



RIO DELL CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING – 6:00 P.M.
TUESDAY, AUGUST 4TH, 2026
City Council Chambers
675 Wildwood Avenue, Rio Dell

A. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Rio Dell City Council was called to order at approximately 6:00 PM by Mayor Garnes.

B. ROLL CALL

Present:

- Mayor Garnes
- Mayor Pro Tem Carter
- Council Member Wilson
- Council Member Woodall

Staff Present:

- City Manager Kyle Knopp
- Finance Director Travis Sanborn
- Water/Roads Superintendent Jensen
- Wastewater Superintendent Moore
- RDPD Chief Phinney
- Community Service Officer Clark
- City Clerk Jessica Hill
- Sr. Fiscal Assistant Rosa Maciel

Excused:

- Council Member Orr

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Council.

D. CEREMONIAL MATTERS

No ceremonial matters were presented.

E. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Tawny Albers (sp?), a Rio Dell resident of 37 years, addressed the Council regarding several concerns: semi-trucks parking in residential areas; perpendicular parking and long-term parking of boats and other vehicles on City streets; off-road motorcycles operating within the City; and, without intending to disparage the Council or Police Department, a perceived lack of follow-through on nuisance complaints that he said discourages residents from reporting issues. She described a specific incident in which she called police three times in one evening (approximately 6:33 p.m., 8:04 p.m., and 10:23 p.m.) regarding a semi-truck parked on the sidewalk in a residential area with no police response, which she understood was due to the department responding to a domestic disturbance call that night. She stated the truck's driver had exceeded federal

hours-of-service limits and that she had reported the matter to the U.S. Department of Transportation. Mayor Garnes thanked her for the detailed, well-documented information she provided.

A community member who identified himself as the owner of the log truck referenced in the prior comment addressed the Council. He stated he had received a parking citation and has since obtained a permit to park the truck in front of his residence, that his work requires early morning and late hours, and that he and his wife, a longtime Rio Dell resident, have seven children between them. He stated he felt harassed by repeated complaints and calls regarding his truck despite having confirmed with police that his parking is legal.

Michael Panis, a retired public employee formerly of a water treatment facility, addressed traffic safety concerns on Riverside Drive, including vehicles he estimated traveling at speeds up to 60 miles per hour, and suggested speed humps near the elementary school. He also raised concerns about drivers using the neighborhood's dead end to turn around at high speed, and about the safety of passengers riding double on off-road motorcycles and quads without proper footpegs, handholds, or helmets. He noted that young children live and play near Riverside Park and asked the Council to consider these safety issues.

No further members of the public wished to address the Council. Mayor Garnes closed public presentations.

F. CONSENT CALENDAR

- 2026/0804.01 – Approve Minutes of the July 21st, 2026, Regular Meeting
- 2026/0804.02 – Adopt Resolution No. 1679-2026, a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Rio Dell Amending the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget to Appropriate an Amount Not to Exceed \$18,000 for Construction of the Concrete Slab for the Police Department Animal Kennel Project
- 2026/0804.03 – Authorize the City Manager to Execute Amendment No. 2 to the Professional Services Agreement with GHD Inc. for the Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Study (SSES), in the Amount of \$602,396.25, Increasing the Total Contract Amount to \$1,088,058.25, and Extending the Completion Date to December 1, 2027

Council Member Wilson asked whether Item 2026/0804.03 was related to the City Engineer presentation later on the agenda. City Manager Knopp confirmed the items are separate, and that the consent item authorizes continuation of the City's existing professional services contract with GHD for the SSES.

No items were removed from the Consent Calendar.

ACTION: Motion made by Council Member Wilson and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Carter to approve the Consent Calendar as presented. Motion carried 4–0 (Council Member Orr excused).

G. ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR

No items were removed from the Consent Calendar.

H. REPORTS / STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

1. 2026/0804.04 – City Manager/Staff Update (RECEIVE & FILE)

City Manager Knopp reported that five individuals have pulled papers to run in the upcoming November election, noting that pulling papers does not guarantee a candidate will qualify for the ballot. He reported the filing deadline is August 7, 2026, which may extend an additional week for a seat without a qualifying incumbent or sufficient candidate filings. He reported that the State's draft Opportunity Zone 2.0 process, released that day, preliminarily recommends approval of Rio Dell's census tract (which runs from the Van Duzen River south to Redcrest and includes Rio Dell and Scotia) — a positive sign, though not yet a final designation — and thanked City staff and the Economic Development Ad Hoc Committee (Mayor Pro Tem Carter and Mayor Garnes) for their work on the application. He reported that letters of support for the application are due by August 28, 2026. He reported that the City is awaiting a Memorandum of Understanding with Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA) regarding the City's share of funding for a Regional Climate Action Plan coordinator position currently being advertised by RCEA, at an anticipated annual cost to the City of approximately \$4,000 to \$5,000, and that staff will bring the MOU to Council once received.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter had no questions and noted a good month for animal control. Council Member Wilson asked staff to confirm the anticipated cost of the RCEA coordinator position, which City Manager Knopp confirmed was in the \$4,000 to \$5,000 range. Council members thanked City staff, police, and the fire department for their work during Wildwood Days, noting the community looked great and the event went smoothly. No members of the public had questions.

I. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS / STUDY SESSIONS

1. 2026/0804.05 – Presentation and Update from City Engineer (DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION)

City Manager Knopp introduced the item, thanking GHD Inc. and City staff for their work on the City's capital projects. Rebecca Crow, PE, GHD Project Manager, introduced

GHD staff Steven Pearl and Michelle Davidson and presented the City's annual engineering project update.

Eel River Trail Accessible Ramp Project. Ms. Davidson reported that construction of the second, accessible-ramp phase of the Eel River Trail project is underway and expected to be substantially complete by the end of August, pending fabrication and installation of handrails. In response to Council Member Wilson's questions, staff confirmed the project connects the trail constructed last summer to the roadway in an accessible manner and does not involve the adjacent RV park. A member of the public asked about responsibility for litter along the trail; Mayor Garnes noted the question was unrelated to the construction update underway.

Pedestrian Connectivity Project. Mr. Pearl reported that construction funding has been allocated for new sidewalks on the northern portion of Painter Street, the northern portion of Center Street, and the eastern portion of Ireland Street, that the project will go out to bid soon following a final quality-control review, and that construction is anticipated in fall/winter 2026.

Cal OES Damage Repair Projects. Ms. Davidson provided updates on several earthquake-related repair projects: repairs to the Metropolitan Wells well pads are being finalized, with the wells remaining in production; bid documents for the Painter Street Tank project are out, with bid opening scheduled for August 11th; a notice to proceed has been issued for the Fern Street Lift Station repairs, with construction expected to begin in August; and the Chlorine Contact Basin and Infiltration Gallery repairs, whose scopes were combined and reduced following a site condition assessment (resulting in Cal OES budget savings), have been awarded, with the notice to proceed pending confirmation of lead times for FRP baffles and piping.

Water Distribution System Improvement Project. Ms. Davidson reported the project is nearing completion of the originally awarded bid items, with additional hydrants, valves, and pipe sections being added using available loan funding based on City priorities, coordinated with the Water/Roads Superintendent. The new 500,000-gallon water tank at the Douglas site is substantially complete and expected to be placed into service in the coming weeks. Work on the five Highway 101 crossings has gone well, with one pressure test remaining. In response to Council Member Wilson's questions, staff clarified that this project spans locations throughout the City, distinct from the separate Eel River Crossing pipeline project discussed next, and confirmed the contractor will be asked to complete remaining street-plate restoration, hydrant painting, and site cleanup sooner than originally planned.

Eel River Crossing Pipeline Retrofit (Final Design). Ms. Crow reported this FEMA Hazard Mitigation-funded project has remained at 60% design since May 2024 while

under review by Cal OES and FEMA, with Phase 2 funding anticipated within the next few months. Phase 2 funding would cover the remaining design work and 75% of construction costs; the City has a separate funding application pending with the State Water Board for the remaining 25%. The project would directionally drill a new water line beneath the Eel River near Aloha Avenue, replacing the existing pipeline currently suspended from the Eel River bridge and removing the City's backup water supply's reliance on the Caltrans bridge structure, while maintaining the water system's existing resiliency. In response to Council Member Wilson's questions, staff confirmed the existing pipeline on the bridge would be removed once the new line is in service and offered to follow up with project plans showing the new alignment in more detail.

Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Study (SSES) – Accomplishments and Next Steps. Ms. Crow, referencing the contract amendment approved on the Consent Calendar, summarized work completed to date under the SSES, including draft GIS mapping of the sewer collection system, system flow monitoring, pump station analysis, closed-circuit television inspection, calibration and validation of the sewer system model, preliminary design and funding work for the Painter Street sewer line project, and completed disinfection byproduct pilot testing and chlorination system upgrade design. She reported that the State Water Resources Control Board approved a funding amendment for the study, which is 100% grant funded, with remaining funds to be used to complete design of high-priority sewer main replacements identified through the study, in coordination with the Water/Roads Superintendent and Wastewater Superintendent.

Painter Street Sewer Line Replacement – Construction Update. Mr. Pearl reported that the sewer line, constructed in the 1960s, no longer has adequate capacity for the City's growth and has caused repeated sewer overflows at the Painter Street manhole; the City began evaluating solutions in 2018 and was awarded SWRCB construction funding, with construction underway since July. He described the project's design, including a transition manhole with a primary and secondary pipe alignment to manage a wide range of flows without the cost and power limitations of a pump station, and reported the construction crew is working through the treatment plant parcel and adjacent fields toward an anticipated completion by the end of October. Mayor Garnes and Council members thanked the Water/Roads Superintendent, Wastewater Superintendent, and the GHD project team for their work resolving an easement issue and coordinating the project.

No formal action was taken on this item; the Council received the presentation.

2. 2026/0804.06 – Appointment of an Ad Hoc Committee to Review Responses to the Humboldt County Grand Jury Report Related to Law Enforcement Emergency Preparedness (DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION)

City Manager Knopp reported that on June 17, 2026 the Humboldt County Grand Jury released a report titled "Emergency Preparedness: The Role of Local Law Enforcement Agencies," which requires a City response to its findings and recommendations, and recommended the Council appoint up to two Council members to an ad hoc committee to review the response before it returns to the full Council, anticipated to require one or two meetings. Council Member Wilson and Mayor Pro Tem Carter volunteered to serve. By consensus, the Council appointed Mayor Pro Tem Carter and Council Member Wilson to the ad hoc committee; no formal motion was required.

J. SPECIAL CALL ITEMS / COMMUNITY AFFAIRS / PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. 2026/0804.07 – Public Hearing on the Cost Recovery for the Abatement of 530 3rd Avenue (ACTION)

Community Service Officer Mary Clark presented the item, reporting that an abatement warrant was executed at 530 3rd Avenue on April 2, 2026, resulting in removal of a 40-yard dumpster of solid waste, and that the City's cost of the abatement was determined to be \$1,568.41. She reviewed the cost recovery process under Rio Dell Municipal Code Sections 8.10.310 through 8.10.330 and California Government Code Section 38773.5, which requires a public meeting followed by a public hearing, and recommended the Council open the public hearing, receive testimony, discuss the matter, and approve the Findings and Order Confirming Accounts and Assessment.

Mayor Garnes opened the public hearing. There were no questions from the Council, and no members of the public wished to comment. Mayor Garnes closed the public hearing.

ACTION: Motion made and seconded to approve the Findings and Order Confirming Accounts and Assessment for the abatement of 530 3rd Avenue. Motion carried 4-0 (Council Member Orr excused).

K. ORDINANCES / SPECIAL RESOLUTIONS / PUBLIC HEARINGS

No items were presented.

L. COUNCIL REPORTS / COMMUNICATIONS

Mayor Pro Tem Carter:

- Reported the Chamber of Commerce has moved its meetings to Tuesdays, with the next meeting scheduled for August 11th at 6:00 p.m. at the Resource Center.
- Noted the Chamber's ongoing fundraiser, with dinners cooked every Monday at DJ's Burger Bar.

- Reported she will attend the school board meeting on Thursday, August 13th, to seek an additional letter of support for the City's Opportunity Zone 2.0 application.

Council Member Woodall:

- Discussed the process for addressing the residential truck-parking concerns raised during public comment, noting the matter would first be referred to the Nuisance Advisory Committee, which could in turn refer specific issues to the Traffic Committee, with any resulting recommendation returning to the Council. Noted the issue had previously been addressed by the Nuisance Advisory Committee and requested copies of the Traffic Committee's minutes and any related permits, as well as the sections of the Rio Dell Municipal Code and California Vehicle Code addressing commercial vehicle parking, in connection with concerns raised during public comment from staff.

Mayor Garnes:

- Thanked City staff, police, and the fire department for their work during Wildwood Days, describing it as a safe, positive, and well-attended event.
- Thanked the volunteers who supported the Community Garden, calling it a highlight of the year, and thanked the community and staff broadly for a successful event.

M. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Motion to adjourn made by Mayor Pro Tem Carter, seconded by Mayor Garnes.

Motion carried 4–0.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:52PM. The next regular City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 18th, 2026 at 6:00 PM.

APPROVED:

Debra L. Garnes, Mayor

ATTEST:

Jessica Hill, City Clerk