

**CITY OF RUSTON
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

Tuesday, July 5, 2022

The City Council of the City of Ruston met on this date via In Person

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

At 7:11PM Mayor Hopkins called the regular Council Meeting to order. Councilmembers present were Councilmember Hedrick, Councilmember Syler and Councilmember Jensen. Councilmember Kristovich and Councilmember Huson were excused. Following the flag salute, Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve the agenda, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 3-0.

MINUTES - Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve the minutes for the Regular Council meeting of June 21, 2022, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 3-0.

STAFF REPORT – Nothing at this time.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS –

Kevin Moser – Applauded Council for their focus on strong police presence within the City of Ruston during the 4th of July celebrations. Citizens felt safe as the public passed through our city and showed folks what Ruston stood for.

BUSINESS –

ORD 1558 – Electricity Rate Increase (2nd reading) – The City of Ruston is entitled to operate its own electrical utility to sell power to its residents and to set the rates for such electrical utility. The City is experiencing higher costs to operate the electric utility based on the rates charged by its electricity provider (City of Tacoma). The City of Ruston last increased rates in 2019 (effective 2020). Since that time Tacoma has increased its rates by 3.5 percent which Ruston has absorbed without passing these increases on to its customers. An increase is proposed for both fixed rates and kWh rates in the amount of 3.5%. This rate increase is proposed to take effect on August 1, 2022.

Customer Class	Current kWh	Effective 8/1/2022
Regular Rates	\$0.104	\$0.1076
Low Income/Disabled	\$0.0704	\$0.0768

In addition, the minimum charge for customers would increase by \$0.75 per month for regular customers and \$0.61 per month for low income/disabled. These fees help pay for infrastructure and to replenish depleted reserves.

Customer Class	Current Minimum Charge	Effective 8/1/2022
Regular Rates	\$21.50	\$22.25
Low Income/Disabled	\$17.50	\$18.11

This increase will ensure that the City recovers the increased cost of purchasing electrical power from Tacoma Power as well as recovering the costs of operating this utility system. The new rates will help ensure that the City’s electrical utility will continue to be fiscally sound and have the resources needed to replace and refurbish the capital infrastructure and maintain high quality operations. Councilmember Hedrick moved to adopt Ordinance 1558, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 3-0.

RES 750 – Public Hearing – Surplus Property 5121 N Winnifred Street – Councilmember Hedrick moved to open Public Hearing, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 3-0. There were no public comments. Councilmember Hedrick moved to close Public Hearing, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 3-0.

RES 750 – Surplus Property 5121 N Winnifred Street – The City of Ruston a parcel of undeveloped real property within its borders which are currently not in use. This parcel is:

Address: 5121 N. Winnifred Street, Ruston WA 98407
 Parcel No.: 4655000391
 Zoning: Residential (RES Zone)
 Improvement: Ruston Fire Station

Earlier this year, most of the City operations, including the Fire Department, have moved to the Ruston School Building and thus the Ruston Fire Station property is no longer used or needed. The Mayor and Planning Director do not anticipate any city use for this parcel and recommend that the Council consider declaring this property “surplus” and directing its sale on the open market for fair market value. Under Washington law, the City has the right to sell surplus property. The process for sale of surplus real property is as follows:

1. Hold a public hearing.

The Council is required to hold a public hearing on whether the property should be declared surplus. This is required for property valued at \$50,000 or more and for any property of any value that was purchased by a city utilities department. While not utility property, this real estate is valued at more than \$50,000, therefore a public hearing is required. The City has complied with the State law requirements for noticing the public hearing by publishing notice of the public hearing a minimum of 10 days (and no more than 25 days) prior to the hearing in the City’s Official Newspaper.

Such notice included the information required by State statute. In addition to publishing notice, the City also sent press releases about the public hearing to the Tacoma News Tribune and Tacoma Weekly and posted copies of the Notice on the Announcement Board at City Hall, at the Mary Joyce Community Center and on the City of Ruston Website.

2. Consider whether the property should be declared “surplus”.

After the public hearing, the Council should consider whether the property is no longer needed by the City for governmental purposes and may be sold. If the City Council determines that the property is not needed, passage of Resolution No. 750 declaring it surplus would be the next step.

3. Consider how the property may be sold.

Resolution No. 750 also outlines how this property will be sold. The Council has authority to direct the method of sale (i.e., auction, take bids, listed for sale, post on website of its availability, etc.) as well as the person who is delegated to oversee and implement the sale. However, the property must be sold for “fair market value” to ensure that the price accepted does not amount to a prohibited "gift of public funds." Resolution No. 750 authorizes the Mayor to (1) obtain an appraisal of the property; (2) place the property on the open market (including hiring a listing agent if desired); and (3) bring any offers to Council for consideration for discussion prior to acceptance.

Declaring this parcel of property surplus and selling it will take unproductive property in the City, allow it to be sold and developed, and will bring revenue into the City based on both the sale, the Real Estate Excise Tax, and any tax or other revenue that is generated by the development of this parcel. Considering the impacts of COVID19 on the City budget and the real estate market, this could be a good time to sell this parcel. Councilmember Hedrick wanted to thank Myrtle Johnson, who owned the property so many years ago, for bequeathing it to the City of Ruston as the residence for the Ruston Fire Department. Councilmember Hedrick asked how the proceeds of the sale would be used. Mayor Hopkins noted that a portion of the money would be earmarked for the renovation of old City Hall and the repair and update of the Ruston School building. Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve Resolution 750, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 3-0.

RES 752 – Tercom – Court Street Conduit Project – The City plans to install two streetlights on the south side of Court Street between Baltimore Street and Bennett Street. Prior to the installation, conduit work is necessary to prepare Court Street for the street lighting installation. Using the small works roster process as adopted by the City under the small works roster bidding

process, the City solicited bids from qualified contractors who are on the MRSC Small Works Roster. Tercom Construction was determined to be the lowest responsible bidder with a bid of \$11,500, tax not included. One contractor failed to bid, and the other was \$44,974.00. Tercom Construction has executed the City's contract and the Mayor seeks authorization to (1) award the bid to Tercom Construction; (2) waive retainage and bonding in accordance with RCW 39.04.155 due to the small size of the contract; and (3) execute the contract on behalf of the City. The maximum contract price is of \$11,500.00, tax not included. This amount is available in the City's budget. Mayor Hopkins gave an overview of the Court Street project and thanked Kevin Moser for his support and effective management of the work on the project. Councilmember Hedrick moved to adopt Resolution 752, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 3-0.

CLAIMS/PAYROLL – Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve Claims of July 5, 2022 and Payroll of July 5, 2022, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 3-0.

MAYOR'S TIME – Mayor Hopkins recognized Ruston Police Chief Bautista and Fire Chief Allen and their officers for their great planning and efforts in keeping the City of Ruston and its residents safe during the 4th of July festivities. Mayor Hopkins noted the developer had past their June 30 deadline and EPA confirmed the developer was now incurring penalties for not meeting the remediation action timeline.

Councilmember Hedrick – Wanted to share his sincere appreciation to all public safety staff and their efforts in keeping Ruston safe during the 4th of July festivities. Councilmember Hedrick express his thanks to all who turned out for the annual bicycle parade. Councilmember Hedrick's children recommended they step it up and hold a barbeque, with hamburgers and hot dogs, at next year's bicycle parade.

Councilmember Kristovich – Excused.

Councilmember Syler – Nothing at this time.

Councilmember Huson – Excused.

Councilmember Jensen – Thanked Councilmember Hedrick for his leadership in the annual bicycle parade and wanted to remind everyone of the Red Cross Community Blood Drive to be held at the Totem Yacht Club on July 15, 2022 from 10AM – 3PM. There were 26 sign ups and 30+ spots.

CITY OF RUSTON
Regular Council Minutes
July 5, 2022

MEETING AJOURNED – At 7:37PM Councilmember Hedrick moved to adjourn, with a second from Councilmember Syler, passed 3-0.

Mayor Bruce Hopkins

ATTEST:

Judy Grams