

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

August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023

**COUCILORS PRESENT:**

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

**COUNCILORS ABSENT:**

Chris Labhart, Councilor (Excused)

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Casey Myers, Public Works Director  
Don Gabbard, Fire Chief  
Savannah Lovell, Records Clerk  
Steph Allen, Senior Accountant  
Sarah Wright, Secretary (Virtual)

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Tammy Bremner	Bruce Ward
John Luginbahl	Ed Newby
Paul Manz	Shannon Adair
Jon Meiling	Jeremy Adair
Linda Ladd	Brad Hale
Joyce Nodine	Stacey Hale
Millie Lysne	Nicholas Ducote
Heather Swank	Judy Schuette
Debbie Brown	Chris Hansen
Louis Provencher	Kathie Stoddard
Kim Holland	Richard Holland

**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 except Councilor Labhart who is excused.

**Agenda Item No. 4—Amend or Accept Regular Agenda**

The approval of Council minutes needs to be taken off the consent agenda since there were none present.

Councilor Holland would like to remove the Nick Ducote updated contract from the consent agenda.

***Councilor Rininger made a motion to approve the consent 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) Approval of Check Register
- b) ADA Contract (was signed by Corum but need an updated one signed)

***Councilor Rininger made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilor Phillips and passed unanimously.***

**Agenda Item No. 6—Public Comments**

Kathy Stoddard filed a written and verbal complaint and requested her letter to be made part of permanent record. She stated on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at the Grant County fairgrounds she listened to Mayor Rookstool talk to fellow residents about how she got rid of a problem employee. Kathy asked what Mayor Rookstool was hiding from the citizens of John Day and who is next on her agenda to get rid of.

Steph Allen put in a public records request regarding the investigation. She got a response from Mayor Rookstool stating the City is the custodian of certain public records pertaining to the investigation. She stated the City of John Day paid the investigator \$5,661.90 and when she filed the public record request she was going to get charged \$1,325 for an investigation that she was a part of.

Shannon Adair said when she was on Council there were a lot of conversations back and forth between the community and there were lots of questions from the community which they always tried to answer those. Just previous to the election it was discussed that if Council received a question that they didn't know the answer to they would say "dually noted" or "we will get back to you." Shannon Adair has noticed that the Council is not answering any questions from the public ever. She asked if that could change so the public gets answers to the questions that are asked.

**Agenda Item No. 7—Action Items**

a. **Bank Authorization**

***Councilor Rininger made a motion to give Rob Gaslin authorization to become the administrator of bank at Bank of Eastern Oregon. The motion was seconded by Councilor Phillips and passed unanimously.***

b. **CJD update (Nick Ducote)**

Nick Ducote asked Council who he is supposed to go to during the day as he is managing these projects. Nick Decote needs the Council to figure out the things that should be brought back to Council and the things they are comfortable with the consultants figuring out on their own. Mayor Rookstool stated anything financially needs to come in front of Council.

Judy Schuette believes if there are technical decisions that need to be made Councilor Holland should be the contact person because of his knowledge of this project.

Shannon Adair stated the City has several contractors with no coordinator. There is nobody that is putting all of this together for the consultants and this is something that should have been handled months ago when it was brought up.

Councilor Holland wants there to be a bigger push on getting a City Manager in the office. He believes a big missing piece of the City right now is not having a City Manager. Councilor Holland told Nick Decote he has no problem helping him and if he needs him involved he's willing to do that.

c. **Rally Contract**

This is regarding the Cyber Mill server room in Seneca. Rally signed the contract to lease the server room

***Councilor Phillips made a motion to accept Rally's signed contract and make it effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. The motion was seconded by Councilor Rininger and passed unanimously.***

d. **Gro Grant**

They sent a letter stating the City of John Day is not conducting the GRO—Growing Rural Oregon Year 2 work, and thus is no longer in need of the grant funds of \$100,000. That money needs to be sent back, it was not counted into the budget.

***Councilor Rininger made a motion to cut a check for \$100,000 to go back to the Ford Family Foundation since it has not been used. The motion was seconded by Councilor Phillips and passed unanimously.***

e. **Vacant Office Staff**

Councilor Holland believes we need the City Manager position filled as soon as possible even if it is a less experienced person that is willing to train and learn as they go. He thinks that is way more valuable than putting in a Office Manager which would still be lacking someone being there to make those larger decisions. Council came to a consensus to reach out to GMP Consultants and interview all the applicants for this position.

**Agenda Item No. 8—Additional Department, Council or Other Comments**

There is a real estate company in Burns that is purchasing the burned building downtown. Mr. Emery was served with his warrant and decided to sell the building that day.

There are 2 council seat positions open and applications are being accepted until September 8<sup>th</sup> by 4 pm.

Councilor Rininger read a letter that criticized city personnel, former City Manager Nick Green and Councilor Holland. Councilor Rininger said, "There has been a lot of anger toward the new council. The fact that we're not transparent and not sharing information. There's a good reason for that." She stated city employees are "out of control" and suggested that the council needs to oversee the disciplining of city employees until a City Manager is hired. She asked Councilor Holland to step down as council president claiming that he has shown his lack of support for our Mayor by going above her head and overstepping his position. Councilor Holland called some of those statements flat out lies. She finished her letter by saying, "it is time for people in this room to start showing our Mayor the respect she deserves and let her continue to move forward with the work that needs to be done to keep this city moving forward."

Frances Preston wanted to express that Mayor Rookstool is doing the best that she can do. She believes Mayor Rookstool is experiencing a deliberate, conscious attempt to destroy her as a Mayor of the people, voted by the people. She believes Mayor Rookstool is doing an outstanding job.

Shannon Adair said nothing that she has heard in this room tonight is bullying, as leaders you deal with people asking you questions every single day and expecting a response and answers. When you don't give that to them, you're going to lose respect. Shannon said, "please take a look at leadership for your City staff because if you don't support your City staff and we lose all of them, we are in a significant world of hurt, more than we are right now."

Nick Decote stated that Councilor Rininger's comment about him doing most of the work is not accurate and also stated Nick Green was doing about 80% of the work that he was on also.

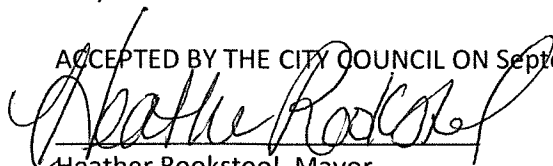
**Adjourn**

***There being no further business before the council, Councilor Rininger moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 PM. The motion was seconded by Councilor Phillips and passed unanimously.***

Respectfully Submitted:

Heather Rookstool  
Mayor

ACCEPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023



Heather Rookstool, Mayor