

**RIO DELL CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
AUGUST 1, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Rio Dell City Council was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Garnes.

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

Absent: Councilmember Woodall (excused)

Others Present: City Manager Knopp, Finance Director Sanborn, Wastewater Superintendent Taylor, Chief of Police Allen, Water/Roadways Superintendent Jensen, 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 public comment was received.

**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 Orr/Carter to approve the consent calendar including the following items:

- 1) Approve Minutes of the July 18, 2023 Regular Meeting;
- 2) Adopt Resolution No. 1586-2023 authorizing the City Manager to execute the Certificate of Acceptance for the Eel River Trail easements;
- 3) Approve 2-year service agreement with Peterson Power Systems, Inc. for inspection, annual service, and load bank testing of the City's eight CAT generators in the amount of \$13,591; and
- 4) Authorize the Mayor to execute Letters of Opposition to SB 423 (Wiener) and AB 309 (Lee).

Motion carried 4-0.

**REPORTS/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

City Manager/Staff Update

City Manager Knopp provided highlights of the staff update and said that staff attended a meeting of the Redwood Regional group (RISE) that is working on the framework to distribute new economic development and post COVID 19 recovery funds based on region. Rio Dell is included in the region of Lake, Mendocino, Humboldt and Del Norte counties, with potential for approximately one-half billion dollars being distributed amongst the different regions for area projects. Staff continues to watch that activity and Mayor Garnes will likely be participating in one of the committee groups in terms of making sure there is an equitable distribution of funds.

He also reported that staff has continued conversations with various elected officials regarding earthquake long-term recovery efforts and noted that he will be providing an update tonight on the 2017 storm damage related activity.

He announced that Wildwood Days would be occurring this weekend and extended special thanks to Mayor Pro Tem Carter and Councilmember Woodall for helping to organize the community cleanup day on Saturday.

### **SPECIAL CALL ITEMS/COMMUNITY AFFAIRS/PUBLIC HEARINGS**

#### Receive Staff Update on Monument Road Slip Out

City Manager Knopp provided a brief update on the status of the Monument Road Slip-Out that occurred during the 2017 winter storms. He noted that staff has some late developments with regard to that project which is good news.

He said that it has been a long drawn out process to get the project approved by FEMA. He said that the County of Humboldt is the lead on this project since the slip-out area included areas within the County and the City. Staff had to enlist the support of Congressman Huffman and his staff to help get the project moving forward. As reported to the City Council in the past, staff was concerned about financial exposure to the City since FEMA capped the repair at a specific cost. The project was put out to bid and the bids came back favorable but required final approval by FEMA. This final approval process typically only takes 2 weeks but with this particular project, it is nearing the end of a 60-day period waiting for FEMA approval, which puts the project at risk for being completed before the winter rainy season.

He reported that the City did received information that Congressman Huffman was successful in getting FEMA to complete the approval process. At this point the County will be meeting with the contractor and completing the final environmental approval through FEMA which should be done in a short period of time. From there, they will see where things are with regard to getting the project done before the rainy season. With the long delay in the approval process, staff was concerned that the project would have to go back out to bid but it appears that the project will be moving forward thanks to Congressman Huffman and his staff.

#### Authorize Mayor to sign correspondence to Governor Newsom related to California Department of General Services purchase of real property in City of Rio Dell

City Manager Knopp provided a draft letter to Governor Newsom outlining the City's proposed position on the recent purchase of real property (former 18-acre Todd property) in the City of Rio Dell by the California Department of General Services.

He reiterated that the parcel has long been looked at by the City as a vital location for future mixed-use commercial and residential development.

He referred to the draft letter provided in the agenda packet and provided the Council the opportunity to make any edits to the letter as presented. He noted that the Mayor had a recommended revision to the letter which he provided under separate cover (included with these minutes as Attachment 1). He said that the added language touches back on prior meetings the City had with the governor's office back in 2019, along with other mayors and representatives from the Department of Housing and Community Development discussing housing, knowing how important the issue of housing was to both the governor and the City. It addressed the need to continue working together to solve the housing crisis and to create new economic opportunities.

Councilmember Wilson asked what the City would be accomplishing if Cal Fire simply says that they need the entire 18-acre parcel over the next 100 years.

City Manager Knopp commented that the cheapest, easiest solution for everybody is to apply political pressure to move towards the City's preferred solution which is not in anyway adverse to Cal Fire but is saying that there is a way to split this large parcel of land into three purposes. Hopefully this is the beginning of a conversation as to whether the governor's office would be able to make that happen.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter said that she liked the letter as presented and that there were some excellent points made.

Mayor Garnes thanked staff for making her suggested addition to the letter.

City Manager Knopp stated for the record that there are open and potentially enthusiastic arms with Cal Fire coming to Rio Dell so the letter in no way should be construed as being anti-Cal Fire as an agency or their mission or anything about Cal Fire, but is about the best most efficient use of the land to serve multiple purposes, not just one very important one.

Mayor Garnes said that it would be amazing if the governor could help so that the use of the land is beneficial to everyone and to the economic development of the City.

Motion was made by Carter/Orr to authorize the Mayor to sign correspondence as revised to Governor Newsom related to California General Services purchase of real property in the City of Rio Dell. Motion carried 4-0.

## **COUNCIL REPORTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

Councilmember Orr reported that he attended an HCAOG meeting where they talked about the housing problems in the surrounding area and the low-to-median housing projects in Arcata. He noted that the California Highway Patrol reviewed current projects

including the project at the 299 on ramp. The board also discussed sending a letter of concern regarding the Offshore Wind Heavy Lift Multi-Purpose Marine Terminal Project and whether it will benefit the local area and protect the waterways.

Councilmember Wilson reported that the August HWMA meeting is typically cancelled however, they will be having an August meeting if they have a quorum.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter reported on the volunteer clean-up event on Saturday and said that there was good community engagement with adults and kids of all ages showing up to help.

She also announced that there would be a Chamber of Commerce meeting on Friday with the majority of the meeting being about Wildwood Days. She said that she also attended a RREDC meeting and she pushed Wildwood Days on everyone present. She said that Wildwood Days activities begin on Thursday and continues through the weekend and it is a big deal and hopes to see everyone there.

Mayor Garnes said that she would be attending an HTA meeting tomorrow morning and on August 18, 2023 there would be a Cal Cities division meeting, hosted by the City of Fortuna and invited everyone to come and network with Cal Cities members.

She also encouraged everyone to come out and enjoy all the Wildwood Days activities and encouraged the Council to come to the Fireman's Barbeque on Sunday where the three young men that volunteered after the earthquake will be honored for their service to the community.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Carter/Wilson to adjourn the meeting at 6:54 p.m. to the August 15, 2023 regular meeting. Motion carried 4-0.

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Debra Garnes, Mayor

Attest:

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Karen Dunham, City Clerk