



Minutes
1382nd Regular Council Meeting
October 27, 2021
(Teleconference)

6:00 p.m. Regular Council Meeting

Mayor Bob Poch called the 1382nd regular meeting of the Coulee Dam Town Council to order at 6:00p.m. via teleconference.

Roll Call

Council members present: Kevin Black, Merv Schmidt, Dale Rey, Larry Hall and Keith St. Jeor.

Staff Present: Public Works Superintendent Mike Steffens, Police Chief Paul Bowden and Clerk/Treasurer Stefani Bowden.

Public Input

None

Updates and Modifications to Agenda

None

Consent Agenda

(m/s St. Jeor/Schmidt) to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried.

Minutes Regular Council Meeting – October 13, 2021
 Budget Workshops – October 13, 2021 and October 20, 2021

Vouchers: Claim Vouchers and Checks:
 Claim Voucher No.'s 39792 through 39803, and EFT's dated October 27, 2021 in the total amount of \$ 62,033.56.

 Manual Claim Voucher No. 39791 dated October 19, 2021 in the amount of \$3,601.56.

Action Agenda

- a. AB 2021-10, Ordinance No. 797, Budget Amendment
A budget amendment was requested to cover additional costs for programming and installation of police radios and for purchase of electrical transformers to have as extra supply. (m/s St. Jeor/Hall) to adopt Ordinance No. 797, amending the 2021 Budget. Motion carried.

- b. Tree Removal Request – 705 Walnut
Mayor Poch stated that he has looked at the trees being requested for removal and can see that the roots are an issue. Councilman Dale Rey also viewed the trees but didn't feel they looked any worse than many other trees in town.

Property owner, Jeff Semanko, was present to speak regarding his request to have 3 trees removed. He said that in order to maintain a yard, he will have to have fill dirt brought in to cover the roots. It is very difficult to mow and he is not able to install a sprinkler system.

Councilman Keith St. Jeor asked if there have been any issues with tree roots in the sewer lines at that location. Semanko replied “not yet”.

Semanko is not opposed to having replacement trees planted should the council approve the removal of the existing trees. Councilman Merv Schmidt asked what type of trees currently exist at that location that are being requested for removal. The existing trees are Horse Chestnut. Discussion was held regarding a good replacement and it was suggested to ask an arborist.

St. Jeor does not have a problem with the removal as long as they are replaced. Schmidt would like the City Crew to work with the homeowner on determining the replacements. It was also brought up that the property owner is responsible for the cost of replacement if the trees are not listed for removal on the most recent tree inventory.

Mayor Poch suggested that whatever tree is decided as a replacement, the same type should be used for any other tree replacements on that street to keep a uniform look. Superintendent Mike Steffens was not in favor of replacing trees at that location due to the potential to cause issues with the water main. Councilman Larry Hall was also not in favor of planting replacement trees at that location but Councilman Rey would like to see at least one tree planted if three are removed.

(m/s St. Jeor/Rey) to approve the removal of three trees at 705 Walnut pending acceptance of replacement. Motion carried. Superintendent Mike Steffens will meet with Semako to determine replacement trees.

Discussion Agenda

a. COVID-19 Vaccination Mandate

Mayor Poch reported on the meeting held between himself, the labor union representative, Councilman Rey and the union steward regarding the proposed vaccine mandate. Due to a lot of information that needs further researched, Mayor Poch asked the council to consider tabling the issue until further information is obtained. He feels there is not enough knowledge at this point to make an informed decision.

Councilman Rey asked for the rest of the council’s input and opinions regarding the mandate. After meeting with the union representative and steward, he feels this is a contentious issue. Rey’s opinion is that this is a matter of public safety and safety of the town employees. Rey told the council that exemptions were discussed at the meeting and there will be lots of hurdles regarding exemptions for medical and religious reasons.

Rey doesn’t want to table the issue for long in fear that it gets ignored. Hall agreed that it shouldn’t get put off for months. Mayor Poch would like to see a decision made before year end.

Councilman Kevin Black has some concerns over the mandate. The federal government does not mandate the vaccine for employers with less the 100 employees. He stated that the fire department already has a low number of people responding to calls and is concerned that if the mandate goes through, there may be no one to respond. He is also concerned about requiring contractors, particularly electrical, working for the town to have the vaccine. It could cause a hardship if Nespelem Valley Electric does not have enough vaccinated staff to perform work for the town. Black stated that he personally knows people that have been vaccinated and have still contracted COVID. The vaccine does not prevent the virus from being passed on. He also knows someone that died from receiving the vaccine. He stated “we aren’t health care professionals...let them make the decision”

Councilman Merv Schmidt feels that individuals should have a personal choice whether or not to get the vaccine and doesn’t like the idea of forcing it on them.

Rey said that not all areas have been considered yet and that volunteers and contractors may not be included in the mandate.

After discussion, the consensus from the council was to gather more information and look at the issue again in another week or two. (m/s Rey/Black) to table the topic for 2 weeks. Motion carried.

Staff, Council & Committee Report

Clerk

The Clerk reminded the council that the audit exit conference is tomorrow morning. Councilmembers should have received a meeting invited from the auditor.

Council

Keith St. Jeor asked about having weeds in yards addressed. The Police Chief will meet with him to discuss the issue.

Public Input

Mayor noted that it was nice to see so many people on the line and asked if anyone wished to speak. There was no response.

Adjournment

(m/s St. Jeor/Schmidt) to adjourn the meeting at 6:51pm.

Mayor 
Bob Poch

Clerk 
Stefani Bowden