

**CITY OF RUSTON
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, January 4, 2022**

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

OATH OF OFFICE – Councilmember Deborah Kristovich, Councilmember Jensen, and Councilmember Bradley Huson

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

At 7:06PM Mayor Hopkins called the regular Council Meeting to order. Councilmembers present were Councilmember Hedrick, Councilmember Kristovich., Councilmember Syler, Councilmember Huson and Councilmember Jensen. Following the flag salute, Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve the agenda, with a second from Councilmember Huson, passed 5-0.

MINUTES

Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve the minutes for the Regular Council meeting of December 21, 2021, with a second from Councilmember Huson, passed 5-0.

STAFF REPORT – Nothing at this time.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS –

Emily Wood – Wanted to know what the City of Ruston snow policy was after the current winter storm and asked if there was a Ruston Police Department blotter that would help bring awareness to what was happening within the City. Ruston Police Chief Bautista noted that the City did not have a police blotter and recommended Ms. Woods and all residents call 911, letting 911 know if it is an emergency situation, such as shots fired and giving a much information as possible. The call is logged and the officer on duty would be dispatched to the scene. Mayor Hopkins encouraged Ms. Woods to contact Chief Bautista if she had further questions.

Alexander Greene – Moved to Ruston in June 2020 and recently got a dog. Mr. Greene wanted to know more about Rust Park and any considerations for a dog friendly park. Mr. Greene referred Ruston Ordinance 1270 which currently prohibits dogs off leash in the park and wanted to better understand the history and why the ordinance was in place. Mr. Greene wanted to open discussion regarding a dog park, introducing a dog run, or making it possible to have dogs off leash during certain hours.

BUSINESS –

ORD 1556 – Overweight Vehicles (2ⁿ reading) - Certain streets within the City limits have been damaged by heavy truck traffic. In most instances, there are alternate routes for heavy truck traffic on streets that can better handle the load. State law allows the City to restrict certain types of trucks from using certain streets within the City.

In 2013, the City Council adopted Ordinances #1394 and #1413 to update Chapter 16.07 of the Ruston Municipal Code (“RMC”) to restrict large trucks on certain streets in the City. Since that time, the correct signage has been installed with Police issuing citations to vehicles in violation. This has been effective in reducing damage to the City’s streets. When there has been requests to use the City streets in violation of this chapter, the City has issued street excavation permits to allow such use with the conditions to repair the streets. In 2018, the City experienced issues with enforcement and therefore, the Council amended the code via Ordinance No. 1512 to ensure that permits are obtained before heavy weight hauling occurring damaging City streets. Recently, the City updated the name of 54th Street to Park Avenue. In addition, the City has been improving its streets with grant funding from the Transportation Improvement Board. The proposed amendments add more streets to the list of streets that require a permit for non-exempt heavy vehicles. The City will need to post signage at these new streets in order to enforce the code. The fees for an overweight vehicle permit range from \$383.40 to \$766.80 depending on and the weight of the vehicle. (See Section 7 of the Master Fee Resolution (RES 736) which the Council adopted on December 7, 2021.) Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve Ordinance 1556, with a second from Councilmember Huson, passed 5-0.

CLAIMS/PAYROLL – Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve Claims of January 4, 2022 and Payroll of January 5, 2022, with a second from Councilmember Huson, passed 5-0.

MAYOR’S TIME – Mayor Hopkins addressed snow and ice removal within the City of Ruston during the recent winter storm. Mayor Hopkins is working with City Attorney Robertson to put a snow removal policy in place, identifying the streets that need attention and setting resident expectations. There are existing codes which notes property owners’ responsibility for removing snow and ice from their sidewalk and the City’s responsibility to clear roadways. Mayor Hopkins provided an overview of the equipment the City currently has. Council approved the acquisition of a snowplow and sander, which attaches to the city flatbed truck, to help emergency vehicles get to areas that they need to respond to. The flatbed truck is two-wheel drive and must be heavily loaded and chained up in order to navigate snow and icy streets. The sander mechanism must be manually loaded with sand. At the time we purchased the plow and sander we employed two Public Works employees. Today we have one Public Works employee. One recommendation is to acquire a small backhoe to load the sand and make the sander attachment operational so that it is not a heavily manual process. Other options for snow removal would be to contact our landscape company or City of Tacoma, since they are already servicing Pearl Street, and identify what their costs are. Mayor Hopkins will bring this topic before Council again and encouraged everyone to email their comments and questions to him. Mayor Hopkins welcomed everyone to lend a hand in the development of the snow policy. Councilmember Hedrick noted that snow removal was a complex issue and was happy to take part of developing a snow policy. Councilmember Hedrick wanted to be mindful of the City making large

investments for snow we do not get on a regular basis and that the City has some geographical issues which make servicing streets difficult. Councilmember Jensen thanked Mayor Hopkins for quickly bringing the snow removal issue forward for discussion and developing a snow removal policy to be published so citizens are not left to wonder. Councilmember Jensen was happy to take part in the development of the snow removal policy. Mayor Hopkins addressed Mr. Greene's public comment regarding an off-leash dog park at Rust Park and recited some reasons why there wasn't a current dog park. City of Ruston does not own the entire park. We lease a large portion of the park from BNSF Railroad. BNSF is not willing to allow a dog park on any portion of the property. Councilmember Kristovich shared that the City stopped exploring a dog park when Metro Parks put in an off-leash dog park at Point Defiance which is in close proximity to City of Ruston. Mayor Hopkins recommended Mr. Greene contact Councilmember Kristovich if he had any further questions. Mayor Hopkins publicly thanked Councilmember Hedrick for his efforts in working with the Department of Ecology related to the contaminated soils within the City. The City continues to incur disposal of contaminated soil costs when doing public roadway project and Councilmember Hedrick has opened dialog with Department of Ecology asking for reimbursement of these costs.

Councilmember Hedrick – Welcomed Councilmember Huson, Councilmember Kristovich and newest member, Councilmember Jensen, thanking them for their commitment to public service and looked forward to working with them in the next four years. Councilmember Hedrick added to the dog park discussion noting the reason for Ordinance 1270 was to avoid incidents where dogs interacted with wildlife in the park and the mauling a fawn and a doe on separate occasions. Councilmember Hedrick has two dogs and would love nothing more than to have a dog park across the street from his home. He uses the Metro Park dog park in Point Defiance, which is very close. Councilmember Hedrick has had good conversation with the Department of Ecology and is cautiously optimistic that they can help the City with contaminated soils. Councilmember Hedrick looked forward to meeting with the Director of Ecology, next week, to discuss the protection of our citizens and the reimbursement of the costs related to the disposal of contaminated soil.

Councilmember Kristovich – Nothing at this time.

Councilmember Syler – Welcomed Councilmember Jensen. Councilmember Syler shared Councilmember Kristovich's email address debk@rustonwa.org with Alexander Greene. Councilmember Syler addressed the snow removal policy stating snow was happening more frequently, stays around longer and was happy to take part in the development of a snow removal policy. Councilmember Syler leaned toward contracting with a company who provides snow removal services at a reasonable cost.

Councilmember Huson – Welcomed Councilmember Jensen and looked forward to working together for the next four years.

Councilmember Jensen – Was excited to be part of Ruston Council and honored to have the opportunity to serve the people of Ruston, who are her neighbors, the Mayor and Councilmembers. Councilmember Jensen recognized all Councilmembers for their experience and all they have done for City through the years. Councilmember Jensen noted the City was a great and vibrant community, right on the edge of the Puget Sound, and has a lot to offer the community. Councilmember Jensen was looking forward to representing and meeting the needs of the citizens, working within the bounds of the resources within the City, and keeping the public informed.

MEETING AJOURNED – At 7:46PM Councilmember Hedrick moved to adjourn, with a second from Councilmember Huson, passed 5-0.

Mayor Bruce Hopkins

ATTEST:

Judy Grams