

A regular meeting of the Astoria Common Council was held at the above place at the hour of 7:00 pm.

Councilors Present: Brownson, Rocka, Herman, Hilton, and Mayor Jones.

Councilors Excused: None

Staff Present: City Manager Estes, Parks and Recreation Director Dart-McLean, Community Development Director Leatherman, Finance Director Brooks, Fire Chief Crutchfield, Police Chief Spalding, Public Works Director Harrington, Library Director Pearson, and City Attorney Henningsgaard. The meeting was live streamed and recorded, and will be transcribed by ABC Transcription Services, LLC.

## REPORTS OF COUNCILORS

**Item 3(a):** **Councilor Hilton** reported that he met with people to discuss transportation and traffic during the heat wave and the Fourth of July. He also talked to Home Bakery about their progress. The bakery would be making doughnuts and was looking for people to make bread. He thanked the Chamber of Commerce and those responsible for putting on the fireworks show.

**Item 3(b):** **Councilor Brownson** had no reports.

**Item 3(c):** **Councilor Rocka** reported that the Department Head reports were included in this meeting's agenda. He encouraged everyone to read the reports to see what their tax dollars were paying for. COVID-19 was trailing off and he enjoyed getting out into his ward again. He was concerned about the problem of homelessness and had recently helped a homeless person get out homelessness.

**Item 3(d):** **Councilor Herman** reported that she and her husband spent an afternoon with government consultant Mary McArthur surveying all of the City's parks accessibility for people with physical disabilities. All of the City's parks are accessible, particularly Violet LaPlante Park. Additionally, Alderbrook Park would be made more accessible when the City receives the grant for accessible playground equipment. She was impressed by how many parks the Parks Department was responsible for. She attended the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association (ADHDA) meeting, where she learned that their interim director was former Councilor Jessamin West. She thanked the Chamber of Commerce for a fabulous fireworks display.

**Item 3(e):** **Mayor Jones** thanked the local businesses that donated money for the fireworks show. There was a lot going on for the Fourth of July, including a live band on the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Pier with dancing and food trucks. No one was wearing a mask and it felt like the community was back to normal. He attended a meeting with Senator Wyden, local government officials and staffs, Clatsop Community Action and other organizations to discuss new federal funding for mental health treatments. He did not know if Clatsop County and Astoria would qualify for any of the funding, but Senator Wyden heard loud and clear that the funds were needed to make up for the deficit in mental health treatments. He made sure to point out that the funding should not come at the expense of local law enforcement.

## CHANGES TO AGENDA

City Manager Estes noted Item 6(g): Authorization to Purchase a Used ford F450 Wildland Fire Vehicle had been added to the agenda that morning. The agenda packet materials were published online prior to the meeting.

## CONSENT CALENDAR

The following items were presented on the Consent Calendar:

- 5(a) City Council Minutes of June 7, 2021
- 5(b) Design Review Commission Minutes
- 5(c) Department Head Status Updates

- 5(d) Designation of Certifying Officer for Community Development Block Grant
- 5(e) Consideration to Extend COVID-19 Emergency Declaration

Mayor Jones noted that he had shared the Department Head reports on his Facebook page. He encouraged everyone to read them to get a sense of how much work each department does to keep the City functioning.

**City Council Action:** Motion made by Councilor Brownson, seconded by Councilor Herman, to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Councilors Brownson, Herman, Rocka, Hilton, and Mayor Jones; Nays: None.

## REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

### **Item 6(a): Consideration of Contract for Riverwalk Enhancement Grant Project Management**

In March, the City was awarded \$428,408 in grant funds from the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation (OPRD) to carry out improvements on the Riverwalk through the Uniontown and Downtown portions of the trail. \$90,000 of the grant funds are designated to hire a project management contractor to oversee installation work and coordinate the different grant activities and funds from other project components which may be used to accomplish tasks within the overall scope of the project. The Parks and Recreation Department posted a Request For Qualifications in May and received two responses from the Klash Group and Greenworks. After reviewing both submittals, staff has identified Greenworks as the preferred contractor who best meets the criteria of the RFQ. Staff has coordinated with Greenworks and developed a contract to engage their services to manage the Riverwalk Enhancement Project and the City Council is presented with the contract for its consideration. It is recommended that the City Council award Greenworks the project management contract to facilitate grant enhancement work on the Astoria Riverwalk using OPRD LGG funds in the amount of \$94,070.

Councilor Rocka asked why the City hired a project manager instead of managing the project in-house. City Manager Estes explained that anytime the City has a construction project, a project manager is hired to be on site when the contractor is working, to do change orders, and they have experience managing these types of projects so they are more proficient than City Staff. Additionally, Staff lacks capacity to manage the project.

Councilor Herman understood that the grant would pay for all but \$4,000 of the contract. City Manager Estes explained that the total amount of the grant was \$428,408 and that the project would also require an additional \$288,937 of City funds. Director Dart-McLean added that the grant is reimbursable and the funds that the City received were based on project cost estimates, including the anticipated project management costs. However, the granting entity has indicated that the City could flex amounts between different priority projects. If City Council approves the contract, Greenworks would begin on stakeholder development, content for interpretive wayfinding signs, management of the lighting, the Portland Loo, and ADA accessibility installations.

**City Council Action:** Motion made by Councilor Brownson, seconded by Councilor Rocka, to award Greenworks the project management contract to facilitate grant enhancement work on the Astoria Riverwalk using OPRD LGG funds in the amount of \$94,070. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Councilors Brownson, Herman, Rocka, Hilton, and Mayor Jones; Nays: None.

### **Item 6(b): Consideration of Community Organization Grant Agreements: General Fund**

Community Organizations apply for City Grant funds through an application process which was due for Budget Committee consideration by February 29, 2020. Applications were reviewed by a subcommittee of the Budget Committee to recommend distribution to the Budget Committee, distributions were approved by the Budget Committee and adopted as part of the FY 2020-21 Budget by Council at on June 22, 2020. A letter format approved by Council for Fiscal Year 2020-21 for award distribution is attached for consideration. This letter incorporates the accounting and reporting requirements, deadlines and the adopted City non-discrimination policy. It is recommended that City Council consider disbursements of the Community Organization and Social Services Grant funds as recommended and approved in the Adopted Fiscal Year 2020 – 2021 budget, utilizing the disbursement letter attached.

Councilor Brownson noted there were not a lot of applicants this year and thanked the organizations that did apply. The City has been able to help CASA, The Harbor, Helping Hands, Clatsop Community Action, Senior Citizen Services, and The Restoration House.

**City Council Action:** Motion made by Councilor Brownson, seconded by Councilor Herman, to approve disbursements of the Community Organization and Social Services Grant funds as recommended and approved in the Adopted Fiscal Year 2020 – 2021 budget, utilizing the disbursement letter attached. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Councilors Brownson, Herman, Rocka, Hilton, and Mayor Jones; Nays: None.

**Item 6(c): Consideration of Arts and Cultural Program Grant Agreements: Promote Astoria Fund**

City Code Section 8.045.18 states "Organizations receiving funds from the Promote Astoria Fund shall enter into a contract with the City that will include a scope of work and budget to be approved annually by the Astoria City Council. The contract will designate how the funds will be expended by contracting organizations." Each year the Arts and Cultural sub-committee recommends distributions of Promote Astoria Funds to the Budget Committee, based on applications to the City and available funds.

Applications were reviewed by a subcommittee of the Budget Committee to recommend distribution to the Budget Committee, distributions were approved by the Budget Committee and adopted as part of the FY 2020-21 Budget by Council at on June 22, 2020. It is recommended Council consider disbursement of the Arts and Cultural Programs funds as recommended and approved in the adopted Fiscal Year 2020-2021 budget, utilizing the disbursement letter attached.

Councilor Brownson said all applicants received the funding amounts that they requested. Many of the applicants had been awarded grants last year but were unable to use them due to COVID-19. The City held on to those funds and dispersed them again this year. He thanked Director Brooks for allowing the arts associations to make use of last year's awards.

**City Council Action:** Motion made by Councilor Brownson, seconded by Councilor Rocka to authorize disbursement of the Arts and Cultural Programs funds as recommended and approved in the adopted Fiscal Year 2020-2021 budget, utilizing the disbursement letter attached. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Councilors Brownson, Herman, Rocka, Hilton, and Mayor Jones; Nays: None.

**Item 6(d): Consideration of Salary Resolution Establishing Basic Compensation Plan: Wage Adjustments and Addition of Positions**

Staff positions and associated compensation are detailed in the "Resolution Establishing a Basic Compensation Plan for the Employees of the City of Astoria and Establishing Regulations for the Placement of Present Employees within the Wage and Salary Schedules Provided". Whenever there are changes in positions, whether a position is being deleted, added or redefined; or whether a change in compensation is proposed; such changes are adopted by resolution. As this is the first City Council meeting of the fiscal year, wage adjustments are brought to City Council to address minimum wage increases and cost of living adjustments. It is recommended that Council adopt the Salary Resolution as presented.

Councilor Rocka said he believed the three new positions were necessary and the wage adjustments seemed appropriate.

**City Council Action:** Motion made by Councilor Herman, seconded by Councilor Rocka to adopt the Salary Resolution as presented. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Councilors Brownson, Herman, Rocka, Hilton, and Mayor Jones; Nays: None.

**Item 6(e): Authorization to Issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for Engineering Services for Wastewater Treatment Plan Improvements Project**

The City's Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) is in need of upgrades as outlined in our City of Astoria WWTP 2019 Wastewater Facilities Plan Update and Headworks Concept Plan which was finalized in 2019 and has Oregon Department of Environmental Quality support.

The WWTP Improvement Project includes new flow measurement, screening, influent grit removal, pond baffles, and removal of existing accumulated solids. Staff is requesting authorization from City Council to issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to solicit Statements of Qualifications (SOQ) from engineering consulting firms with experience in design of WWTP improvement projects similar to our project for the engineering services of the design and construction service of the WWTP Improvements Project.

Mayor Jones said the federal funding totaled \$4.8 million. He thanked Senator Johnson for her extensive work advocating for Astoria and Staff for putting together a very detailed package justifying the expenditures.

Councilor Rocka added that WWTP is infrastructure that needs constant attention and improvements. Keeping the existing plant healthy and operable will save money.

Councilor Brownson noted that the wastewater treatment system has been stressed by new inputs from the breweries. Prior to this stimulus, the City was not sure where it would get funds to complete this project or put in a whole new system. He appreciated all of the hard work that went into getting the funding.

**City Council Action:** Motion made by Councilor Rocka, seconded by Councilor Hilton, to authorize Staff to issue a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to solicit Statements of Qualifications (SOQ) from engineering consulting firms with experience in design of WWTP improvement projects similar to our project for the engineering services of the design and construction service of the WWTP Improvements Project. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Councilors Brownson, Herman, Rocka, Hilton, and Mayor Jones; Nays: None.

**Item 6(f): Continuation of Bird Scooter Program from June 16, City Council Worksession**

A representative from Bird Scooters has met with City staff on a proposal to start an electric scooter program in Astoria. While the scooters would need to be operated on streets, they are usually stored and for rental on public sidewalks. An agreement with the City would be needed to operate. Mike Butler from Bird made a presentation to the City Council on their business and operations at the June 16th Council Worksession. Staff asked City Council direction if they would be interested in an Astoria electric scooter program and at the conclusion of the worksession, two councilors were in support and two were not. One councilor asked for additional time to do more research. It is recommended that Council continue the dialogue as to whether there is interest in directing staff to negotiate an agreement with Bird Scooters to allow operation of their scooter program in Astoria.

Mayor Jones stated that after the worksession presentation, two Councilors were opposed and two were in favor of the program. The City has received an overwhelming number of comments in opposition and no comments in favor of the program. Helmets are required by State law, but they are not provided with the scooter. The scooters will be operating at no more than 15 miles per hour on roadways with vehicles going 25 to 30 miles per hour. He was opposed to the program.

Councilor Brownson said he was interested in taking a closer look at the program. On Nextdoor, he posed a question that received 46 comments. Only two or three of those comments might have been slightly in favor of the program. All of the other comments were opposed. He took time to consider how the scooters would maneuver around town and he decided there would be nothing but trouble and difficulty. He now agreed with the negative comments. This program will not work for Astoria. City Council has jurisdiction over this program because Bird needs to stage the scooters in the public rights-of-way. If a company opens a shop and rents scooters, there is nothing the City can do. Requiring a rented scooter to be returned to the shop eliminates a lot of the problems. Additionally, individuals could own electric scooters to ride around town. He thanked Councilor Hilton for requesting public input before discussing the program.

Councilor Herman said this issue has generated more outcry than any other issue. All of the correspondence she received was opposed to the scooters.

Councilor Rocka appreciated that many comments included personal experiences with scooters and details about issues with scooters in other communities.

Councilor Brownson added that the comments were also thoughtful, respectful, and to the point. Public input was important to all of the Council's decisions, so he would be starting his Meet the Councilor events again on Saturday mornings at Peter Pan. He hoped people would attend and talk.

Councilor Hilton said the amount of opposition was overwhelming. This issue brought people back into City politics and the future of the community. He hoped there would be more public interest when other issues come about. He thanked the Daily Astorian for publishing information about the program, which got the ball rolling. He was opposed to the program based on the input he received.

Mayor Jones called for public comments.

Pamela Mattsen MacDonald Astoria, said she approved of electric vehicles, but Astoria's streets were too narrow for the scooters.

Lisa Morley Astoria, thanked the Councilors for listening to their constituents. She was concerned about someone starting a scooter rental company, and she hoped that would go before City Council. She did not believe a scooter rental company would be approved because that would not comply with Oregon law. Many other issues would get more attention if there were places other than City Council meetings where topics could be discussed. There are many other avenues to get the public involved. The public is hamstrung when getting information, how the information is received, and how much people have to research and search for information. She did not see the application submitted by Bird in the Agenda packet, so she could not see what the company was asking to do. She could not find out where the company wanted to house the scooters. More avenues should be explored by the City Council to get more public involvement. Additionally, she was bothered by the fact that every time she speaks, she is supposed to give her full name and address. That is not acceptable in this day and age. She was also bothered by the fact that she was limited to three minutes. The Councilors get to talk for as long as they want and do not have to give their name and address. The three-minute ticker causes stress.

Mayor Jones explained that State law requires speakers to give their name and address. City Manager Estes added that speakers stating their name and address on the public record is mandatory for land use issues and so Staff knows how to contact them.

Mayor Jones noted that many of the Councilors have had well-advertised public meetings that very few people attend. Getting information to the 10,000 people in the city is very challenging. Notices are published in the newspaper, on KAST, on KMUN, and on social media. The City Council meetings, the agenda packets, and the minutes are the best place to get information. Presentation materials are in the agenda packets and on the City's website. This agenda packet did not have a link to the slides shown during the worksession presentation on the scooters. All but one of the Councilors has an active Facebook page and the links published on those pages should be shared so that more people see them.

Ms. Mattsen MacDonald noted COVID-19 has been with the community for a year and a half and that is why no one attended any of the meetings.

Mayor Jones clarified that he was speaking about pre-pandemic meeting attendance. However, the Zoom meetings have been well-attended.

Ms. Morley stated she was technically savvy, but had a hard time finding information. People who are not so technically savvy are lost and in the dark. It is complicated for people to get involved and the Council will not get much involvement at their once a month meetings.

**City Council Action:** Motion made by Councilor Brownson, seconded by Councilor Rocka, to refrain from pursuing the Bird Scooter Program's proposal to use City of Astoria rights-of-way. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Councilors Brownson, Herman, Rocka, Hilton, and Mayor Jones; Nays: None.

**Item 6(g): Authorization to Purchase a Used 2008 Ford F450 4x4 Crew Quick Attack Wildland Vehicle**

The Fire Department requested and was allocated budgetary resources to purchase a used wildland Type 6 emergency response vehicle in the approved budget for FY 2021-2022.

This vehicle will replace a 1998 Chevrolet pickup truck with 171,000 miles that is used for Fire Department emergency response. This vehicle has reached the end of its service life as an emergency response vehicle and is not NFPA compliant.

The department requests the replacement of this vehicle with the following equipment:  
Used 2008 Ford F450 4x4 Crew Quick Attack wildland vehicle with 51K miles.

It is recommended that Council authorize the purchase of a used 2008 Ford F450 4x4 Crew Quick Attack wildland vehicle for the Fire Department at a cost of \$64,500.00 from Outback Fire Apparatus, Inc. and authorize the City Manager to sign the purchase agreement.

Chief Crutchfield said his department did not currently have this type of vehicle in operation. The truck carries water and wildland hose and can get to places the department currently cannot access. Additionally, the truck can be used around the state and in other states.

Councilor Herman asked if a newer truck would be a better deal. Chief Crutchfield explained that a newer truck would cost more than was budgeted. Additionally, the newer truck option was an F350, which is not as heavy duty. The F450 is a one ton truck that is too light weight to carry 300 gallons of water and all of the equipment.

Mayor Jones called for public comments. There were none.

**City Council Action:** Motion made by Councilor Rocka, seconded by Councilor Hilton, to authorize the purchase of a used 2008 Ford F450 4x4 Crew Quick Attack wildland vehicle for the Fire Department at a cost of \$64,500.00 from Outback Fire Apparatus, Inc. and authorize the City Manager to sign the purchase agreement. Motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Councilors Brownson, Herman, Rocka, Hilton, and Mayor Jones; Nays: None.

#### **NEW BUSINESS & MISCELLANEOUS, PUBLIC COMMENTS (NON-AGENDA)**

Mr. Mathison said he was noticing a lot of highly invasive plants around town, particularly knot weed and Scotch broom located in places where they can easily spread. The empty lot on 7<sup>th</sup> Street is infested with knot weed, which is likely to spread into the road. The knot weed has already spread on to adjacent properties. The middle school field is also close to being overrun.

Mayor Jones responded that the County has a unit that will spray the purple loosestrife in the Alderbrook lagoon with poison.

Director Dart-McLean added that the Parks Department controls noxious and invasive weeds on park properties, but neither of the properties mentioned are park properties. The Soil and Water Conservation District also does noxious weed removal. However, Astoria's climate is very welcoming to some plant species, which makes weed control an uphill battle.

Director Harrington said the Public Works Department also hires temporary employees to do weed removal at City facilities and on other City properties.

Councilor Rocka commented that Ken Adey and his friend have removed blackberries and other invasive plants from the grassy area next to the Alderbrook lagoon that many people use as a park. They are replanting native vegetation with remarkable success.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 pm to convene the Astoria Development Commission meeting.

#### **ATTEST:**



\_\_\_\_\_  
Finance Director

#### **APPROVED:**



\_\_\_\_\_  
City Manager