

# City Council Meeting Minutes

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THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2015

CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

CITY OF COLUMBIA CITY, COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

**AGENDA ITEM 1**      **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:**

**CONVENED:**

Mayor Young called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Young delivered the invocation and led the flag salute.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mayor Cheryl A. Young  
Councilor Sally Ann Marson  
Councilor Josh Fromm  
Councilor Nell Harrison

**COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Councilor Gordon Thistle

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Micah Rogers, Public Works Superintendent  
Leahnette Rivers, City Administrator/Recorder

**ATTORNEY PRESENT:**

None

A quorum was present and due notice had been published.

**AGENDA ITEM 2**      **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**2.1      Public Hearing: To hear public testimony about a proposal to authorize a loan under the Clean Water State Revolving Fund loan program. The loan will not exceed \$351,000 and the interest rate will be 1.93% per annum. The loan will be subject to an annual loan fee equal to 0.5% of the outstanding principal. The loan will be payable over a period of twenty years.**

Public Hearing opened.

Joe Turner of 2920 Sixth Street said 1.93% for a municipal loan is high. He said he can get a loan for a house at 2.25% and a car loan for 2.49%. He said he thinks it is because the City's debt load is too high. He said telemetry is a luxury that the City does not need. He said the City should be paying for improvements with cash and not borrowing money. He said at some point in time we need to stop and figure out what we are doing instead of just completing project after project. He said the citizens were told that the last project would stabilize the pressure, and now we are planning on horsepower upgrades. He said we are just spending money and it doesn't make sense. He said when the citizens vote something down, the City just puts it on the next ballot and keeps pushing it. He said this last water project was a failure - the contractor never even finished it. He said during his career, he made sure the contractors performed or he got rid of them, and he is just not impressed. He said he lost his phone service for months during this last project. He said

the City is going to have problems with this cellular based telemetry system. He submitted three pages of written testimony in opposition of the project.

Ray Cliff of 3005 Seventh Street said the City is looking at borrowing funds, and it should accurately provide its customers with comparative information about the cost of water between the different communities. He said he has had a difficult time finding that information, and he believes we have very high rates.

Leahnette noted that this public hearing is related to a sewer project loan, not a water project loan, and these loan funds will be repaid with sewer revenues. Leahnette agreed that we do have rather high water rates, and said the City's budget contains some comparative rate information. She said the City is a bedroom community, and the customer base is nearly all residential, which leaves the residents with nearly the full burden of the system operations and infrastructure costs, while most communities share those costs with a large industrial and commercial user base.

Ray asked if the new wells ever reduced our rates like predicted, and asked what our rates would be if we had just continued purchasing water from St. Helens.

Leahnette said the new wells were projected to be the most cost effective approach. She said she does not know what the rates would be now if we had relied solely on water from St. Helens.

Public Hearing closed.

**AGENDA ITEM 3**

**CITIZEN INPUT:**

None.

**AGENDA ITEM 4**

**COUNCIL REPORTS:**

**4.1 Parks Committee:** Chair Marson said the Veterans Park is really looking nice, and a lot of volunteers have been working to spruce it up for the Dedication Ceremony. She said Harvard Park is also quite beautiful right now.

**4.2 Water and Sewer Committee:** Leahnette said the Surety Company's new contractor just finished the punch list last week, so the project is wrapping up.

**4.3 Street Committee:** Chair Marson said the crack seal work has been completed, and the crew's been out fixing one thing after another.

**4.4 Audit Committee:** Secretary Harrison said the Committee met earlier this month to complete the review of the first quarter.

**4.5 Hazard Mitigation Planning Group:** Member Fromm said the Team has selected the topic "Grab and Go" for the emergency preparedness fair, and he has suggested the Chief invite some cool law enforcement DARE cars to the event to tie in with the car show.

**4.6 Other Reports:** Councilor Marson said Hudson Garbage Service will be asking for a very minimal pass-through increase related to a transfer station rate increase in the near future. She said CC Rider is looking forward to participating in the transportation of people to and from the Dedication Ceremony.

**AGENDA ITEM 5**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**5.1 Financial reports for the period ending April 30, 2015.**

**5.2 Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting on April 2, 2015.**

**5.3 Resignation from retiring City Attorney Harold L. Olson effective May 1, 2015.**

Leahnette suggested the Consent Agenda be amended to strike item 5.2

MOVED (FROMM), SECONDED (MARSON) AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA AS AMENDED.

**AGENDA ITEM 6**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**6.1 Second reading of Council Bill No. 15-752; Ordinance No. 15-690-O: An Ordinance declaring the City's election to receive State Revenues.**

The Council completed the second reading of Council Bill No. 15-752.

MOVED (MARSON), SECONDED (HARRISON) AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL NO. 15-752.

**AGENDA ITEM 7**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**7.1 Council Bill No. 15-753; Resolution No. 15-1140-R: A Resolution declaring the City's authority to obtain a loan under the Clean Water State Revolving Fund Program for the completion of a Sewer Improvements Project.**

Leahnette explained that in 2013 the City developed an updated Water Master Plan and an updated Wastewater Facilities Plan, and those plans contain a long list of necessary improvement projects that we are supposed to implement during the next 20-years. She said we plan to complete improvement projects in water and sewer nearly every year. She said we also hired a rate consultant, and he completed a Water and Sewer Rate Analysis that took into account the costs of those improvement projects during the next 20-year period. She said the financial situation that we are currently in shows that we will need to borrow funds to complete the projects. However, she said the financial situation could improve if we get a lot of new residential construction or some new commercial or industrial users because the development fees we collect during construction could be used to help fund the growth related portions of our projects and/or some of the debt payments.

Leahnette said each of the Sewer Improvements Project components are extremely important. She said the City's main RCE pump station currently operates at levels that exceed its capacity, which could result in sewer overflows that eventually reach the river. In addition, she said the pumps that are currently installed in the RCE facility exceed the capacity of the electrical transformer that serves it, which could result in severe damage to the pumps and a complete loss of power to the lift station and the RCE neighborhood.

Leahnette said the manhole lining work associated with this project will reduce the amount of infiltration and inflow (I&I) in the sewer system, which is water from springs and storm water that should not be entering the system. She said the I&I increases our treatment costs, and reduces the capacity of our system. She said relining the manholes will significantly reduce the amount of I&I entering the system.

Leahnette said another part of the project involves the abandonment of 16 steel septic tanks, and the replacement of one steel septic tank. She said these steel tanks have exceeded their life expectancy, and we have investigated the condition of the steel tanks, and many of them are failing.

Finally, Leahnette said the telemetry is much more than a luxury. She said it will help prevent sewer spills, it will reduce some unnecessary costs associated with sewer alarms, and it will produce a lot of very useful data about the system that we do not currently have access to.

Leahnette explained that this Sewer Improvements Project is well under way - the design work is now complete. She said we know a lot more about the project now, and the estimated total project costs increased from \$340,000 to \$751,000, which is why we

applied for this second loan of \$351,000. She said the good news is that this second loan comes at a lower interest rate than the first loan (1.93% vs. 2.54%).

MOVED (MARSON), SECONDED (FROMM) AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL NO. 15-753.

**7.2 Council Bill No. 15-754; Resolution No. 15-1141-R: A Resolution extending the City of Columbia City Worker's Compensation Coverage to volunteers of the City of Columbia City, Oregon, during the fiscal year 2015-16.**

MOVED (MARSON), SECONDED (FROMM) AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL NO. 15-754.

**7.3 Intergovernmental Agreement: Intergovernmental Agreement for Regional Disaster Preparedness within the Greater Portland and Metropolitan Region, by and among counties, cities, regional governments, and special districts within Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah, and Washington counties in Oregon and Clark County in Washington.**

MOVED (FROMM), SECONDED (HARRISON) AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO AUTHORIZE SIGNATURE TO THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT.

**7.4 Clean Water State Revolving Loan Agreement: Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Agreement No. R23551 between the State of Oregon acting by and through its Department of Environmental Quality and City of Columbia City.**

MOVED (MARSON), SECONDED (HARRISON) AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO AUTHORIZE SIGNATURE TO THE CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING LOAN AGREEMENT.

**AGENDA ITEM 8**

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Food Bank support request:** The Council reviewed a letter dated May 4, 2015 from Casey Wheeler of the Columbia Pacific Food Bank requesting support. Leahnette said the Budget Committee has agreed to include a \$500 contribution during the 2015-16 budget, and she recommended the City Council authorize a another \$500 contribution in the current year.

MOVED (FROMM), SECONDED (HARRISON) AND CARRIED TO DONATE \$500 TO THE COLUMBIA PACIFIC FOOD BANK. Councilor Marson abstained from voting.

**Community Hall rental refund request:** The Council reviewed an email dated May 20, 2015 from Julie Chin requesting a refund of the rental fees associated with a May 30<sup>th</sup> reservation due to health issues.

MOVED (HARRISON), SECONDED (FROMM) AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE REQUEST FOR A REFUND.

**AGENDA ITEM 9**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned 6:46 p.m.

APPROVED:

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Cheryl A. Young  
Mayor

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ATTEST:

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Leahnette Rivers  
City Administrator/Recorder