**BINGEN CITY COUNCIL MINUTES**

**January 2, 2024**

**Meeting Via Teleconference and In-Person**

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Catherine Kiewit at 7:04 p.m.

Council members present: Phil Jones, Ryan O’Connor, Brittany Spratt and Michael Stahl. Staff present: City Attorney Chris Lanz, City Administrator Krista Loney, Fire Chief Carl Spratt. Audience present: Craig Trummel.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Added Item – Ryan O’Connor Oath of Office**

Councilor Ryan O’Connor took the oath of office as he begins another term of service on the Bingen City Council.

**Interview and Appointment for Council Vacancy #2**

Councilor Izzy Schroder’s term ended on December 31, 2023. The City of Bingen advertised the Council vacancy in the Columbia Gorge News and posted recruitment flyers at City Hall and the Post Office. Craig Trummel submitted an application and was interviewed in November of 2023 when Councilor Joe O’Sullivan moved. Michael Stahl was ultimately appointed to that vacancy. Craig Trummel attended council this evening and reconfirmed his interest in the vacant seat. Councilor Phil Jones made a motion to appoint Craig Trummel to Council position number 2. Councilor O’Connor provided the second and the motion carried. Councilor Craig Trummel took the oath of office. Administrator Loney will work with Councilor Trummel to provide the necessary tools and training.

**Meeting Minutes – 12/19/2023**

Councilor Jones pointed out a typo and Councilor Spratt pointed out an erroneous capitalization. Mayor Kiewit requested that the nice comments made about Councilor Schroder be added to the meeting minutes. Councilor O’Connor made a motion to adopt the December 19, 2023 meeting minutes with corrections. Councilor Jones provided the second and the motion carried.

**Mayors Proclamation for Centennial**

Mayor Kiewit wrote a proclamation about Bingen’s Centennial year and read it aloud to Council. The proclamation will be posted to the Bingen website.

**Bingen Fire Update**

Fire Chief Carl Spratt provided the final data for 2024: 2 Bingen responses and 24 mutual aid responses in December bring the total number of responses to calls to 409 for 2024. Chief Spratt shared that Tom Andrews from Fire District 3 is working on an emergency management response plan for Wilcox and Flegel. Mayor Kiewit inquired about lessons learned from the lumbermill fire in Hood River. Chief Spratt stated that he is surprised that lumbermills don’t catch fire more often and that this fire was a good reminder of what could happen. Mayor Kiewit inquired if there is an internal protocol to respond to when providing mutual aid to other municipalities. Chief Spratt stated that Bingen follows the incident command structure. He also stated that SDS Lumber Company has done upgrades including sprinklers to minimize fire danger. Mayor Kiewit inquired if there would be any compensation for responding to the lumbermill fire. Chief Spratt stated that he was informed by the incident commander that it might be a possibility, but he thinks it will be unlikely. Councilor Trummel inquired how many volunteer fire fighters are on the Bingen Fire Department and was told that there are 18 active members.

**Bingen Police Update**

None.

**Resolution 2024-001 Establishing the 2024 Salary Schedule**

Administrator Loney provided a memo and the resolution. The collective bargaining agreement currently in place between the City of Bingen and Local 701 of the International Union of Operating Engineers mandates a cost-of-living allowance be provided to staff on January 1 of each year. The COLA is based on the Consumer Price Index-West and this year is 3.5%.

Councilor O’Connor made a motion to adopt Resolution 2024-001. Councilor Spratt provided the second and the motion carried.

**Public Hearing – Ordinance 2024-01-750 Amending BMC 17.08 Definitions**

Mayor Kiewit opened the public hearing at 7:26 p.m. Administrator Loney provided a memo to Council and the ordinance. The definitions to be updated are those for Hotel and Total Housing Stock. Council revised the definition for Dwelling Unit during the public hearing. Those new definitions are:

Hotel – “Hotel” means a commercial property on one or more adjacent parcels designed and intended to provide overnight lodging to transient guests for a fee. A hotel generally consists of a lobby, rented units that are entered from the inside of the building, has a minimum of seven rental units, on-site staff, and a transient lodging license as issued and administered by the Washington State Department of Health. A hotel is not a short-term rental.

Total Housing Stock – “Total housing stock” means the total number of dwelling units within Bingen city limits based upon currently available data provided by the Klickitat County Assessor’s Office

Dwelling Unit – "Dwelling unit" means one or more rooms in a building designed for occupancy for living, cooking, sleeping and sanitary facilities. Hotel, motel, room and boarding units shall not be considered as dwelling units.

The public hearing was closed at 7:46 p.m. Councilor Trummel made a motion to adopt the revised Ordinance 2024-01-750 Amending BMC 17.08 Definitions. Councilor O’Connor provided the second and the motion carried.

**Public Hearing – Ordinance 2024-02-751 Amending BMC 15.04 Building Definitions**

Mayor Kiewit opened the public hearing at 7:47 p.m. Administrator Loney explained that the State of Washington pushed the adoption date for the 2021 version of International Building codes to March 15, 2024 and Bingen should wait for the state to adopt the code. Mayor Kiewit closed the public hearing at 7:49 p.m. Councilor O’Connor made a motion to table the public hearing until after March 15, 2024. Councilor Spratt provided the second and the motion carried.

**Gray and Osborne WSDOT Watermain Contract**

Administrator Loney explained that this item was on the agenda as a placeholder and that contract terms had not yet been reached between Gray and Osborne and WSDOT. Loney will follow up with Nancy Wetch to see if a special meeting will need to be held to approve the contract.

**2024 Committee Appointments**

2024 Committee Appointments are as follows:

* Budget Committee: Mayor Kiewit, Councilor Spratt, Councilor Jones
* Water/Sewer Committee: Mayor Kiewit, Councilor Stahl, Councilor O’Connor
* Streets/Parks Committee: Mayor Kiewit, Councilor Trummel, Councilor Jones
* Representative to Solid Waste Committee: Councilor O’Connor
* Representative to Fire Board: Councilor Jones
* 2024 Centennial Committee: Mayor Kiewit, Councilor Spratt, Citizen Representative Izzy Schroder
* Representative to Huckleberry Festival Committee: Administrator Loney, Councilor Stahl
* Representative to Community Cleanup Committee: Councilor Spratt
* Mayor Pro Tempore: Councilor Spratt

**Changing Regularly Scheduled Meeting Time Discussion**

Mayor Kiewit stated that she asked Administrator Loney to research which days and times other local meetings were held and asked Council if they would like to move the meetings to 6 p.m. Councilor Jones stated that he is happy to move to 6 p.m. or keep the meetings at 7 p.m. Councilor Spratt suggested splitting the difference and beginning meetings at 6:30. Councilor Stahl agreed to 6:30 p.m. Councilor O’Connor requested the 6 p.m. start time. Councilor Trummel requested the 6 p.m. start time. City Attorney Chris Lanz requested the 6 p.m. start time. Administrator Loney echoed the request for a 6 p.m. start time.

Administrator Loney explained that the Bingen Municipal Code will need to be updated to change the start time to 6 p.m. An ordinance amending BMC Chapter 2 will be crafted and public notice will be issued for the hearing regarding the revision. The January 16, 2024 meeting will begin at 7 p.m. as scheduled. If Council adopts the ordinance amending BMC Chapter 2, meetings can begin at 6 p.m. effective February 6, 2024.

**Staff Updates**

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

* Bingen has until January 20, 2024 to process payments for 2023 expenditures with 2023 funds. This is called 13th month.
* A budget amendment establishing the correct 2023 ending balances/2024 beginning balances will be on the February 6, 2024 agenda.
* Bingen needs to change our life insurance from USAble Life to The Standard through the Association of Washington Cities. One of the employees has aged out of eligibility for USAble and the policy is a group policy.
* Loney followed up today with J&J Overhead door on a quote for the fire hall damaged door. No response yet.
* Bingen is switching wireless internet from BlueMountain (formerly gorge net) to AT&T Firstnet
* Now that the Treatment Plant OITs have been employed for 6 months, Bingen will be seeking funding through the South Central Workforce Incumbent Worker Training program to help offset costs for in-person training.
* The Klickitat County Commissioners sent a draft interlocal agreement for Bingen and White Salmon to contribute to the cost of adult probation services. Mayor Kiewit, Chris Lanz, and Administrator Loney are working to collect data on proportional share and overall costs.
* Bingen received three lodging tax grant applications totaling $62,800. Total available funds are $61,037.18. Each Council member has all three applications in a manila envelope for review. Please make notes and plan to discuss and award contracts at the January 16 meeting.
  + $3,000 for Big Art in Bingen – Mt. Adams Chamber of Commerce
  + $44,800 for Bingen Tourism Marketing – Mt. Adams Chamber of Commerce
  + $15,000 for Centennial – City of Bingen
* The 2024 Visioning Session will be Tuesday, January 23 at 5:30 p.m. in Council chambers and dinner will be ordered in.

**Mayor’s Update and Council Comments**

Administrator Loney already shared an update about the Klickitat County Adult Probation Services work. Mayor Kiewit, Administrator Loney, and WWTP Manager Frank Sinclair will be meeting with Everybody’s Brewing and White Salmon leadership on January 11, 2024 to discuss the proportional share of the treatment plant and associated costs that will be billed to Everybody’s Brewing. Mayor Kiewit was asked to serve on the Hood River Bridge Aesthetics Committee and agreed. The Klickitat County Regional Transportation Program is finished, and Kiewit will send it to Council for their viewing.

**Voucher Approval**

Claims Checks (Dated 12/20/2023) and Claims EFT (Dated 12/20/2023) totaling $750.01; General Fund - $181.37 and Treatment Plant Fund - $568.64.

Councilor O’Connor made a motion to approve the Claims dated December 20, 2023. Councilor Jones seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Claims Checks (Dated 12/31/2023) totaling $24,587.75; General Fund - $12,081.16, Street Fund - $2,462.65, Hotel/Motel Tax Fund - $2,887.65, Water Fund - $664.63, Sewer Fund - $246.61, and Treatment Plant Fund - $6,245.05.

Councilor O’Connor made a motion to approve the Claims dated December 31, 2023. Councilor Spratt seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Payroll Checks (Dated 12/29/2023) and Payroll EFT (Dated 12/29/2023) totaling $40,402.90; General Fund - $12,593.12, Street Fund - $6,941.19, Water Fund - $4,011.39, Sewer Fund - $1,216.27, and Treatment Plant Fund - $15,640.93.

Councilor Jones made a motion to approve the Payroll dated December 29, 2023. Councilor Trummel seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Claims Checks (Dated 1/2/2024) totaling $186,816.44; General Fund - $95,200.22, Water Fund - $3,973.61, Sewer Fund - $3,973.61, Treatment Plant Fund - $1,510.00, and Treatment Plant Improvement Fund - $82,159.00.

Councilor Spratt made a motion to approve the Claims dated January 2, 2024. Councilor Jones seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**Adjournment**

Mayor Kiewit adjourned the meeting at 8:24 p.m.