

CITY OF RUSTON REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, May 20, 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. Following the flag salute, 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 May 6, 2025, with a second from Councilmember Huson, passed 4-0.

STAFF REPORT –

Ruston Police Department – Chief Bautista addressed the issue of noise from racing drivers, noting that it is a nationwide concern. Locally, he explained that the noise often comes from drivers organizing meetups at various locations, including the Ruston Market parking lot, Dune Peninsula, and Point Defiance. One of the main challenges is that the noise is brief and difficult to trace to its source. Additional challenges include managing trespassing agreements and ensuring officer safety when responding to or dispersing these gatherings.

Chief Bautista provided an overview of the regional task force's efforts to track down car meetups, including monitoring social media platforms and business websites where such events are often promoted. He noted that Ruston police officers actively participate in this task force, which has played a key role in preventing illegal activity. He also shared how the City, in collaboration with local stakeholders, is working to address and reduce these ongoing issues.

He then gave an update on the ongoing discussion regarding traffic cameras and a proposed interlocal agreement (ILA) from the district court. The ILA outlined court fees that appeared to be nearly double what the City currently pays Fircrest—without even including traffic camera services. Chief Bautista explained that the City is continuing to explore its options, which may include hosting court proceedings within Ruston or maintaining some services through Fircrest. However, he noted that the City Attorney has raised concerns that are being considered.

Lastly, Chief Bautista addressed a letter he sent to Metro Parks Tacoma, informing them of the planned closure of 51st Street and N Baltimore Street on July 4th at approximately 9:30 p.m. As a result, traffic from the 4th of July event will need to exit via Ruston Way. He highlighted the challenges the City has faced in managing this annual event, including the financial burden of police staffing, officer safety concerns, and

limited support from the agency. He also described alternative traffic management strategies he explored with Fire Chief Allen, ultimately concluding that the plan outlined in the letter to Metro Parks was the most practical solution for the City.

Councilmember Huson voiced his support for Chief Bautista's decision to implement the street closure, noting that he has advocated for this measure for some time due to the significant traffic burden the event places on the City. He inquired about how the police department plans to manage attendees who choose to park in Ruston and walk down to the event. Chief Bautista responded that those individuals would most likely exit via Pearl Street and added that he is considering adopting a similar approach to the City of Tacoma's plan, allowing drivers to self-navigate out of the area following the closures.

Councilmember Jensen raised concerns about the impact on residents, particularly regarding the influx of eventgoers parking in residential areas and the challenges of exiting after the event. She suggested the possibility of turning 51st Street into a continuous flow of traffic by disabling the traffic light. In response, Chief Bautista acknowledged past efforts to manage traffic and expressed optimism that the 51st Street closure would significantly improve post-event traffic flow.

Councilmember Huson expressed his support for the planned street closures for the Fourth of July event, emphasizing the importance of being a "good neighbor," while also noting that such cooperation should be mutual—something he feels has not always been the case in the past. He asked about the proposed environmental design strategies aimed at addressing ongoing traffic and noise issues, mentioning that he had observed groups gathering at the Ruston Market. He also inquired whether a cost analysis could be conducted in light of the fees proposed by the district court.

Mayor Hopkins responded by noting that Pierce County has provided data and outlined additional resources that could be made available. He also shared that the potential developer, Terra Cotta, has expressed opposition to the traffic-related activity and car meetups occurring in the area. Mayor Hopkins outlined several potential solutions to help deter these gatherings, including the installation of substantial speed bumps and a development layout that incorporates pedestrian walkways. This design would require traffic to navigate around the building layout, thereby discouraging high-speed driving and reducing disruptive vehicle activity.

Mayor Hopkins provided additional insight into the Comprehensive Plan, noting that it includes considerations for raised crosswalks, which would function similarly to speed bumps by slowing down speeding vehicles. As part of the traffic mitigation strategy, the permitting process will focus on implementing traffic-calming measures such as speed bumps in roundabouts and throughout the City. He mentioned that this topic will be part of the upcoming public outreach discussions.

Chief Bautista added that he had spoken with the Deputy Director of Metro Parks Tacoma, who expressed dissatisfaction with the letter that had been sent. *Attached is a copy of the Ruston Police Department report.*

Ruston Fire Department – Chief Allen expressed his gratitude to Patty and Michele for their efforts in coordinating the Easter Egg Hunt. He also presented the Fire Department's monthly metrics, which included the total number of incidents, volunteer hours, and current member roster. Additionally, he shared several announcements, including the recent graduation of individuals from both the firefighter and EMT training programs. *Attached is a copy of the Ruston Fire Department report.*

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS –

Douglas M. – Informed the Council that the noise disturbances reported by residents at the Commencement are caused by motorcyclists revving their engines. Also inquired about the City's plans for managing traffic related to the concerts scheduled at the nearby park.

Leah D. – Expressed the need for the City to implement traffic cameras to address the ongoing speeding issues within the City. Also inquired about the City's plans for managing traffic related to the concerts scheduled at the nearby park.

Fred Byzinger – Highlighted the importance of recognizing Memorial Day and recited a spoken word to the City Council.

BUSINESS – Nothing at this time.

CLAIMS/PAYROLL – Councilmember Syler moved to approve the Claims for May 20, 2025, and the Payroll for May 20, 2025, with a second from Councilmember Huson, passed 4-0.

MAYOR'S TIME – Discussed upcoming events taking place near the City, including available parking options for visitors. Provided updates on several key topics: the current court system utilized by the City of Ruston, public outreach efforts connected to grant applications, the Point Ruston receivership, the GRID plan, and City-wide soil testing and GIS reporting initiatives.

Announced the upcoming bid opening scheduled for May 22, 2025, for the 2024-25 TIB Highland-Shirley Pavement Overlay Project. Also noted that final details are being completed for an agreement to implement the new permitting system, MyBuildingPermit.

Encouraged residents to reach out to Parks Tacoma to express concerns regarding traffic issues and noise disturbances caused by car meet-up events currently being approved by the City of Tacoma.

Finally, announced that Councilmember Jensen will be attending the upcoming AWC conference.

Councilmember Hedrick – Nothing at this time.

Councilmember Syler – Expressed gratitude to Mayor Hopkins for providing updates.

Councilmember Huson – Discussed the City's exploration of residential parking permits as a potential solution to address parking challenges that are heightened during events and to ensure residents have adequate access to parking in their neighborhoods.

Councilmember Jensen – Urged residents to attend the upcoming Parks Tacoma commission meeting to address their concerns regarding the parking challenges that are heightened during events and discuss the noise complaints that are coming from events being approved by the City of Tacoma. Additionally, encouraged residents to continue contacting 911 to report the noise disturbances. Lastly, thanked Mr. Byzinger for his spoken word on Memorial Day.

Councilmember Holland – Agreed with Councilmember Huson on the need to explore the idea for residential parking permits as a potential solution to address parking challenges that are heightened during events. Discussed the challenges centered around trying to secure grant funds for the City.

MEETING AJOURNED – At 8:03 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



**Chief's Report
Ruston Police Department
Tuesday, May 20, 2025**

Update on Automatic Traffic Camera Program

Update on Anti-Racer Activities

Ruston Fire Department Monthly Review for April 2025

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

Presented by Chief Bruce Allen

Total Incidents (YTD) 43, April (2 Fire/Service, 13 Medical Aid)

Volunteer Hours: April 1529 Hours, YTD 6426 Hours

Membership Roster (22 out of 25): (18 Members, 4 Officers)

State of Business

- The Easter Egg hunt was a huge success thanks to all the work of Patti and Michelle!
- Graduation from the Buckley FF1 Academy is May 31, we'll have 2 more FF1's.
- We have one more EMT student almost done with their class.
- Engine 33 (red one) will be going in for it's yearly inspection and pump test.