

**CITY OF PRAIRIE CITY  
PRAIRIE CITY OREGON**

**MEETING MINUTES  
JULY 17, 2021**

**ATTENDEES:**

Mayor Jim Hamsher	Councilor Scott Officer via phone
Councilor Jenny Shaw	Councilor Candy Reagan
Councilor Brook Williams	Councilor Chase McClung
PW Director Chris Camarena	Fire Chief Marvin Rynearson
Contract Fiscal Officer Anna Bass	Georgia Patterson
Joe Phippen	Francis Preston
Tory Stinnett, Economic Development Director	Mike Eicher, Homeland Fireworks Inc

The meeting was opened at 6:00 pm with the pledge of allegiance.

Kevin Boss – Status of the recycle building and property.

Mr. Boss was not present at the meeting. Mayor Hamsher informed the Council that Mr. Boss was interested in possibly purchasing the property. Discussion was had as to the use of the building; at this time it is storage and includes an obsolete glass crusher. Councilor McClung asked if the site was a possible well site. Mayor Hamsher indicated that the geologist had tagged several sites for possible well development, but test drilling was not successful. He reminded the Council that municipal wells have different restrictions than non-municipal wells. Councilor Officer suggested that the City receive an Opinion of Value from a realtor. Mayor Hamsher agreed and suggested that the City have a discussion with Mr. Boss first. The consensus of the Council was to discuss the matter with Mr. Boss at a future meeting.

Changes or Additions to the Agenda.

Mayor Hamsher asked to amend the agenda to include Resolution 2021-10, a Resolution to Re-Designate the Grant County Enterprise Zone and Resolution 2021-11, a Resolution to Declare an Emergency. Motion was made by Councilor Shaw to include add these resolutions to the agenda. Motion was seconded by Councilor Officer and passed unanimously.

Resolution 2021-10, a Resolution to Re-Designate the Grant County Enterprise Zone

Tory Stinnett, Economic Development Director explained to the Council that letters had been sent inviting the residents of the affected taxing districts to a meeting on June 1<sup>nd</sup> to discuss the change requested. No members of the public attended. She explained the following:

- The designation is for a period of 3 years, but can be extended 2 years making it a 5 year designation.
- The designation is a tax deferral designation as an incentive to revitalize the area.
- There are requirements to add jobs to receive the tax deferral.
- Been in place since 1999 and will sunset in 2025 without legislative action.
- At the time of the meeting the redesignation had been approved by Mt Vernon, John Day and Seneca. Prairie City's meeting is this evening and Canyon City is

expected to pass the resolution at their meeting the following week. Mayor Hamsher indicated the County had passed the redesignation also.

Motion to adopt Resolution 2021-10 to Re-Designate the Grant County Enterprise Zone was made by Councilor Williams. The motion was seconded by Councilor McClung and passed unanimously.

Mayor Hamsher asked if the Fireworks discussion could be moved up in the agenda for discussion at this point.

Mike Eicher of Homeland Fireworks was in attendance to discuss the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks display that was cancelled. Mr. Eicher explained that the contract indicates that if the display was delivered and set up had begun, Homeland Fireworks has earned the full amount of the contract. He felt that the cancelling of the display was necessary action considering the fire and he was not going to go by the letter of the contract. He calculates that he has earned \$1,462 of the full contract amount.

- He stated that the permit for the display is valid through the end of the year. If the City chooses to have the display on another date, the permit will need to be updated for that specific date.
- The fireworks have been returned to the Homeland Fireworks magazine for safe keeping. This is requirement for an explosive device unless very specific guidance if followed.
- There are a couple of options the City has currently. They can request a refund of the dollars not earned or the City can reschedule the display for another day.
- Christmas on the Prairie would be a good option as there are no other displays scheduled for that date.
- New Year's Eve would require a different pyrotechnic from Homeland to run the display as there are other displays that day and Mr. Eicher is committed to another display.
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July displays cost more than other times of the year, being the most expensive. Christmas on the Prairie would provide the best "bang" for the City's buck. New Year's Eve would not provide as much as Christmas on the Prairie, but would be more than the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

Mayor Hamsher requested that Mr. Eicher write up some cost options for the two discussed dates. The Council could review those options and decide at a later date. Following the initial discussion there was more discussion related to why one date may be better as well as to where the fireworks could be shot off from.

#### Approval of the June 9<sup>th</sup> Minutes

Councilor McClung made a motion to approve the June 9<sup>th</sup> minutes. Councilor Shaw seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

#### Approval of the June 23<sup>rd</sup> Minutes

Councilor Williams made a motion to approve the June 23<sup>rd</sup> minutes. Councilor McClung seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

#### Ratify Payment of the Bills

Fiscal Officer Bass explained that the list presented is for all bills paid since the June 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. Councilor McClung made a motion to ratify payment of the bills. Councilor Williams seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

#### Fire Dept

Fire Chief Ryneason gave the following update

- Dixie Creek is 93% contained. It was in the Rural district, but the Oregon Dept of Forestry has agreed to pay the costs of approximately \$2.2 million. The fire will be monitored daily for the next couple of weeks, then the schedule will be decreased. It will be monitored until we've received significant rain. The lightning strike was striking on July 1. PW Director Camarena and Chief Ryneason and several others went to the area to observe if a fire had started. The thought at that time was the strike hit outside the district boundary. No smoke was observed for several days. The district was notified on July 3<sup>rd</sup> that there was indeed a fire and it was in the district. Chief Ryneason indicated that there was a good, quick attack on the fire which kept it from getting larger. The air attack was most of the expense.
- Related to the fireworks discussion, Chief Ryneason reminded the Council that the fireworks were moved from the football field to the Oxbow location because of a requirement to keep spectators back 600 feet. That is impossible to do at the football field. Also added that during the fall and winter months, parking at the Oxbow location may be difficult if not impossible.
- Related to Personal Protective Equipment; the department received three new helmets on the previous year's budget and have eight more coming soon. The department is attempting to become compliant with regulations.
- The fire pumper that is outside has been loaded with water for wildfire season.

#### Public Works Department

PW Director Camarena gave the following update:

- The composting facility is close to be completed.
- The application for the Small City Allotment grant is in process.
- The County Road Dept has a lot of extra chip sealing rock left at the mill site. There may be an opportunity for the City to trade for some.
- The mill has got their well back running again. The city will be able to use this to fill the water tank required at the composting facility.

#### Comp Time Discussion

Mayor Hamsher reminded the Council that the budget has in it the ability to pay the public works employees 100 hours of their comp time bank. This is something that needs to be approved by the Council. Finance Officer Bass informed the council that historically the Council has approved this payment in July. This has put the Council behind on cash flow issues as the expense goes out in the beginning of the year and the rest of the year is spent trying to "catch up". It is budgeted for and is the decision of the Council. Fiscal Officer Bass informed that Council that in the proposed personnel policy is indicates that the City will offer auto-deposit of the payroll. With the payroll schedule the City follows now, this option is not possible as there is a need for a 3 day lead time for auto deposits to happen. She explained to the Council that the workdays of the 11<sup>th</sup> through the 25<sup>th</sup> are paid on the 25<sup>th</sup>, the 26<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup> are paid on the 10<sup>th</sup>. She proposes that the City change their pay periods to the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup> paid on the 25<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> through the end of the

month be paid on the 10<sup>th</sup>. This change will require one short paycheck and the payment of the comp time could bridge that to enable the change. After discussion, it was agreed that Fiscal Officer Bass would meet with the employees the following week to discuss the proposed change and the comp time discussion will be tabled until after that discussion.

#### Resolution 2021-11 a Resolution to Declare a Drought State of Emergency

Mayor Hamsher explained that the County has previously issued a State of Emergency Declaration and this has been ratified by the State of Oregon. At this time there are 19 or 20 Counties that have made this declaration. The State is in the process of requesting the Federal Govt to issue a Federal Declaration. The Mayor informed the Council that a restriction of outside water usage to be implemented to enable having the reservoir levels at a level to insure firefighting capabilities. He did indicate that he would be in favor of allowing watering for gardens as they are a food source. Mayor Hamsher indicated he has been in discussions with USDA and the Governor's office to enable shortening of the bid process time for the water project. He did state that, even if the project was started tomorrow, the drought was still going to have an effect on the residents.

Councilor McClung asked what the City was waiting for to go out for bid. Mayor Hamsher stated that the State is needing a final opinion of counsel and the title report from Land Title. Land Title is behind in their reporting process because of increase in the housing market.

Joe Phippen asked why the construction company involved in the sewer project was not automatically given emergency authorization to do the water project. It was explained that the sewer project was able to be awarded in that manner because that company was on-site doing another project. This is not the case for the water project to it is required to go out for bid.

At this time, Frances Prestin gave those in attendance an update on US Senate Bill 192. This bill was introduced by Senator Wyden and is moving quickly through the process. This bill is to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers act to designate certain river segments in the State as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Mrs. Prestin believes that this bill will have a detrimental effect on the water usage in the state and is asking those present to contact their elected officials. Mayor Hamsher added that the Grant County Court and other Eastern Oregon Counties have written letters of opposition to this bill.

After further discussion, Councilor Williams made a motion to adopt Resolution 2021-11, a Resolution Declaring a Drought Emergency. Councilor McClung seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Further discussion was had regarding the water restrictions. It was suggested to put a memo on the water bills, do a mailing to all post office boxes and put a notice in the paper as well as on the radio.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:06 pm.

Accepted by the Council the 11<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2021.

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Mayor Hamsher