

**RIO DELL CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 4, 2025**

Mayor Garnes called the regular meeting of the Rio Dell City Council to order at 6:00 p.m.

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

Others Present: City Manager Knopp, Police Chief Phinney, Community Development Director Caldwell, Water/Roadways Superintendent Jensen, Wastewater Superintendent Kelly, Senior Fiscal Assistant Maciel, and City Clerk Dunham

Absent: Finance Director Sanborn (excused)

### **PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS**

Mayor Garnes invited public comment on non-agenda matters.

**Albert Houghton**, 940 Curtis Lane thanked everyone who showed up for Saturday's Ribbon Cutting for the Neighborhood Barbershop. He invited everyone to come out and celebrate St. Patrick's Day at the Scotia Lodge on Monday, March 17<sup>th</sup> from 6-8 p.m.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

Mayor Garnes asked if any council member, 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 Carter/Orr to approve the consent calendar, including the following items:

- 1) Minutes of the February 18, 2025 Regular Meeting; and
- 2) Authorize the City Manager to Execute an Agreement with Wahlund Construction for \$10,027,410 and Authorize the City Manager to Approve all Change Orders in a Total Amount not to exceed \$11,032,410.

Motion carried 5-0.

### **REPORTS/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

#### City Manager/Staff Update

City Manager Knopp highlighted the staff update and reported that the City's grant application with Redwood Region Rise for an ag processing center feasibility study was not awarded however, staff would continue researching other alternative funding sources.

He noted that CalFire released its local area responsibility Fire Hazards Severity Map for Rio Dell and the region. He said that staff is currently reviewing the map which can be viewed by the public on CalFire's website. The area was categorized into three classifications; moderate, high, and very high with a portion of Rio Dell categorized as high risk which was surprising.

City Manager Knopp said that he and the Mayor would be attending a meeting in Sacramento tomorrow with Senator McGuire and CalFire representatives.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter extended special thanks to Finance Director Sanborn for all his help. She then referred to the Animal Control report with zero dogs and only 2 cats transported to Miranda's Rescue.

### **ORDINANCES/SPECIAL RESOLUTIONS/PUBLIC HEARINGS**

#### Adopt Resolution No. 1629-2025 Approving Expanding Underground District No. 2 and Authorize the City Manager to Execute Rule 20A General Conditions with PG&E

City Manager Knopp provided a staff report and said that the City was recently contacted by a representative of PG&E related to Rule 20 and underground utilities, recommending the City expand Underground Utility District 2 to avoid potentially losing the City's allocated work credit of approximately \$504,000. The existing underground District No. 2 along Wildwood Ave. includes six parcels and the recommended expanded district would include an additional 34 parcels from Berkeley Street to Side Street. If the project materializes, it would make Wildwood Avenue overhead-free.

He explained that the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) gathers unused work credits which are then available to other jurisdictions. He said that PG&E pointed out that the proposed project is a competitive program with some minor adjustments.

Community Development Director Caldwell provided supplemental Information including a slightly revised format of the Resolution regarding the expansion of Underground District No. 2.

Councilmember Wilson asked if additional funding would be needed to complete the project as proposed.

Community Development Director Caldwell estimated the undergrounding cost at \$1,000 per linear foot bringing the total to approximately \$800,000. With \$504,000 in available work credits, additional funding would be needed. He said that the adoption of the Resolution and boundary map would allow the City to retain its active status to use PG&E Rule 20A funds.

Councilmember Orr referred to Section 5 of the Resolution related to the property owner's responsibility to have underground electrical entrance facilities installed and inspected.

Community Development Director Caldwell explained that the City would be financially responsible for those costs.

Councilmember Woodall referred to the Public Notice for the Public Hearing which stated in part "No fees will be levied on any property owners as a result of establishing the District."

Community Development Director Caldwell commented that staff notified all affected property owners within the proposed expanded District 2 area and there were no comments or questions received.

Mayor Garnes opened the public hearing to receive public comment on the proposed Resolution. There being no public comment, the public hearing was closed.

A motion was made by Carter/Woodall to adopt Resolution No. 1629-2025 Expanding Underground District No. 2 to Include Additional Lands Along Wildwood Avenue and Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Rule 20A General Conditions Agreement with PG&E. Motion carried 5-0.

Second Reading (by title only) and Adoption of Ordinance No. 411-2025 and Resolution No. 1630.2025 Amending the Industrial Commercial (IC) Zoning Regulations and the General Plan Land Use Element

Community Development Director Caldwell provided a staff report recommending amendments to the Industrial Commercial zoning regulations and the General Plan Land Use Element. He said as discussed at the February 18<sup>th</sup> regular meeting, the purpose of the amendment is to identify all use types for the Industrial Commercial zone under one reference to avoid flipping back and forth between the other commercial zones to determine the various use types.

He said that a number of the use types in the Industrial Commercial zone were expanded and mentioned that the property owner of the former junkyard at 1395 Eeloa Ave. was very pleased with the expanded use types and is considering utilizing the property for RV and boat storage.

He pointed out that at the February 18<sup>th</sup> meeting when the ordinance was introduced, staff encouraged councilmembers to review the list of use types, identify any uses they thought were unsuitable in the Industrial Commercial zone, and let staff know before this meeting. He said that no changes were recommended.

Mayor Garnes opened the public hearing to receive public comment on the proposed ordinance. There being no public comment, the public hearing was closed.

A motion was made by Carter/Orr to approve the second reading (by title only) and adoption of Ordinance No. 411-2025 and Resolution No. 1630-2025 Amending the Industrial Commercial (IC) Zoning Regulations and the General Plan Land Use Element.

Motion carried 5-0.

Second Reading (by title only) and Adoption of Ordinance No. 412-2025 Establishing Section 12.30 "Trails" of the Rio Dell Municipal Code (RDMC) Pertaining to Regulations for Trails

City Manager Knopp provided a staff report and said that with the Eel River Trail nearing completion, the staff is recommending the establishment of regulations for the use of the trail. He said that since this is Rio Dell's first official dedicated non-motorized path, the language as proposed only impacts the Eel River Trail. The language specifically prohibits the use of any motor-driven vehicle on the Eel River Trail, with exceptions for personal mobility devices for the disabled, electric-powered baby carriages, or vehicles in service of the City. He noted that electric bicycles may use the trail provided the bike is powered off.

He said that with the introduction of the Ordinance at the February 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, some questions were raised regarding the use of Segways and remote-control cars. He said that staff reviewed the grant language and found that the intention of the grant was for a non-motorized trail. The grant application also cited planning studies from HCAOG and RCAA calling for a non-motorized regional network to encourage safe physical exercise and recreational opportunities for the community.

Mayor Garnes opened the public hearing to receive public comment on the proposed ordinance.

**Albert Houghton** asked where the trail was located.

Mayor Garnes explained that the trail extends from Edwards Dr. to Davis St. by way of the river.

Councilmember Orr asked if this Ordinance would affect traffic going to the trail.

City Manager Knopp said that it only pertained to vehicles on the trail.

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

A motion was made by Carter/Woodall to approve the second reading (by title only) and Adoption of Ordinance No. 412-2025 Establishing Section 12.30 "Trails" of the Rio Dell Municipal Code (RDMC) Pertaining to Regulations for Trails. Motion carried 5-0.

**COUNCIL REPORTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

Mayor Pro Tem Carter reported on her attendance at the last RREDC meeting and said the board heard from North America's Building Trades Union with a focus on the importance of hiring local contractors. She also noted that she was appointed to the Executive Committee for RREDC.

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She said that she also attended a Community Organization Active in Disasters (COAD) Board meeting and they are working on nailing down the various working groups and solidifying COAD and its ability to respond to local disasters in the most effective way possible.

She commented that she also attended the ribbon cutting for the new barber shop, announced there would be a Chamber of Commerce meeting on Friday in Scotia, followed by a St. Patrick's Day Celebration on March 17<sup>th</sup> at Scotia Lodge from 6-8 p.m., a Beautification, Walkability, and Pride Committee meeting on Friday at 3:00 p.m. at City Hall, and said she would be attending a Cal Cities Regional meeting in Willits next week.

Councilmember Woodall commented that the ribbon cutting for the barber shop was great and the business is a good fit for Rio Dell. She said that she attended the Annual Fireman's Dinner which was very nice and wished the City Manager and the Mayor good luck with the meeting in Sacramento.

Councilmember Wilson reported that he attended a Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA) meeting last week and the focus was on the budget and getting the reserves on target.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Carter/Garnes to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m. to the March 18, 2025, regular meeting. Motion carried 5-0.

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Debra Garnes, Mayor

Attest:

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Karen Dunham, City Clerk