

## **BINGEN CITY COUNCIL**

### **DRAFT MINUTES – April 2, 2019**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Betty Barnes at 7:01 pm. Council Members Present: Laura Mann, Phil Jones, Catherine Kiewit, Student Council Member Cesar Robles. Staff Members Present: Mayor Betty Barnes, City Attorney Chris Lanz. Audience Present: Ken Park, Police Chief Mike Hepner, Carl Warren

#### **Public Comment**

*Carl Warren*

City resident Carl Warren mentioned to the Council that he likes to see the value of the City and appreciates the idea that it is growing rapidly. Warren thanked the police on a good job on handling recent crimes with a professional approach. Warren referenced the three large projects the has been planning and asked the Council if they could control City growth. Mayor Barnes stated that Bingen’s growth is inhibited by geography and that plans made will reflect transport and utilitarian needs.

Mr. Warren further asked about zoning; Mayor Barnes explained that the City is still in search of an experienced City Planner. Warren moved on to ask about water agreements with the City of White Salmon; Barnes made it clear that the City needs to discuss these matters further with the City of White Salmon in order to proactively maintain current agreements, particularly in the area of water conservation. Currently, Barnes added, the City’s planned improvements for water facilities through 2032.

Mr. Warren thanked the Council and said that he may come back with more general questions.

#### **Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 19, 2019**

Mayor Barnes postponed the approval of the meeting minutes for March 19, 2019, citing their absence.

Councilmember Kiewit moved to table the approval the meeting minutes of the March 19, 2019 regular council meeting. Council Member Jones seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

#### **Bingen White Salmon Police Department Update**

*Police Chief Mike Hepner*

Chief Hepner reported to the council that a business owner had asked if safety flags could be used for west end of city during projects, similar to the flags at the local high school. Hepner thought it would be a good idea to add logos and place them in town, particularly at the Oak and Steuben intersection. Councilmember Kiewit said that this would help pedestrians around Highway 14, where they must get out far enough to see incoming see. Carl Warren asked if lights would be changed, to which Kiewit replied that the City had applied for money to replace these lights, but that they had not received grants because the City did not have enough fatalities. Mayor Barnes added that the State of Washington has peculiar laws in this realm. Kiewit further explained to Warren that in lieu of the traffic issue, the City purchased slowdown signs on the north and west ends of town, with WSDOT purchasing a sign for the east end of town for the future roundabout construction. Warren also asked if there were restrictions on vehicle heights; Kiewit responded no and summarized that the City did not receive safety grants because of the lack of documented incidents.

Mayor Barnes mentioned that an old, ill dog was found at the post office recently; Animal Control Officer Mike Solomon originally believed that it was abandoned given its condition, but ultimately realized it had an owner. The dog was housed at the Alpine Veterinary while Solomon looked for the animal's license. Allegedly, the dog had its rabies shot and was licensed by the City. Solomon was helped by BWS Police Office Pedro Virgen; together they checked with owners and housed the dog in a clean and safe environment. After returning the dog, it happened to get out of its gate. When the gate was fixed, Solomon and Virgen released the animal to its owners but advised the owners to euthanize it. Both Solomon and Virgen worked hard to figure out the situation, and Virgen's bilingual ability came in handy.

### **Discussion on Lodging Tax**

Councilmember Kiewit mentioned to the Council that the City has not taken the advantage of a lodging tax; Klickitat County has an automatic 2 percent as a tax. Councilmember Jones questioned if the City should take the advantage of applying for this money or begin levying its own tax. He added that the upcoming Society Hotel opening will be beneficial for more City income should this tax be implemented. Kiewit stated that at first, the County would receive the money but then distribute it back out to the City following a yearly application process. She further added that Goldendale does not receive the lodging tax from the County because they have levied a 2 percent tax. Moreover, White Salmon will begin taking a 2 percent tax from the county. Councilmember Mann asked if there was a kitty since the County began collecting; Kiewit answered that there is one that has been reserved for growth, but that mostly all income is redistributed. Mann also asked if the redistribution standards applied if the City collected its own tax. Kiewit speculated that the City could need a five-member board to monitor this, but that likely this amount is too small for the City to need to worry about a board. Mayor Barnes said that this can be thought about and discussed in the future. Kiewit stated that she did not know about the tax previously but could have spread more information about it to apply for funding during the Huckleberry Festival earlier in the year. Possible uses for the extra money, Kiewit noted, included upgrading the Amtrak station on Depot Street and many more. Mayor Barnes added that the City should be taking in this money, and that she would like to possible ten-year disbursement rates for the Board; Kiewit said she would reluctant to take this all on as Bingen is quite small. She did add, however, that she would like to see the actual rates of income for this tax, but that it would end up being reported all together annually. Councilmember Mann mentioned that the inclusion of the City would be additional money for the kitty, so the City would not be taking from the County. If Bingen ingress could be tracked, she added, then the City should consider levying its own tax for tourism and development, which would be harder to do. Mayor Barnes reported that she learned that the latest AWC meeting that while it is not so hard to file, it would be harder to keep track of and maintain. Barnes also mentioned that she would like to have the Council look at this further.

### **Old Business**

#### *Dry Creek Ranch Subdivision*

Mayor Barnes added that White Salmon's Jan Breeding would be good to look at and make comments for the Dry Creek Ranch Subdivision; the comments would be put in a letter and sent to White Salmon.

Barnes noted that the Council discussed the plans and were overwhelmed. Councilmember Mann said that she read Pat's letter and will submit comments for such, but that they will not be done before the due date of April 11 because the next City Council meeting is not before then and the documents were received at this meeting. Mann expressed the general concerns of the Council, which were mainly composed of egress worries, which White Salmon has addressed, but only in their city. She further explained that she

worried about fire spreading to the east, especially as the Bingen Fire Department staff are usually first responders to emergencies. Mann also said she would ask for another map representation of the project, most preferably a satellite image. Councilmember Kiewit stated that the City has its water towers there, but that they are south of the proposed improvements; she also added that the hillside might not be stable.

Mayor Barnes summarized the discussion by adding that the next steps would be to write a letter to White Salmon, discuss this project with other departments in the City, and notify residents within 300 feet of any project border.

## **Mayor's Update and Council Comments**

### *Senator Outreach*

Mayor Barnes mentioned to the Council that on March 22, Senator Patty Murray sent Brian Stephens to visit on various issues pertaining to the City, like the underpass project, the status of the Hood River Bridge, and the Society Hotel, to name the most prominent. Stephens received a tour of the hotel construction area; Stephens was reportedly interested in the economic development that will result from the project. Barnes and Stephens discussed the quiet zone proposal for the area; the discussion prompted a possible letter of support from Senator Murray herself. Barnes added that outreach from the senator will likely occur more in the future, as Bingen has more business occurring.

### *Art and Wine Fusion*

Mayor Barnes mentioned to the Council that on March 29 an Art and Wine Fusion meeting was held at Eagle Point. Barnes explained that she talked about several different matters with the group; Barnes relayed concerns with the proposed statue, including a mockup being shared, and other locations being considered. Barnes added that she will not be at the Art and Wine Fusion. She further explained that the AFW will have to follow other park restrictions and concerns; the group was very receptive to feedback and comment. AFW said they would take a picture from various angles modeling a statue; Barnes and the Council agreed that this would not suffice, instead requiring a life-like mockup. The Council advocated in favor of the area in front of Insitu rather than the area on the corner, as the latter creates a safety issue on the intersection. In summation, Barnes concluded by adding that the Council would need to wait until later to figure out the best spot for the statue with a mockup from the group.

### *Miscellaneous Meetings*

Mayor Barnes mentioned to the Council that on April 1 an AWC meeting was held. Barnes added that she had won a trip to an AWC conference in Spokane, and she attended a Ford Family Foundation Course. She further explained that RDI was at the meeting and Barnes thought that a branch of the program should be set up in the area, as it would be exciting to have and would benefit the common good. Councilmember Kiewit remarked that she appreciated the diversity of the program and that many of the individuals she met there proved to be valuable connections. Barnes and Kiewit both agreed that they would like RDI to come to the area and implement a chapter. With regards to the AWC meeting, Barnes explained that the meeting covered new legislation.

Barnes notified the Council that the WSDOT meeting for April 3<sup>rd</sup> was postponed to May 1<sup>st</sup>. Barnes said that she required the meeting to be in Bingen for the purpose of looking at the two main impact zones in the City. She added that BNSF would attend.

Barnes notified the Council that Emergency Management Training would be coming up for a lot of different things, including EMS training. Barnes explained that some trainings would occur in Bingen and some would happen in White Salmon.

*Council Comments*

Councilmember Mann announced to the Council that she had met with Jan Brending regarding a possible funding agreement for the wastewater treatment plant. She added that the City of White Salmon needs to be in discussion with the City of Bingen with attention to running the plant as opposed to building a new one. Both Councilmember Mann and Councilmember Kiewit agreed to work on this intercity discussion. Mann concluded that the City of White Salmon is still in talks with local brewery Everybody's Brewing but that an agreement had still not been reached.

Mann conjectured to the Council that the Society Hotel had allegedly cut down a telephone pole with a siren used to relay Fire Department signals, and asked if the City was still using it. Mayor Barnes said that the pole might not work, which is why it was taken down.

**Voucher Approval**

Vouchers audited and certified as required by RCW 42.24.080 and expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090 as of this date April 2, 2019.

The council by unanimous vote does approve for payment the following list:

Payroll Checks 20645-20650 and Payroll EFT (Dated 3/29/2019) totaling \$25,981.83 General Fund - \$11,765.97, Street Fund - \$4,090.21 Water Fund - \$2,823.06, Sewer Fund - \$518.41, Treatment Plant Fund - \$6,784.18.

Checks 20651-20668 totaling \$48,867.12. General Fund - \$31,160.14, Street Fund - \$7,525.90, Water Fund - \$8,839.91, Sewer Fund - \$467.35, Treatment Plant Fund - \$873.82.

The council adjourned at 8:54 pm.

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City Clerk

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Mayor