



**CITY OF JOHN DAY
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES APRIL 22, 2025**

COUCILORS PRESENT:

Sherrie Rininger, Mayor
Chris Labhart, Councilor
Eric Bush, Council President
Bradley Hale, Councilor
Ron Phillips, Councilor
Vern Pifer, Councilor
Heather Swank, Councilor

COUNCILORS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT:

Melissa Bethel, City Manager
Rob Gaslin, Contract Finance
John Russel, Auditor

Agenda Item No. 1—Call Meeting to Order

The City Council meeting was called to order at 6:30 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

All councilors were present.

Agenda Item No. 4—Amend or Accept Regular Agenda

Councilor Bush moved to accept the agenda as published. The motion was seconded by Councilor Swank and passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 5—Public Comments

Jim Spell: Several meetings ago the Fire Chief of Canyon City suggested naming the new Fire Hall in honor of Ron Smith, the previous Fire Chief because he put a lot of time and effort into the building. Mayor Rininger asked for this to be put on the next council meeting agenda.

Agenda Item No. 6—Consent Agenda

- a. Accounts Payable through 3-27-25
- b. Minutes of 4-8-25

Mayor Rininger had one addition to the minutes of 4-28-2025. On Agenda Item No. 12 she would like to clarify that the money they asked for would have been from the Federal Government.

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

Agenda Item No. 7—Audit Report for FY22-23—John Russel; Zwygart John & Associates CPA's PLLC

Russel discussed the FY22-23 Audit Report.

During the course of the audit, they were made aware of allegations of significant mismanagement of the Urban Renewal Agency. The current governing body is aware of the allegations and has made the consultations with attorneys that are necessary. The Urban Renewal Agency is its own independent audit.

The City of John Day lacked oversight over federal payroll tax liability reporting. There should be controls in place to ensure payroll tax liabilities are properly reported and remitted to federal and state agencies. The lack of oversight caused the City to fail to make required payments which led to significant penalties and interests charge to the City. The City has hired Gaslin to provide accounting and payroll services, policies and procedures will be reviewed to ensure future compliance.

Councilor Labhart made a motion to accept the FY22-23 Audit as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Bush and passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 8—City Manager Comments

The City of John Day Budget meetings will begin on May 12th, 2025. Bethel encourages Councilors and members of the Budget Committee to go to other cities websites and look at their fees. Bethel is putting together a master fee schedule because there are things the City isn't charging for when they should be.

Agenda Item No. 9—Mayor and Council Comments

The Ways and Means Committee was held in La Grande, Ducote did not have the opportunity to speak on the Cities behalf. Mayor Rininger sent a letter out to our Congressmen, Representatives and Senators. There were several positive responses to the letter and she was able to testify for the Treatment Plant regarding funding as well as submit her testimony in writing.

Mayor Rininger was very pleased with the outcome and attendance of the Small Cities meeting that was held on April 18th.

Councilor Labhart met with Senator Wyden's representatives last week and Senator Wyden will be in town on April 24th.

Adjourn:

There being no further business before council the meeting was adjourned.

Melissa Bethel, CM