

**BOARDMAN CITY COUNCIL- REGULAR MEETING MINUTES– MARCH 7, 2023**  
**BOARDMAN CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS AND VIA ZOOM**

Mayor Keefer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilors present: Paul Keefer, Isaac Williams, Heather Baumgartner, Cristina Cuevas, Karen Pettigrew, and Brenda Profitt (arrived at 7:06pm)

Staff: Rick Stokoe- City Manager Pro Tem, Jackie McCauley-Acting Recorder & Building Clerk, Marta Barajas-Finance Director, Carla McLane-Planning Official, Rolf Prag-Special Projects Coordinator, Loren Dieter-Interim Police Chief, Jose Fernandez-Code Compliance Official, and George Shimer-School Resource Officer

Audience: Torrie Griggs-Boardman Chamber of Commerce, Stephen Fuss, Brandon Hammond, Toneshia Rich-Williams, Lisa Pratt, Dori Drago, L-Anders, and RHS Students: Osoaldo Chopin, Efrain Lopez, Jonathan Alvarez, Damian Garcia, and Brenda Trujillo

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

February 7, 2023 – Regular Meeting

Councilor Williams made a motion to approved the February 7, 2023 minutes as presented. Councilor Cuevas seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0 with one absent and one vacancy.

**PREARRANGED PRESENTATION**

Rental Complexes, Costs, and Rent Control – Stephen Fuss

Mr. Fuss reviewed a report he had prepared for the council's consideration regarding Boardman's Rental Complex. He said he wanted to persuade the council to add either a clause defining "affordable housing" or a clause regulating rent increases to the city's municipal code. He lives at the Port View Apartments and his rent has gone up 15% in 2021 and 21% in 2022. He said Oregon Senate Bill 608 was passed to help with the issue of affordable housing, however one of the criteria is that the rental must be over 15 years old. The Port View Apartments are newer than that, so the rules in SB 608 are not applicable. He said the new apartments going in at Tidewater are owned by the same company. He feels the company has a monopoly in Boardman.

7:06pm Councilor Profitt logged in via Zoom.

Mr. Fuss said, based on his research, Boardman rentals are charging more than \$600.00 over fair market. He cited the City of Portland's code which keeps rents and utilities to no more than 30% of renter's income. According to Portland's code, the Port View Apartments is not affordable housing. He mentioned several other cities who already have rent controls in place or are in the process of establishing rent controls. He said if his rent goes up again, he may be forced to move back to Texas, leaving his teaching job and leaving his students. He feels the previous city council handed the owners of Port View and Tidewater Apartments a monopoly.

Councilor Cuevas asked if he had researched other benefits for educators, besides rent control. She is aware of programs for educators in Umatilla such as a tax reduction and buyers benefits. Mr. Fuss said he had not.

Mayor Keefer said he is concerned about the council interfering with businesses. He does not want to tell them what they can and cannot do. He does not know the ramifications of such an action. Mr. Fuss said monopolies are not good. He said more government control would bring more property management to town; its not about government control, its about diversifying. He believes the city is in crisis.

Councilor Williams said he too is concerned about the council interfering with businesses, however he feels the council needs to defend its citizens. He asked how the city would pursue the matter. Mayor Keefer said the council has not heard the property owner's side of the story.

Mr. Fuss said people outside of Boardman are seeing the prices of rent and it is a deterrent to move here.

Councilor Pettigrew said about 10 years ago the city was concerned about having too much low-income housing. Having other available apartments gives others an option to live here. The council has to look at the entire community and decide if it wants to be low-income or not. This is the reason why the city allows different types of housing.

Chamber Director Torrie Griggs said supply and demand is driving rental costs up. It is not just an issue in Boardman, it is an issue across the U.S. right now. The state is working, at the workforce level, to bring more affordable housing. Boardman is in a unique moment right now. She said once the housing supply is caught up, we will see a difference on rental prices.

Councilor Cuevas said the city council does decide what is developed in Boardman. It might be worthwhile to get more information.

Councilor Baumgartner said, perhaps, the city could put language in the code to let developers know ahead of time what they could charge for rent.

City Manager Pro Tem Stokoe said the city should defer to the state statutes on this issue.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Ending January 31, 2023

Finance Director Barajas reported the largest expenditure for the month of January was for the G.O. Bond. She reported the interest rates are up to 3.5%. No councilors had questions for her regarding the monthly financial report.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

CREZ III IGA Amendment – Modifying City Area of Influence

City Manager Pro Tem Stokoe said the CREZ III board met and all three entities have agreed to expand the circle of influence. This will not include the city's property on Tower Road or the airport, but will bring the city to the table if businesses locate near there. He recommends approval of the amendment.

Councilor Pettigrew said it is important since the city owns property on Tower Road that the city be included.

Mayor Keefer said it is to the county's advantage to have CREZ. City Manager Pro Tem Stokoe said CREZ has contributed 1.1 million to education in Morrow County.

Councilor Williams made a motion to approve Amendment #2 of the Intergovernmental Agreement for the Columbia River Enterprise Zone III, within a City Area of Influence. Councilor Baumgartner seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Councilor Profitt – yes, Councilor Williams – yes, Councilor Baumgartner – yes, Councilor Cuevas – yes, Councilor Pettigrew – yes, Mayor Keefer – yes. The motion passed 6-0 with one vacancy.

City Manager Recruitment

Mayor Keefer said the council's first choice for the position took another job. The council may consider the two other candidates they have interviewed, they may continue the search for more candidates, or they may wait for the candidates pool to cool off. He welcomed suggestions from the councilors.

Councilor Williams said he does not want to wait too long to fill the position. The community is waiting and he does not want to look for another recruiting firm or for the councilors to recruit on their own. He would like to continue with SGR.

Councilor Cuevas said she does not want to wait either. The community and the council has already invested a lot in this search. She would like to find a quality candidate.

Councilor Baumgartner would like to continue the search.

Councilor Profitt said she does not want to wait. She wants to pursue the search.

Mayor Keefer asked if the council would like to pursue on their own or to go with a recruiting firm.

Councilor Profitt said she wants to continue to use SGR. They have already done all of the leg work.

Councilor Pettigrew asked if the council wants to change the requirements this time such as how many candidates to bring for consideration and what expectations may be. She is concerned about how the council may look to candidates from reading the minutes and watching the videos of previous meetings. The search for a city manager needs to be seen as important to the city council.

Councilor Williams said what the council does now will matter to the community. He feels the council has done a good job in searching for a candidate.

Councilor Cuevas said she understood from SGR that it is up to the city on how to proceed. The council has flexibility on number of candidates, etc.

Mayor Keefer said it sounded like there was council consensus to continue the search.

City Manager Pro Tem Stokoe said he has an option of bringing on an assistant city manager to hire and to train and that person could apply for the city manager's position, however this person would not be available until August. Councilor Profitt expressed caution in going this route because of the way it looks to citizens. She feels it is the same situation as the last time an assistant city manager was hired for the same purpose. Mayor Keefer said the difference is this person would need to apply for the position this time; it is not the same process. City Manager Pro Tem Stokoe said he would not hire an assistant city manager if the council decides to continue the search. Councilor Cuevas said she feels the council is being asked to make a decision on pursuing this route with no knowledge about this person; the council would only be relying on City Manager Pro Tem Stokoe's decision. The council has no guarantee that this person is going to work out. She feels the city should grow their own city manager in looking for candidates. Councilor Baumgartner said if this person is a great candidate, then they can go through the hiring process. She is concerned about waiting until August.

Councilor Williams wanted clarification if negotiations with the hiring company would be in executive session or in an open meeting. City Manager Pro Tem Stokoe said if it is to talk about options, it would need to be in an open session. Councilor Williams said he would like to continue with SGR and would like to set the number of candidates.

Councilor Pettigrew said the city is at a critical standstill. The city needs someone who knows Boardman and willing to live here, someone who can be trained and needs to fit into the community.

Mayor Keefer said there is consensus to continue the hiring process with SGR. City Manager Pro Tem Stokoe will inform SGR.

#### Councilor Drago's Resignation – Council Vacancy

Mayor Keefer said the city has received a letter of resignation from Councilor Drago on February 21, 2023 and he has accepted his resignation. The council will take letters of interest from the community and hold interviews at their April city council meeting. Staff was directed to post the announcement.

#### Congressionally Directed Spending – Incubator Building

City Manager Pro Tem Stokoe said he has applied, at the request of the Boardman Community Development Association, for a grant for an office incubator project. The grant is through the Congressionally Directed Spending Program. If the city receives the grant, the council will need to vote on a resolution to accept the grant. He has also written letters of support for the Port of Morrow and Morrow County for projects they have applied for through the same program.

#### Appointment of Budget Committee Member – Dori Drago and Stephen Fuss

Finance Director Barajas said the city has received two letters of interest for the two vacancies on the budget committees, one from Dori Drago and the other from Stephen Fuss.

Councilor Williams made a motion the mayor appoint Dori Drago and Stephen Fuss to the vacancies on the Boardman Budget Committee and the Boardman Urban Renewal Agency Budget Committee for a term, each, ending December 31, 2023. Councilor Baumgartner seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken: Councilor Profitt – yes, Councilor Williams – yes, Councilor Baumgartner – yes, Councilor Cuevas – yes, Councilor Pettigrew – yes, Mayor Keefer – yes. The motion passed 6-0 with one vacancy.

### **REPORTS, CORRESPONDENCE AND DISCUSSION:**

#### Police Report

Interim Police Chief Dieter said on the police report the numbers for February are down a bit. He had nothing new to report.

#### Building Department Report

Building Clerk McCauley said on the building report permit issuances are down, however there has been a tick up in plan reviews, which equates to permit issuances in the future.

#### Public Works Department Report

City Manager Pro Tem Stokoe said the public works report was in the councilors' packets. Mayor Keefer said he had noticed a cross walk was up and working on NE Columbia Avenue.

#### City Manager Report

City Manager Pro Tem Stokoe said the sales agreement with the BCDA is taken care of.

The City has received the easement from Morrow County to complete the walkway along NE Columbia Avenue.

There is a City, County, Port Meeting for Wednesday, March 8, 2023 scheduled at the Port at 5:30pm.

He apologized for the councilors not receiving their email regarding this. The executive assistant at the Port did not have all of their email addresses.

The city has interviewed a temporary employee to help with the human resources/payroll duties.

Idaho Power wants to purchase an easement on property the city owns by the lagoon. He is uncomfortable with a purchase of an easement. There was council consensus for the city manager pro tem to work with Idaho Power to lease an easement instead.

#### Councilors

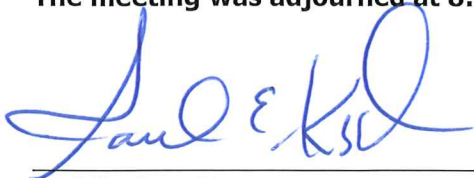
Councilor Pettigrew reminded everyone of the Community Awards Banquet this weekend.

#### Mayor

Mayor Keefer thanked the RHS students for attending tonight's meeting. He encouraged them to get involved in their community.

He asked councilors to reschedule April's meeting because he would not be available April 4, 2023. There was council consensus to reschedule the meeting to Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at 7:00pm. Mayor Keefer will be a little late as he will just be getting back in town from a game.

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:49pm.**

  
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Paul Keefer – Mayor  
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Jackie McCauley – Acting Recorder