



Minutes
1384th Regular Council Meeting
November 29, 2021
(Teleconference)

6:00 p.m. Regular Council Meeting

Mayor Bob Poch called the 1384th regular meeting of the Coulee Dam Town Council to order at 6:02p.m. via teleconference.

Roll Call

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

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

Public Hearings

a. 2022 Final Budget Hearing

Mayor Poch opened up the Final Budget Hearing to take comments regarding the proposed Budget for 2022 at 6:03pm. Councilman St. Jeor did some research on paying of the water loans early to reduce interest. There is 23 years remaining on the two loans. He estimated that making additional principal payments of \$20,000 each year would pay the loans off in 15 years. The interest savings would be over \$100,000 and maybe closer to \$200,000.00 A \$3.00 per month increase assessed to every water user would provide for the \$20,000. The Clerk suggested it be charged as a separated line item on the bills that specifically indicates it is for the loan payments. The Clerk will prepare a draft water rate resolution for the council to review and consider.

St. Jeor mentioned the need to increase or adjust the wastewater rates but it would probably be better to wait until the treatment plant project is complete so there is a more accurate accounting of the final costs. Dale Rey stated that the rates could be looked at again mid-year.

With no comments from the public, the hearing closed at 6:11pm.

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 – November 10, 2021
Budget Workshop –November 10, 2021

Vouchers: Claim Vouchers and Checks:
Claim Voucher No.'s 39835 through 39846, and EFT's dated November 24, 2021 in the total amount of \$ 375,110.00.

Manual Claim Vouchers and Checks:
Check No. 39834, reissue for lost Check No. 39655

Voided Checks: Lost Check No. 39655 (re-issued as 39834)

Action Agenda

- a. AB 2021-14, Ordinance No. 800, Adopting the 2022 Budget (First Reading)
(m/s Rey/Schmidt) to accept the first reading of Ordinance No. 800, adopting the 2022 Budget. Motion carried.
- b. AB 2021-15, Resolution No. 2021-05, Surplus Property
The Police Department has 2 handguns that are no longer of use to the town. The former police officer who used the handguns in the line of duty has requested to purchase them. Dale Rey asked about Fair Market Value. Police Chief Bowden stated that Fair Market Value has already been established as identical handguns were recently surplused and used as trade-ins with a gun broker. (m/s St. Jeor/Schmidt) to approve Resolution No. 2021-05, surplusung 2 handguns. Motion carried.
- c. AB 2021-16, Resolution No. 2021-06, Delano Transfer Station Fees
There is a need to raise gate fees and tipping fees at the Transfer Station in order to meet budget needs. Mayor Poch stated that the doesn't see any other way to increase revenues at the Transfer Station without raising the rates. Councilman Rey asked how much it would raise the monthly utility bills for Coulee Dam. It is unknown at this time. The increase in expense to the Town of Coulee Dam will come from rate increases by Sunrise Disposal. Sunrise disposal has not indicated how much they will raise their rates to the Towns. The gate fee increase will affect individuals that haul waste on their own to the transfer station. (m/s St. Jeor/Rey) to approve Resolution No. 2021-06. Motion carried.
- d. NCWNTF – Annual Renewal of Narcotics Task Force Operational Agreement
Councilman Rey had some issues with the lack of services provided by Okanogan County and asked Chief Bowden how much of a benefit the Town receives from being a part of the Task Force. Chief Bowden stated that they do turn stuff in to the Task Force but they are not provided a lot of detail as to what the Task Force is doing. Rey felt that if the Task Force is going to operate in the Town, they should be providing the Chief with more details. Bowden tried to explain that isn't how a Task Force works. Most of the time, information is kept very confidential because the less people who know what is going on, the more effective it is. Rey said that if he actually saw the county here, providing services, he might feel different. He has a hard time supporting anything with the county when he doesn't see their presence in Coulee Dam.

Chief Bowden said that he and his officer have both reached out for help from the Task Force on many occasions. They have assisted in some marijuana issues. The Police Department is notified on the big issues but there are a lot of small drug issues that they work on without Coulee Dam's knowledge.

The Clerk informed the council that there were similar concerns a few years ago and the Task Force provided a presentation to the council. There were a lot of things the Task Force had done behind the scenes that we were not aware of. Mayor Poch stated that the Task Force extends out to other agencies such as Douglas County and Washington State Patrol.

No decisions were made due to lack of motion for approval of the agreement.

Discussion Agenda

a. Water Use Efficiency Goals

Superintendent Mike Steffens informed the council that it is time to update and re-establish water use efficiency goals which needs to be done in an open public forum every six years. These goals coincide with the annual water report that has to be submitted to the Department of Health. There are two sides to the goals; consumer side and supply side.

On the consumer side, the goal is to lower water usage by 2% over six years. Steffens will work with the public to lower usage. The public can contact him for ideas and suggestions. One of the biggest culprits is leaky and inefficient toilets. He has dye tablets for leak detection and toilet bricks to reduce water usage approximately a half gallon per flush.

On the supply side, the goal is to lower the leakage by 5% every 2 years. A couple of things that contribute to the loss are computer fails and broken meters. We are already in the process of a computer upgrade at the water plant which will help with quicker response and detection of unaccounted water. Over the next six years, meters will be evaluated for accurate reads. Leak detection is done annually as well.

Steffens works closely with Evergreen Rural Water to meet these goals. Educating the public is a key factor in reaching consumer goals. Currently, the town is at about a 20-25% water loss. The goal is to reduce that to 10-15%.

With working towards these goals and with the help from Evergreen Rural Water, the town can continue to provide good quality drinking water in the most efficient way possible.

b. COVID-19 Vaccination Mandate – Revised Draft Policy

No changes have been made to the draft vaccination mandate policy since the previous council meeting. There were no comments on the mandate policy.

Councilman St. Jeor proposed an idea relating to getting employees vaccinated. He suggested that ARPA funds be used to provide an incentive to employees that are already vaccinated or will get vaccinated. He called it a "safety award" and proposed a dollar amount of \$1000.00 per vaccinated employee. He said it would be a way to reward those who want to follow the rules and mandates. It will cost the town a substantial amount to accommodate those who do

not get vaccinated and are granted an exemption.

Schmidt asked if this would cover those employees that are already vaccinated. St. Jeor stated the incentive would apply to anyone who is currently vaccinated and any employee who chooses to be vaccinated within 30 days.

The Clerk has been trying to get a definite answer as to if the ARPA funds can be used for vaccination incentives. MRSC, Town Attorney and the Department of Commerce cannot provide any definite answer on it. The Clerk has contacted the US Treasury Department and is waiting on a response from them. Mayor Poch asked the Clerk if there are any town funds available that could cover it if ARPA funds are not allowed. There is some money in the General Reserve Fund that could be used.

Schmidt said he has heard of another employer that provided an incentive of \$300. Rey felt that if you don't make it enticing enough, people won't get vaccinated. Schmidt had no objections to offering an incentive and covering it out of the general reserve if needed.

(m/s St. Jeor/Schmidt) to move the vaccine incentive topic to the Action Agenda. Motion carried.

Action Agenda continued

e. COVID 19 Vaccination Incentive

(m/s St. Jeor/Schmidt) to award employees that are fully vaccinated by the 29th of December 2021, a one-time \$1000 safety award. Rey suggested the amount be changed to \$1500. The goal is to get the employees vaccinated without having to "hold a gun to their head". Original motion died due to lack of vote and revision request.

(m/s St. Jeor/Rey) to offer a safety award in the amount of \$1500 to any Coulee Dam employee that can show that they have been fully vaccinated by December 29, 2021. Schmidt wanted it known that he felt that \$1000 was sufficient but wouldn't hold up the approval of incentive. Motion carried.

The Clerk stated that this action will require a formal written policy. She will contact the attorney to get the policy drafted right away.

Staff, Council & Committee Report

Council

Dale Rey asked if anything has been heard from MSI regarding the wastewater treatment plant. No response has been received. Kurt Holland has been in contact with other contractors for quotes for painting and valve repair.

Keith St. Jeor asked about working towards getting the bill straightened out with Elmer City now that the treatment plant is almost finished. The Clerk has provided all of the councilmembers with a detailed spreadsheet showing outstanding bills from Elmer City. The spreadsheet only covered operational costs. It did not include any costs associated with the treatment plant project. The project costs will need to be worked on with the attorney. The

Clerk will be sending the outstanding invoices and past due amounts to Elmer City again for operational costs that are chargeable under the existing agreement. St. Jeor stated that it needs squared away because the citizens of Coulee Dam are covering the past due amounts for Elmer City and “that’s not right”. Rey feels that Coulee Dam should submit all amounts in arrears along with new treatment plant costs to Elmer City and give them 30 days to respond. He stated this has “gone on way to long” and is “ridiculous”.

Mayor

Mayor Poch gave a “shout-out” to the Public Works Crew for doing a great job on leaf pick-up. They have gone through a lot of extra work and headaches with equipment break-downs this year. He just wanted to publicly thank them. The sentiments were echoed by all the council members in attendance.

Clerk

The Clerk informed the council that a liquor license renewal request has been received from Coulee Fuel and Food. Dale Rey asked if it was just for beer and wine, which it was.


Public Input

There was no response when Mayor Poch asked again if any members of the public wished to speak.

Adjournment

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

Mayor 
Bob Poch

Clerk 
Stefani Bowden