

CITY OF RUSTON REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, January 7th, 2025

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

MINUTES - Councilmember Syler moved to approve the minutes for the regular Council Meeting of December 17, 2024, with a second from Councilmember Huson, passed 4-0.

STAFF REPORT – Nothing at this time.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS –

Tom Poole – Expressed concerns regarding several topics to include transportation, parking, and public safety relating to Point Ruston, traffic issues, and the development plans posed by Terra Cotta. Asked the Council to provide guidance on his questions.

Jim Jackson - Expressed concerns about the passage of Ordinance 1585 and its negative impact on local businesses in Ruston. Mr. Jackson also urged the City Council to review the current tax on pull tabs in light of Ordinance 1585. Lastly, he requested a meeting with the City Council to discuss both the current and future impacts of Ordinance 1585 throughout its term.

BUSINESS –

ORD 1589 – Updating Electrical Utility Rates – (1st Reading) - The City of Ruston is entitled to operate its own electrical utility to sell power to its residents and to set the rates for such electrical utility. The City is experiencing higher costs to operate the electric utility based on the rates charged by its electricity provider (City of Tacoma). The City of Ruston last increased rates in March of 2023 by adoption of Ordinance No. 1566 (effective 3/21/23). Since that time Tacoma adopted increases in its rates by 6.5 percent to be effective in 2025 and another 6.5 percent to be effective in 2026 which Ruston is passing along to its customers by adoption of this Ordinance.

Tacoma has also adopted an increase in fixed rates of approximately 12 percent, effective April 2025. An increase is proposed for Ruston's fixed rates matches this amount. These fixed fees help pay for infrastructure and to replenish depleted reserves. The kWh rates (consumption rates) are being increased for 2025 in the amount of 6.5% and by 6.5% for 2026 to keep up with the rate increases imposed by Tacoma. The first step of this rate increase is proposed to take effect on March 21, 2025, with the second step taking effect on March 21, 2026.

Consumption Charges

Customer Class	Current kWh	Effective 3/21/2025	Effective 3/21/2026
Regular Rates (kWh)	\$0.1157	\$0.1232	\$0.1312
Low Income/Disabled	\$0.0795	\$0.0847	\$0.0902

Fixed Charges

Customer Class	Current Minimum Charge	Effective 3/21/2025
Regular Rates	\$24.25	\$27.16
Low Income/Disabled	\$19.74	\$22.11

This increase will ensure that the City recovers the increased cost of purchasing electrical power from Tacoma Power as well as recovering the costs of operating this utility system. The new rates will help ensure that the City's electrical utility will continue to be fiscally sound and have the resources needed to replace and refurbish the capital infrastructure and maintain high quality operations.

CLAIMS/PAYROLL – Councilmember Syler moved to approve Claims for January 7, 2025, and Payroll for December 20, 2024, and January 5, 2025, with a second from Councilmember Huson, passed 4-0.

MAYOR'S TIME – Announced the Planning Commission meeting scheduled for January 8, 2025 and encouraged residents to attend for updates regarding housing requirements and other agenda, in addition encouraged individuals to apply for the Planning Commission vacancy. Mayor Hopkins provided updates over the ongoing City projects relating to Point Ruston, Ruston Way, and the City of Ruston.

Councilmember Hedrick – Nothing at this time.


Councilmember Syler – Nothing at this time.

Councilmember Huson – Nothing at this time.

Councilmember Jensen – Expressed gratitude to those who shared public comments and requested that they submit their written feedback to the Council for review. Acknowledged the important efforts of Mayor Hopkins and Councilmember Hedrick in securing funding for the City. Encouraged attendance at the upcoming Planning Commission meeting and the Winter Blood Drive.

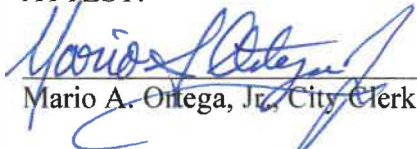
Councilmember Holland – Nothing at this time.

MEETING AJOURNED – At 7:24 PM Councilmember Syler moved to adjourn, with a second from Councilmember Huson, passed 4-0.



Bruce Hopkins, Mayor

ATTEST:



Mario A. Ortega, Jr., City Clerk