

**CITY OF RUSTON
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

Tuesday, March 1, 2022

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 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.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve the minutes for the Regular Council meeting of March 1, 2022, with a second from Councilmember Huson, passed 5-0.

MINUTES

Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve the minutes for the Regular Council meeting of February 15, 2022, with a second from Councilmember Huson, passed 5-0.

STAFF REPORT – Nothing at this time.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Maryanne and David Bell – Moved to Ruston four months ago. Ms. Bell wanted to understand the very eloquent letter Mayor Hopkins wrote to the EPA on the specific changes EPA has made on behalf of Point Ruston. Ms. Bell observation is that it sounded like the developer was going bankrupt so EPA was trying to make a deal to close out and wondered if this would cost the City revenue in terms of residential units. After reading the letter Ms. Bell asked what the City's strategy was. Ms. Bell inquired about the plans by Promontory Park and if the City could request compensation or damages from the state, as it related to what it was costing the City. As well, could the City be more specific in terms of what the City was asking for. Mayor Hopkins encouraged Ms. Bell to email her comments to him so he could respond to her on this multi-faceted and complicated issue.

BUSINESS

Open Government Training – City Attorney Jennifer Robertson – See attached.

ORD 1557 – Updating Ruston Personnel Policy Manual (1st reading) - The last significant revision of the City’s Personnel Policies occurred in December 2007. Since then, there have been significant developments in personnel laws that have warranted a new review and update. The City contracted with an attorney whose practice is focused on personnel issues. She reviewed and revised the personnel manual consistent with best practices and current legal standards.

The updates to the policies since 2007 include the following significant features:

- The Whistleblower Policy has been expanded consistent with the Local Government Whistleblower Protection Act, Chap. 42.41 RCW.
- The Leave policies have been substantially revised to incorporate Washington’s new Mandatory Paid Sick Leave and Paid Family and Medical Leave provisions; and to expand upon provisions related to Military Leave and Domestic Violence Leave;
- The EEOC, anti-discrimination, and reasonable accommodation policies have been modified to better explain the rights available to employees and applicants and the processes in place for insuring such rights are protected;
- New polices have been added related to: Social Media Usage; Animals in the Workplace; and Drug-Free Workplace;
- There have also been several relatively minor changes to conform to current style standards and changes in wage and hour laws.

The personnel attorney, Beth McIntyre, recommends the City adopt the updated manual. This is being done by ordinance as the prior manual was adopted by ordinance and thus any revisions or repeal must likewise be done by ordinance.

RES 743 – RE-Appointing Kevin Moser – Planning Commissioner Position 1 – Kevin Moser has been serving on the Ruston Planning Commission since June 2008 in Position No. 1. On September 1, 2015, Kevin Moser was re-appointed to Position No. 1 on the Ruston Planning Commission by adoption of Resolution No. 616. Commissioner Moser’s term expired on June 30, 2021. Since the Planning Commission was not meeting during 2021 due to COVID-19, the re-appointment was not processed. Commissioner Moser is both eligible for and willing to serve another 6-year term. Mayor Hopkins desires to make the re-appointment. 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. The attached Resolution #743 re-appoints Mr. Moser to Position No. 1 to a new 6-year term ending June 30, 2027. If Council agrees with the Mayor’s appointment, then adoption of the Resolution is recommended. Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve Resolution 743, with a second from Councilmember Huson, passed 5-0.

RES 744 – RE-Appointing Cliff Kendall – Planning Commissioner Position 2 - Position #2 on the Ruston Planning Commission is currently held by Cliff Kendall. Commissioner Kendall was appointed via Resolution No. 637 expired on September 6, 2016. His term is set to expire on June 30, 2022. The Mayor recommends re-appointing Cliff Kendall to this seat for another 6-year term which will expire on June 30, 2028. 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. The attached Resolution #744 re-appoints Commissioner Kendall to Position #2 for a second 6-year term ending June 30, 2028. If Council agrees with the Mayor’s appointment, then adoption of the Resolution is recommended. Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve Resolution 743, with a second from Councilmember Huson, passed 5-0.

CLAIMS AND PAYROLL – Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve Claims of March 1, 2022 and Payroll of February 20, 2022, with a second from Councilmember Huson, passed 5-0.

MAYOR’S TIME – Nothing at this time.

Councilmember Hedrick – Thanked Mr. Moser and Mr. Kendall for their continued service on the Planning Commission and noted the complexity of the work they do. Councilmember Hedrick asked how the updated Ruston Personnel Policy Manual would be distributed to staff. Mayor Hopkins explained that the City Clerk would distribute the updated personnel manual to all staff and present an acknowledgment page for each staff member to sign. The acknowledgement page would be kept in their personnel file.

Councilmember Kristovich – Nothing at this time.

Councilmember Syler – Nothing at this time.

Councilmember Huson – Nothing at this time.

Councilmember Jensen – Requested a presentation from the City Planner at the next council meeting, piggybacking Councilmember Hedrick’s referral regarding the work our Planning Commission does. There has been a lot of discussion at the state and regional level about affordable housing, with more pressure on cities to have a more robust plan. Councilmember Jensen noted there was a bill before the Washington State Senate, House Bill 660, requiring cities to increase density in the form of more ADU’s and allowing three ADU’s on properties larger than 4500 square feet. This would push for missing middle housing, which is medium density, residential housing. Councilmember Jensen received questions from Ruston city residents. Councilmember Jensen thanked Maryanne Bell for her questions related to the City’s stance on affordable housing.

The good news was the City has an awesome Planning Commission and a very good comprehensive plan already in place. The City's comprehensive plan was written in 2015 and incorporates many of the ideas that the state wants to mandate. Councilmember Jensen wrote to our Senator asking her to vote no on that house bill on the grounds that the City should be able to develop its own polices and not have them forced on us. In a one size fits all city formula written by the state was the grounds for which Councilmember Jensen wrote to our Senator. Councilmember Jensen thought it was perfect timing for Ruston City Planner to present an update on community development, provide a status of current projects, give an overview of the City's long-range planning and how it answers the questions of increased density with affordable housing and ADU's. Councilmember Jensen hoped, with the City Planner's presentation, that it would bring citizens to our council meeting to hear what the City has in place. Councilmember Jensen shared that she has taken on the project of updating the City's website to improve information and communication flow. Councilmember Jensen was not an expert on this and welcomed citizens input in terms of types of communication, content, and platforms. She asked citizens to send their input to jenniferj@rustonwa.org.

MEETING AJOURNED – At 8:14PM Councilmember Hedrick moved to adjourn, with a second from Councilmember Jensen, passed 5-0.

ATTEST:

Mayor Bruce Hopkins

Judy Grams