

**CITY OF RUSTON  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

**Tuesday, October 18, 2022**

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

**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 Kristovich, passed 5-0.

**MINUTES** - Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve the minutes for the Regular Council meeting of October 4, 2022, with a second from Councilmember Kristovich passed 5-0.

**STAFF REPORT** –

Ruston Police – Chief Bautista – See attached.

Ruston Fire – Chief Allen – See attached.

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS** – Nothing at this time.

**BUSINESS** –

**ORD 1561 – Public Hearing – FY2023 Tax Levy** - Councilmember Hedrick moved to open Public Hearing, with a second from Councilmember Kristovich, passed 5-0. Kevin Moser asked if the property tax levy was factored into the proposed 2023 budget. Mayor Hopkins responded noting the property tax levy was factored into the preliminary budget and shared that the City was limited to a 1 percent property tax levy increase each year. Councilmember Hedrick moved to close Public Hearing, with a second from Councilmember Kristovich, passed 5-0.

**ORD 1561 – FY 2023 Tax Levy (1<sup>st</sup> Reading)** - As part of the budget process, Ruston will consider a budget and the revenue sources for City operations and capital expenses. As part of that process, the City is required to hold a public hearing on this topic. The public hearing on revenue sources was scheduled to coincide with this First Reading of Ordinance No. 1561 on October 18, 2022. Ruston is required to adopt its property tax levy in November of each year by ordinance and transmit a certified copy of the ordinance to Pierce County Assessor-Treasurer and to the Pierce County Council no later than November 30<sup>th</sup>. A Levy Certification must also be transmitted with the Ordinance. Adoption of this Ordinance will be scheduled on the agenda during the meetings on **November 1, 2022** and for Action on **November 15, 2022**. This levy ordinance increases the property taxes levied by Ruston by the maximum amount allowed by law (one percent plus new construction, etc.). The maximum amount allowed by law is \$602,241.29. This is a 0.864 percent increase from 2022, or a \$5,157.65 increase. Further discussion at the Council Meeting of November 1, 2022.

**ORD 1562 -Public Hearing – Preliminary City of Ruston 2023 Budget** - Councilmember Hedrick moved to open Public Hearing, with a second from Councilmember Kristovich, passed 5-0. Kevin Moser asked how the surplus balance was holding up. Mayor Hopkins shared the City’s surplus balance is \$1.7MM and is doing well considering all the progress that has occurred within the City since Mayor Hopkins took office in 2008. Councilmember Hedrick moved to close Public Hearing, with a second from Councilmember Kristovich, passed 5-0.

**ORD 1562 – Preliminary City of Ruston 2023 Budget** – In accordance with State law, the Mayor of the City of Ruston completed and placed on file with the City Clerk-Treasurer a proposed preliminary budget and estimate of the amount of monies required to meet the public expenses, interest, reserve funds, and expense of government of the city of Ruston for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023. The Council is required to adopt its budget ordinance prior to January 1, 2023. On October 18, 2022 the Council held a preliminary public hearing to hear from the public about their budget priorities. The final public hearing on the budget will be held on November 15, 2022. The final public hearing must take place prior to budget adoption. The City is required to pass the budget before the end of this calendar year. The City Council Budget consideration schedule for Fiscal Year 2022 is as follows:

Mayor’s Budget Message to Council:	October 4, 2022
Council discussion of revenue sources:	October 18, 2022
Public Hearing on Revenue Sources	October 18, 2022
Public Hearing on Preliminary Budget	October 18, 2022
Adoption of Tax Levy Ordinance No. 1561	November 15, 2022
Public Hearing on Proposed Budget	November 15, 2022
Budget Discussion #1:	October 18, 2022
Budget Discussion #2:	November 1, 2022
Budget Discussion #3:	November 15, 2022
Budget Discussion #4:	December 6, 2022
Adoption of Final Annual Budget for 2023	December 6 or 20, 2022

Prior to budget adoption, the City Clerk will have fully complied with state law by publishing notice of the availability of the budget for public review and publishing notice of the required public hearings on the City’s proposed tax levy and budget, including a preliminary and final budget hearing. The proposed Total Revenues forecasted are \$9,965,278, consisting of Beginning Balances in the amount of \$4,329,881, plus interfund transfers in of \$307,000, and operating revenues of \$5,328,397.

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The Total Expenditures proposed are \$10,017,179, consisting of operating expenses in the amount of \$5,308,103, plus Interfund transfers out of \$307,000, and Ending Balances of \$4,402,076.

The proposed budget by funds is as follows:

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Expense</b>
1	General Fund	\$ 2,069,847	\$ 1,976,220
5	Real Estate Surplus	\$ 2,069,610	\$ 2,067,610
101	City Street Fund	\$ 449,400	\$ 596,700
102	Reserve for Equipment	\$ 12,250	\$ 12,250
103	Reserve for Streets	\$ 108,100	\$ 108,100
301	Capital Construction Fund	\$ 358,000	\$ 358,000
401	Electric Utility Fund	\$ 1,656,300	\$ 1,656,300
402	Electric Utility Reserve Fund	\$ 275,000	\$ 275,000
403	Sewer Utility Fund	\$ 1,583,500	\$ 1,583,500
404	Sewer Utility Reserve Fund	\$ 355,000	\$ 355,000
407	Storm Sewer Utility Fund	\$ 237,000	\$ 237,000
410	Sewer Debt Service Fund	\$ 375,000	\$ 375,000
411	Electric Meter Deposit Fund	\$ 153,000	\$ 153,000
622	WR Rust Playfield Fund	\$ 54,921	\$ 55,299
624	School Building Maintenance Fund	\$ 133,000	\$ 133,000
634	Custodial Funds	\$ 350	\$ 200
635	Pt. Ruston Signage Custodial Fund	\$ 75,000	\$ 75,000
		<b>\$ 9,965,278</b>	<b>\$ 10,017,179</b>

Approval of this Ordinance will adopt the 2023 Budget and establish the appropriations necessary to authorize expenditures for each of the City's funds as will be later detailed in Ordinance #1562. Mayor Hopkins discussed a 5 percent staff wage increase and personnel retention. This was not currently in the preliminary budget numbers and would not be a direct hit to the general fund. Mayor Hopkins would be looking at other revenue generating options in funding staff retention and public safety costs. Rather than using reserve funds one option would be a Levy LID Lift, asking residents to pay more in property taxes to support public safety which includes Police, Fire and Court system.

Councilmember Jensen asked if the value of gaining population would increase property taxes? Councilmember Jensen was surprised to see that property taxes were only \$600,000 of the overall revenue, which is a smaller part of the revenue. If the City's population would double, could we realize \$1.2MM in property taxes? Mayor Hopkins noted that new construction loads at a higher rate, and that the City only receives 17 percent of all property taxes paid. The rest goes to schools, state and county. Mayor Hopkins shared that the City realized \$40,000 a month, in sales tax revenue, during the summer months and noted that the City receives the sales tax revenue reports two months in arrears. Mayor Hopkins addressed the option of a Levy LID Lift and would bring more information at the next council meeting for additional discussion. Councilmember Jensen asked if a Levy LID Lift would go onto one of the four ballots in 2023 would it take effect in 2024? Mayor Hopkins responded it would and noted the Levy LID Lift could go onto the special elections ballot as soon as February 2023. Councilmember Huson believed February 2023 was too aggressive based on the steps the City would need to go through in order for it to be placed on the ballot. The City would need to hold public meetings and workshops to justify a Levy LID Lift. In calculating the increase of property tax, Councilmember Syler and Councilmember Huson requested that Mayor Hopkins, when bringing this initiative forward for discussion, ask City Attorney to present the numbers in a factual manner. Further discussion at the Council Meeting of November 1, 2022.

**ORD 1563 – Update Sewer Utility Taxes - Chapter 5.20 RMC for FY2023 (1<sup>st</sup> Reading)**- The City of Ruston has the authority to levy utility taxes under Washington law. Under Washington law the City may levy utility tax upon Cable TV, electricity, gas, sewer, storm water, solid waste, steam, telephone services, and water. The City first adopted its utility tax code (Chapter 5.20 RMC) was first enacted in 2010 and was significantly updated in 2018 by adoption of Ordinance No. 1501. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic City resources have been diminished while needs have increased. In order to maintain current city services, new revenue sources need to be found. There is no state law limitation on levying utility taxes on stormwater, sewer, or solid waste. Therefore, the Finance Department is recommending that the utility taxes on sewerage services be increased. Note that Ruston combines storm water and sewer into a single definition of “sewer system business” which applies to both types of services. These are currently at 10 percent and are proposed to be increased to 25 percent. The increase in the taxes on sewerage businesses will not be passed through to the customer but are on the sewer utility itself. Note, the Ordinance also contains a referendum clause for the portion that enacts the rate increase as required by law. If passed, these rate increases will take effect on January 1, 2023. Councilmember Syler asked if this ordinance was simply a change in allocation of funds. Mayor Hopkins clarified that the City was taxing itself 10 percent (internally) and the change of allocation would move funds from the sewer fund into the general fund.

**RES 760 - Small Works Roster Bid Award Salish Construction Utility Pole Replacement-**

Ruston Power, which is a City Utility is the electrical utility in town and owns all of the utility poles in City limits. The utility pole which is located on N. 52nd Street at the Alley, between N. Shirley St. and N. Winnifred St needs replacing. 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. Salish Construction was determined to be the lowest responsible bidder with a bid of \$14,568.00, tax not included. A copy of the scope of work and the bid are both attached to the public works contract. Salish Construction has executed the City's contract and the Mayor seeks authorization to (1) award the bid to Salish Construction; and (2) execute the contract on behalf of the City. The maximum contract price is of \$14,568.00, tax not included. This amount is included in the City budgeted resources for power infrastructure. Councilmember Hedrick moved to approve Resolution 760, with a second from Councilmember Kristovich passed 5-0.

**CLAIMS/PAYROLL** – Nothing at this time.

**MAYOR'S TIME** – Mayor Hopkins would not attend the Council meeting of November 1, 2022.

**Councilmember Hedrick** – Was pleased with the great budget discussion and was looking forward to more discussion on the Levy LID Lift initiative. Councilmember Hedrick understands the increased cost for public safety and the need to retain great employees. Councilmember Hedrick is supportive of a Levy LID Lift and would be happy to talk with any voter about this initiative.


**Councilmember Kristovich** – Nothing at this time.

**Councilmember Syler** – Nothing at this time.


**Councilmember Huson** – Nothing at this time.

**Councilmember Jensen** – Wanted to thank Mayor Hopkins and staff for prioritizing the cleanup of the poor signage throughout the City. It has improved the look, particularly for those that drive into the City on 51<sup>st</sup> Street.

**MEETING AJOURNED** – At 7:58PM Councilmember Hedrick moved to adjourn, with a second from Councilmember Kristovich, passed 5-0.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Bruce Hopkins

ATTEST:

  
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Judy Grams



**Chief's Report  
Ruston Police Department  
Tuesday, October 18, 2022**

Ruston Police officers logged 163 calls for service in the previous 28 days; 50 were traffic stops. This is 22% traffic stops than the same period last year.

After passing all phases of the required background investigation, the Department presented an offer of employment to Ms. Rachel Clark of University Place. She is 27 years old and a graduate of Seattle University. Her first day will be on October 31<sup>st</sup> and we believe she will fit in perfectly with the Department and our Core Values.

Ms. Clark is the culmination of a recruiting effort that started nearly 11 months ago to fill the 2 new FTE's approved by the Council.

I have been asked to serve another 4-year term on the Governor's Boards and Commissions called the Forensic Investigations Council. This position represents all city and municipal police chiefs in Washington State.

Prepared by Nestor Bautista

## **Ruston Fire Department Monthly Review for September 2022**

Tuesday, October 18, 2022

Presented by Chief Bruce Allen

**Total Incidents (YTD) 96, September 16(2 Fire/Service, 14 Medical Aid)**

**Volunteer Hours: September 998 Hours, YTD 6989 Hours**

**Membership Roster (19 out of 25): (16 Members, 3 Officers)**

### **State of the Business:**

- We have two new members Nicholas Commons and Tim Valenzuela.
- Matt Kubisky has off boarded and moved to Texas to further his firefighting career.
- Mike Lundy is doing well at the Browns Point Academy.
- Moises Guzman and Taylor Crowell are doing well in the EMT program at Pierce College.
- Moving forward with the move into the Old City Hall.
- Utility 33 is in for repairs.
- All fire tools are fully operational.