

**CITY OF RUSTON
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, September 1, 2020**

The City Council of the City of Ruston met on this date via Virtual Teleconference

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

At 7:00PM Mayor Hopkins called the regular Council Meeting to order. Councilmembers present were Councilmember Hedrick, Councilmember Hardin, Councilmember Syler and Councilmember Huson. Councilmember Holland was absent. Following the flag salute, Councilmember Hedrick moved to amend and approve the agenda adding Resolution 718 as the second item of business, with a second from Councilmember Hardin the amended agenda passed 4-0.

MINUTES

Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve the minutes for the Regular Council meeting of August 18, 2020, with a second from Councilmember Hardin, passed 4-0.

STAFF REPORT – Nothing at this time.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS –

Jan Griffiths – There was a rumor that the City of Tacoma was looking to defund their Police Department and hoped that it was not the case in the City of Ruston. Ms. Griffiths thanked all those that serve the City of Ruston, from the Police and Fire Departments to staff for always being there when she has needed support.

Randy Plain – Wanted to know the estimated date of completion for the 52nd Street Project. Mayor Hopkins noted he did not have an estimated date. Mayor Hopkins shared there was a delay due to contractor error in the concrete pour. The contractor did not pour the proper height on the sidewalk and walked off the job. The City was having the project surveyed today to determine the current situation with results tomorrow and the general contractor planned to have another concrete contractor come to finish the work by the end of the week. Once the sidewalks were in the grind and overlay would be very quick.

BUSINESS –

RES 716 – Surplus Aid Vehicle. The City's Fire Department has a 1995 Aid Vehicle (Ford E350) that has reached the end of its useful life. The vehicle was replaced earlier this year and is no longer in use. Ruston is the third jurisdiction to use this aid vehicle and it has 226,000 miles on it. As a result of the mileage, the 1995 vehicle needs a new motor, the cost of which is greater than the vehicle value.

The vehicle was taking up space in the City Hall parking area and should be removed to make room for the new aid vehicle (which is currently parked on the street due to lack of off-street parking space). Chief Allen verified that this vehicle no longer has any value and should be hauled away for scrap. Chief Allen plans to remove some components of the vehicle prior to it being scrapped and to use those parts for other city vehicles which are currently in service. The Chief requests Council approve declaring the vehicle surplus and authorize it to be scrapped. By sending it for scrap, the City can remove useful parts of the vehicle and will not bear the burden or expense of hauling the vehicle away or paying disposal fees. Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve Resolution 716, with a second from Councilmember Hardin, passed 4-0.

RES 718 – Pierce Transit Board Vote. This item is requested to be added to the September 1st Council Agenda. If Ruston waited until the September 15th Council meeting, it would be too late to have any input on who will represent Ruston on the Pierce Transit Board. The votes must be cast and delivered to Pierce Transit no later the end of the day on September 9th which was why this was proposed to be added to the September 1st meeting. The Pierce Transit Board provides input on transit in Pierce County. It is made up of various elected officials that represent different parts of the county. The Board was recently reorganized, and Ruston will share a representative with Auburn, Pacific, Gig Harbor, Steilacoom, Milton, Fife. (See attached letter from the Pierce Transit Board.) The official who will represent Ruston must be an elected official from one of those seven cities. There was a deadline for nominations of August 26, 2020. Councilmember Nancy Henderson of Steilacoom currently represented Ruston on the Pierce Transit Board. Two people were nominated by the deadline:

Mayor Kim Roscoe, City of Fife
Councilmember Nancy Henderson, Town of Steilacoom

Ruston has had a close and collaborative relationship with Fife in recent years, including having a jail service contract with Fife. Fife also was also very supportive to Ruston during the annexation issue a few years ago. Mayor Roscoe has asked Ruston to support her election to the Board and the Mayor recommends that the Council cast the Ruston vote for Mayor Roscoe. Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve Resolution 718, with a second from Councilmember Hardin, passed 4-0.

CLAIMS – Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve Claims, with a second from Councilmember Hardin, passed 4-0.

MAYOR'S TIME – Mayor Hopkins noted with COVID, the pandemic and the Silver Cloud being behind schedule, along with those businesses closed in the City, revenue was below what was forecasted for 2020. The City also lost an anchor tenant, at the Ruston School, and were in the process of looking for a tenant to lease this space to replace the monthly revenue lost. Next meeting Mayor Hopkins will bring legislation before Council to surplus property located at 5405 N. Commercial. This land, owned by City of Ruston, was brought forward a few years ago. At that time it was recommended the City hold on to the property as values would go up. Council approved the sale of the lot on 49th Street and this property will undergo an appraisal. The sale of these two properties will help the City in the shortfall. Mayor Hopkins wanted to note that Claims presented a couple of purchases. A trailer to support the Public Works Supervisor in his daily work on city streets and the other item was to purchase a new used police vehicle, fully certified, from the City of Tumwater Police Department. This replaces an old Ruston Police vehicle which has required a lot of maintenance and repair. Mayor Hopkins addressed Jan Griffiths concern on defunding the Ruston Police. Mayor Hopkins noted there was no reduction planned in the 2021 Police budget. Instead, the City will look to include additional funding in support of increased activity at the Point Ruston development and car racing. The unfortunate part is the residents of Ruston will have to pay for this until the developer mitigation is put in place by the City of Tacoma.

COUNCIL TIME –

Councilmember Hedrick – Appreciated that Ms. Griffiths brought up the defunding of the police department. There has been much discussion around the defunding of police departments. Councilmember Hedrick believed, in his 17 years as a Ruston resident, the City has one of the best police departments and expressed his strong support of the Ruston Police and Chief Bautista. Councilmember Hedrick will not look at defunding the police department. Councilmember Hedrick noted his disappointment on how City of Seattle handled Chief Carmen Best and her departure. Councilmember Hedrick wanted to acknowledge the passing of Don Torbet. Don's dedication and commitment to the City of Ruston as the Fire Chief for many years, known as the ice cream man at the corner store to his children, their family was heartsick at the loss. Don was a Ruston institution and wanted to send out his sympathy to Beth and family.

Councilmember Hardin – Noted he was not inclined to defund the Ruston Police department and was not concerned about what other cities were doing on this topic. Councilmember Hardin stated the City has a great police department and fully supports them. Councilmember Hardin expressed his sadness on Don Torbet's passing and was not able to speak about Don because it was too emotional. Councilmember Hardin noted a neighbor had stopped by his home to let him know they were could not locate information regarding access to current virtual council meeting information on the Ruston website. Councilmember will address this.

Councilmember Holland – Was absent.

Councilmember Syler – Believed the Ruston Police department has done and continues to do a phenomenal job and if Chief Bautista wanted to add resources for additional training or anything necessary, Councilmember Syler would support additional funding. Councilmember Syler wanted to send out heartfelt condolences to the Torbet family on their loss.

Councilmember Huson – Wanted to send out heartfelt condolences to Beth and the Torbet family and would definitely miss seeing Don in town. Councilmember Huson also wanted to echo Councilmember Syler in his support of the Ruston Police department.

MEETING AJOURNED – At 7:33PM Councilmember Hedrick moved to adjourn, with a second from Councilmember Hardin, passed 4-0.

Mayor Bruce Hopkins

ATTEST:

Judy Grams