

**CITY OF MYRTLE POINT
CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting
Monday, November 20, 2023 – 7:30 p.m.,
OSU Extension Service Meeting Room
631 Alder Street, Myrtle Point**

Council Members

Present:

Samantha Clayburn, Mayor
Mike Wood, City Councilor
Berea Gibbons, City Councilor

Michael Hogan, Council President
Ivan Hawker, City Councilor
Amy Ligons, City Councilor

Absent:

Gary Sullivan, City Councilor

Staff and Others

Scott Robinson, Chief of Police
Wayne Ramsey, Public Works
Amy Bruno, Library Director
Doug Ligons
Kathy Lewis*

Willy Burris, Fire Chief
Ginny Groce, Accountant
Darin Nicholson, City Manager
Jeffrey Howes
Dan Kleis (arrived ~7:36 p.m.)

(* indicates remote attendance)

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Clayburn called the City Council meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Clayburn asked the City Council members to state their names for the roll.

CONSENT ITEMS

- A. Mayor Clayburn announced the Consent Items – Minutes of the November 6, 2023 Regular Meeting. Councilor Hogan moved to accept the minutes as submitted. Councilor Wood seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. City Manager Candidate Introduction

Mayor Clayburn announced the City Manager Candidate Introduction. Manager Nicholson acknowledged Jeff Howes, candidate for the City Manager position. He summarized that the City Manager Recruitment Committee had interviewed several candidates, initially by Zoom, and that follow-up interviews had been conducted with two of the candidates. At the conclusion of the interviews, Jeff was the individual the committee felt was most qualified for the job. Manager Nicholson indicated that the intent of having him at the City Council meeting was to allow the rest of the council to get to know him. Mayor Clayburn opened the floor to Mr. Howes to share a little bit about himself. Mr. Howes explained that he had really enjoyed his time as a City Councilor in Hines, Oregon. He has desired to work in a small community since that time. Mayor Clayburn called for questions from the City Council for Mr. Howes. Councilor Gibbons stated that there were some people in the community that mentioned to her that they felt it would be important to have a City Manager who is willing to

work with people and not be a “letter of the law” type of person, but a “spirit of the law” person; someone who can look at problems from different perspectives and come up with a solution that works for everyone. Mr. Howes believed that he would be able to look at problems from various perspectives and come up with several different alternative solutions. He mentioned needing to balance the needs of the citizens, the city and the staff when considering alternatives. Councilor Hogan asked Mr. Howes how much he knew about Myrtle Point. Mr. Howes said he had some ties to the community through individuals at the gun club as a trap shooter. He also knows several business owners. He recently has read City Council meeting minutes from the past year. He also mentioned that he’d been given a tour of city facilities including the Water Treatment Plant and Sewer Treatment Plant during his in-person interview. Mr. Howes also said that if he is hired, he intends to stay in Myrtle Point long-term to serve the citizens here. Councilor Hogan then asked Mr. Howes what he feels would be his biggest challenge in the first year. Mr. Howes was uncertain how to answer the question but spoke about an upcoming street reconstruction project he knew about as well as needs at the water treatment plant. He also said that ensuring that the needs of the citizens, the community and the employees were met would be a challenge. Councilor Hogan rephrased the question and asked Mr. Howes if there was an area which he didn’t have experience. Mr. Howes identified sewer treatment and explained that Manager Nicholson had told him that the City Manager is the responsible official in relation to meeting the city’s sewer treatment permit requirements. He also mentioned that he would depend on Manager Nicholson and the League of Oregon Cities to get up to speed on the requirements. Councilor Wood asked Mr. Howes about a time that he was part of a team or group that accomplished its goals and how did he go about it? Mr. Howes explained that when he had first started teaching IT, several students returned later to tell him how well prepared they had been when they went on in their education later. He also spoke about his involvement with the sportsman club in Burns. He initially got involved because he liked shooting, but as time went on, he helped recruit new members and secured grant funding for development of the facility. He also mentioned that he had been part of an audit team that put together financial statements for cities and counties.

Mayor Clayburn opened the discussion to city staff members for questions. Library Director Bruno asked Mr. Howes which schools he had worked at in Harney County. Mr. Howes said he was a contract teacher and taught computers and accounting both at Burns High School and Crane High School. Director Bruno identified that her brother, Ted Netter, was the shop teacher at Crane High School. Mr. Howes remembered Mr. Netter. Director Bruno said her brother didn’t have anything bad to say about Mr. Howes. Next, Public Works Leadman Ramsey asked Mr. Howes about his experience with water and sewer systems. Mr. Howes explained that he had mostly been involved in the finance department at the Coos Bay-North Bend Water Board but he also had some experience as the City Councilor who oversaw the water and sewer systems in Hines, Oregon when he lived there. He explained that he was the liaison who heard citizen complaints regarding water or sewer. Leadman Ramsey also asked Mr. Howes if he had any ideas about securing funding for street improvement projects. Mr. Howes mentioned that he had some experience with grants and public financing but didn’t have any specific ideas. Next, Police Chief Robinson asked Mr. Howes for clarification about his departure from the Coos Bay-North Bend Water Board, noting that Mr. Howes had mentioned during the interview having a difference of opinion with the General Manager. Mr. Howes indicated that he couldn’t speak too much about the situation but stated, “part of what happened was that the General Manager preferred me to communicate in a different manner than I was, and [pause] he was explaining that I was doing things that I wasn’t, but yet he wanted me just to agree with him that I was.” Chief Robinson then asked how long it went on before he couldn’t take it anymore. Mr. Howes

stated that he believes himself to be a very patient person and he was with the Water Board through two General Managers: Mr. Schaub was there for eight years [of his employment] and Mr. Thomas is in his eighth year. He spent a lot of time with Mr. Thomas. After some other discussion, Fire Chief Burris asked if Mr. Thomas had a different management style than Mr. Schaub. Mr. Howes said he did. Chief Burris also referred to a comment during the interviews in which Mr. Howes said he would be comfortable with the department heads running their departments with only limited oversight. Mr. Howes confirmed that he was comfortable with that management style. Mr. Howes also said he appreciated the walk-around that had taken place during his second interview because he was able to learn about the town and also see the pride of the staff members in their respective facilities. Leadman Ramsey asked Mr. Howes about his familiarity with public meetings laws and requirements to provide public notice regarding meetings. Mr. Howes explained his experience with public meetings and budget requirements. There was some other discussion. Mayor Clayburn called for any other questions for Mr. Howes, and hearing none, closed the discussion and explained that the City Council would meet in executive session later and asked Mr. Howes to stay around until after the executive session.

PETITIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Mayor Clayburn called for petitions from the audience. Kathy Lewis wished everyone a gluttonous Thanksgiving. She also said that if Mr. Howes got the job, she would be a thorn in his side. Manager Nicholson explained that she was the Planning Commission President and also served on the Budget Committee.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- A. Myrtle Point Planning Commission Meeting – November 28, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
- B. Myrtle Point City Council Meeting – December 4, 2023, 7:30 p.m. – Mayor Clayburn stated that she would be unable to attend that night and asked Councilor Hogan if he would preside. He said he would.
- C. Myrtle Point Public Library Foundation Meeting – December 5, 2023, 5:00 p.m.
- D. Flora M. Laird Memorial Library Board Meeting – December 19, 2023, 5:00 p.m.

INFORMATION ITEMS

None.

OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Staff Reports:
 - 1. Manager Nicholson reported on the following:
 - 1. Wastewater Treatment Plant – The Myrtle Point Wastewater Treatment Plant discharges treated wastewater to the South Fork Coquille River under regulations contained in a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit issued for the facility. The most recent NPDES permit expired on June 30, 2015. The city applied for permit renewal six months prior to its expiration in accordance with rules stated in the permit. DEQ was tied up with a permit renewal backlog for many years due to staff turnover and other factors. Finally last fall, a draft permit was forwarded to the city with proposed effluent limits that were unrealistic for the Myrtle Point Wastewater Treatment Plant to achieve. An appeal letter was returned to DEQ identifying the issues and, after a meeting with DEQ staff in February 2023, they agreed to revise the draft permit and allow for input from the city during the process. New proposed waste discharge limits were received from DEQ on November 14th. The proposed limits are considered very reasonable with one possible exception. The new permit limits include requirements for total phosphorus.

The wastewater treatment plant has not been required to treat for phosphorus removal in the past. Based on the proposed discharge limits, the plant would have to reduce phosphorus by 10 to more than 15 times the levels measured last summer. It is uncertain whether this is realistic to achieve. These concerns have been identified to DEQ. The conversation is currently ongoing. A copy of the draft waste discharge limits was attached for reference. Manager Nicholson indicated that he had an appointment with DEQ to discuss the proposed phosphorus limits.

2. Accountant Groce had nothing to report.
 3. Leadman Ramsey had nothing to report.
 4. Library Director Bruno reported that December 1st is the Grand Reopening evening at the library from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. She also planned a kids' event on Saturday, December 2nd and said there would be a prehistoric special guest for "Dinovember."
 5. Police Chief Robinson had nothing to report.
 6. Fire Chief Burris reported that the department had done a "Burn to Learn" on the preceding Saturday. Bandon Fire, Coquille Fire and Green Acres Fire departments, the city's Auto-Aid partners, all attended. The training went well and all the departments had some new volunteers. He also reported that a couple of weeks before there was a middle-of-the-night emergency in Powers. The Myrtle Point Police Officer responded and Chief Burris said he received several compliments that the police officer had responded very quickly. Councilor Hawker asked if Powers was still without a police officer. Chief Robinson confirmed that was true. Chief Robinson also explained that the Sheriff's Office was responsible to handle the call but the nearest deputy was in Bunker Hill at the time. Officer Gilbert decided to respond before the deputy arrived due to the urgent nature of the call.
- B. City Council Concerns & Comments:
1. Councilor Gibbons shared that she had a rough week and thanked those who had reached out to provide support.
 2. Councilor Hawker asked if it was normal for Coquille PD to pull people over in Myrtle Point. Chief Robinson said that technically it is their jurisdiction as well.
 3. Mayor Clayburn reported that she would not be at the next City Council meeting. She also reported that Christmas Lights the Night was planned for December 9th. She said the tree lighting would take place at the OSU Extension and also there would be a family movie in the meeting room. There were other activities planned at some of the downtown businesses.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Clayburn closed the Regular Meeting at 8:09 p.m. and announced that the City Council and members of the City Manager Recruitment Committee would meet in Executive Session per ORS 192.660(2)(a) "To consider the employment of a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent." Those present for executive session included the members of the City Council, Police Chief Robinson, Fire Chief Burris and City Manager Nicholson.

RECONVENE REGULAR MEETING

Mayor Clayburn closed the Executive Session and reconvened the Regular Meeting at 8:37 p.m. Jeff Howes, Accountant Groce and Leadman Ramsey rejoined the meeting. Mayor Clayburn called for a motion concerning the City Manager candidate. Councilor Hogan moved to grant a Conditional Job Offer to Mr. Jeffrey Howes for the position of City Manager with a starting salary of \$84,000 per year. Councilor Hawker seconded the motion. Mayor Clayburn called for discussion and hearing none called for a vote on the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Manager Nicholson clarified to Mr. Howes that with a conditional job offer, he is allowed to negotiate. He also explained that if Mr. Howes accepted the job offer, it would be contingent on a background check. Manager Nicholson asked for any feedback. Mr. Howes stated that he would like to visit with his wife before making a decision. He also asked what the starting date would be if he accepted. Chief Robinson explained that it would take a week or two minimum once all the necessary information had been provided. He also stated that the background check would include driving, criminal and financial records. They also would contact previous employers. Mayor Clayburn asked Mr. Howes if there was a timeframe he was thinking. Mr. Howes said he was very flexible concerning a starting date. Mayor Clayburn concluded by asking Mr. Howes to let Manager Nicholson know his decision.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business for the City of Myrtle Point, Mayor Clayburn adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

12/04/2023

Michael Hogan, Council President
City of Myrtle Point