



**CITY OF HOQUIAM
Council Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Winkelman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmember Thornton led the flag salute.

ROLL CALL

Those in attendance were Mayor Winkelman and Councilmembers Brooks, Carlstrom, Davis, Hinchey, Larsen, Nelson, Pauley, Puvogel, Reid, Smith and Thornton. Absent from the meeting was Councilmember Anderson.

Staff in attendance were Police Chief Joe Strong, Fire Chief Matt Miller, City Attorney Steve Johnson, City Administrator Brian Shay, Finance Director Corri Schmid and Council Secretary Tracy Wood.

COMMUNICATION

Adopt a Drain

The Grays Harbor Conservation District were scheduled to present a program called "Adopt A Drain" but were not in attendance. It will be rescheduled for a future date.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilmember Brooks moved to approve Consent Agenda items a and b as presented. His motion was seconded. Those items appearing on the Consent Agenda were as follows:

- The City Council Minutes of January 10, 2024;
- The Regulatory Committee report recommending approval and payment of claim check numbers 102269 through 102614 in the amount of \$2534259.00; claim auto pays and EFTs numbers 683 through 690 in the amount of \$163,296.64; payroll check numbers 30704 through 30727 in the amount of \$210,294.19; payroll ACH and EFT's in the amount of \$506,367.03 and \$260,808.76 respectively;

The motion for the approval of the consent agenda passed by voice vote.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee on Committees
2024 Council Committee
Assignments

The Committee on Committee's consisting of Councilmembers Brooks, Puvogel and Thornton mad the following 2024 Committee Assignments:

Public Utilities:

Councilmember Anderson, Interim Chair
Councilmember Carlstrom



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Councilmember Hinchey
Councilmember Smith
Councilmember Puvogel

Watershed Committee:

Councilmember Anderson, Interim Chair
Councilmember Smith
Councilmember Davis
Councilmember Nelson
Councilmember Larsen

Regulatory Committee:

Councilmember Pauley, Interim chair
Councilmember Carlstrom
Councilmember Puvogel
Councilmember Reid
Councilmember Thornton

Public Safety Committee:

Councilmember Reid, Interim chair
Councilmember Hinchey
Councilmember Davis
Councilmember Nelson
Councilmember Pauley

Councilmember Brooks moved to accept the committee assignments for 2024 as presented. His motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

OFFICER REPORTS

Tree Planting Bids

The City made a formal call for bids to plant approximately 51,900 seedlings across 173 acres of harvested timberlands. Two bids were received as follows: Four Seasons forestry - \$35,950 and Mt. St. Helens Reforestation, Inc. - \$30,102. Staff recommends that the Council award the contract to Four Seasons Forestry as the apparent low bidder. Councilmember Puvogel moved to approve the staff recommendation and award the bid and his motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

MAYOR REPORTS

Mayoral Appointments

Mayor Winkelmann made the following appointments to City Boards and Commissions:

Library Board - Christine Lauder;



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Urban Forestry Board – new appointments of Autumn Melvard and Jason Still; reappointment of Rick Strom;
Historic Preservation – reappointment of Jim Larrison, John Larson, Al Gozart and Micky Thurman;
Revitalization Ad Hoc Committee (this Committee is being formed as an advisory committee) – Chris Frye, Buck Giles, Councilmembers Carlstrom and Larsen.

The Committee assignments will be posted to the City website. Staff is working at getting more updates to the site done this week. There is also information to help answer some of the questions citizens have had. In the meantime if you need information or copies of the code, etc., please ask.

Freeze Earlier This Month

Many people experienced broken pipes during the last cold weather event. One concern is what the water bill is going to look like after losing water from the break, especially if you weren't home when the break occurred. Many people couldn't get professional help to their homes, etc. so some water was lost. There is a code to address this type of situation. It is important for people to read that. If you make repairs, show that those repairs were done, you can get a discount once it is completed. This applies to any utility user, citizens or businesses.

**Recent Public Meeting –
Commercial Pellet
Manufacturer**

DOE recently held a Public Meeting regarding a possible Commercial Pellet Manufacturer locating in our Community. This would be relevant to some of the public comments made about utility costs. When we bring a new company into the community we hope it is a good employer, environmentally friendly and they pay into our tax base. We encourage people to continue to support that type of production in our community. These types of businesses will support our utilities, road system, etc.

Sand Bag Station

The Sand Bag station has been refreshed behind Fire Department. Staff has been asked to make sure that is taken care of.

**Keyless Entry – Security
System**

The contractor is still working on the keyless entry and Councilmembers will be issued new cards once that is complete. If you have questions work with Corri and Tracy.



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Ad Hoc Committee

We have another year ahead. The mayor stated that he wants to make sure the stake force task force is an active one to benefit what is happening in our community. This is a problem across the country, not just Hoquiam. He asked council to remain cognizant on that and have hope to make our community what we want it to be. When answering questions, make sure you are giving them accurate information.

COUNCIL REPORTS

COG Meeting

Councilmember Pauley attended his first COG meeting. The transit system will be replacing twenty bus shelters in the next five years. There will be a 5% increase starting in May. Groundbreaking for the new T-4 will be soon and another item brought up is a full repave of the port road from Hoquiam to Aberdeen.

LEGAL BUSINESS

Other Legal

Amendment to Mental Health
Services Grant with Grays
Harbor County

Included in the Council packet was an amendment to the 2023 Agreement between the County and City of Hoquiam for increasing access to Mental Health services. This amendment adds grant funding and extends the end date to June 2024. Councilmember Puvogel moved to authorize the amendment and his motion was seconded. Funding is OPIOD funding that the County received, which helps fund the smaller city's needs. Following a brief discussion, the motion passed by voice vote.

Watershed Road Use
Agreement - Rayonier

Included in the Council packet was a Watershed Road Use Agreement between the city and Rayonier Operating Company, LLC. Councilmember Brooks moved to sign the agreement and his motion was seconded. Councilmember Smith stated that it seems like the agreement is to the advantage of Rayonier. Mr. Shay stated that we have road agreements on occasion. Rayonier will be responsible for payment for use of the road and value of any trees removed. Councilmember Smith asked if there were any ecological impacts. Mr. Shay stated the agreement lists what they can do and can't do. Council asked who patrols the area to make sure these items are being followed. Mr. Shay stated that the City Forester would approve the road improvements. The Sheriff's office would answer any calls for other issues. Councilmember Hinchin asked if there were any waterlines, etc. since they will be building roads. Staff stated there are none. It was also asked if this would increase logging traffic through our downtown.



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Staff stated it should not be anything more than what is usual for a regular year. Following the discussion the motion to authorize the agreement passed by voice vote.

EMS Service Rates – Fire
District 10

Included in the Council packet was an Ambulance Services Agreement between the City of Hoquiam and Grays Harbor Fire District 10 to contract for services for ambulance services from the City of Hoquiam. This agreement sets the per call fee to \$590.50 for any time city ambulances/personnel respond to the District. Councilmember Puvogel moved to authorize signing the agreement and his motion was seconded. Staff commented that they appreciated Fire District 10 for being the first to reach out to the city. Their commissioners understand the need for the increase. A brief discussion followed on how many other districts there were (five) and that the fee is consistent with each of the districts. The motion to approve passed by voice vote.

NEW BUSINESS
2024 Appointments

Councilmember Puvogel moved to confirm the 2024 committee and board appointments and his motion was seconded. A brief discussion regarding the library board followed after which the motion to approve passed by voice vote.

Councilmember Hinchey-
City Funding

Councilmember Hinchey stated the following: He would like an efficiency expert or consulting firm who specializes in Business Operations to come into the city to look at our operations and see where we can save some money. It is his belief and more importantly the belief of many of the citizens that the City is spending beyond its means or at least can be operating more efficiently. Per the 2022 census, the average household income for residents in the city was \$47,614 and considering we just gave significant raises to our administrative employees which puts them making above the \$100,000 mark, it is really embarrassing. Maybe the firm will find that we can operate with less employees, or it might be as simple as limiting overtime and/or offering comp time or some other type of compensation for these “valued employees. He doesn’t know what the 3rd party would find or what exactly what the city can be doing better. It is clear to him and the great people of Hoquiam that something needs to happen and needs to happen quickly. The City cannot continue to keep raising the bills on our people without knowing we are doing our very best to



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protect them and their dollar. He is asking the council to approve a resolution that would have a third party come to the city and look into all facets of the operations and find where we can be more fiscally responsible. This should be led by an advisory board comprised of a few citizens and a few councilmembers. This would ensure that we are asking the right questions and are getting results led by the people and not by people who have ulterior motives. Councilmember Hinchin moved to have the Regulatory Committee review this and see if it is feasible to hire a firm. His motion was seconded. Councilmember Thornton asked what the cost range would be for this. Councilmember Puvogel stated that the salary ordinance was brought before the council and was voted on. He understands people are upset. Maybe we could see if the auditor can help with some of this. There were hearings held on the utility rate study – which were open to anyone. Following further discussion, the motion to send this to the Regulatory Committee for their review passed by voice vote.

Excuse Absent Member

Councilmember Thornton moved to excuse the absent member and her motion was seconded, passed by voice vote.

Public Safety Committee

Councilmember Reid announced that the Public Safety Committee will meet on February 12th at 6:00 p.m. in the council chambers.

PUBLIC COMMENT

GH Fire District #6

Tim Spradlin, 177 US HWY 101, Hoquiam, stated he wanted to express his frustration and also frustration of other fire districts over the proposed raise in ambulance transportation fees. He lived in Hoquiam for many years, his parents lived here, and he volunteered for the city for 6 plus years. He started GH Fire District 6 and his concern is the increase of costs that we are all facing trying to make the Government work. One of these fire districts, fire district #8, is larger than the city of Hoquiam! Fire Districts 4, 6, 7, 16, 8 and 10 met last Wednesday to discuss what the Districts could do to. They hoped the City would give them some time other than 20 days to have a signed contract. Is there a way to come up with some type of budget to cover the increase? Sometimes the ambulance comes out checks people out and leaves, other times its more serious and the ambulance is needed. In 2005 the maximum fee was \$11,000. Now it has increased to over



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\$37,000. The District has paid the city nearly \$400,000 for that period. He's had discussion with Fire District #10 and they along with everyone else are concerned. They may have signed their contract but they would probably want to review other options. The budgets are already fixed for 2024 and they don't have additional funds to cover this.

Broadway Avenue

Julie Minsker, Broadway Avenue, Hoquiam. She asked what the plans were for Broadway Avenue to be repaired. She is concerned that someone is going to get injured by debris in the road. She knows funding is an issue but wanted to bring it to the attention of the City.

ADJOURN

Councilmember Puvogel moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 p.m. His motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

BEN WINKELMAN – MAYOR

TRACY WOOD – COUNCIL SECRETARY