

**RIO DELL CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 1, 2025**

Mayor Garnes called the regular meeting of the Rio Dell City Council to order at 5:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Present - (Closed Session): Mayor Garnes, Mayor Pro Tem Carter, Councilmember Wilson, and City Manager Knopp. Absent were Councilmember Woodall (excused) and Councilmember Orr.

Present – (Regular Meeting): Mayor Garnes, Mayor Pro Tem Carter, Councilmembers Orr and Wilson. Absent was Councilmember Woodall (excused).

Others Present: City Manager Knopp, Police Chief Phinney, Water/Roadways Superintendent Jensen, Senior Fiscal Assistant Maciel, and City Clerk Dunham

Absent: Community Development Director Caldwell, Finance Director Sanborn, and Wastewater Superintendent Kelly (excused)

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED IN CLOSED SESSION**

Conference with Labor Negotiator – Agency Negotiator: City Manager – Employee Organizations: Rio Dell Employees Association, Rio Dell Police Officers Association, and all Contract Employees Pursuant to §54957

**PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING CLOSED SESSION**

No members of the public were present to comment.

**RECESS INTO CLOSED SESSION**

The Council recessed into a closed session at 5:00 p.m. with City Manager Knopp to discuss the above-listed matter.

The Council reconvened into open session at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Garnes announced that there was nothing to report out of closed session.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS**

Mayor Garnes invited public comment on non-agenda matters. No public comment was received.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

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Mayor Garnes asked if any council member, 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 March 18, 2025 Regular Meeting;
- 2) Approve Additional Budget Appropriations and Change Order of \$50,000 for Miscellaneous Road Patching Under the Agreement with S.T. Rhoades for a Total not to Exceed \$179,000; and
- 3) Authorize the Mayor to Execute a Letter of Opposition to SB 79 (Wiener) Transit-Oriented Development

Motion carried 4-0.

## **REPORTS/STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

### City Manager/Staff Update

City Manager Knopp highlighted the staff update and said that he met with County officials regarding a proposed ban on Nitrous Oxide. He said that he would have a related item to the Council for consideration in May.

He also reported that staff was waiting on a proposal and Scope of Services from GSG Consultants for an audit analysis of the City's Solid Waste Franchise Agreement with Recology. He said that this is to make sure the franchise agreement aligns with other jurisdictions and that the new agreement is fair for all parties involved.

City Manager Knopp referred to the Police Department update and the announcement of an upcoming Public Safety event on Sunday, April 13<sup>th</sup> from 11-3 pm at McKinleyville High. Law Enforcement, Fire Departments, and Ambulances will have vehicles and helicopters there offering public tours of equipment, vehicles, and information on recruiting opportunities.

He then announced that construction was underway with Wahlund Construction on the Water Capital Improvement Project (water line installation) and encouraged residents to drive safely through construction areas. He said that there would be some slight water disruptions for the replacement of water infrastructure but no citywide shutdowns.

Mayor Garnes cautioned residents that there would be some noise disruptions during the construction.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter asked if residents would be notified of water service disruptions and referred to the Animal Control report noting that once again, there were zero dogs and zero cats transported to Miranda's Rescue.

Mayor Garnes commented that she had noticed fewer dogs running at large and felt safer taking her dog for walks.

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

#### Presentation and Update from City Engineer, GHD

Rebecca Crow from GHD provided a PowerPoint presentation via Zoom with an update on current engineering projects.

The project update included the following categories:

- Transportation
- Drinking Water
- Wastewater
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Earthquake Engineering Support

Active Transportation projects included the following:

- Eel River Trail Project
- Neighborhood Pedestrian Connectivity Improvements
- Traffic Study
- Potential Future Projects

Potential future projects included improvements on Second Avenue, Ogle Avenue, and Northwestern Avenue.

She provided a brief update on each project and offered to answer any questions.

Mayor Garnes referred to the Eel River Trail project and said that it was her understanding there would be pathways leading from the trail to the river.

City Manager Knopp explained that on the north end of Davis St., sand and gravel were added to usher people off the trail, and in addition, there are some pre-existing natural paths.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter thanked Rebecca Crow for the project update and said that it was nice to see projects out of the analysis phase and into the construction phase.

### **SPECIAL CALL ITEMS/COMMUNITY AFFAIRS/PUBLIC HEARINGS**

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Status Update on Remaining 2022 Earthquake Disaster Recovery Projects

City Manager Knopp provided a PowerPoint presentation on the 2022 Earthquake Disaster Recovery Projects. The report provided a comprehensive update on both completed and remaining projects related to the earthquake disaster recovery efforts. The City completed eight emergency response projects with seven of those receiving 100% reimbursement. Six remain in progress, all of which have been assigned Disaster Survey Report (DSR) numbers by the California Office of Emergency Services except for the repair projects which will receive DSR assignments upon completion.

He provided a list of earthquake-related projects not being addressed through the California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) highlighting six specific projects.

Next was a review of completed 2022 Earthquake DRS Projects with seven of the eight projects 100% funded by CDAA. The only project not approved for 100% funding was related to emergency fixes to broken water lines at various locations which was approved for 75% funding. The 25% remainder at \$76,294.00 was to be determined.

A summary of all 2022 Earthquake Recovery Projects represented eight completed projects and six remaining projects for a total of \$6,625,309.88. Total reimbursements received totaled \$3,225,066.68, pending reimbursements of \$2,411,255.20, and a potential City obligation of \$1,550,044.50.

City Manager Knopp cautioned the Council on related risks that none of the remaining projects would be funded by the CDAA although the remaining obligation was down to an attainable amount. He indicated that the City may need to obtain a short-term line of credit to maintain the cash flow until reimbursements are received.

He recommended the Council authorize staff to proceed with the implementation of the remaining projects and to continue pursuing 100% reimbursement for all remaining earthquake recovery projects.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter thanked staff for staying on top of the reimbursement process with the State.

Councilmember Wilson asked if money was available in the reserve account to fund the remaining projects and if low-interest loans were available to the City.

City Manager Knopp explained that funds were available in the reserves but funding all the remaining projects would deplete those funds commenting that the City could only apply for reimbursements once a project was completed. He indicated that low-interest loans would be available to the City as an option.

Mayor Garnes called for public comment on the matter. No public comment was received.

A motion was made by Carter/Wilson to direct staff to continue pursuing 100% reimbursement for all remaining earthquake recovery projects and authorize staff to proceed with the implementation of the remaining projects as presented. Motion carried 4-0.

## **ORDINANCES/SPECIAL RESOLUTIONS/PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### Introduction and First Reading (by title only) of Ordinance No. 413-2025 Establishing Chapter 8.45 of Title 8 of the Rio Dell Municipal Code (RDMC) Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map of the City of Rio Dell

City Manager Knopp provided a staff report recommending the introduction and first reading (by title only) of Ordinance No. 413-2025 Establishing Chapter 8.45 of Title 8 of the Rio Dell Municipal Code (RDMC) Fire Hazard Severity Zone map for the City of Rio Dell.

He explained that CalFire has been releasing maps identifying the level of fire hazard severity that cities across the State face as part of efforts to prepare for and prevent wildfires. The purpose of the map(s) is to identify areas in the state as moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones based on consistent statewide criteria and on the severity of the fire hazard that is expected to prevail in those areas.

According to CalFire, the maps evaluate hazards, or the physical conditions that create a likelihood and expected fire behavior over a 30-50-year period which doesn't account for efforts to prevent wildfires, such as home hardening. Fire hazard severity zone maps are utilized for building standards and various property development standards, as well as planning for future development.

Local agencies are required to make the recommended maps available for public review and comment within 30 days of receipt to ensure that the community has an opportunity to engage with and provide feedback on the fire hazard severity designations. The City made the map available on the City's website on the day the map was released for review and public comment. Cities are required to adopt the map(s) within 120 days of its release.

City Manager Knopp commented that jurisdictions have very little discretion on the fire hazard severity designations as presented and cannot contest high-risk designations for a lower risk however, could request revision of a low-risk designation to a higher-risk designation.

He noted that no areas of the City were designated as "very high" risk although some are designated as "high risk" which could play a role in insurance rates.

Councilmember Wilson said that he understands the assigned designations are not debatable but asked if the City could submit a letter of objection on some of the designations to have it on record.

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Mayor Pro Tem Carter commented that there is no process for appeals or negotiations related to the fire hazard severity designations.

Mayor Garnes opened a public hearing to receive public comment on the proposed ordinance. There being no public comment, the public hearing was closed.

A motion was made by Carter/Orr to approve the introduction and first reading (by title only) of Ordinance No. 413-2025 Establishing Chapter 8.45 of Title 8 of the Rio Dell Municipal Code (RDMC) Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map of the City of Rio Dell and to continue the second reading, approval, and adoption of the Ordinance to the meeting of April 15, 2025. Motion carried 4-0.

### **COUNCIL REPORTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

Mayor Pro Tem Carter reported on recent meetings and events and said that she attended a RREDC meeting on March 24th where they received a positive audit report. She said that she would be attending a Chamber of Commerce meeting, a Beautification, Walkability, and Pride Committee meeting on Friday, and a Rio Dell School Board meeting and Fire Commissioners meeting on April 10<sup>th</sup>.

Councilmember Orr reported that he attended an HCAOG meeting and met the new Executive Director.

Councilmember Wilson reported that Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA) is moving from the lower floor of the Wharfinger Building to the upper floor.

Mayor Garnes thanked Supervisor Bushnell for dialing into tonight's meeting and reported she attended a LAFco meeting where they discussed the water situation with Samoa. She announced that she would be attending a Humboldt Transit Authority meeting tomorrow, a Seismic Committee meeting on Thursday, and a Cal Cities meeting in Burbank on Friday. She noted that she would also be testifying to the State Assembly regarding AB 262 on Monday and noted that she would only have 2 minutes to tell her story about Rio Dell and the earthquake disaster recovery efforts.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Carter/Orr to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 p.m. to the April 15, 2025, regular meeting. Motion carried 4-0.

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Debra Garnes, Mayor

Attest:

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Karen Dunham, City Clerk