

**RIO DELL CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JULY 16, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Rio Dell City Council was called to order at 6:10 p.m. by Mayor Garnes.

ROLL CALL: Present: Mayor Garnes, Mayor Pro Tem Carter, Councilmembers Orr, Wilson, and Woodall

Others Present: City Manager Knopp, Finance Director Sanborn, Interim Chief of Police Conner, Water/Roadways Superintendent Wastewater Superintendent Kelly, Senior Fiscal Assistant Maciel, and City Clerk Dunham

Absent: Community Development Director Caldwell

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Mayor Garnes invited public comment on non-agenda matters. No members of the public commented.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Mayor Garnes asked if any councilmember, staff or member of the public would like to remove any item from the consent calendar for a separate discussion. No items were removed.

A motion was made by Woodall/Carter to approve the consent calendar including the following items:

- 1) Minutes of the June 18, 2024 regular meeting;
- 2) Authorizing the Finance Director to sign and submit the City's Annual Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) Claim to the Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG); Aeromod Tritan Belt Filter Press in the amount of \$17,693.78; and
- 3) Resolution No. 1610-2024 Designation of Voting Delegate for the League of California Cities Annual Conference;
- 4) Check Register for June; and
- 5) Authorizing the City manager to execute a contract for professional services with CSG Consulting for SB 1383 Compliance and Franchise Consultant Agreement Development in the amount of \$25,530.

Motion carried 5-0.

REPORTS/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager/Staff Update

City Manager Knopp provided highlights of the staff update and said that a ceremonial groundbreaking with Senator McGuire, Cal OES representatives and other local officials would be occurring tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. at the Douglas Street water tank for the City's water distribution system capital project. He encouraged all councilmembers to attend and recommended carpooling due to limited parking.

Change in Order of Agenda

Mayor Garnes announced that the last item on the agenda related to the camera system at Fireman's Park was being moved up to this position of the agenda.

Financial Support for Camera System Related to the Public Restrooms at Fireman's Park

City Manager Knopp provided a brief staff report and said that at the June 18, 2024 City Council meeting, Mayor Pro Tem Carter requested that the Council agenize an item to discuss a financial contribution covering a portion of the cost of a camera system for Fireman's Park due to recent vandalism of the public bathroom.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter said that she brought this item before the Council as a result of the recent vandalism and said that the City needs to support the Fire Department in their efforts to crack down on vandalism. She noted that Fireman's Park is the only public park in the city and security cameras would not only help the police department but be a benefit to the entire community. She recommended the City Council approve a contribution to help cover a portion of the cost of the camera system.

Jim Barsanti, Rio Dell Fire Commissioner addressed the Council and began by thanking the City Council for its generous contribution of \$2,500 for playground equipment. He said that someone broke into the women's bathroom at the park and vandalized the bathroom resulting in \$2,500 in damages. In addition, there has been recent vandalism to the memorial picnic tables. He expressed the need for security cameras at the park and said that they received an estimate from Advance Security in the amount of \$4,660.53 for the installation of four (4) security cameras to be placed on the fire hall roof. One camera would shine toward the bathrooms, the other three would cover the park, the baseball field and the playground equipment.

Mayor Garnes commented that installation of the security cameras would benefit the entire community, not just the fire department.

Councilmember Wilson asked how hard it would be for the vandals to access the cameras.

Jim Barsanti said that Advance Security recommended against installing the cameras on poles and that the best location would be on the peak of the building. He said that they are exploring options for protecting the cameras.

Councilmember Woodall asked if the cameras being proposed are high resolution cameras.

Chief Conner commented that even with cameras that produce low quality pictures, they can often identify a suspect by the way they walk.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter suggested the City split the cost of the camera system and authorize a contribution to the Fire Department of \$2,300.

City Manager Knopp reminded the Council that they should include in the motion that the contribution is in the best interest of the public and that the contribution be a reimbursement.

A motion was made by Woodall/Carter making the finding that a cost share to the Fire Department for a security camera system is in the best interest of the public and that the City Council authorize reimbursement of \$2,300 to the Fire Department once the work is done.

Motion carried 5-0.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS/STUDY SESSIONS

Presentation by Wastewater Superintendent Kelly on future proposed amendments to the Sewer Regulations and the creation of the Sewer Lateral Repair/Replacement Program Revolving Loan Fund

Wastewater Superintendent Kelly provided a staff report and explained that as the City Council is aware, inflow and infiltration (I&I) issues during the wet weather season are extreme. Staff's goal is to work with the residents to resolve some of these I & I issues on private property by providing guidance with clearer language in Chapter 13.10 of the Rio Dell Municipal Code (RDMC), "Sewer Rates and Regulations".

She said that with adoption of the ordinance related to Sewer Rates and Regulations in 2013, there were articles from the past ordinance not included, leaving some language vague and misinterpreted. With clearer language, staff is hopeful preventative maintenance and scheduled maintenance will be established with future projects.

Suggested revisions to the ordinance included the following:

- 1) Making it clear that backflow devices and lower cleanouts with correct direction of sweep are installed at the time of sale during the sewer lateral inspection.
- 2) Clarifying language that at the time of sale, with sewer lateral inspections that camera work be done to look for tie-ins or shared laterals. When discovered, these are to be immediately made aware to the property owners and that a 60-day time line be given to fix the problem.

- 3) Requesting that if a property is within 300 feet of the City sewer and their current on-site wastewater treatment (septic) system fails or is not adequate for future development of the property, that the property tie into the City's sewer system.

Wastewater Superintendent Kelly further explained that throughout the City there are many hidden sewer laterals, some of them tie into their neighbors' laterals which is not legal and must be dealt with at the time of sale when a lateral test inspection is attempted and corrections must be made to pass the lateral inspection.

She said that it is during these tests that neighbors and homeowners discover the problem and letters of deferment are written to help with the completion of the project. Sometimes these lateral corrections can be costly and as a surprise cannot be financially sustainable for the low-income residents.

Staff recommended that at a future date the City do the following:

- 1) Create the Sewer Lateral Repair/Replacement Program Revolving Loan Fund with the City setting aside \$150,000 from the Sewer Fund to make available to homeowners that need sewer lateral replacement and lower cleanout installation.
- 2) A fixed 5-year loan with 6% interest be paid back to the City.

She explained that the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) project is currently being reviewed by the Finance Department and the City Attorney as they resolve some of the details. Staff will have a complete presentation for the Council at a future date.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter supported the recommended revisions to the ordinance.

Councilmember Wilson asked if the City has the equipment to camera the lines.

Wastewater Superintendent Kelly said that the homeowner is responsible for hiring a licensed plumbing contractor to camera the line and do the sewer lateral test.

Councilmember Wilson questioned the direction of the sweep.

Wastewater Superintendent Kelly explained that the sweep is at the lower cleanout at the property line and the sweep needs to be toward the city sewer main. If they are installed incorrectly, it causes problems down the line.

Councilmember Woodall asked if homeowners are only required to have sewer lateral inspections at the time of sale of the property.

Wastewater Superintendent Kelly said that currently it is only at the time of sale so when they camera the line and discover a tie-in with a neighboring property, they are required to disconnect from the neighbor and tie into the city main within a designated time frame.

Mayor Garnes called for public comment.

Kieley Hawthorne, 351 First Ave. addressed the Council regarding a recent sewer backup that occurred at her residence. She said that when she purchased the property 2-3 years ago, she had a contractor come and perform the sewer lateral test and everything passed. She said that she also received a letter from the City stating that she was not responsible for any repairs to the sewer lateral. She indicated that the neighbor at 353 First Ave. is tied into her sewer line and recently when the City was hydro-jetting the main sewer line, sewer backed up into her house causing damage to personal items in her bathroom.

Sharon Wolfe asked if the proposed amendments related to septic tanks applies to the Cal Fire property.

Wastewater Superintendent Kelly explained that there are some properties in the City that have private septic systems and if they fail or are not sufficient for a proposed development and are within 300 feet of the sewer main, they would be required to connect to City sewer.

City Manager Knopp pointed out that the State of California (Cal Fire) is not required to comply with the City's regulations.

Sharon Wolfe mentioned the establishment of the Sewer Revolving Loan Fund and said that 6% interest seems high in consideration of the fact that Rio Dell is a low-income area. She said that the program sounds good but since the City would benefit from the homeowner doing these repairs, suggested the City Council consider establishing a lower interest rate.

SPECIAL CALL ITEMS/COMMUNITY AFFAIRS/PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public Hearing on the List of Delinquent Sewer Accounts to send to the Auditor-Controller for placement on the tax roll

Finance Director Sanborn provided a staff report and said that at the meeting of July 6, 2023, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 399-2023 to allow the City to send delinquent sewer charges to the auditor-controller to add them to the tax roll as a lien.

He said that § 5473 of the Health and Safety Code allows the collection of overdue sewer charges through taxes and in order to do so, certain steps must be followed. He reviewed the seven (7) steps as required by the code and provided a list of fifteen (15) delinquent sewer accounts identified by assessor parcel number (APN).

Councilmember Woodall identified the process as being similar to nuisance abatement liens where it potentially takes 5 years for the City to collect the debt.

Mayor Garnes opened the public hearing to receive public comment related to the delinquent sewer accounts.

Katherine Fontaine addressed the Council on behalf of 185 Douglas St. She said that she received a notice from the City with the final due date for a delinquent utility bill and questioned the final day to pay the bill before it goes to the County as a lien.

Finance Director Sanborn explained that customers with delinquent sewer accounts would have until August 10, 2024 to pay the bill in full; after that the lien would be placed on the property taxes and the customer would need to contact the County Auditor-Controller to settle the debt.

There being no further public comment, the public hearing closed.

A motion was made by Carter/Woodall to approve the final list of delinquent sewer accounts to send to the Auditor-Controller for placement on the tax roll. Motion carried 5-0.

COUNCIL REPORTS/COMMUNICATIONS

Councilmember Woodall reported on recent meetings and activities and said that a representative from Proper Wellness attended the last Beautification, Walkability and Pride Committee meeting saying that they wanted to be more involved in the community and offered to organize clean-up events in the City. The first clean-up event was on July 9th which was a big success. She said that it is nice to see businesses that want to get involved.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter reported on her attendance at recent meetings and events including the RREDC meeting that was hosted by the City, meetings of the Chamber of Commerce, the Rio Dell School Board, the Rio Dell Fire District, and said that the Nuisance Advisory Committee was scheduled tomorrow at 3:00 p.m. at City Hall followed by the Beautification, Walkability and Pride Committee meeting on Friday at 1:30 p.m.

She reminded everyone of the upcoming Wildwood Days festivities and encouraged everyone to come out and enjoy the fun. She said that her mom would be singing at Mingo's on Thursday at 1:30 p.m. and invited everyone to come by.

Councilmember Orr said that this month's HCAOG meeting was canceled.

Councilmember Wilson reported that the RCEA meeting scheduled for next Thursday was also canceled and there was no HWMA meeting scheduled for August.

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Mayor Garnes reported on the July 3rd HTA meeting and said that they are moving forward with the Ride Humboldt campaign with one ticket available from Crescent City to Santa Rosa. She said that she is doing her best to convince them to include a stop at Davis St. to avoid riders having to go to Fortuna to catch the bus. She said that they say that it is a timing issue with the express route but since it is a quick on and from Davis to the freeway, she is hoping they will consider the request.

She announced that she would be attending a Seismic Safety Committee meeting on Thursday and that she would not be attending the August 6 City Council meeting. She said that she would also miss the next HTA meeting and asked Councilmember Woodall as alternate on the board to attend if possible.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Carter/Woodall to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 p.m. to the August 6, 2024 regular meeting. The motion carried 5-0.

Amanda Carter, Mayor Pro Tem

Attest:

Karen Dunham, City Clerk