

**RIO DELL CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 18, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Rio Dell City Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Garnes.

**ROLL CALL:** Present: Mayor Garnes, Mayor Pro Tem Carter, Councilmembers Orr, Wilson, and Woodall

Others Present: City Manager Knopp, Finance Director Sanborn, Wastewater Superintendent Kelly, Senior Fiscal Assistant Maciel, and City Clerk Dunham

Absent: Community Development Director Caldwell, Water/Roadways Superintendent Jensen, and Interim Chief of Police Conner

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS**

Mayor Garnes invited public comment on non-agenda matters. No members of the public commented.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

Mayor Garnes asked if any councilmember, staff or member of the public would like to remove any item from the consent calendar for a separate discussion. No items were removed.

A motion was made by Carter/Orr to approve the consent calendar including the following items:

- 1) Minutes of the June 4, 2024 regular meeting;
- 2) Purchase of right-hand screw conveyer assembly for the Aeromod Tritan Belt Filter Press in the amount of \$17,693.78; and
- 3) Check Register for May.

Motion carried 5-0.

**REPORTS/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

City Manager/Staff Update

City Manager Knopp provided highlights of the staff update and said that Caltrans would be replacing the fencing along Bellevue Avenue and Highway 101 with a new type of welded-wire fencing; the Church of Christ on Second Avenue was able to redeem the property taxes; staff held a preconstruction meeting for the Eel River Trail with Mobley Construction with work slated to begin on June 24th; a new series of advertisements went out for Chief of Police and police officer positions; and on June 20<sup>th</sup>, the City of Fortuna will

be holding their grand opening for their new Police Department at Rohnerville Rd. and Newburg Rd. and said that Councilmembers are welcome to attend.

### **SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS/STUDY SESSIONS**

Presentation – Humboldt Senior Resource Center – Senior Home Repair Grant Program  
Finance Director Sanborn provided a brief staff report and said that Vanessa Kuersten, Community Resource and Housing Coordinator from the Humboldt Senior Resource Center was present to provide a presentation on the Senior Home Repair Grant Program. This program would provide financial assistance to eligible seniors for minor home modifications and improve safety and accessibility.

Vanessa Kuersten explained that this is a partnership they have had with the City of Eureka for the past 36 years. The program provides seniors with improved accessibility, minor home repairs, grab bars, repairs to trip hazards, stairs and railings and other needed repairs to help seniors remain independent in their homes.

She noted that they utilize HUD housing guidelines to evaluate income eligibility for the program and seniors must be 60 years of age or older to qualify.

She provided examples of some of the individuals they have helped ranging from replacement of outdoor steps and handrails to the replacement of plumbing fixtures and lighting.

Councilmember Woodall asked if projects could be approved exceeding \$300 with the applicant paying the difference.

Vanessa explained that the annual cap is \$300 so any amount over that would be the responsibility of the applicant.

Councilmember Wilson asked if this grant would be funded by the City or another organization.

Vanessa said that they are requesting a partnership with the City of Rio Dell where the City would allocate \$5,000 in funding and Humboldt Senior Resource Center would facilitate the program.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter expressed support for the program and said that she works with elderly people in their homes and sometimes these minor repairs are necessary.

Councilmember Orr said he also supports the program.

Mayor Garnes called for public comment.

**Sharon Wolfe** commented that this sounds like a fantastic program to help keep people in their homes and suggested looking at lighting and hearing assistance. She said that someone fixed her grandmother's light so if someone rang the doorbell or when the phone would ring, the light would flash to let her know. She said that her only concern is with the bureaucratic part of the grant related to income eligibility. She said if there is flexibility in that regard, she would like to see the City throw in a little more because there were so many people after the earthquake that could not meet the eligibility requirements for funding.

Vanessa said that she presented the model used in the City of Eureka who uses the HUD guidelines but the City could make any adjustments to the grant that they feel necessary with regard to income eligibility. She commented that the HUD income levels at \$70,000+ for a 2-person household seems gracious for the senior population.

A motion was made by Carter/Woodall that the City Council direct staff to move forward in establishing a Senior Home Repair Grant Program and allocate the funding through a budget adjustment. Motion carried 5-0.

Presentation – Recology Eel River – Annual Rate Adjustment to Solid Waste Franchise Agreement

City Manager Knopp provided a brief staff report and explained that a portion of the rates are established for the franchise hauler, Recology Eel River and a portion is related to Humboldt Waste Management Authority (HWMA). He noted that the fees associated with the Humboldt Waste Management Authority represent the bulk of both the increase and overall per ton tipping fee. He said that on the next agenda will hopefully be the onboarding of a consultant to work with the City on SB 1383 compliance and potential universal collection which is all grant funded.

He introduced Frank Nelson, Assistant General Manager for Recology Eel River to provide a presentation on the annual rate adjustment.

Frank explained that as the City Manager eluded to, a lot of the rate increase has to do with the HWMA processing fee as well as recycling processing. He said that HWMA struggles with moving the material out of the area and not having something to backhaul.

He said one of the struggles within the County is knowing what to recycle. In the future franchise agreement, they would like to look at some options for education and community outreach. He said that about 90% of the rate increase is due to HWMA and the other 10% to Recology Eel River is driven by the CPI modifier.

He reviewed the adjusted rates effective July 1, 2024 and said for a typical residential customer with a 32-gallon can, the increase would be \$2.13 month.

Councilmember Wilson asked what the increase is for recycling and green waste.

Frank indicated that there is a small increase with curbside recycling increasing from \$8.11/mo. to \$8.51/mo. and green waste from \$3.63 to \$3.94.

Councilmember Woodall asked if the annual cleanup event would still take place.

Frank explained that the annual cleanup day is negotiated in the franchise agreement.

Mayor Garnes asked if Rio Dell will eventually have automated trash pickup.

Frank explained that he does see that happening sometime in the future but in terms of cost savings for the program they hope to roll out the program in conjunction with Rio Dell, Fortuna and Ferndale.

Mayor Garnes asked if there would be an offset between labor costs and the automated equipment.

Frank said that it would depend on how the contract is negotiated with regard to the type of services offered.

Mayor Garnes called for public comment.

**Sharon Wolfe** commented that she was down in southern California visiting her father for Father's Day and his garbage service provider allows customers to register as a senior citizen and get assistance with taking the cans out to the street since he is no longer able to do that. She said that knowing that it was available was a huge relief and said that it would be an awesome service to add to the franchise agreement and advertise it to the senior community.

Frank said that he wasn't sure if that service is available to Rio Dell citizens but in a lot of areas it is.

Motion was made by Carter/Woodall to approve the proposed rate adjustment with Recology Eel River and accept it as an amendment to the Solid Waste and Recycling Franchise Agreement. Motion carried 5-0.

## **COUNCIL REPORTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

Mayor Pro Tem Carter reported on her attendance at recent meetings and events including the Chamber of Commerce meeting where she said that they are planning for the upcoming Wildwood Days activities and are now meeting in Scotia across from the Scotia Lodge.

She said that the Bike Rodeo on Saturday was well-attended and thanked Sarah Reback for helping put on another great event for kids. She attended the Fire Department meeting

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and provided the board with an update on the Cal Fire issue and said that they have a lot of events coming up including the sale of fireworks, and Beers, Bands and Barbeque/Softball Tournament on July 6-7. She said that they also caught the people who vandalized the bathrooms so they will be installing security cameras to try and deter future vandalism. She asked that an item be placed on the next agenda to discuss a possible donation to the Fire Department to help with the alarm system. Council agreed.

She announced that the Nuisance Advisory Committee meeting scheduled for tomorrow was canceled due to the Juneteenth holiday, the Beautification, Walkability and Pride Committee would be meeting on Friday at 1:30 p.m. at City Hall and the Humboldt Humane non-profit spay and neuter group would also be meeting at City Hall on Friday at 2:30 p.m.

She said that the City would be hosting the Redwood Region Economic Development Committee (RREDC) meeting here on Monday, June 24<sup>th</sup> with the City providing a presentation on economic development.

She said that the Rio Dell School Board meeting was moved to June 27<sup>th</sup> due to graduation, commenting that the staff at Bear River said that Rio Dell School graduation was a very smooth event with the best well-behaved kids.

Councilmember Orr said that it was nice to see work progressing on the Rio Dell Dog Park and that the exercise equipment looks great. He said that he agreed with the security cameras at Fireman's Park and that he would be attending an HCAOG meeting on Thursday. He announced that he would not be attending the next City Council meeting on July 2<sup>nd</sup> as he would be spending a couple of weeks in Rhode Island.

Councilmember Wilson reported that the last HWMA meeting was canceled due to the lack of a quorum.

Mayor Garnes reported that she attended an HTA meeting and said that the Ride Humboldt campaign is in full swing with the creation of an app to schedule rides. She noted that they are cleaning up their buses with a sleeker look without all the advertising and the hydrogen buses will be going into production soon with construction of a new hydrogen station to fuel the buses.

She announced that she had a Cal Cities Community Services and Environmental Policy meeting on Thursday and Friday of this week and encouraged everyone to go to the Great Redwood Trail website and submit suggestions for a trail through Rio Dell by July 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Carter/Wilson to adjourn the meeting at 7:22 p.m. to the July 2, 2024 regular meeting. The motion carried 5-0.

Attest:

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Debra Garnes, Mayor

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Karen Dunham, City Clerk