

BINGEN CITY COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES – April 16, 2019

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Betty Barnes at 7:02 pm. Council Members Present: Laura Mann, Phil Jones, Catherine Kiewit, Isolde Schroder, Ryan O'Connor (via telephone), Student Council Member Cesar Robles. Staff Members Present: Mayor Betty Barnes, City Attorney Chris Lanz. Public Works Chief David Spratt Audience Present: Ken Park, Police Chief Mike Hepner, Nancy Potts, Josh Jimenez

Public Comment

Josh Jimenez, Local Business Owner, El Rinconcito Express

Jimenez introduced himself to the Council and reported that he called Mayor Barnes to discuss a parking space issue on Steuben Street. The issue in question, Jimenez added, was the placement and restrictions of the parking space- the space is clocked out at 15 minutes and occasionally creates a problem for the business, as vehicles take the place during critical loading times. Mayor Barnes speculated that the parking space could be moved slightly to solve the issue. Councilmember Kiewit asked Jimenez if he could consider changing the area to a no parking zone; in turn, Jimenez replied that this would be a last resort to solve the issue. Jimenez emphasized that parking is hard in the City, and that this problem could be simply solved by setting a chair out, but that he would appreciate a more long-term solution. Mayor Barnes concluded that the City will look at progressively changing the parking ordinances in place.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 19, 2019

Corrections were noted as follows:

Page 1, Paragraph 2:

“...and that budget approval would need to go through Nancy Welch ~~LAST NAME~~.”

Page 1, Paragraph 2:

“Walters noted that short-term funding was still to be determined ~~assets were unaccounted for~~, and that the USDA Rural Development grant was placed.

Page 4, Paragraph 5:

“O'Connor He added that the committee was unsure of a final due date for the letters ~~has not set a final date~~; the letters will be taken with the application.”

Councilmember Jones to approve the meeting minutes of the April 2, 2019 regular council meeting. Councilmember Kiewit seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – April 2, 2019

Mayor Barnes postponed the approval of the meeting minutes for April 2, 2019, citing their absence.

Councilmember Kiewit moved to table the approval the meeting minutes of the April 2, 2019 regular council meeting. Councilmember Mann seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

Old Business

Oh Joy of Joys Statue – Doug Comstock

Doug Comstock introduced the lead sculptor on the statue, Doug Graham, to the Council. Graham spoke of the fascinating concept and statue design. Graham knew Guillermo Fish well, and claimed that when thinking about making a statue, he determined that it should not be just about Fish, but instead the community in which he resided. Graham explained that many other Native villages had welcoming figures, and that the Fish statue could resemble these; Fish was a welcoming and talented man. Graham hypothesized that this project was a blank canvas and he filled it meaningfully, often consulting with Fish's wife for advising. He continued to describe the process of generating a world-class statue, covering sketches and computer-aided designs to the casting sequence.

Comstock then proceeded to discuss logistics with the Council, particularly line of sight issues. Graham added that the best spot for the statue is the original proposed corner where the Peace Pole resides; Graham further explained that he would want lights on the statue for it to be lit at night. Mayor Barnes asked if there were electrical connections in that area. Councilmember Kiewit brought up the concern that persons wishing to take pictures could be confused as pedestrians wanting to cross and could be hit. Kiewit also figured that flowers in the area would be trampled. Graham addressed the latter concern by stating that the flowers be taken out and an apron inserted. Barnes continued by stating that Insitu traditionally plows their snow there; Comstock said that if the statue were there, nobody would it plow it; even so, he added, the statue would withstand the snow.

Councilmember Kiewit appreciated the effort and work that the group put into the project but said that the statue does not embody the values and history of the City of Bingen. Kiewit said she would rather have the statue elsewhere where it is more balanced with the environment. Councilmember Mann added that she did not know if she liked the location of potential placement. Comstock conceded that likely not very many people knew Fish, but that the statue conveys how Willy made the town feel. Comstock added that he would like to have an artistic presence in Bingen, reportedly to give people a reason to stay longer. Kiewit asked Graham if a meeting could be scheduled for a more in-depth conversation. Kiewit also asked if there would be a plaque on the statue; Comstock affirmed that there would be a plaque commemorating Fish. Councilmember Schroder asked if there was a deadline for a decision to be made, to which Comstock responded that the sooner possible would be better for notifying donors.

Custom Interface Water Leak Request – Nancy Potts

Nancy Potts opened the discussion on Custom Interface's water leak problems, which traced back to 2012. In this time period, Potts explained, the Port of Klickitat rerouted water to travel through Custom Interface; water leaks were found to exist. Potts said that the Port contacted her to pay for water that needed to be treated. Potts said she contacted the Port about the issue, but they only agreed to pay for the water difference based on a yearly average over the summer excluding any sewer charges. Potts petitioned the Council for lenience in the charges. Potts stated that she did not think that there was a leak, but instead a misuseage of water by the Port. Councilmember Kiewit asked if Potts had done her due diligence in determining where the water originated; Potts said that she found a minimal water leak. Kiewit also asked Potts what the delay was in contacting the Council about the issue. Potts said that she was notified of the new charge in June and was notified that the Custom Interface water system was dysfunctional in August. Potts explained that in October, upon learning this, she sent an email to the Port to discuss the issue. Potts claimed that the Port replied on February 28, and that she had contacted Mayor Barnes as soon as possible to bring up to the Council.

Councilmember Jones asked for clarification on why the issue was significant, and then realized that the sewer charges were out of ordinary. Potts asked the Council if it would be okay with potentially covering

the charges. Councilmember Mann asked if the irrigation process for Custom Interface would change in the future; Potts responded by saying that the company would still use City water but would install a meter to determine the exact amount of water used by the company. Potts also explained that Custom Interface does not have water rights, so it must obtain its water from the City. Potts concluded that implementing a meter would show water usage for irrigation that would not require sewer charges.

Mayor Barnes iterated that leniency would be decided on if an additional meter is added to demonstrate that the company is working on addressing the issue. Potts asked if the Council would agree with using old water usage rates as a reasonable basis for the adjustment of charges. Councilmember Kiewit acknowledged this but added that it would look better from the perspective of the City if the City was notified of this issue earlier. Kiewit also noted that the previous year's budget could be impacted; Kiewit was adamant about leaving the past books unchanged.

Councilmember Mann proposed that costs be reduced to the company in the future to avoid changing past books; Mann said that this could be plausible, but it would be best to check with City Clerk Cheyenne Willey for consideration.

Ultimately, the Council decided that the issue had occurred quite some time ago, and potential solutions are ambiguous. Councilmember Schroder said that she would be willing to work with Potts, but that the situation was unfortunate. Mayor Barnes added that the Council will work on the matter in coordination with City Clerk Willey and attempt to return with a conclusion to Custom Interface prior to the next Council meeting.

Councilmember Kiewit moved to work with City Clerk Willey on the issue and revisit the issue in May to discuss a pardon of sewer charges. Councilmember Schroder seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

SEPA Dry Creek Proposal

Mayor Barnes reported to the Council that the Bingen's concerns about the project are valid so long as RCW-based language is used to address them. She noted that she had contacted the City of White Salmon and asked that the City be notified so that the City can make a notice for this. Councilmember Mann asked if clarification was received on how far east the property ranges; Mayor Barnes was unsure.

Councilmember Mann said she had sent an email concerning stormwater runoff, reduction of life span of treatment property, fire mitigation, ingress and egress in a heavy density area with a hospital, increased traffic on Highway 141, erosion issues, the heightened responsibility of Dock Grade for ingress into White Salmon, and road and parking issues. Councilmember Kiewit said that the ground material could be soft and perhaps erodible. Kiewit expressed concern for water runoff and proposed an engineer look at this issue. Kiewit surmised that while drainage is filtered, the increased water presence could cause flooding on some Bingen properties. Kiewit also worried about chemicals; Public Works Chief David Spratt expressed the same concern, particularly with contamination of well water. Mayor Barnes emphasized that these concerns were valid and added that as owners change, attitudes towards this matter will change as well. Kiewit questioned if the water main in the area needs power to run and if it does, if it would create adversity for the area.

Kiewit continued to express her personal concerns with the project, including the misrepresentation of housing costs and potential issues with the set scenic area. Mayor Barnes agreed with Kiewit and added that the Department of Ecology will likely have much to say about his project; it will also act as an unbiased third party on the issue.

Councilmember O'Connor analyzed the plans and speculated that the increase in residents each year would be of about 70 people. Councilmember Mann showed concerns that this number may not be accurate and could cause issues. Mann reported that in the email she sent to White Salmon was an inquiry on if White Salmon had flood control regulations. She then acknowledged that the legislation would not matter because Bingen would receive the flooding. Mann showed favor in Kiewit's emphasis on water quality and conservation. Mann concluded that the City is mainly concerned about high to medium level development and other transportation issues.

Mayor's Update and Council Comments

Public Works Update

Public Works Chief David Spratt updated the Council on various events that occurred within the Public Works department. He mentioned that he had come up with a list of tasks accomplished by Public Works and those still yet to be accomplished. Councilmember Kiewit asked if the Society Hotel would clean the streets which they had left unclean. Spratt answered that the City of White Salmon cleans Bingen's streets, and that they will get to it soon.

Spratt also revealed that a new 42-inch television was acquired; placement of the television was discussed. Both the Council and Spratt proposed mounting it inside the Council meeting room.

Councilmember Mann asked if Depot Street was going to receive a new concrete coating; Mayor Barnes agreed with Mann's question. Mann further asked if the holes on the street would be filled with gravel. Spratt was unsure of the status of the project but noted that it would be considered.

Water Survey

Mayor Barnes reported to the Council that the proposed water survey for the City would have to be put off; she affirmed that the City was quite busy with other work, and that the most recent survey was done last year. Barnes said that a survey could be done this year, but it would be done again next year anyways with the United States Census; she added that this would trouble citizens. Barnes advised the Council to put off the survey and use next year's survey to apply for funding.

Lodging Tax

Councilmember Kiewit mentioned to the Council that it should come back to the lodging tax discussion the following meeting, as the City's intentions are more straightforward than those of White Salmon's. Councilmember Mann said she was unsure of how the tax would be set, but she affirmed that there would be more income brought in that could potentially go to Daubenspeck Park or a nicer railroad depot, both of which could be improved as the City grows.

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 16, 2019.

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

Payroll Checks 20670-20673 and Payroll EFT (Dated 4/15/2019) totaling \$18,480.09 General Fund - \$7,526.92, Street Fund - \$3,121.53 Water Fund - \$2,102.35, Sewer Fund - \$435.31, Treatment Plant Fund - \$5,593.98.

Checks 20669, 20674-20703 and EFT totaling \$165,127.65. General Fund - \$4,829.32, Street Fund - \$840.91, Community Development Fund \$105,028.20, Water Fund - \$22,156.491, Sewer Fund - \$7,214.13, Treatment Plant Fund - \$4,785.08, Sewer Capitol Fund \$20,273.52.

The council adjourned at 9:21 pm.

City Clerk

Mayor