

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Paul Helenberg called the November 28, 2011 regular meeting of the Castle Rock City Council to order at 7:33 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The following councilmembers were present: Ray Teter, Glenn Pingree, Earl Queen and Ellen Rose. Councilmember Jack Reilly was absent.

COUNCIL APPOINTMENT

Mayor Helenberg reports that a letter of resignation was received from Councilmember Jack Reilly on November 24th. Councilmember Teter made a motion, seconded by Queen to accept the resignation of Jack Reilly from City Council. By roll call vote, unanimous Aye.

Councilmember Queen made a motion, seconded by Pingree to appoint Michael Davis to fulfill the remainder of Reilly's term for Council Position No. 4, which expires on December 31, 2011. By roll call vote, unanimous Aye.

Clerk-Treasurer Ryana Covington administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Davis to filling the unexpired term for the remainder of 2011.

Councilmember Davis recently was confirmed as the successful candidate elected for this position when the new term begins on January 1, 2012.

BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

In response to a question from Councilmember Pingree, Public Works Director David Vorse affirmed that the Cowlitz Valley Runners are requesting permission to hold the Sand and Misery Challenge on the same property as last year. They will provide insurance documents to the city.

Councilmember Pingree made a motion, seconded by Queen to approve the request from the Cowlitz Valley Runners to hold the Sand and Misery Challenge on city owned property. By roll call vote, unanimous Aye.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Helenberg adjourned regular session at 7:38 p.m. to take public testimony on the proposed budget for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2012, which includes rate increases for stormwater, water and sewer utilities.

Mayor Helenberg noted that revenues remain level. Difficult reductions were made to arrive at this budget. The city was not successful this year in their applications for 2012 street maintenance grants.

Due to the failure of the library excess levy, there is enough in the Library Fund for two to three months of services. The level of Library service may need to be reduced to extend services for a longer period.

The proposed 6% fee increase for stormwater, sewer and water is required to offset operating increases, specifically for PUD electricity and employee cost of living increases.

Covington noted that decreases in the General Fund Intergovernmental Revenues estimates are the direct result of anticipated reduction in Washington State shared revenues for City Assistance, Liquor Profit and Liquor Excise tax.

In response to a question from Councilmember Queen, Mayor Helenberg noted that surveys must be completed to determine the effect that Safe Routes to School sidewalks will have on Roake Avenue SE.

In response to a question from Lee Kessler, Clearwood Court SE, Mayor Helenberg justified cost of living adjustments as needed to retain employees. Council set the tone with an increase in council compensation. The mayor noted that the majority of employee compensation increases were determined by collective bargaining contracts.

There being no further public comment, Mayor Helenberg closed the Public Hearing and resumed regular session at 7:50 p.m.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

City Attorney Frank Randolph

Randolph requests an executive session to review the proposed collective gardens ordinance for potential litigation.

Public Works Director David Vorse

Vorse outlined current requirements needed to purchase a boat launch pass. These requirements include photo identification and a copy of the boat trailer registration. Cowlitz County only requires these items for a disabled veteran's pass or a permit for a second trailer, purchased at a reduced rate. The city's requirements eliminate the option of someone purchasing a boat launch pass as a gift. Mayor Helenberg noted there have been occasions when a boater from out of town was unable to purchase a pass as he was not carrying his trailer registration.

By council consensus requirements to purchase an Al Helenberg Memorial Boat Launch Annual Pass will be the same as requirements to purchase a Willow Grove Boat Launch Permit.

Police Chief Bob Heuer

Heuer reports that he attended the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs' in Chelan two weeks ago. The Governor spoke and recommended collaborating government services. The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery, Substance Abuse Prevention, Exemplary Collaboration Award was presented to the Castle Rock Police Department by the Attorney General.

In response to a question from Councilmember Pingree, Heuer noted that during this difficult economy, calls for services have doubled. Domestic violence and mental health issues continue to increase. This has a significant impact on police services.

City Engineer Mike Johnson

Johnson reported that the city will receive Front Avenue North Improvement plans on Thursday.

Clerk-Treasurer Ryana Covington

- Covington reviewed the October Cash and Investment Activity Report. Tax revenues have been received into the General Fund. The Arterial Street Fund is in deficit due to the Cowlitz Street West Revitalization Project grant reimbursements. On the agenda is an interim loan agreement with Cowlitz County, which would allow a cash flow until grant reimbursements are received.
- Covington presented a Zoning Fee Comparison of Castle Rock, Longview, Cowlitz County and Woodland. Cowlitz Wahkiakum Council of Governments provided notice that the city has once again exceeded the contract for planning services. A fee comparison indicates that some fees may need to be increased to recoup this General Fund expense.

Councilmember Pingree would like to keep these fees low to encourage investment in the community, yet meet the expense of planning services. City Attorney Frank Randolph pointed out that the city cannot deny these services due to lack of funds. Councilmember Teter concurred that costs should be covered while keeping fees low. A comparison to a city similar in size should be made. Councilmember Teter requests a copy of Kalama's planning fee schedule.

By council consensus, planning fees will be evaluated focusing on the need to cover expenses while encouraging development.

Exhibit Hall Director Karen Johnson

Johnson noted that the Annual Wreath Making Day is Saturday December 3rd. Mayor Helenberg added that also on Saturday, the Festival of Lights Committee will be decorating the float at the Cowlitz Regional Conference Center for the Longview Christmas Parade later that day.

There will be a jazz band playing for the Festival of Lights on December 13th along with other activities such as the Cowlitz Street West Grand Opening, Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, caroling, community dinner at Hatties and photos with Santa.

COUNCIL AND AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Paul Helenberg

Mayor Helenberg reports that he attended a Chamber of Commerce and a Festival of Lights meeting. He plans to attend Thursdays Community Economic Development Summit with Nancy Chennault and the Festival of Lights meeting tomorrow at 8:30 a.m.

Mayor Helenberg reported today trees and shrubs were planted and decorated on Cowlitz Street West. Further landscaping will be completed on Thursday. In the near future, five hundred large red tulip bulbs will be planted around these trees. A fund raiser is currently being held by the Chamber to purchase the bulbs for \$1 each. Proceeds will be used to purchase daffodils bulbs to be planted next year. Sixty-four hanging baskets of greenery were made by High School students for Christmas displays throughout the community. The baskets will be hung at businesses tomorrow along with more decorations. Strain poles will be installed tomorrow which will hold a large wreath with garlands across the entrance to Cowlitz St West.

Mayor Helenberg thanked Councilmember Teter for providing his expertise and assistance during the budget process.

Councilmembers

- Councilmember Queen attended a 911 meeting and will attend the next meeting on Wednesday when the budget should be finalized. The 2012 budget remains unchanged.
- Councilmember Rose will attend the 'Big Idea' meeting on Friday.
- Mayor Helenberg noted correspondence from Nancy Chennault announcing that the Community Economic Development Council will be touring Castle Rock on December 7th. The focus of this tour will be small business development. Mayor Helenberg and Nancy Chennault will attend the Community Economic Development Summit on Thursday.

- High School Representative Genevieve Grant reports that the High School Choir will be caroling during the Festival of Lights. Mayor Helenberg noted that last year approximately 150 people attended the Festival of Lights.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilmember Teter made a motion, seconded by Pingree to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2011 Regular Council Meeting. By roll call vote, unanimous Aye.

OLD BUSINESS

- Councilmember Queen made a motion, seconded by Pingree to approve Ordinance 2011-15 rescinding Ordinance 89-20 and 97-01 codified as Castle Rock Municipal Code, Chapter 5.06, Admissions Tax, on second reading. By roll call vote, Teter Nay, the rest Aye, motion passed.
- Councilmember Queen made a motion, seconded by Pingree to approve Ordinance 2011-17 amending Ordinance 2009-19 related to amending the rate for utility taxes for water, sanitary sewer and stormwater service businesses, on second reading. By roll call vote, unanimous Aye.
- Councilmember Pingree made a motion, seconded by Queen to approve Resolution 2011-12 asking qualified voters of the City to fund by Special Excess Levy for the furnishing of public library services to the citizens and will submit the following question: Whether or not a Special Excise Levy on real property shall be had for the purpose of funding library services during the year 2013, on second reading.

Discussion: In response to a question from Councilmember Pingree, Mayor Helenberg confirmed that this would place the library levy on the February 2012 Special Election ballot, along with the school district levy.

Vote: By roll call vote, unanimous Aye.

NEW BUSINESS

- City Attorney Frank Randolph reports that his current contract expires at the end of March. City attorney services cannot be sustained under the old retainer system. Randolph presented an Employment Agreement to retain his services from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2014 at \$150 per hour. Mayor Helenberg cautioned that it is important to keep costs low. For this reason, the mayor advised that any projects for the attorney must first be approved by the mayor prior to presenting to the city attorney.

Councilmember Teter made a motion, seconded by Rose to approve the Contract to Employ City Attorney from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2014. By roll call vote, unanimous Aye.

- Councilmember Queen made a motion, seconded by Pingree to approve the Interlocal Agreement between Cowlitz County and the City of Castle Rock for an interim loan not to exceed \$300,000 to assist in financing Cowlitz Street West improvements. The request for funds shall be made prior to December 15, 2011. By roll call vote, unanimous Aye.
- Covington reports that the State of Washington Department of Enterprise Services requests 2012 membership renewal at a cost of \$1500 over three years. In response to a question from Councilmember Teter, Police Chief Bob Heuer clarified that the Police Department has not used this service since switching to electronic ticketing. This service agreement will not be renewed at this time.
- City Engineer Mike Johnson requests approval of Cowlitz Street West Revitalization Project Supplemental Agreement No. 4 for an additional \$27,227. Because the project was divided into three phases to minimize impact to downtown businesses, this required construction management and material testing services beyond what was originally anticipated. In addition, an enormous amount of paperwork is required for projects receiving federal funds. Johnson estimates the actual overage is closer to \$50,000 over the contracted amount. However last week, Mayor Helenberg and Vorse met with Johnson and reviewed these expenses and was able to negotiation a reduction of the costs to the amount included in the proposed supplemental agreement.

Councilmember Pingree made a motion, seconded by Queen to approve Gray & Osborne Supplemental Agreement No. 4 for Cowlitz Street West Revitalization Project in the amount of \$27,227. By roll call vote, unanimous Aye.

- Councilmember Queen made a motion, seconded by Rose to approve the collective bargaining agreement between the City and Public Works employees, effective January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2015.

Discussion: Councilmember Teter would like to change the procedure for negotiating future employee agreements. Wage increases should not be based upon changes in the cost of living, but rather upon the City's budget projections.

Vote on the above motion: By roll call vote, unanimous Aye.

- Mayor Helenberg reports that consideration of boat launch lighting bids will be postponed until the December 12th council meeting.
- Covington detailed that Ordinance 2011-18 amends the budget to provide for contract and grant amendments approved throughout this fiscal year.

Councilmember Pingree made a motion, seconded by Teter to approve Ordinance 2011-18 amending the budget for fiscal year 2011 to allow for grant funded projects and contract obligations awarded by city council, on first reading. By roll call vote, unanimous Aye.

- Covington detailed that Ordinance 2011-19 would increase the base stormwater fee 40¢ per month for approximately 745 customers; with no increase for customers not paying the base charge. This will provide an annual revenue increase of approximately \$3576 for the Stormwater Management Fund.

Councilmember Pingree made a motion, seconded by Teter to approve Ordinance 2011-19 amending the stormwater utility base rate, effective January 2012 billing, on first reading. By roll call vote, unanimous Aye.

- Covington provided a summary of monthly customer water usage. Based on third quarter totals;
50% of customers use 400 cubic feet of water or less;
35% use between 500 and 900 cubic feet of water;
9% use between 1000 and 1500 cubic feet of water and
6% use 1600 cubic feet of water or more.

Mayor Helenberg noted that a small rate increase each year would provide for maintenance and operation of the water and sewer systems. A larger increase of 6% is needed as there has not been an increase for the last three years. Councilmember Teter feels that a sustainable cost could be determined.

Councilmember Davis asked what the source of funding was to restore city streets for projects involving utility work. Mayor Helenberg detailed the lack of funds for street repairs. A portion of the budget for a water or sewer main replacement project is an asphalt patch. A primary complaint from residents is the need for street repairs.

Councilmember Teter made a motion, seconded by Pingree to approve Resolution 2011-13 amending the water and sewer utility rates, effective January 2012 billing, on first reading. By roll call vote, unanimous Aye.

- Councilmember Teter made a motion, seconded by Rose to approve Ordinance 2011-20 adopting the budget for fiscal year ending December 31, 2012, on first reading. By roll call vote, unanimous Aye.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Helenberg adjourned regular session at 8:37 p.m. for a 20 minute executive session to discuss possible litigation, with no action anticipated.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Helenberg resumed regular session at 8:57 p.m. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor Paul Helenberg

Clerk-Treasurer Ryana Covington