

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

March 8, 2022, 7:00 p.m. at City Hall, 100 W Halsey St., Halsey, OR

**This hybrid meeting was also conducted as a teleconference, with external participation available via phone or video link.*

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Jerry Lachenbruch, Councilor Jerry Gillson, Council President Ken Lorensen, Councilor Stacy Strauss, Councilor Michelle Isom, Councilor Randy McMillen

Absent: Councilor Christine Raven

Staff Present: City Administrator Hilary Norton, Assistant City Recorder Larissa Gangle

Guests: Michael Grove, Debra Gruell, Brian White, TJ Gillson, Gena Wetherett, Tia Parrish, Holly Parrish, Sergeant Beth Miller, Anne Sunday, Corey Gladwin

Remote

Participants: Public Works Andy Ridinger, Robert Winthrop (PSU), Kyle Gangle

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CONSENT AGENDA

Council Meeting Minutes – February 8, 2022

Motion: I move that the Governing Body of the City of Halsey approve the business items in the consent agenda as submitted.

Motion by: Councilor McMillen, Seconded by Council President Lorensen

Vote:

Ayes: Unanimous

Motion Carries

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Council reviewed the Financial Reports and Journal Entries for February 2022.

The February Financial Report includes approving check numbers 19563-19613 in the amount of \$68,588.67. The prior month's final check number was 19562.

Motion: I move that the Governing Body of the City of Halsey approve the February 2022 Financial Reports and Journal Entries as submitted.

Motion by: Councilor Strauss, Seconded by Council President Lorensen

Vote:

Ayes: Unanimous

Motion Carries

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

There were no agenda adjustments

DELEGATIONS

Linn County Sheriff's Office-Sergeant Beth Miller

Both the January and February monthly reports were reviewed, as a representative from LCSO not being able to attend the February Council Meeting. There is a seasonal deputy that has been assigned to south county, which has resulted in increased patrol in the Halsey area. Deputy Jacob Randall, Halsey's assigned deputy, has been diligent with traffic. Senate Bill 1510 has passed, which will prohibit pulling drivers over for lighting violations. Theft incidences; including burglaries, vehicle break-ins, and vehicle theft increased area wide in the month of February. A detective has been assigned to conduct a "sweep" beginning in the North part of Linn County to bring the individuals that are responsible for the theft crimes into custody.

-A question was asked about what violations can justify a traffic stop, since lighting violations no longer qualify. A driver can still be pulled over for lighting if lack thereof is causing a safety issue, such as no headlights or not using a turn signal.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Sharing Hands Request

Debra Gruell, the Executive Director for Sharing Hands, has presented a written request for a Community Partners Donation from the City of Halsey. She appeared before Council to thank them for the appliance donation in 2021, and to explain the current happenings and financial situation at Sharing Hands.

Motion: I move that the Governing Body of the City of Halsey approve a donation in the amount of \$500 to Sharing Hands.

Motion by: Council President Lorensen , Seconded by Councilor McMillen

Vote:

Ayes: Unanimous

Motion Carries

Sweet Home Sanitation-Michael Grove

Mr. Grove presented Sweet Home Sanitation's proposed rate increase of 4.94% to Council. This increase is consistent with the annual CPI (Consumer Price Index) as established in Ordinance 2019-429.

-Mayor Lachenbruch voiced a concern regarding the quality of Sweet Home Sanitation's customer service when contacted regarding charges for extra bags on his and other Halsey Resident's bills.

-Council President Lorensen also mentioned concerns regarding extra charges that he felt were unjustified for a slightly elevated container lid, as well as a concerns about cans being compressed by the arms on the trucks when they are picked up to be dumped, resulting in a lesser maximum capacity. Mr. Grove stated that SHS is working on obtaining new cans that are more rigid to try to remedy the issue.

Motion: I move that the Governing Body of the City of Halsey approve the 2022-23 Sweet Home Sanitation rates

Motion by: Councilor Gillson, Seconded by Councilor Isom

Vote:

Ayes: Unanimous

Motion Carries

Appoint Budget Committee Member

The Council was asked to consider a Budget Committee Application from Jennie Lorensen. Mrs. Lorensen was the sole applicant for the vacant position. Council President Ken Lorensen recused himself from the discussion and vote.

Motion: I move that the Governing Body of the City of Halsey appoint Jennie Lorensen to the Budget Committee

Motion by: Councilor Isom, Seconded by Councilor Strauss

Vote:

Ayes: Unanimous

Motion Carries

Compensation Study Review

The Compensation Study from PSU (Portland State University) is complete and was submitted to the Council for review. Administrator Norton provided a summary of the study process and findings. Robert Winthrop of PSU was in remote attendance to answer questions about the report.

The Study shows two part-time positions and one full time position considerably under market value, and two full time positions above. Employees that are currently being paid above market value according to the study would be advanced to the appropriate of step on the new scale to avoid a reduction in wage, and would be capped at a lower maximum rate of pay.

-Councilor Gillson asked for clarification regarding the lowest hourly rate currently being paid, as he understood that it was under minimum wage. Administrator Norton clarified that no employee is being paid less than minimum wage, but that step one for two positions starts below minimum wage on the current wage scale.

-Council President Ken Lorensen asked Administrator Norton if City income has kept pace with the increase in the Consumer Price Index. CA Norton stated that the City's income does not fluctuate as much due to inflation like the CPI does, and that the City's finances are stable and able to accommodate the proposed increases to the two part-time positions.

-Councilor Isom asked why discussion pertaining to wages is not discussed in an executive session. Administrator Norton stated that the topic is public information and does not qualify for an executive session.

-Councilor McMillen stated that he had a potential conflict of interest before voicing his concerns regarding the proposed wage scale, specifically the two positions that are over market value according to the wage study. He suggested that those employees be "grandfathered" into their current wage scale to avoid a reduction in pay in the long run due to a reduced capped wage, and that any new hires for those two positions be hired at the proposed lower scale.

-Councilor Gillson inquired about the cost of the compensation study. Administrator Norton stated that she has not received the final invoice but estimated that the cost was around \$6,000.

2022-2023 Wage Scale

The proposed 2022-23 wage scale was presented to Council for review. Proposed amendments included adjustments to bring all positions in line with market value according to the Rate Study, as well as a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).

-City Administrator asked if Council would like her to amend the proposed wage scale to keep the two positions that are currently above market value at their current rate and keep all other positions at the proposed rates. This would be in lieu of creating two separate wage scales to accommodate Councilor McMillen's request. There was a consensus amongst Council.

-Councilor Lorensen asked Council their opinions regarding negotiating a contract for the City Administrator. Administrator Norton provided a summary of the benefits of a contract for both the City and the Administrator. There was discussion. There was consensus amongst Council to remove the City Administrator from the wage scale and pursue negotiating a contract.

Motion: I move that the Governing Body of the City of Halsey approve the proposed 2022-2023 Wage Scale with amendments to remove the City Administrator from the scale and keep the Assistant City Recorder and Utility Worker I Positions at the rate of the current scale.

Motion by: Councilor McMillen, Seconded by Council President Lorensen

Vote:

Ayes: Councilor Isom, Council President Lorensen, Councilor Strauss,
Councilor McMillen

Nays: Councilor Gillson

Motion Carries

Declare Surplus Property

Council was asked to consider approving a list of surplus property to be sold or donated.

Motion: I move that the Governing Body of the City of Halsey declare the items in the attached list to be surplus property.

Motion by: Councilor McMillen, Seconded by Councilor Stacy Strauss

Vote:

Ayes: Unanimous

Motion Carries

REPORTS TO COUNCIL

City Administration-Administrator Hilary Norton

- Website Update- Revize was selected to design a new website for the City. This process generally takes 3-4 months.
- IT Request for Proposals (RFP)-Five proposals for IT support were received. The top proposals will be interviewed, and a decision will be made by mid-March
- REAL (MVP) Update- The Mid Valley Partnership has been renamed the Rural Economic Alliance. Marketing materials and a website are currently in development. The group has decided to apply for a RARE member to assist with various duties and projects. The City continues to partner with RAIN in a reduced capacity.
- Cascades West Regional Consortium (CWRC) Report- The Cascades West Regional Consortium received a \$130,000 grant from Business Oregon to conduct a wetlands mitigation feasibility study for our region, specifically to evaluate the feasibility of forming a publicly owned wetlands mitigation bank, which could provide mitigation credits at a reduced cost. The RFP process is complete, and the Consortium has chosen a contractor to work with.

- State Surplus Haul- The office has been reorganized in order to create an additional workspace for a prospective RARE Student. State Surplus had an overstock of furniture, and the City received several pieces of furniture for free to aid in the reorganization project.
- Statements of Economic Interest (SEI)- Council will soon receive emails from the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (OGEC) about the annual SEI. The deadline to complete the SEI is April 15th.
- No Budget Orientation Since there are very few new members, there will be no Budget Committee Orientation this year.
- Municipal Clerk Resignation- Municipal Clerk Laurie Eastridge has resigned from her position, effective immediately as of March 7th. Administrator Norton asked Council permission to consider applicants from the recent Library applicant pool, rather than posting for the position. This could potentially save staff time and enable a quicker hiring process. Councilor McMillen stated that he would prefer the position be posted, as there may be a larger pool of applicants who may not have necessarily applied for the Librarian job.
 - o Guest and former Halsey Librarian TJ Gillson stated that she felt many of the skills that a Librarian possesses would easily transfer over into an office setting.

Public Works-Administrator Hilary Norton (Public Works Lead Andy Ridinger was present remotely but was experiencing technical difficulties).

- Well 69- Information was gathered from the engineering firm regarding the next steps to take in the process of repairing or replacing the well.
- Lagoon- The composite sampler located at the lagoon began to have issues this month. Oregon Association of Water Utilities (OAWU) assisted with getting it up and running again. The lagoon road was graded in preparation for fresh gravel. Councilor McMillen suggested that it is possible that a replacement battery for the composite sampler could remedy the loss of power issue. An algae bloom occurred at the lagoon this month. There was discussion about the possibility of installing an aeration system at the lagoon, but Councilor McMillen stated that he believes that adding that system would require a level two certification.
- Drainage- Ditches and culverts were cleaned in a few areas of town. An area on West 4th St. was excavated to diagnose drainage issues. A collapsed pipe and pipe elevation discrepancies were identified as the sources of the issue. Two hundred feet of new pipe will be installed in the area.
- City Hall Projects- Several wood pieces, including cabinets, shelving, and closet doors are being sanded and finished as part of the City Hall office reorganization/upgrade.
- Utility Work in Town- NW Natural is close to completing their work in town to move their lines in preparation for the upcoming Highway 99 Project.

Library-Administrator Norton

- New Librarian Hired- Sara Cunningham-Cooper has accepted the Librarian position. Her first day was March 8th.
- Library Heat Pump- The heater at the Library has failed and is not worth repairing financially. A grant has been submitted to the Siletz Tribal Charitable Contribution Fund to possibly help fund a new heating and cooling system for the building. Other funding possibilities include the Central Linn Community Foundation and the Ford Family Foundation Trust. Currently space heaters are being used to keep the space comfortable.
- Free Books- Former Municipal Clerk Laurie Eastridge attended The Corvallis “Friends of the Library” Book Sale on Sunday, February 27th. Small libraries in the surrounding areas were invited to take as many “free” books as they wanted. Forty-three books and two new audio books were added to our inventory.

Council Priorities Quarterly Report-Administrator Norton

- Water System Improvements- GSI Water Solutions has been hired to evaluate the well, equipment, and aquifer. They will provide repair or replacement options for Well 69. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds should be able to be used for the repair/replacement.
- Building Repairs & Facility Improvements-
 - o Oregon Association of Water Utilities (OAWU) was able to provide recommendations for maintenance tracker software.
 - o The fuel tanks at the shop are on hold until there is more information on what needs to be done with Well 69.
 - o The new Community Center electronic sign location may interfere with the Highway 99 Project. The sign project is on hold until after the highway project is complete.
- Wastewater Treatment and Sewer I&I Improvements-The I&I Report will be complete by June 2022. Civil West Engineering will be conducting the camera work this spring.
- Financial Stewardship-
 - o City revenue has not been as heavily impacted by COVID as was budgeted for. Property tax and utility revenue have held steady.
 - o It is anticipated that an upgrade to the Utility Billing software will fit into the budget for the coming fiscal year.

- RARE Program Participant- The application for the RARE member has been submitted. A grant application has been submitted to the Ford Family Foundation for possible assistance with the match.
- Emergency Response Plan- This project will be assigned to the RARE Student. The RARE Program has access to materials and information that will help them with this.
- Halsey Park Improvements- The RARE Member will also be working on this project.
- Vehicle Replacements
 - o A ditch mower should fit into the budget for the next fiscal year.
 - o Nearby cities will be contacted to see if there is interest in an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) to share a manlift.
- Improve Street Maintenance
 - o An RFP (Request for Bids) will be put out in the next two months for the East B Street repair.
 - o Stop signs, traffic signs, and budgeting for additional street maintenance are ongoing.
- Council Leadership & Community Engagement- This was a question for Council to discuss their ideas to implement this goal. Multiple ideas were discussed, including Council involvement in the weekly coffee & donuts group, family-oriented events to bring in families with children, and partnering with the Library for events. There would be Council presence at these events to engage with the community.

Administrator Norton asked permission from Council to lift the mask mandate as of March 11th in accordance with state guidelines, as well as hold the city-wide garage sale. There was consensus amongst Council. She also stated that the Spring Clean-Up Day with Sweet Home Sanitation will return to its pre-COVID curbside format.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Assistant City Recorder, Larissa Gangle

Mayor Jerry Lachenbruch