSC is hoping to preserve is owned by PacifiCorp. PacifiCorp is open to the idea of selling the land and the Yakama Nation has the right of first offer. LWSC would like to be involved in the selection of the future buyer and their priorities are additional trail development, trail infrastructure to prepare for future use, and location and safer use and fish-friendly takeouts down river.

Negotiations for the sale of the land are in progress with the US Forest Service getting Northwestern Park, the Yakama Nation having the first right of offer, and the cabin owners owning the land under their cabins.

Councilor Stahl inquired about how he can keep updated on the Lower White Salmon Coalition’s progress. Arnold said she would happily send updates and will provide a website link to Administrator Loney to share with Council.

**WSDOT Agreement Review – Section 1 Undercrossing**

Administrator Loney provided a memo and the WSDOT agreement to fund engineering and construction of the undercrossing. Councilor Jones made a motion to allow Mayor Kiewit to sign the Utility Construction Agreement. Councilor O’Connor provided the second and the motion carried.

**Resolution 2024-004 Fee Schedule**

Administrator Loney provided a memo, supporting data, and resolution 2024-004 Establishing and Amending Fees and Charges. At the February 20 meeting, Councilor Trummel asked Administrator Loney to research adding the engineering charges to close the corners onto subdivisions. Mandy Hertel, Bingen’s contracted planner, and the engineering should be included.

Councilor Trummel made a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-004 Fee Schedule. Councilor Stahl provided the second and the motion carried.

**Ordinance 2024-05-754 Amending BMC Title 3 – Revenue and Finance**

Mayor Kiewit opened the public hearing at 7:02 p.m. Council walked through the draft BMC Title 3 – Revenue and Finance Chapter. Updates and corrections were made. Council discussed and came to consensus that the Bingen Gambling Ordinance should be repealed and reserved. The public hearing was closed at 7:43 p.m.

Councilor O’Connor made a motion to adopt Ordinance 2024-05-754 Amending BMC Title 3 – Revenue and Finance. Councilor Stahl provided the second and the motion carried.

**Staff Updates**

Administrator Loney reviewed the project status reports for the month and had the following additional updates for Council:

* Grants in progress:
  + Secretary of State: $27,500 for digitization of records. Submitted 2/13/24. We should hear by June 1, 2024.
  + AARP: $25,000 for bus shelters. Due 3/6, we should hear June 26.
  + COAF: $100,000 pre-application for repairs to skate park. We should hear if we are invited to submit further application by May 10, 2024.
  + WSDOT Regional Mobility: $50,000 for bus shelters. Pre-application due March 4. Actual application due June 25, 2024.
  + TIB Complete Streets Early Grant: Didn’t do it, not feasible.
  + USDA Rural Development RBDG: $35,500. Submitted 2/28/24.
  + Humanities Washington: $5,000 for Centennial Sense of Place event. Submitted 3/1/24.
* Bingen issued a Small Works Roster for tree work along SR-14 and in Daubenspeck Park. Bids are due 3/11/2024.
* Bingen is issuing a Small Works Roster for valve service and replacement at the treatment plant.
* The firehouse door is being replaced tomorrow [3/6/2024]
* Loney is working on 2023 SAO report and plans to convene Budget committee week of March 18 to review progress to date. Due May 30, 2024.
* Water and Sewer Committee had a great meeting with WS and EB. EB wants to increase their flow and BOD, reduce testing to twice monthly. Flow/BOD is a White Salmon call, we are maintaining weekly until the end of June.
* Community Cleanup will be Friday and Saturday April 26 and 27 this year. Committee has already begun meeting.

**Mayor’s Update and Council Comments**

Mayor Kiewit stated that she is focused on Centennial. The upcoming event on Saturday, April13, 2024 is going to be an amazing event. She has done a great deal of work on the website.

Mayor Kiewit stated that there is another Hood River-White Salmon bridge aesthetic meeting next week. She will attend a PUD intergovernmental event at the Pioneer Center on March 8.

Mayor Kiewit stated that White Salmon Mayor Marla Keethler is the lead of the Association of Washington Cities Small Cities group.

Councilor Stahl stated that the waterline repair at SR-141 and Jefferson needed to be hot-patched as the road was pitted. Administrator Loney promised to get an answer on when the hot patch would be placed. He also stated that there was a bit of sediment in their water after the repair and the residents should be made aware to run their water cold when sediment is in the lines so as not to burn out their water heaters.

Councilor Spratt stated that she had been voted into the cities position of the Law Enforcement Officers and Fire Fighters (LEOFF) board.

**Voucher Approval**

Payroll Checks (Dated 2/27/2024) totaling $6,996; Treatment Plant Fund - $7,030.80 and General Fund – (34.80).

Councilor O’Connor made a motion to approve the Payroll dated February 27, 2024. Councilor Jones seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Payroll Checks (Dated 2/29/2024) and Payroll EFT (Dated 2/29/2024) totaling $43,240.66; General Fund - $12,795.76, Street Fund - $6,620.1, Water Fund - $7,423.22, Sewer Fund - $1,159.63, and Treatment Plant Fund - $15,241.93.

Councilor Jones made a motion to approve the Payroll dated February 29, 2024. Councilor Spratt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Claims Checks (Dated 3/5/2024) and Claims EFT (Dated 3/5/2024) totaling $88,149.42; General Fund - $47,567.68, Street Fund - $2,603.99, Hotel/Motel Tax Fund - $1,612.50, Water Fund - $16,376.63, Sewer Fund - $6,917.96, Treatment Plant Fund - $10,962.86, Water Short-Lived Assets Reserve - $1,369.20 and Water Capital Reserve Fund - $738.60.

Councilor Trummel made a motion to approve the Claims dated March 5, 2024. Councilor Spratt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**Adjournment**

Mayor Kiewit adjourned the meeting at 8:23 p.m.