

**RIO DELL CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 15, 2025**

Mayor Garnes called the regular meeting of the Rio Dell City Council to order at 5:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Present - (Closed Session): Mayor Garnes, Mayor Pro Tem Carter, Councilmembers Wilson, Woodall, and City Manager Knopp. Absent was Councilmember Orr (arrived at 5:42 p.m.).

Present – (Regular Meeting): 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, Senior Fiscal Assistant Maciel, Senior Fiscal Assistant Townsend, and City Clerk Dunham

Absent: Finance Director Sanborn, and Wastewater Superintendent Kelly (excused)

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED IN CLOSED SESSION**

Conference with Labor Negotiator – Agency Negotiator: City Manager – Employee Organizations: Rio Dell Employees Association, Rio Dell Police Officers Association, and all Contract Employees Pursuant to §54957

**PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING CLOSED SESSION**

No members of the public were present to comment.

**RECESS INTO CLOSED SESSION**

The Council recessed into a closed session at 5:00 p.m. with City Manager Knopp to discuss the above-listed matter.

The Council reconvened into open session at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Garnes announced that there was nothing to report out of closed session.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS**

Mayor Garnes invited public comment on non-agenda matters. No public comment was received.

**CEREMONIAL MATTERS**

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Proclamation Declaring April 2025 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Mayor Garnes read the proclamation declaring April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Maria Sepulveda from the North Coast Rape Crisis Team was present to accept the proclamation.

She thanked the City Council for presenting the proclamation and provided a brief overview of what the North Coast Rape Crisis Team does. She said that North Coast Rape Crisis Team provides direct support to victims through direct crisis lines and offers peer counseling and educational services as well as financial support to victims and their families. She said that the organization is at risk of losing funding due to state and federal budget cuts and invited everyone to visit their website at [ncrct.org](http://ncrct.org) for more information.

**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/Woodall to approve the consent calendar, including the following items:

- 1) Minutes of the April 1, 2025 Regular Meeting;
- 2) Authorize the City Manager to execute a Contract with Harshwal & Company, LLP to provide auditing services for fiscal years ending June 30, 2025, through June 30, 2030, with a total not to exceed \$129,235;
- 3) Authorize the Finance Director to sign and submit the City's Annual Transportation Development Act (TDA) Claim for FY 2025-26;
- 4) Authorize the City Manager to execute agreements for on-call construction contract agreements with Wendt Construction and RH Construction in coordination with the City Attorney; and
- 5) Receive and file the Check Register for March.

The motion carried 5-0.

**REPORTS/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

City Manager/Staff Update

City Manager Knopp highlighted the staff update and announced that the Nuisance Advisory Committee meeting scheduled for tomorrow was canceled. He then thanked Community Development Director Caldwell for the submission of the grant application to the Wildlife Conservation Board (provided the Council approves the Resolution tonight), for Phase II of the Eel River Trail for the concrete ADA ramp.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter referred to the Animal Control report, noting that 2 dogs and 0 cats were transported to Miranda's Rescue.

Councilmember Woodall thanked Public Works for mowing the Gateway and other areas around town and said it looks great.

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

Provide Direction to Staff Related to a Donation to the Chamber of Commerce for the Cinco de Mayo Celebration at the Scotia Lodge

City Manager Knopp provided a staff report and said that it was requested that the Council agendaize a discussion and action item related to the request of a donation to the Chamber of Commerce for the upcoming Cinco de Mayo celebration. He commented that due to the timing of Cinco de Mayo, this would be the Council's last regularly scheduled meeting before the event, and that staff have no additional information on the proposal or details about the event other than the attached event announcement.

Jim Brickley, Rio Dell-Scotia Chamber of Commerce Vice-President, was present to address the Council. He provided details of the event at the Scotia Lodge on Sunday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. He noted that it would be a family event with a kids zone, games, and a bounce house. The event would be catered by Taco Loco in Fortuna with a Mariachi Band. Admission to the event is \$10 for adults, with kids 12 and under free.

He said that donations were received from the Community Resource Center, the Kiwanis, the Rio Dell Volunteer Fire Department, and others, and asked the City for a donation of \$2,000.

Albert Houghton then asked if the City could provide orange cones to block off reserved parking for the Mariachi Band.

Councilmember Orr asked how the event would directly benefit Rio Dell and Scotia since the catering was coming from Fortuna.

Jim Brickley said that the caterer would be providing meals for 150 guests at \$6/person. The Patron in Rio Dell was contacted however, they quoted a price of \$20/person.

Councilmember Woodall asked if kids unaccompanied by their parents would eat free. She said that she liked the idea of a Cinco de Mayo celebration and appreciated the Chamber of Commerce's effort in organizing the event, but pointed out that the funding for this event was not in the City's current budget.

Mayor Garnes asked how much the Chamber of Commerce was funding toward the event.

Jim Brickley indicated that the Chamber would be contributing \$500 toward the event. He explained that the event is not intended to be a fundraiser but rather a community event to

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honor the Hispanic community. He said that if the event makes a profit, one idea would be to reimburse the City for a portion of the donation.

Mayor Garnes asked if some of the funds could come out of the Christmas decoration budget that the City contributes to the Chamber each year.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter agreed that it might be easier to give up a portion of the Christmas decoration contribution on a reimbursement basis.

City Manager Knopp referred to the draft Grant Agreement prepared by the City Attorney and said that the contribution would need to be as an upfront grant award, but the Chamber would need to comply with all the insurance requirements outlined in the agreement.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter asked if language could be added to the agreement regarding the contribution coming from the next Christmas decoration budget.

City Manager Knopp noted that the City needs to establish policy guidelines for future contributions and said that there may be other organizations willing to donate without all the legalities associated with the City providing funding. He explained that the event must be in the public's best interest and the City Council would need to make certain findings as recited in the agreement.

Mayor Garnes pointed out that the current fiscal year ends on 6/30/25, so the funds budgeted for Christmas decorations are likely expended.

Councilmember Woodall asked what the profit or loss was on the previous St. Patrick's Day Event and the 64 Flood Event.

Jim Brickley reported that the Chamber lost approximately \$110 on the St. Patrick's Day event and had a profit of \$320 on the 64 Flood event.

A motion was made by Carter/Wilson authorizing a \$1,000 donation to the Rio Dell Scotia Chamber of Commerce for the Cinco de Mayo Celebration at the Scotia Lodge as set forth in the terms of the agreement with the Chamber of Commerce and the City of Rio Dell, and to reduce the donation to the Chamber of Commerce for Christmas decorations by \$1,000 in the FY 2025-26 budget.

The motion carried 3-2 with Councilmembers Orr and Woodall dissenting.

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

Second Reading (by title only) and adoption of Ordinance No. 413-2025 Establishing Chapter 8.45 of Title 8 of the Rio Dell Municipal Code (RDMC) Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map of the City of Rio Dell

City Manager Knopp provided a staff report recommending the second reading (by title only) and adoption of Ordinance No. 413-2025, establishing Chapter 8.45 of Title 8 of the Rio Dell Municipal Code (RDMC) Fire Hazard Severity Zone map for the City of Rio Dell.

He said as discussed at the last meeting, jurisdictions have very little discretion on the fire hazard severity designations as presented and cannot contest high-risk designations for a lower risk, only designations to a higher risk.

Mayor Garnes opened a 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 Woodall/Carter to approve the second reading (by title only) and adoption of Ordinance No. 413-2025 Establishing Chapter 8.45 of Title 8 of the Rio Dell Municipal Code (RDMC) Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map of the City of Rio Dell. The motion carried 5-0.

Approve Resolution No. 1631-2025 Authorizing a Grant Application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for Phase II of the Eel River Trail, a Concrete Accessible Ramp

Community Development Director Caldwell provided a staff report recommending approval of Resolution No. 1631-2025 authorizing the submittal of a grant application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for Phase II of the Eel River Trail for a concrete ADA ramp. He reported that the staff person at the Wildlife Conservation Board has been very supportive of the grant application, so hopefully the grant will be awarded.

Councilmember Woodall asked where the ramp would be located.

Community Development Director Caldwell explained the ramp would be installed at the top of Davis Street to the end of the asphalt, approximately 130 ft. in total length, with two switchbacks.

Mayor Garnes opened a 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 approve Resolution No. 1631-2025 Authorizing a Grant Application to the Wildlife Conservation Board for Phase II of the Eel River Trail, a Concrete Accessible Ramp. The motion carried 5-0.

Introduction and First Reading (by title only) of Ordinance No. 414-2025 Amending Section 12.30 of the Rio Dell Municipal Code (RDMC) Pertaining to Trails and Further Establishing Fines

City Manager Knopp provided a staff report recommending approval of the introduction and first reading (by title only) of Ordinance No. 414-2025 amending Section 12.30 of the Rio Dell Municipal Code (RDMC) pertaining to Trails and further establishing fines for misuse of the trail.

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He explained that the City Council approved an ordinance related to regulations for trails at their meeting of February 18, 2025, but since then, there has been some illegal use of motorized vehicles on the trail. As such, the Mayor requested that fines for misuse of the trail be agendaized for the Council's consideration. He commented that there would be signage at the trail to make everyone well aware of the regulations.

City Manager Knopp commented that Chief Phinney would be working with the City Attorney on potential changes to the draft ordinance before its final adoption, related to violations being a misdemeanor rather than an infraction.

Councilmember Orr mentioned a complaint he received related to non-licensed vehicles driving on city streets and asked how the police department planned on enforcing that issue, as well as motorized vehicles on the trail.

Chief Phinney explained that the current language in the proposed ordinance identifies a violation as an infraction which means that an officer would have to witness it and write a citation. Changing it to a misdemeanor means they could use investigative leads to determine who the people are violating the regulations. As far as non-licensed vehicles on public streets, it is a traffic infraction and can be enforced.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter said that there is a problem with dirt bikes in town, but signage should help to take care of some of the problems.

Mayor Garnes commented that it might be wise to budget for a dirt bike so the police department could patrol the river bar and catch violators.

Mayor Garnes opened a 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 Orr/Carter to approve the introduction and first reading (by title only) of Ordinance No. 414-2025 Amending Section 12.30 of the Rio Dell Municipal Code (RDMC) pertaining to Trails and Further Establishing Fines and to continue the item to the May 6, 2025 regularly scheduled City Council meeting for its second reading and adoption.

The motion carried 5-0.

## **COUNCIL REPORTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

Mayor Pro Tem Carter reported on recent meetings and events and said that she attended a Rio Dell School Board meeting where Breanna Taylor was appointed to serve on the Board replacing Faith Hansen. She said that she would be attending the next RREDC meeting on April 28<sup>th</sup> and announced that the Humboldt Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD) meetings would be resuming as of May 12<sup>th</sup> for anyone interested in attending via Zoom.

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Councilmember Orr reported that he would be attending an HCAOG meeting on Thursday.

Councilmember Wilson reported that Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA) is moving from the lower floor of the Wharfinger Building to the upper floor, so the next meeting scheduled for next Thursday, would be held at the Jefferson School.

He also reported that Humboldt Waste Management Authority (HWMA) is going through the process for establishing tipping fees and noted that garbage rates will be increasing slightly.

Councilmember Woodall reported that she has a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) meeting tomorrow, followed by a CERT disaster preparedness training at the Fire Hall on Saturday at 11:00 a.m. She said that related to the Beautification, Walkability, and Pride Committee, she spent most of the weekend planting the Petunia's and placing more flower pots down the median.

Mayor Garnes reported that she testified at a hearing before the State Assembly regarding AB 262 and was allowed to tell her story about Rio Dell and the earthquake disaster recovery efforts. She said that the bill passed the committee and would be moving forward. She said that the impetus of the bill is on the 2022 Rio Dell Earthquake and the City not reaching the threshold for federal assistance.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Carter/Orr to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m. to the May 6, 2025, regular meeting. The motion carried 5-0.

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Debra Garnes, Mayor

Attest:

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Karen Dunham, City Clerk