

CITY OF RUSTON
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, June 4, 2024

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

At 7:00PM Mayor Hopkins called the regular Council Meeting to order. Councilmembers present were Councilmember Hedrick, Councilmember Syler, Councilmember Husen, and Councilmember Jensen. Following the flag salute, Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve the agenda, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 4-0.

MINUTES - Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve the minutes for the regular Council Meeting of April 16, 2024, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 4-0.

STAFF REPORT – Nothing at this time

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS – Nothing at this time

BUSINESS

ORD 1582 – Billing for Basic Life Support (BLS) Transport.

City Ordinance 1577 was passed January 2, 2024, and created a new title 3 “Fire Department” in the Ruston Municipal Code (RMC). Over the past couple of decades medical response has increased significantly for the Ruston Fire Department (RFD). Medical response now makes up a significant portion of the RFD’s calls for service. When a person is ill or injured, they may be transported to a hospital. While Advance Life Support (ALS) transports are performed by a contractor for the City, the Basic Life Support (BLS) transports may be performed by RFD. RMC 13.06.010(f) defines “BLS transport” as transportation by ground ambulance vehicle and the provision of medically necessary supplies and services, including BLS ambulance services as defined by the state (RCW Chapter 18.73). Like many area agencies, the City charges for BLS transport fees in order to recover costs for providing this service. RMC 13.06.010 “BLS transport user fee imposed” was enacted January 2, 2024, to support the recovery of costs. Although, insurance, Medicare, and Medicaid will reimburse the City for transport fees, the City does not have the capacity nor expertise to handle this work, along with billing, within current staffing resources, and it is in the best interests of the City to contract with a professional ambulance billing service that can provide the City with a high level of customer service for all. In accordance with City Resolution No. 784; the City entered into an agreement with System Design West, LLC as a vendor/contractor that performs all of the administrative tasks for billing such as BLS transport fees to insurance, obtaining insurance information from patients, and remitting the fees to the City. A new code, section RMC 13.06.030 “Billing for BLS Transport User Fee” is needed to authorize the City to contract with professional ambulance billing services when needed. Additionally, there is a need to amend RMC 13.06.010 to strike language of a fee waiver as there is no mechanism allowed for this overly broad wavier, and amend a scrivener’s error in RMC 13.06.020 Medicare and Medicaid.

Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve Ordinance No. 1582, with a second from Councilmember Syler. Mayor Hopkins would like latitude to not pursue uncollectible debts and forgive the costs. This language was revised in version 2 of Ordinance 1582. Councilmember Jensen supports the language from version 2 to be approved. Councilmember Hedrick moved to withdraw the previous motion for passage of Ordinance 1582 as it did not address a version, with a second from Councilmember Syler. Councilmember Hedrick refined the motion to move passage of Ruston Ordinance 1582 version 2 as submitted by the city attorney on June 3, 2024, codifying the authority for the City of Ruston to contract BLS Emergency Medical Services Transport User Fee Billing and amendment to RMC 13.06.010 and RMC 13.06.020, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 4-0.

CLAIMS/PAYROLL – Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve Claims for June 4, 2024, and Payroll for June 5, 2024, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 4-0.

MAYOR’S TIME – The City of Tacoma will update the EIS within the next few weeks. Mayor Hopkins will be meeting with Terracotta tomorrow to discuss the EPA liens on the property they are purchasing. There will be a street sweeper in the city on Monday, June 10. The city will be installing camera within the city limits around 4th quarter of this year. Mayor Hopkins provided updates with the police activity over weekend in the city.

Councilmember Hedrick – He thanked Fire Chief Allen for the reminder of the 4th of July bicycle parade. He will work with the Chief and city clerk to get announcements out. He has had discussions with EPA and members of Congress of possibly waiving the fees on the parcels.

Councilmember Syler – Nothing at this time.

Councilmember Huson – Nothing at this time.

Councilmember Jensen – She announced Pierce County Council will be having a meeting tomorrow night at 6:00PM at the pagoda regarding the watershed and environmental issues. The City of Ruston planning commission meeting is here tomorrow at 7:00PM. She has received two proposals to facilitate the council retreat and would like to discuss them at the next council meeting. She thanked the police department for making our neighborhood safe.

MEETING AJOURNED – At 7:19PM Councilmember Hedrick moved to adjourn, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 4-0.

Mayor Hopkins

ATTEST:

Laurie Cassell