

CITY OF RUSTON
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, March 2, 2021

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 approve the agenda, with a second from Councilmember Hardin passed 4-0.

MINUTES

Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve the minutes for the Regular Council meeting of February 16, 2021, with a second from Councilmember Hardin, passed 4-0.

STAFF REPORT – Nothing at this time.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS –

AJ Sekhon - Owner of Defiance Dental Studio. Dr. Sekhon wanted to discuss options for public parking on Pearl Street. Dr. Sekhon's patients have been challenged to find parking at his location with cars parking all day, especially with the new development to the north on Pearl Street, which Dr. Sekhon noted was a good thing. Mayor Hopkins thanked Dr. Sekhon for bringing his concern forward and asked that Dr. Sekhon wait until Mayor and Council time for a response.

BUSINESS –

ORD 1543 – Public Hearing – Sewer Rates – Councilmember Hedrick moved to open Public Hearing, with a second from Councilmember Harding, passed 4-0. There was no Public Comment. Councilmember Hedrick moved to close Public Hearing, with a second from Councilmember Hardin, passed 4-0.

ORD 1543 – Sewer Rates (2nd reading) - Under State law, the City is authorized to provide sanitary sewer services to properties within the City. As a sanitary sewer utility provider, the City may establish charges for sanitary sewer service. The City of Tacoma accepts the flow from Ruston sanitary sewers for the purpose of sewage treatment. The City of Ruston pays Tacoma for this service. The last time the City of Ruston changed its rates was in May of 2017. Since that time, the City of Tacoma has instituted several sewer rate increases. This ordinance does not change the fixed rate for Ruston customers, which remain unchanged since 2017, but it does bring the flow charges equal to what Tacoma charges its customers for flow charges for both 2021 and 2022. As is the City's practice for utilities, rate increases are passed through to its ratepayers to ensure continued financial viability of the sanitary sewer utility. The rate increases are outlined below, including a look back at 2016 rates.

Rate Type	Since 2017	Increase	2021	Increase	2022
Fixed Rate - RES	\$ 67.67	\$ -0-	\$ 67.67	\$ -0-	\$ 67.67
Flow Charge - RES	\$ 4.73	\$ 0.42	\$ 5.15	\$ 0.08	\$ 5.23
Fixed Rate - COM - Categorized	\$ 55.60	\$ -0-	\$ 55.60	\$ -0-	\$ 55.60
Flow Charge - COM by Category					
1	\$ 6.31	\$ 0.93	\$ 7.24	\$ 0.22	\$ 7.46
2	\$ 6.68	\$ 0.85	\$ 7.53	\$ 0.23	\$ 7.76
3	\$ 8.41	\$ 1.07	\$ 9.48	\$ 0.29	\$ 9.77
4	\$ 10.33	\$ 0.80	\$ 11.13	\$ 0.34	\$ 11.47
5	\$ 10.33	\$ 0.98	\$ 11.31	\$ 0.34	\$ 11.65
6	\$ 12.27	\$ 0.69	\$ 12.96	\$ 0.39	\$ 13.35
7	\$ 13.93	\$ 0.72	\$ 14.65	\$ 0.44	\$ 15.09
8	\$ 14.42	\$ 0.73	\$ 15.15	\$ 0.46	\$ 15.61
Fixed Rate - COM - Not Categorized	\$ 66.96	\$ -0-	\$ 66.96	\$ -0-	\$ 66.96
Flow Charge - COM - Not Categorized	\$ 4.73	\$ 0.42	\$ 5.15	\$ 0.08	\$ 5.23

The City Council held a Public Hearing on this Ordinance during Second Reading on March 2, 2021. By increasing the sanitary sewer flow rates to be the same as Tacoma charges its sanitary sewer customers for flow for 2021 and 2022, the City will ensure that its sanitary sewer utility is self-sustaining and that these increased costs are born by the ratepayers rather than the general public. Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve Ordinance 1543, with a second from Councilmember Hardin, passed 4-0.

RES 725 - Planning Commission Re-Appointment – Jennifer Jensen – Jennifer Jensen was appointed to the Ruston Planning Commission on April 17, 2018 by Resolution No. 679 to fill a vacancy for Position No. 4 due to the member moving out of the City. She has now completed that unexpired term which ended on June 30, 2019. Mayor Hopkins would like to re-appoint Ms. Jensen to this seat for a term that expires on June 30, 2025. In accordance with RMC 1.07.020, the process for appointing Planning Commissioners is an appointment by the Mayor and a confirmation by the Council. If Council agrees with the Mayor’s appointment, then adoption of the Resolution is recommended. Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve Resolution 725, with a second from Councilmember Hardin, passed 4-0.

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

MAYOR’S TIME – Mayor Hopkins received notification that the Silver Cloud Hotel now has temporary occupancy for Level 0, which is the parking garage and Level 1–2, which is still undergoing minor construction. Silver Cloud is moving forward with their April 15, 2021 deadline for opening. Mayor Hopkins addressed Dr. Sekhon’s concern with parking at his location. There have been discussions about parking in Ruston for as long as Mayor Hopkins has been acting mayor. The City put into place was a permit parking ordinance. This allows the City to issue parking permits. Dr. Sekhon’s concern is a little different as it centers around commercial properties. Mayor Hopkins will begin researching and determine if the City can initiate time limits. Not only is parking a challenge in the area Dr. Sekhon is concerned about, but it is also an issue with the City’s ownership of a portion of Yacht Club Road which abuts Point Ruston development and the long-term parking occurring there. Mayor Hopkins will keep Dr. Sekhon updated on a resolution.

Councilmember Hedrick – Nothing at this time.

Councilmember Hardin – The sound on GoToMeeting was going in and out and Councilmember Hardin wondered if other Councilmembers were experiencing the same issue. All Councilmembers responded they were not having GoToMeeting sound issues.

Councilmember Holland – Not in attendance.

Councilmember Syler – Nothing at this time.

Councilmember Huson – Nothing at this time.

MEETING AJOURNED – At 7:15PM Councilmember Hedrick moved to adjourn, with a second from Councilmember Hardin, passed 4-0.

ATTEST:

Mayor Bruce Hopkins

Judy Grams