



RIO DELL CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING – 6:00 P.M.
TUESDAY, September 15TH, 2026
City Council Chambers
675 Wildwood Avenue, Rio Dell

A. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Rio Dell City Council was called to order at approximately 6:00 PM by Mayor Pro Tem Carter.

B. ROLL CALL

Present:

- Mayor Pro Tem Carter
- Council Member Wilson
- Council Member Woodall
- Council Member Orr

Absent:

- Mayor Garnes (excused)

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Council.

D. CEREMONIAL MATTERS

No ceremonial matters were presented.

E. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

No members of the public wished to address the Council, and no written public comments were received by email. Mayor Pro Tem Carter closed public presentations.

F. CONSENT CALENDAR

- 2026/0915.01 – Approve Minutes of the August 18th, 2026, Regular Meeting
- 2026/0915.02 – Resolution No. 1684-2026 – Designation of Voting Delegate for Cal Cities Annual Conference

No items were removed from the Consent Calendar.

ACTION: Motion made by Orr and seconded by Woodall to approve the Consent Calendar as presented. Motion carried 4–0 (Mayor Garnes absent).

G. ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR

No items were removed from the Consent Calendar.

H. REPORTS / STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

1. 2026/0915.03 – City Manager/Staff Update (RECEIVE & FILE)

City Manager Knopp reported that the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, September 22, 2026, at 6:00 PM, to receive an update on the 7th Cycle Housing Element update, and encouraged the public to attend, ask questions, and provide comment. He noted that questions regarding the Housing Element update process may be directed to Community Development Director Kevin Caldwell at (707) 764-3532, and that public comment on agenda items may be submitted by email to publiccomment@cityofriodell.ca.gov, noting the agenda item to which the comment is directed. He reported that the City encourages residents to complete the Housing Element survey, available on the City's website, with hard copies also available at City Hall in both English and Spanish.

City Manager Knopp reported that the Council may be aware of correspondence from Cal Cities regarding wildfire liability legislation that would have extended liability to cities and counties for wildfires caused by public or private utilities, and that the legislation ultimately passed by the Legislature did not include those liability extensions or limits on public agencies' cost recovery, which he characterized as a significant win for Cal Cities. He cautioned that the Governor has indicated an interest in pursuing similar legislation before leaving office in January 2027.

City Manager Knopp reported that an Unmet Transit Needs hearing is scheduled for October 20, 2026, and that an item related to the Regional Climate Coordinator position with the Redwood Coast Energy Authority, including a financial component related to the City's support of the position, is also expected on the October 20th agenda.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter thanked staff for continuing to prioritize dog licensing as part of the City's animal control efforts, noting that it helps reunite lost dogs with their owners, and thanked City staff generally for their work. There were no other questions or comments.

I. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS / STUDY SESSIONS

1. 2026/0915.04 – Recommend Staff and the Manufacturer to Replace the Damaged Parts of the Screwfactor (DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION)

Wastewater Superintendent Moore presented the item, recommending replacement of degraded screwfactor parts consistent with both staff's and the manufacturer's recommendation. He reported the screwfactor has been in continuous operation for approximately 14 years, during which the driveshaft has degraded from approximately one inch to approximately one-half inch in diameter, and that if replacement parts are not obtained within approximately the next three to five years, the cost of repair will be substantially higher. He also raised concerns regarding staff health and safety, noting that staff are currently having to manually break down the bar screens because the ladder rack and screwfactor are not functioning properly, and noted an ongoing odor nuisance affecting the surrounding area when the wind shifts, as well as concerns about accessing the equipment during the anticipated "Super El Niño" winter.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter provided additional context for the public, describing the screwfactor system in general terms as equipment that removes solids from the wastewater stream, compacts them, and dewateres them for disposal.

Councilmember Woodall stated she had previously observed the process and had no additional questions.

Council Member Wilson asked about the current condition of the bar screens and how debris is being handled; Superintendent Moore explained that staff currently must manually rake material from the influent channels, allow it to dewater, and remove it by bucket, rather than relying on the automated ladder rack and screwfactor, and confirmed that the driveshaft is nearing failure and needs to be replaced.

Per the staff report, the fiscal impact of the recommended parts replacement is \$45,622.49, based on a quote from Gierlich-Mitchell, Inc.

ACTION: Motion made by Orr and seconded by Wilson to approve staff's and the manufacturer's recommendation to replace the damaged parts of the screwfactor. Motion carried 4–0.

2. 2026/0915.05 – Receive a Brief Presentation from Wally Coppini on the Progress of the Chamber's Billboard Endeavor at the City's Wastewater Disposal Parcel Located at Metropolitan Heights Road and Highway 101 (DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION)

Wally Coppini, representing the Rio Dell Chamber of Commerce, provided a progress update on the Chamber's billboard project at the City's wastewater disposal parcel at Metropolitan Heights Road and Highway 101. He reported that engineering work with Baird Engineering has been underway for approximately one month, that utility poles donated from a ranch in Fernbridge have been relocated to the job site, and that the Chamber has applied for a grant from Coast Central Credit Union. He reported that the estimated project cost is approximately \$5,000 to \$6,000, covering aluminum panels (with lumber donated by HRC), engineering, and decal work, and that the Chamber has approved \$3,000 toward the project. He requested that the City consider matching that amount as a contingency ("Plan B") in the event grant funding is not secured, in order to keep the project moving forward.

In response to Council questions, Mr. Coppini clarified that no costs beyond initial engineering (paid for by the Chamber) would be incurred prior to a grant determination, and that no construction costs would be incurred until funding is confirmed. Council Member Orr asked whether the Chamber's billboard grant request would compete with a separate Coast Central grant request submitted by the Police Department for the animal kennel project; Mr. Coppini stated he had been told the two requests were not in competition.

City Manager Knopp clarified that no formal Council action was being requested at this meeting, but that staff was seeking Council direction regarding a potential future commitment of up to \$3,000 in Economic Development Funds toward the project if needed, noting that such use would be reasonably related to the fund's community marketing purpose. Council Members Carter and Wilson each expressed support for contributing up to \$3,000 from Economic Development Funds if necessary. Mayor Pro Tem Carter thanked Mr. Coppini for his continued commitment to the project.

By consensus, the Council indicated support for the City contributing up to \$3,000 toward the billboard project from Economic Development Funds if needed, with any formal action to return to Council at a later date if required. No formal vote was taken.

3. 2026/0915.06 – Adopt Resolution No. 1683-2026, Authorizing Staff to Proceed with Completion of the Animal Kennel Project in its Entirety and Authorizing the Chief of Police and Streets Superintendent to Coordinate and Execute the Various Project Components Necessary for Completion (DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION)

Police Chief Phinney presented the item, recalling that at the prior meeting the Council directed staff to attempt to raise approximately 30% of project costs through donations and grants before returning to Council. He reported that the City has received \$10,415.50 in donations to date, and that the City also received a donated concrete slab representing an additional cost savings of \$2,140.38. He reported that staff has identified potential project cost reductions, including removing a built-in heater from the prefabricated kennel (saving a little over \$2,000) and reducing anticipated electrical costs from an initial \$24,000 quote to an estimated amount under \$5,000.

Chief Phinney requested that the Council authorize the full project with an overall cap of \$125,000, to be coordinated by himself and Streets Superintendent Randy Jensen, citing the approaching winter construction season, rising costs if the project is delayed, and the ongoing need for local kennel space, while staff continues to pursue donations and grant opportunities.

Council Member Woodall thanked Chief Phinney for explaining the rationale for proceeding ahead of fully reaching the 30% fundraising goal. Council Member Orr stated he had no concerns with the request,

characterizing the project as a need rather than a want. Council Member Wilson asked about ongoing maintenance responsibilities for the facility; Chief Phinney confirmed that Police Department staff, rather than Public Works, would be responsible for day-to-day care of the animals and facility. He clarified that the \$125,000 cap represents the full estimated project cost before accounting for approximately \$12,500 in donations received to date (including the donated concrete slab), a pending \$25,000 grant request to Coast Central Credit Union, and anticipated project scope reductions of approximately \$20,000 to \$25,000, and that he anticipates the ultimate City cost will be substantially less than \$125,000.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter noted for the public record that the project would not require the City to hire additional staff and would continue to be operated using existing Police Department staff. In response to a prompt from the City Manager, Chief Phinney identified Mercer-Fraser and GR Sundberg among the project's larger donors, along with numerous community members who have contributed smaller amounts, including during the Wildwood Days Parade. He reported that the concrete slab is expected to be poured within approximately one month, and that the prefabricated kennel facility will take approximately 60 days from order to manufacture, meaning completion is anticipated approximately two months from the date the Council authorizes ordering the unit.

In response to questions regarding the handling of stray animals, Chief Phinney confirmed that, absent a local facility similar to the former Miranda's Rescue operation, the City currently uses a kennel in Fortuna, requiring residents to travel there to reclaim animals. He confirmed the City will continue to coordinate with the Humboldt Humane Society for animals requiring adoption placement and with Critters Without Litters for spay/neuter and emergency veterinary care, both before and after completion of the new local facility.

ACTION: Motion made by Woodall and seconded by Orr to adopt Resolution No. 1683-2026, Authorizing Staff to Proceed with Completion of the Animal Kennel Project in its Entirety and Authorizing the Chief of Police and Streets Superintendent to Coordinate and Execute the Various Project Components Necessary for Completion. Motion carried 4–0.

J. SPECIAL CALL ITEMS / COMMUNITY AFFAIRS / PUBLIC HEARINGS

No items were presented.

K. ORDINANCES / SPECIAL RESOLUTIONS / PUBLIC HEARINGS

No items were presented.

L. COUNCIL REPORTS / COMMUNICATIONS

Council Member Woodall: Had nothing to report.

Council Member Orr: Had nothing to report; noted he would be traveling out of state and would be unavailable for the next regular meeting, and reported having been occupied with yard and garden work.

Council Member Wilson: Reported meeting with the Humboldt Waste Management Authority (HWMA), which is developing a long-range strategic plan looking out roughly 15 years, and which will be convening City staff and other stakeholders for input.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter:

- Reported that a recent committee meeting she serves on was cancelled due to lack of quorum.
- Reported attending a Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) board meeting, noting that Humboldt County COAD was formed in direct response to the 2022–23 Rio Dell earthquakes. She praised the work of Nick Bown-Crawford, reporting that he is pursuing a grant to build and operate a community resilience center in Arcata and has been active in wildfire response efforts in Hoopa. She

reported that COAD is closely monitoring the anticipated "Super El Niño" and potential coastal flooding, particularly in King Salmon, given flooding that occurred in January of the prior year.

- Reported Community Resource Center statistics for August, including 425 people served through commodity distribution, 133 people provided emergency food, 15 bus passes, 10 instances of housing assistance, 22 instances of career assistance, and 18 Spay/Neuter Program vouchers issued.
- Reported that the 4th Annual Touch-a-Truck event was held the prior weekend with attendance of close to 200 people.
- Reported that approximately 143 pounds of produce have been gleaned from the community garden and distributed through the Resource Center, and thanked Resource Center staff Providence, Sarah, and Andrea.

In response to a question, staff confirmed that the Nuisance Advisory Committee meeting scheduled for the following day had been cancelled.

M. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Motion made to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:37 PM. The next regular City Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 6, 2026, at 6:00 PM.

APPROVED:

Amanda Carter, Mayor Pro Tem

ATTEST:

Kyle Knopp, Acting City Clerk