

City of Tekoa

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, November 20, 2023

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Schulz called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M., Councilmembers*present at the meeting were Dave Tysz, Shelly Ausmus, Mike Hale, B.J. Sperber. Angie Rambo, Mandi Prince and Pete Martin. Clerk-Treasurer Eliza Evans-Teague was present, as well as additional attendees Kyle Dombrowski, Kathi Houston, Hugh and Suzanne Evans, Darlene Pearson, Laurie Shrope, Kevin and Heidi Turnbough, Jennifer Olson, Lydia Fletcher, Margie Jaeger, Matt Morkert, Steve Haxton, Dylan Barker. John Jaeger and Yolanda Bone entered the meeting while it was in progress.

*In the following paragraphs, Councilmember(s) will be abbreviated as: "C."

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Mayor Schulz led in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. AGENDA:** Added Sheriff's contract approval to New Business.
- IV. NOVEMBER 6, 2023, COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES:** C. Rambo moved to accept the November 6, 2023, council minutes. C. Hale seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

V. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

A. DYLAN BARKER RE: VARIANCE: Dylan asked the Council to approve the variance they approved October 16, 2023, for Phil Overton, as he is actually the property owner. C. Ausmus moved to approve the variance for Truax St. allowing a variance to build within 5' of the street, and that would keep them 41' from the pavement. C. Tysz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. COMMUNITY GROUP UPDATES: C. Ausmus let everyone know Small Business Saturday is this coming Saturday with all the usual events and some special ones, too.

C. MATT MORKERT-CENTURY WEST: Matt explained the change order he submitted and the oversight from Century West on the extra rock work required. There was clarification. He reported that the Influent Lift Station is expected to be completed the week of December 4, 2023, while dealing with some ongoing supply line issues. There was an explanation about the outdated lift station and the purpose of the new lift station, with some discussion. C. Tysz moved to approve the change order. C. Martin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously. There was additional discussion. Matt Morkert also presented the amendment for Century West's services. There have been 90 days of field work instead of the original 40 days. There was an explanation and discussion. C. Tysz moved to accept the engineering change order and have Eliza investigate additional income sources. C. Hale seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. There was additional discussion. Matt commented that we will be putting the scrub seal project out for bid in January.

- VI. CORRESPONDENCE:** Mayor Schulz read a letter of resignation from Andy Constancio. There was discussion about finding someone who may already have certifications to do the wastewater treatment plant work.

VII. CONTINUING BUSINESS:

- A. **KEVIN TURNBOUGH: SUPERVISORY COMPENSATION PROPOSAL:** There was discussion about the ramifications of Kevin Turnbough being gone from January-April. There was additional discussion about C. Tysz continuing as the sewer operator. Mayor Schulz suggested that Duane Groom would be willing to plow on occasion if he was doing the sewer operations. There was consensus that the council would prefer not to pay Kevin benefits while he is gone, especially as the city will need to pay someone else to be here for sewer operations. C. Ausmus suggested that the city hire someone who has some certifications. There was additional discussion. C. Tysz asked for feedback. Kyle Dombrowski suggested that talking to employees would be expedient. Steve Haxton said that finding people is not going to be easy at the wages we are offering. John Jaeger asked whether we could find someone at \$60,000/year? C. Tysz offered that other cities are offering approximately \$45/hr. to get someone with certifications. There was discussion about current wages for such positions. There was additional discussion, and the council would like to hear Duane's proposal before they make a decision. C. Ausmus moved to not approve paying benefits for Kevin while he is gone. C. Martin seconded the motion. There was discussion. Kyle Dombrowski asked about losing Kevin permanently over \$2800. There was discussion. C. Sperber asked to have Kevin give them another proposal. Councilmembers Hale, Rambo & Sperber voted against the motion and Councilmembers Martin, Tysz, Prince and Ausmus voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. **SHERIFF'S CONTRACT APPROVAL:** Mayor Schulz presented the contract. The contract includes a 2% increase this coming budget year (2024) and 2% increase the following year (2025). C. Sperber moved to accept the contract. C. Hale seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.
- B. **FINAL BUDGET HEARING:** There was some discussion about budget items. C. Ausmus offered some overtime information from MRSC. C. Hale offered that MRSC directed the issue back to the city's attorney. C. Ausmus confirmed that the council can cap overtime hours. She clarified the budget figures for 2023 and going into 2024. There was discussion about sewer rates and whether they should be raised to meet possible hardship requirements for funding the sewer plant. C. Tysz mentioned that we may be able to get additional funds as Tekoa is in the Hangman Creek watershed, and the State of Washinton is prioritizing the cleaning up of the Hangman Creek watershed. John Jaeger commented on the initial project requirements of raising sewer rates. There are many factors that will determine the hardship factor as the planning gets underway. C. Tysz suggested waiting another year. The council will revisit this issue next year.
- C. **KYLE DOMBROSKI:** Kyle Dombroski mentioned he was not given the due courtesy a constituent deserves during his time to speak at the previous meeting. He brought up a few points about observing the rules. Kyle made comments about how things should be done in an impartial way. C. Ausmus apologized for cutting him off when he was speaking at the previous meeting.
- D. **COMMUNITY CENTER:** Mandi Prince read a statement about her questions on the community center at the last meeting. Mayor Schulz answered Mandi Prince's issues. Kyle Dombroski contested Mandi Prince's version of the events. C. Ausmus contested the mayor disagreeing with

Mandi's version of the story. C. Tysz asked the mayor questions. There was extensive discussion about previous discussions. C. Ausmus said she believes that all issues are about salaries, and she would like to see the town unified. C. Rambo would also like to see the town unified. There was additional information discussed. C. Sperber thinks Roy should not come to a council member's place of work to discuss city business, even to set an appointment. C. Ausmus suggested we do what Palouse has done. There was continuing conversation and C. Sperber suggested that if no walkthrough is made after a community center event, the deposit is returned. The mayor apologized if it wasn't convenient for C. Prince, and she clarified that she hadn't understood what the meeting was about.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION: The mayor announced the council would go to executive session for 10 minutes regarding possible property acquisition at 8:35 P.M. The council came out of executive session at 8:43 P.M.

X. REPORTS:

A. MAYOR'S REPORT: None.

B. CLERK/TREASURER REPORT: Port of Whitman sent an update memo about their project west of town and Eliza Evans-Teague included it in the councilmembers' packets.

C. COUNCIL REPORTS: C. Hale has a meeting with the Port of Whitman on Dec. 4 about the city match for the airport project. C. Tysz reported he will continue with the research about the blue containers on Crosby St. C. Martin reported on the yellow parking strip by the new building on Crosby's garage door and noted that the sidewalk will likely need to be modified. C. Rambo reported on the EV station. There are some locals who are using the EV charging station. She would like to make sure it is not abused. There was some discussion about policies and how to manage that. C. Rambo likes the reader board sign. It is hard to read. C. Rambo has enjoyed her time as a councilmember. C. Ausmus wanted to know about the Keegan building. The mayor stated that now that the ownership of the next-door building has changed, Denise Keegan and the new owner will work it out. C. Ausmus read a statement about council meetings and the mayor's role and hopes for going forward.

E. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE: Kyle Dombroski reminded the council about re-voting about the sewer supervisor role. There was discussion. C. Tysz said he would give up the supervisory position if Duane wanted to go forward. John Jaeger would like to have everyone working. He would like to see many council members involved in hiring. Yolanda Bone commented as she heard many comments about the Community Center process re: the high school. She spoke about the process. She clarified that Mandi Prince had asked her about the process, the city had included the checklist, and there was some difficulty in the process as there were misunderstandings. There was no walkthrough. Kyle Dombroski read the part of the ethics handbook that said the mayor oversees the administration of the city and of the everyday running of the city.

XI. PAY THE BILLS: C. Tysz moved to pay payroll EFTs and checks 16810-16830 and payroll EFTs and checks 16831-16862. C. Hale seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XII. ADJOURNMENT: C. Tysz moved to adjourn the meeting. C. Ausmus seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. Mayor Schulz adjourned the meeting at 9:08 P.M.

APPROVED:

Roy Schulz - Mayor

ATTEST:

Eliza M. Evans-Teague– Clerk/Treasurer