

City of Gold Bar

EST. 1910



107 – 5th Street, Gold Bar, WA 98251

City of Gold Bar Council Meeting Minutes Tuesday, June 19, 2018

CALL TO ORDER, FLAG SALUTE, ROLL CALL

Mayor Clem called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Present were Councilmembers Diaz, Martin, Phillips, Wallace, and Yarbrough. Also present was Chief Casey, Clerk Stowe and Public Works Director Light.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Councilmember Yarbrough moved to approve the agenda as presented, and with a second by Councilmember Martin, the motion carried.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Clem reminded those present that there were two separate signup sheets for citizen comments. One was for the general comment period and one was for the public hearing.

STAFF REPORT

Chief Casey touched on recent burglaries, arrests, drownings, and the danger of the rivers right now.

Clerk Stowe reminded the audience to keep conversations to the comment periods in order to allow staff, councilmembers, and the audience to hear what was being said.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Diaz complimented Mayor Clem and Councilmember Yarbrough on the work they have been doing.

Councilmember Yarbrough thanked Clerk Stowe and Office Manager Beaton for never hesitating in answering his questions and for doing a great job.

Councilmember Martin talked about meetings on tourism and Smart 911 cards.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Kathy Curnutt talked about her request for changes to the noise ordinance.

CONTINUED BUSINESS

Ordinance #714 Amending the 2018 Budget. This amendment is for the repair of sidewalks. Councilmember Yarbrough moved to accept Ordinance #714 as presented and with a second by Councilmember Wallace, the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Ordinance #715 Amending Title 13. This ordinance amends the title relating to low income discounts for senior citizens. Councilmember Yarbrough recommended changing this draft to add wording that the standard for federal poverty guidelines will be followed. Clerk Stowe will make that change in the draft for the next meeting. Councilmember Diaz moved to accept Ordinance #715 for an introduction and first reading and with a second by Councilmembers Martin and Wallace, the motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING

Clerk Stowe called to order the public hearing to discuss water rates at 7:16 p.m. She reviewed the rules of public hearings and asked Councilmembers to disclose any reasons that they might not be impartial, any appearance of fairness issues, or any ex parte contact. There were none. She reminded the public about signing up in order to speak during the public hearing.

Mayor Clem introduced Resolution #18-03 relating to raising water rates and assessments. He asked Councilmember Yarbrough to review his suggested changes to the resolution.

Councilmember Yarbrough explained the history behind the usage thresholds for commercial properties and reviewed his amendment that raises the usage threshold for those businesses back to the level they were at previously.

Councilmember Diaz said he had the same concerns. He talked about residential thresholds and how no current residences have three or four inch meters. He felt the same thresholds could be used for larger meters with residences as with businesses. There was discussion around this.

Tracy Cotterill talked about cloudy water, hydrants, and asked for clarification on households with larger meters getting more water. Mayor Clem said currently all residences have the same size meter but if someone did end up with a larger meter, they pay more.

Mayor Clem also explained that the assessment rate is specifically for capital projects relating to exactly those issues Ms. Cotterill listed.

Pat Mabry understands people have a duty to help pay for improvements but she would like to be charged just for the water she uses, especially since meters are read anyway.

Chuck Lie applauded the Council for taking action. He said this was ten years overdue.

Carrie Paul said water is horrible, wanted to know why she should pay more so the city could buy more new trucks, and what's been done to improve the system since the last increase. Mayor Clem clarified that the assessment fee can only be used for capital projects. He said there is a list of critical projects that are needed and to do those, assessment rates have to go up. Director Light talked about the recent 10th Street Project that cost over \$400,000 and how that money came directly from assessment rates. Clerk Stowe said the City has had two recent water main breaks and the assessment rates paid for those repairs. Councilmember Yarbrough pointed out that all revenue received from assessment rates has to be dedicated to those capital projects.

Douglas Paul also complained about the quality of water and said poison is being pumped through the pipes.

Mayor Clem reminded those present that during the public hearing comments must be related to the assessment rates. Clerk Stowe suggested those with complaints on water quality put their comments in writing and direct them to Director Light.

Daniel Thompson talked about his property taxes, that Gold Bar is a bedroom community, gas taxes, water leaks at his home, that the City has helped him with those leaks, that he doesn't get credit for water not used, drivers without insurance, and that everything is going up except income.

Mayor Clem responded that the gas tax revenue cannot be used for water projects.

Barbara Olson asked what residents can expect and how soon. Mayor Clem suggested that those wanting the results of the public hearing put a mark by their names on the signup sheet and information will be sent to them.

Jack Williams talked about fixed incomes and how people on social security have to pay the same as everyone else. Mayor Clem clarified that the City has a senior low income subsidy. Mr. Williams then talked about meter sizes, the trailer parks, and how he knows the system is old and work needs to be done.

Jerry Denlocker wanted more discussion on usage vs. rates. He talked about the difficulty of being able to afford living in the area. Mayor Clem talked about the two sides of the discussion, with some wanting smaller limits of water and others wanting more.

Benton Wyer complained about never having been told that the City had a senior discount, and about having to pay for a full month of water when he didn't live in the home for a full month. He said the City had mismanaged funds and compared the City's rate to Tucson, Arizona. He also asked what the assessment fee was used for.

Councilmember Wallace said they all drink the same water and all pay the same rates. He said the assessment issue has been kicked down the road for too long and it can't be done anymore. He said if the PUD took over the water system there would be a guaranteed doubling of the rates. He understands the frustration as it seems every time he gets a raise there's another hand in his pocket. But the system has to be replaced. He pointed out that the proposed increase is half what the City was told they had to do.

Councilmember Martin said she was on the Council when rates were analyzed by an outside company. She was appalled by the amount that company recommended for rates, which is why the City has scaled down on that rate increase. She said she hates having to pay those rates as much as the public but it has to be done. She said the Council struggled with this and the proposed rate increase is a compromise. She pointed out that the 10th Street project was paid for by assessment rates which allowed the City to save on interest so the way this was handled was very cost effective. She also said she was impressed with the work Director Light does.

Councilmember Yarbrough said the City is federally mandated to conserve water so they have to pick a threshold number. He said if someone uses 7,500 gallons of water instead of the threshold of 6,000, it's an additional \$5 on their bill, which he thinks is fair.

Mayor Clem compared that threshold to other cities such as Monroe and Sultan, which have thresholds between 2,244 and 2,992 gallons. He said the system has to be repaired, and called for action on the resolution.

There was further brief discussion with Councilmembers Diaz and Martin considering further threshold review.

Councilmember Wallace moved to accept Resolution #18-03 increasing water rates as amended to include Councilmember Yarbrough and Councilmember Diaz's changes relating to thresholds, and with the understanding that discussion will continue on quantities. With a second by Councilmember Diaz, the motion carried.

Councilmember Diaz then moved to adjourn the public hearing and with a second by Councilmember Martin the motion carried.

The regular scheduled Council meeting was returned to at 8:01 pm.

FINAL COUNCIL COMMENTS/OTHER BUSINESS

Mayor Clem reminded those present that he has a coffee hour the first Saturday of each month from 9:00 am to 10:00 am for discussion that doesn't have to conform to Council meeting rules. While no action takes place, he can take issues to the Council.

Councilmember Phillips asked about clarifying the new water rates. Mayor Clem said it is broken down in the resolution and reminded people to sign up if they want to receive the results of the public hearing.

MINUTES APPROVAL

Councilmember Martin moved to approve the June 5, 2018 minutes as presented, and with a second by Councilmember Wallace, the motion carried.

VOUCHER APPROVAL

Councilmember Diaz moved to approve checks numbered 32951 through 32977 with \$311,119.95 for claims and \$2,200.00 for payroll and payroll taxes, for a total of \$313,319.95 and with a second by Councilmember Martin, the motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, Councilmember Yarbrough moved to adjourn the meeting. With a second by Councilmember Wallace, the motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 pm.

William Clem, Mayor

Lisa Stowe, Clerk