

City of Prairie City  
City Council Meeting  
September 13, 2017

1. Attendance:
2. Mayor Jim Hamsher
3. Councilor Georgia Patterson
4. Councilor Carole Garrison
5. Councilor Les Church
6. Councilor Joe Phippen
7. Councilor Frank Primozic
8. Councilor Dottie Miller
9. Chris Camarena, Public Works Director
10. Bobbie Brown, City Clerk
11. Marvin Rynearson, Fire Chief
12. Tracey Malone, Faulk & Foster
- 13.
14. Residents:
15. Dan Becker
16. Carlos Bortell
17. Louanne Bortell
18. Christine Coyne
19. Ingo Wedde
20. Wanda Winegar
21. Bob Munchausen
22. Francis Preston
23. Debbie Emmel
24. Loren Bebb
25. Mathew Goodwin
26. Kristen Shull
27. Pat Shull
- 28.
- 29.
30. Mayor Hamsher opened the regular meeting at 7:00pm and roll call was taken.
31. All Councilors are present.
- 32.
33. Mayor Hamsher started by amending the agenda and striking items J, L, and M.
- 34.
35. Mayor Hamsher recognized Wanda Winegar who has come before the council to
36. ask the City about possibly helping with financial assistance of welcome signs to be
37. placed at the edge of town. The original quote was \$1,200.00 and Mrs. Winegar

38. was hoping to split it 3 ways between Talents and Treasures, Prairie City  
39. Community Association, and The City of Prairie. She was hoping The city of  
40. Prairie could help finance \$400.00 of the welcome signs. Chris Camerena had  
41. told Mrs. Winegar she would need to contact the State of Oregon for placement.  
42. She has not done so as of now, but talked to some private citizens about  
43. placing the signs on their property and has permission for that.  
44. The final cost of the signs equals \$1,351.47 making the City's portion comes to  
45. \$450.49. Mrs. Winegar stated Bar WB has donated \$100.00 along with Prairie  
46. City Trading Post to Talents and Treasures.  
47. Mayor Hamsher entertained a motions to pull funds from the beatification fund  
48. to help support the welcome signs. **MSP: Motion to pay 1/3 of the welcome**  
49. **signs. Carol Garrison/Councilor Miller. All in favor**  
50.  
51. The council recognized Christine Coyne who represents Ingo Wedde. Mr. Wedde  
52. would like to loan the City a sculpture called "Metal Man" to be placed in Depot  
53. RV Park. Ms. Coyne and Mr. Ingo Wedde would like to also donate their time  
54. and money to improve the fountain in front of City Hall with lights and sculpture.  
55. Ms. Coyne Explained that they would not hold the City of Prairie responsible for  
56. any damage that may occur to "Metal Man".  
57. **MSP: To allow Ingo Wedde to put his sculpture in Depot Park. Les Church/**  
58. **Dottie Miller. All in favor.**  
59.  
60. **Museum:** The Museum was open all regular days with additional volunteers  
61. before and during the eclipse. The museum offered gold panning for youth during  
62. the eclipse. The Museum Director, Bob Shive announced the day before the  
63. eclipse the Museum had it's biggest attendence with 89 people walking through  
64. the museum to view exhibits. He also announced that before the eclipse they had  
65. plexi glass installed in the cattle car for security purposes. Mr. Shive will be  
66. heading to Portland to meet with Restore Oregon for a potential grant they may  
67. give to the Depot Museum. Mr. Shive also will go to the County Court and  
68. the City of Prairie to ask for matching funds.  
69.  
70. **Public Works:** Director Chris Camerena reported the water level is still at a  
71. critical low level. He reported a leak on the City's side by the Post Office that  
72. Public Works replaced rotten pipe with all new line. Chris mentioned he believes  
73. with this leak fixed it will help with rising water levels in the reservoir.  
74.  
75. Councilor Patterson mentioned the need to proceed with the master water plan,  
76. but stepping away from the well portion of the master plan to fix our well issues  
77. and get water sooner.  
78.  
79. Mayor Hamsher wanted to commend the Public Works Department on the speedy

80. response to the leak by the Post Office. The Mayor Stated a nearby resident was  
81. very pleased to see the leak fixed so quickly after reporting it.

82. Councilor Phippen also wanted to tell the Public Works Department how pleased  
83. he was with how smoothly the department worked through the eclipse.

84.

85. Chris reported the speed signs where moved to the school zone due to the state  
86. not approving them on state highway. After the Eclipse, ODOT got in touch with  
87. Chris and stated the speed signs were not MUTCB compliant and could not be  
88. used on State Highway. They gave the city a week to take down the signs or they  
89. would take them down. Chris stated he made sure before the city purchased the  
90. signs they were ODOT approved to use and the signs have a stamp on the stating  
91. they are ODOT approved. The State would like to put their own type of speed  
92. sign up and costing an additional \$6,000.00. Chris said we could put the existing  
93. signs on any kind of private property including the Durango or a trailer.

94.

95. Councilor Garrison asked about the cost of a leak detector to find all the leaks  
96. underground the city streets and wondered if we had the leaks fixed if it would  
97. help with the water situation? Chris replied, we paid fees on OAWU and they  
98. assist us with issues like detecting leaks. Councilor Patterson said that Public  
99. Works has looked into the cost of a master detector and thought it was very  
100. expensive. Chris also stated that Mt. Vernon has a small detector, and the City  
101. borrowed it but the problem is we have underground noise making it almost  
102. impossible to hear water over the road and stream noise.

103.

104. Mayor Hamsher brought up a town hall meeting he would like to hold and talk  
105. to the residence of Prairie about the water situation. Mayor Hamsher would like  
106. to be able to address the concerns and answer questions the citizens of Prairie  
107. have. The topics he would like to address is what happened to our system,  
108. whats being done, and our financial options for moving forward. Councilor  
109. Garrison offered to go through our back minutes to find when the City  
110. refinanced our existing loan. Mayor Hamsher thought it was a good idea to put  
111. out a questionnaire with the utility billing for those who couldn't make the  
112. town hall meeting.

113.

114.

115. **Fire Department:** Fire Chief Marvin Rynearson reported one incident between  
116. Bear Creek and the shooting range last weekend. Lightning strike from the  
117. night before was the cause and burned approximately 2 ½ acres. State  
118. Forestry had a couple of engines and Prairie City had one engine at the scene.  
119. Chief Rynearson stated it had rained pretty good helping slow and put the fire  
120. out.

121.

122. Chief Rynearson said he was going to be gone October 2, 2017 through  
123. October 15, 2017 for family issues.

124.

125. Mayor Hamsher stated he was going to be gone September 20, 2017 for hip  
126. surgery and will be in recovery for a few weeks.

127.

128. Councilor Garrison commended Chief Rynearsons efforts with helping water  
129. around town. She stated what a big help it was to her and how much she  
130. appreciated his help.

131.

132. **Payables: MSP: To ratify payment of the bills. Councilor Garrison/  
133. Councilor Phippon. All in favor**

134.

135. **Ordinances:** Resolution 2017-12 authorizing budget transfer. Oregon budget  
136. law allows us to transfer appropriated within funds. An insurance check was  
137. received for the storm damage and water system and the funds should be  
138. delegated to the correct expense line. **MSP: To approve or except resolution  
139. 2017-12 authorizing budget transfer. Councilor Garrison/ Councilor  
140. Patterson. All in favor.**

141.

142. Resolution 2017-13 authorizing a budget transfer where we had unexpected  
143. expenses estimated in the Public Works Directors payroll fund. **MSP: To  
144. approve resolution 2017-13 authorizing budget transfer.**

145. **Councilor Patterson/ Councilor Phippon. All in favor.**

146.

147. **Other Business:** Mayor Hamsher announced a workshop scheduled for  
148. October 4, 2017 where the council will discuss the Master Water Plan and  
149. continue working on our water ordinance.

150.

151. The Mayor recognized Francis Preston who came to the council to discuss  
152. some concerns she has with rumors and the water situation. She thanked the  
153. Mayor for thinking about the city and the willingness to have a town hall  
154. discussion. She talked about some “elephants in room” so to speak, and  
155. concerns on an employee matter. She stated that people cannot believe that the  
156. citizens are being asked to pay for something their not getting. She stated that  
157. there are people in poverty that cannot afford to pay for something their not  
158. getting. She asks the council to have empathy on the citizens of prairie in  
159. regards to the utility payment.

160.

161. Mayor Hamsher address her concerns stating the City has no leeway in that  
162. matter. He explained there are conditions that the City has to meet regarding  
163. the loan the City has received. He explained he went to the council meeting

164. when this proposed well project took place, and warned the council of his  
165. concerns of limited water in the proposed well site. Now all those concerns  
166. have come to pass. The Mayor expressed at the beginning of the summer we  
167. had good ground water and built up enough water in our reservoir to have a  
168. decent water level throughout the coming summer. After the lightning strike  
169. knocking out all the equipment and stopping the flow of water to town and  
170. started to drain the tank. Unfortunately it drained our reservoir down to 4 feet  
171. before Public Works could get the water restored and flowing back to town.  
172. The City has been trying to play catch up to restore the reservoir level.  
173. Mayor Hamsher explained to Mrs. Preston that we still have to pay the loan  
174. payment and we need the citizens to pay their portion, so the City can make  
175. the loan payment and not be in default of the payment. He expressed it's very  
176. frustrating and he understands the frustration from the citizens.  
177.  
178. Mrs. Preston also told the Council of another concern regarding an employee's  
179. large wage increase. She really wanted to know from the Council  
180. where can this money come from when we are struggling with water issues.  
181. She also stated the citizens are being made to pay their bills and were told there  
182. was no money, but the City can afford to pay a significant wage increase.  
183.  
184. Mayor Hamsher answered that the Council cannot talk about personnel issues  
185. publicly. Mayor Hamsher explained that one issue we have is this person's  
186. position has to have multiple certifications. The City would be at fault and  
187. fined if the City's Public Works Department does not have an employee with  
188. those certification. He stated the fines would well out weigh the wage increase  
189. and those people that have these certifications are few and far between.  
190.  
191. Councilor Patterson with her background in water/waste spoke on this matter  
192. telling Mrs. Preston the fines for not having someone employed with these  
193. certification are well over \$20,000 a year. She stated you have to have those  
194. certified people and if you don't pay to keep them here then the City of Prairie  
195. would be in the same boat that many cities are in.  
196.  
197. Mrs. Preston asked if we have the money then why can't we give the citizens a  
198. break?  
199.  
200. Councilor Church answered every department has to run its self.  
201.  
202. Mayor Hamsher also stated that we have agreed to pay those rates and charge  
203. those rates to be able to satisfy our loan agreement. He explained in the loan  
204. agreement it stats we can no longer give free water or even the free base rate.  
205. The Mayor said the City used to give the Councilors free water, but the city can

206. no longer do that because in the loan agreement it stated no water was to be  
207. giving free and the City would be in violation of the agreement.  
208. The Loan agreement was set up on the population of the city and then calculate  
209. that every household pay a certain amount every month to insure the loan  
210. payment can be paid.  
211.  
212. Councilor Garrison stated funds that are acquired in water have to stay in water.  
213.  
214. Mayor Hamsher reiterated that when people leave for the winter or people  
215. move away it cuts cost in our water department and it makes it harder on the  
216. City to make ends meet. Now the City is faced with coming up with new  
217. options regarding our water situation.  
218.  
219. Mrs. Preston wanted to touch on one more concern about an employees failure  
220. to fill the requirements to do their job.  
221.  
222. Mayor Hamsher told Mrs. Preston that being an employee matter he couldn't  
223. talk on that issues, but assured her it was being addressed by the council.  
224.  
225. Mayor Hamsher mentioned on a positive note, an award Public Works received  
226. from CIS for safety in the department. They received first place for no  
227. workman's comp claims.  
228.  
229. **Mayor Hamsher adjourned the meeting at 7:55pm.**  
230.  
231.  
232.  
233. Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
234. Bobbie Brown, City Clerk  
235.  
236. Approved by the City Council this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2017  
237. and signed by the Mayor:  
238.  
239. \_\_\_\_\_  
240. Jim Hamsher, Mayor