

**CITY OF JOHN DAY
CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
JOHN DAY, OREGON**

August 8th, 2023

COUCILORS PRESENT:

Heather Rookstool, Mayor
David Holland, Council President
Chris Labhart, Councilor
Ron Phillips, Councilor
Sherrie Rininger, Councilor

COUNCILORS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Casey Myers, Public Works Director
Don Gabbard, Fire Chief
Sarah Wright, Secretary (Virtual)

GUESTS PRESENT:

Cody Crismon	Shannon Adair
Amanda Crismon	Bruce Ward
Ed Newby	Kim Ward
Carl Swank	Judy Schuette
Heather Swank	Kim Holland
John Rowell	Jim Spell
Sherr Lundbom	Beth Spell
Ron Lundbom	Louis Provencher
Bob Pereira	Nick Green
Morgan Green	Susan Church
Tammy Bremner	Joyce Nodine

Agenda Item No. 1—Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Rookstool called the city council meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Agenda Item No. 2—Pledge of Allegiance

The City Council stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Item No. 3—Roll Call and Attendance

Mayor Rookstool noted that all councilors were present.

Agenda Item No. 4—Amend or Accept Regular Agenda

Items to be added to the agenda include a City Manager update, the investigation findings, an update from the Sherriff about the sign complaint, an update on R3, and meeting locations.

Councilor Rininger made a motion to accept the regular agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilor Phillips and passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 5—Consent Agenda

Items on the consent agenda for approval:

- a) Check Register
- b) Approval of Council Minutes
- c) Except the resignation from Katrina Randleas, Anna Bass, and Robert Gaslin
- d) 2023 SDC Report

Councilor Rininger had a question on the check register. She asked Casey Myers, Public Works Director who LS Networks were, they are the ones doing the fiber networking through town.

Councilor Labhart made a motion to accept the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilor Rininger and passed unanimously

Agenda Item No. 6—Public Comments

Mayor Rookstool welcomed the public and asked if there was anyone present for something not on the agenda.

Jim Spell asked Councilor Phillips if he was interviewing for a job and found out one member of the interview team wanted that same job, does he think he would have a fair interview. Councilor Phillips answered with I don't know. Jim Spell asked the same question to Councilor Rininger and she responded with he is supposed to address the Mayor not the individual Council members. He then asked Mayor Rookstool the same question, she responded with she feels like if the person on the interview panel was the person applying for the job that would be a problem.

Steph Allen said in the past the online comments used to be up on the board and they are no longer, she thinks they should be put back on there so people at home are able to ask questions that way, Mayor Rookstool agreed. As the Senior Accountant who has been preparing for the audit, she feels it is unfair that she is just now finding out they have requested to extend it. With the investigation being finished, the City employees haven't been notified of the findings so she feels it should be taken off of the agenda. Mayor Rookstool said the attorney said Council had to accept the findings in a public meeting then it will be released to staff what the findings are. She said Councilor Rininger gave Councilor Labhart a dirty look as he walked by and they need to show each other respect. Councilor Rininger said that they need to be shown respect as well. She then gave her 2 week notice.

Savannah Lovell stated that Council unanimously voted to accept a new employee handbook on May 23rd. Immediately after that it was given back to the attorney to do more revisions. She would like to know why Council is revising an approved handbook and then expect employees to sign it. Mayor Rookstool said last she spoke to the attorney there are no revisions being made they are just typing it up and finalizing it. Savannah stated we received invoices from the attorney that say otherwise.

Shannon Adair said the audience and the public don't know what the employees are going through every day. If you're in a leadership position you are going to get criticized and that's not bullying in her eyes. That is clarification, asking questions and expecting an answer. People don't know what's happening on the inside.

Ron Lundbom said it is obvious people don't know what is happening with the sewer plant. He wishes people would get the fact about what is actually happening

Agenda Item No. 7—Action Items

a. Bank Signers

Katrina Randleas and Elliot Sky need to be removed as a bank signer and Councilor Labhart needs to be added to all of the Cities Bank of Eastern Oregon accounts.

Councilor Phillips made a motion to remove Katrina Randleas and Elliot Sky from all of Bank of Eastern Oregon accounts and add Councilor Labhart. The motion was seconded by Councilor Rininger and passed unanimously.

b. City Recorder

Rob Gaslin was hired as our City Auditor, he started our audit. He was made aware of the City Recorder resigning and then resigned as our auditor to speak with Mayor Rookstool about the City Recorder position. Prior to Anna Bass resigning she spoke with Rob Gaslin first to make sure he would be willing to consider the City Recorder position.

Council Rininger made a motion for the City to work out a contract with Rob Gaslin as the City Recorder and the administrative committee be involved in negotiations then be brought back to Council for a final decision. The motion was seconded by Councilor Holland and passed unanimously.

c. Council Seat

There are 2 City Council seats available. The deadline to turn in an application for Council will be September 8th, 2023 at 4 pm.

Agenda Item No. 8—City Manager Update

The gentleman that Council interviewed didn't realize it was a in building position. Due to personal things he is not able to consider the position. The consulting firm gave us the option of re advertising the position. They will send in applications as they receive them to have Council review. Savannah Lovell suggested reinstating the office manager position whose duties include HR for the office staff. Shannon Adair asked if there was a way to open the job up on our website because it currently says it is closed.

Agenda Item No. 9—To Accept the Findings of the Investigation

Councilor Rininger made a motion to accept the findings of the investigation as presented in the executive session. The motion was seconded by Councilor Phillips and passed unanimously.

Mayor Rookstool said they only saw the findings of the investigation but not the full investigation. After the findings are shared with staff it will be open to the public. Savannah Lovell said Council just accepted the summary of the investigation findings from an attorney who recommended the person under investigation. To be transparent Councilor Labhart told the audience there was a complaint filed by some staff members against the City. As soon as the findings get approved, a letter will go out to the complainants before anyone else.

Agenda Item No. 10—Update on Sign Removal

On August 3rd, 2023 the sheriff's office received a theft complaint filed by Councilor Holland. The complaint was in regards to Councilor Phillips and the actions he took in removal of the sign. The

Sheriff's office provided a letter that stated the Grant County Sheriff's Office will be taking no action in this matter and considers it closed.

Councilor Phillips made a statement that he overstepped and should have had it approved by Council before he removed that sign. He said he's learning and shouldn't have done that.

Judy Schuette said there were comments made by the Sheriff and his deputies long before that complaint was filed. That would completely corrupt any kind of investigation. She believes his office should not have been the ones investigating that.

Nick Green thanked Councilor Phillips for admitting to what he did, that is appropriate. He addressed that Council saying the reason people are so upset right now is because they are violating the law. He believes the Council owes it to themselves and the public to actually address the comments Katrina Randleas made in her resignation letter. He stated Council doesn't have the authority outside of Council meeting to do what they did, to discipline City staff or hire employees except for the City Manager. Those are constitutionally protected rights under the City Charter. He addressed Mayor Rookstool and told no one elected her to be the City Manager or City Recorder and stated she intervened unlawfully in his Public Records Request. She charged him \$2,650 for 6 invoices from 3 companies. Under the City Code the only people with authority to respond to Public Records Requests are the City Recorder and the City Attorney, not the elected Mayor. He will be pursuing this to hold Mayor Rookstool accountable for her violations of our constitutionally protected rights.

Councilor Labhart thanked Councilor Phillips personally for stepping up and admitting what he did. The sign was put up by the City as a gesture to the library. They were pleasantly surprised to see that sign put up and they were shocked to see it taken down.

Agenda Item No. 11—R3 Update

The next R3 meeting is going to be September 18th where hopefully things can be finalized. R3 is still moving forward. The City is still waiting for Baker to join and then John Day's paperwork will officially be sent off.

Councilor Rininger stated her conflict of interest because her building was supposed to be a part of R3. She is not going to recuse herself because she is not for R3 at all. She spoke with the ethics commission and they told her she has the right to state her opinion as long as she records her conflict of interest. She strongly urges the rest of the Council to listen to the meetings because she doesn't like the direction it is going.

Shannon Adair said the Council seems very comfortable with Rob Gaslin coming in and being the City Recorder. There have been reports from him in the past stating the City has stellar books and our financial statements were outstanding. If the City Council is comfortable with hiring Rob Gaslin then Shannon believes they are comfortable with the books and how they have been in the past.

Agenda Item No. 12—Meeting Locations

Councilor Labhart apologized to the public for the meeting that was held at City Hall and believes that never should have happened. He asked the Council for a consensus to never do that again to the public. Council came to a consensus.

Agenda Item No. 13—Additional Department, Council or Other Comments

No additional comments were made.

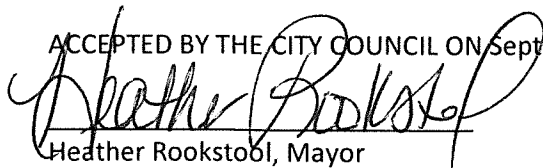
Adjourn

There being no further business before the council, Councilor Holland made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm. The motion was seconded by Councilor Rininger seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted:

Heather Rookstool
Mayor

ACCEPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON September 12th, 2023


Heather Rookstool, Mayor