

MINUTES  
Warrenton City Commission  
April 25, 2023  
6:00 p.m.  
Warrenton City Hall - Commission Chambers  
225 S. Main  
Warrenton, OR 97146

Mayor Balensifer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioners Present: Mayor Henry Balensifer, Mark Baldwin, Tom Dyer, and Gerald Poe

Excused: Paul Mitchell

Staff Present: City Manager Esther Moberg, Police Chief Mathew Workman, Harbormaster Jane Sweet, Public Works Operations Manager Jim McCarthy, Interim Public Works Director Greg Shafer, Utility Worker Cayben Marshall, and City Recorder Dawne Shaw

AFSCME Union represented employees present for the Public Comment period: Robert Burk, Dave Davis, Rebecca Sprengeler, Brian Crouter, Christian Jensen, Twyla Vittetoe, Jessica McDonald, Hallie Homolac, and Jeremy McMahon

Mayor Balensifer noted the new City Logo plaque that the City Recorder had made for the chambers.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. City Commission Meeting Minutes – 4.11.23 <sup>4.25.23</sup>
- B. City Commission Work Session Minutes – 4.11.23 <sup>4.25.23</sup>
- C. Public Works Quarterly Update – Qtr. 1, 2023
- D. Marinas Quarterly Update – Qtr. 1, 2023
- E. Amendment to Sublease Agreement – Fowlers
- F. Employee Handbook Addendum – Exempt Staff
- G. City Manager Contract Amendment
- H. Police Department Monthly Report – March 2023
- I. Port PIDG Grant Letter of Support
- J. Building Department Quarterly Report – March 2023

**Commissioner Baldwin made the motion to approve the consent calendar as presented. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**Baldwin – aye; Dyer – aye; Poe – aye; Balensifer - aye**

Mayor Balensifer requested to add the FEMA buyout letter to be added as item 7F; there were no objections.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

<sup>Manager</sup>  
City ~~Moberg~~ Esther Moberg noted Greg Shafer was hired as Public Works Director.

Mayor Balensifer noted LOC conference; noted his concerns with FEMA, citing the Biop Flood Insurance Plan response letter and the challenges the Biop presents.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Dave Davis noted his history with the city and the importance of the work performed and the services provided by city employees. He noted concerns about not being competitive in the job market and the inability to retain staff.

Robert Burk, Chairperson of the AFSCME General Bargaining Unit, noted the financial struggles staff are currently having. He noted a recent staff survey and stated low wages are causing people to look for work elsewhere. He noted they made a request to open bargaining on wages and other issues, but the city declined their ideas.

Cayben Marshall also spoke in regard to the status of staffing issues and the inability to retain staff. He stated they are working hard to build a team and requested help in building a team.

Scott Widdicombe submitted public comments via email, regarding the Capital Improvement Program and the Pavement Management Program. These comments will be entered into the meeting record.

## PUBLIC HEARINGS

Mayor Balensifer opened the Public Hearing on the proposed sale of city property. Formalities followed. No conflicts of interest or exparte contacts were reported. City Manager Esther Moberg noted lot 63000 may have a deed restriction; she discussed the properties that the City would like to sell, which include tax lot 81022CB06300, tax lot 81022CB06900, and tax lot 81022CB07200. She noted they do not meet the criteria of Chapter 11 of the City Charter, therefore do not need to go to the voters. Mayor Balensifer asked for public comments. No one spoke in favor or opposition. There being no further comments, Mayor Balensifer closed the public hearing.

**Commissioner Baldwin made the motion to approve the sale of Tax Lots 81022CB06300, 81022CB06900, and 81022CB07200 through the City's representative/broker. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**Baldwin – aye; Balensifer - aye; Dyer – aye; Poe – aye**

## BUSINESS ITEMS

Mayor Balensifer noted Alisa Dunlap of Pacific Power, stating she was invited to explain about power reliability of the power grid related to power outages. He stated concerns were expressed to the commission about what can be done, what is being done and why is the power going out for longer periods, etc. Ms. Dunlap introduced herself and her colleagues, Director of Operations Kevin Freeman, Area Manager of Operations Jeremy Morris, and Clatsop County Operations Manager Nate Hankwitz. noted they will respond to questions on power reliability. Kevin Freeman responded to questions: What is the leading cause of non-weather-related outages? Mr. Freeman stated the leading cause of outages is equipment failure. The coastal environment, namely wind battering, is causing equipment decay and deterioration which is often not visible. He noted they have more work to do proactively and stated they have increased their number of linemen staff. He explained the issues that caused the last outage and the steps that were taken to fix it. Brief discussion followed on planned outages.

Mayor Balensifer noted the question on major retailers voicing concerns about the lack of communication from their account managers on the longevity of outages. Outages that lasted over 6 hours often causing them to dump refrigerated goods which then turn to foodstuff shortages. What is PPL doing to ensure

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these customers have reliable information and power? Ms. Dunlap stated that her team will own that – they have now established a direct line to their outage management person. The store managers can also contact her directly for information on outages.

What is being done to prevent future outages both weather and non-weather related? Mr. Freeman stated they get daily matrixes from their meteorology team, so they can scale up and move resources. He noted the Pacific Power weather website ([pacificorpweather.com](http://pacificorpweather.com)) which is comparable to NOHA and available to the public.

Mayor Balensifer asked if the code by which they build electrical infrastructure, the same here as it is in the valley? Mr. Freeman stated no, a lot is dependent on the coastal environment. Wind loading is definitely taken into account; also build to a stainless steel standard due to the coastal environment; they use specific conductors because of corrosion. Mayor Balensifer disclosed that he benefits from electrification, he works for an electric vehicle manufacturer, and he advocates for electrification at the legislature, and asked, with Oregon's policy shift to electrification, is the rural coastal power grid modernized enough or on track to be modernized enough to keep up with the state's ramped up timelines? Mr. Freeman stated the timelines are concerning for them as it will be a lot more work, but they do have groups looking ten years ahead to take that into account. He does feel they are well positioned and is confident but cannot speak to it directly. He noted he has not heard any concerns about being able to keep up with the transition. Mayor Balensifer asked if the aggressive timeline will cause rates to increase. Ms. Dunlap stated the aggressive timeline, depends on the sector you are talking about. She spoke of the electric vehicle portfolio and how it is growing leaps and bounds. She stated they do everything they can to keep the rates affordable, but yes, anytime you are talking about a significant load on a system or additional capacity resources that are needed, it will likely come with some sort of investment. She explained how the anticipation of load is modeled. Discussion continued.

Mr. Freeman addressed the question on what should elected officials tell people with fixed incomes (who cannot afford a generator), who have health concerns or refrigerated medicines and who rely on increasingly unreliable power outage duration estimates. He stated they do have resources available and encourage people to let us know who they are and where they live, so we can pivot and prioritize. There is also a pilot program for generators, and if people call in and request a generator, all that is needed is a signing of a waiver, and a lineman or meterman will come out and hook it up. He noted it is currently a pilot program but if it is utilized it will become more widely available.

Mr. Freeman noted the question about the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and their ability to maintain or upgrade the grid. He noted other than fielding customer concerns and responding to audits to their system, the PUC is regulating our inspection and corrections process. He detailed the inspection process which is done by a third party, and the response/correction requirements.

Mayor Balensifer noted the question related to what benefits do Clatsop County residents get from PP&L having a monopoly on electric power, that they would get not from a PUD or power cooperative? Mr. Freeman stated their ability to scale is exceptional. They have contracts with large companies across the country that they regularly pull from. So, if a storm is bad enough, they can pull in contractors; they can also leverage for supply chain issues. Mayor Balensifer noted the city is happy to have Pacific Power and its crews here in Warrenton and thanked them for taking the time to come out and answer constituent's questions and concerns about power outages. He also noted he has heard nothing but great things about the cooperation between the city public works employees and Pacific Power. Brief discussion followed.

Police Chief Mathew Workman discussed street and traffic code amendments. He noted the previous work session and discussions and stated the ordinance/code updates have been reviewed by legal counsel. He noted there is a fiscal impact, due to need to purchase signs. Brief discussion followed.

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**Commissioner Dyer made the motion to conduct the first reading, by title only, of Ordinance No. 1263, amending the various sections of the City of Warrenton Municipal Code and adding Section 10.04.350 and Chapter 10.20 as stated. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**Baldwin – aye; Dyer – aye; Poe – aye; Balensifer - aye**

Mayor Balensifer conducted the first reading of Ordinance No. 1263.

Ms. Moberg presented a lease agreement for Warrenton Kia, to continue their lease of the city parcels that are within the dealership lot.

**Commissioner Poe made the motion to approve the lease with Kia Auto Dealership that is owned by Vince and Patricia Williams. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**Baldwin – aye; Dyer – aye; Poe – aye; Balensifer - aye**

Ms. Moberg discussed the First Right of Refusal clause for the Kia dealership. She stated the city may look at selling the city parcels that are in landlocked within the dealership's lot but noted it will have to go to the voters. It was noted it would be made very clear in the ballot measure.

**Commissioner Dyer made the motion to approve the right of first refusal clause with the Kia auto dealership that is owned by Vince and Patricia Williams. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**Baldwin – aye; Dyer – aye; Poe – aye; Balensifer - aye**

Ms. Moberg requested the temporary closure of City Hall to facilitate the remaining installation of new carpet. She noted the city will do their best to facilitate bill paying.

**Commissioner Poe made the motion to approve the closure of City Hall offices May 31 through June 5, 2023, in order to remove old carpet and install new carpet. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**Baldwin – aye; Dyer – aye; Poe – aye; Balensifer - aye**

Ms. Moberg discussed the FEMA response letter, noting concerns with the flood plan, and noted they are asking us to agree to a plan we have not even seen yet, and noted potential litigation issues. She noted the city is very concerned it may shut down housing; the no net loss is very concerning with no plausible plan for us to even evaluate.

**Commissioner Baldwin made the motion to authorize the Mayor's signature on a FEMA Biop letter. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

**Baldwin – aye; Dyer – aye; Poe – aye; Balensifer - aye**

DISCUSSION ITEMS – None

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Commissioner Poe stated he recently talked to ODFW and the calm toxin numbers coming down and we may get an opening in the next 10-12 days.

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Commissioner Dyer stated he appreciated so many people in attendance.


Mayor Balensifer thanked all that attended the homelessness work session and the regular meeting. He read into the record a commendation from a constituent related to an interaction she had with one of our Law Enforcement Officers; from Tina Stacy, commending Officer McCoy for his kindness, dignity, respect, and quality service when responding to a car accident. Mayor Balensifer also noted one more reason to come to Morning with the Mayor is the fishing reports provided by Mr. Fowler.

There being no further business, Mayor Balensifer adjourned the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dawne Shaw, CMC, City Recorder

APPROVED:

  
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Henry A. Balensifer III, Mayor *Pro tem*  
Mark Baldwin