

**January 20, 2021  
Regular Session  
City of Gaston  
Zoom Videoconference**

**Present:** Mayor David **Meeker**, Incumbent Bill **Martin**, Mario **DePiero**, Council-Elect Dave **Benson**, Margaret **Bell**, and Incumbent Don **Richter**.

**Absent:** Tony **Hall**

**Staff Present:** City Recorder Wenonah **Blanchette**, Public Works Specialist Rick **Mapes**, and Washington County Sheriff's Office Deputy Jarod **McCreary**.

- I. Mayor David **Meeker** called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** City Recorder **Blanchette** conducted the roll call for the record with:  
Councilor Mario **DePiero**: Present  
Councilor Bill **Martin**: Present  
Mayor David **Meeker**: Present  
Councilor Margaret **Bell**: Present  
Councilor Tony **Hall**: *Absent*  
Councilor Don **Richter**: Present
- III. **OATH OF OFFICE:** Mayor **Meeker** called for incumbent Don **Richter**, newly elected Dave **Benson**, and incumbent Bill **Martin**, to recite the oath of office one at a time. Mayor **Meeker** directed each new councilor to submit their oath of office form to the Recorder at a later time.
- IV. **APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL PRESIDENT:**  
Mayor **Meeker** motioned to appoint Councilor Bill **Martin** as Council President with second made by Councilor **Richter**. Motion passed with aye votes: **DePiero**, **Martin**, **Meeker**, **Bell**, **Richter**, and **Benson**. No councilor voted in opposition.  
Councilor **Benson** was appointed to a 2-year supervisor position ending January 18, 2023.
- V. **APPOINTMENT OF CITY SUPERVISOR:** Mayor **Meeker** asked if Councilor **DePiero** was still interested as the employee supervisor which he declined. Councilor **Martin** motioned to appoint Dave **Benson** as the City employee supervisor with second heard by Councilor **Richter**. Motion passed with aye votes heard from **DePiero**, **Martin**, **Meeker**, **Bell**, **Benson**, and **Richter**. Nay: 0.
- VI. **ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS:** Mayor **Meeker** called for any changes or deletions to the agenda with the City Recorder noting information received from the City attorney for Council to consider approving a correction in ownership of the pump station property for Clean Water Services located in Gaston. Washington County Records lists the City as the current property owner when in fact it was sold to USA (United Sewage Agency) in the 1970s and ownership should have been transferred then.  
Mayor **Meeker** announced that after speaking with Councilor Tony **Hall** tonight, due to health reasons Councilor **Hall** will be resigning from City Council. Motion to accept Tony **Hall**'s resignation and post notice of the vacancy was made by Councilor **DePiero** and seconded by Councilor **Richter**. Motion passed. Aye: **DePiero**, **Martin**, **Meeker**, **Bell**, **Richter**, and **Benson**. Nay: None.  
Public Works Specialist Rick **Mapes** asked Council to consider approving a water customer's credit request for 432 Hedin Terrace. Public Works Specialist **Mapes** discussed repairs made to both sides of the water meter at the location resulted in current water billings being significantly less each month than in prior months and is requesting a possible credit for the difference. Council requested to use three months of new water data to compare to the prior year of water

usage to determine if a credit is due. Councilor **Benson** said he can take the meter into Water Metrics to have the meter tested.

**VII. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS:** Mayor **Meeker** called for any additions or deletions. None heard.

**VIII. STAFF/COUNCIL/COMMITTEE/SUPERVISOR REPORTS:**

**Police:** Deputy **McCreary** provided a verbal report for December to the Council: Deputy **McCreary** explained his report is short being he has been back just a few days after being out of the office for two weeks.

- Incident on Salter Street resulted with an arrest for Arson I, case is still pending.
- Felony domestic assault at the Riverside Apartments, case is still pending.
- Several reports were made to the Sheriff's office due to teenage boys driving throughout town honking their horns and driving through stop signs. Spoke to most the parents with hopes of it stopping. Councilor **DePiero** confirmed honking has stopped since the Deputy spoke with teenagers and parents.

**Public Works:** Public Works Specialist **Mapes** provided his report with the following:

- Damage to the City Hall building in the shop areas, one of the main trusses are rotten and working with the insurance company to get it repaired.
- Still planning on repairing the Onion Lane water line break on E. Main Street as time permits.
- Of the two street projects occurring, three hydrants will be replaced and will help with water loss.
- Cottonwood Street sidewalk construction to begin Thursday.
- Office training on how to use the software for the AMR (Automatic meter reading) meters. Installation will happen next Tuesday. The goal is to have all meters installed within two years.
- Councilor **Bell** asked if shut off valves were included for the new hydrants installed with the Public Works Specialist responding that yes shut off valves will be installed.
- Councilor **Benson** inquired about several items including new hydrants vs. rebuilding hydrants, contractors installing hydrants, corps stops, and procurement processes. No action taken.

**Recorders Report:** Recorder **Blanchette** provided her report with the following:

- Legal:
  - As mentioned earlier in the meeting, the City will need to transfer ownership of the sewer pump station originally sold in the 1970s to Clean Water Services. County records have the City as the property owner. The attorney has drafted a Bargain and Sale deed for the Council to approve.
  - Continued negotiations for the properties on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street for the purchase of right-of-way for the project.
- Financials: December financials report the General Fund is in the positive. Financial reports are available online and was emailed to all Councilors.
  - Looking for budget committee members for the 2021-2022 budget.
- Municipal Court: Traffic court was scheduled for January 19 with two appearances and both were dismissed due to hardship. Next court date is March 16<sup>th</sup>.
- 101 3<sup>rd</sup> Street: Letter was sent to the property owner relating to the number of dogs allowed at the property.
- 304 Church Street: Reported the violation has been cleared and there is no longer any vegetation encroaching on adjacent properties.
- 100 3<sup>rd</sup> Street: Storm drainage work was performed Monday and Tuesday. Waiting to hear comments back from the surrounding property owners if there are continued issues with water drainage.
- Grants:

- Safe Routes to School Cottonwood Street:
  - Working on obtaining extensions for 3<sup>rd</sup> and Cottonwood Street grant projects.
  - A reimbursement request was filed and are now seeking additional information to process the request.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Widening: Still working on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street negotiations with two property owners agreeing to the offer amounts; two property owners asking for more information and 2 others counteroffering. Once everyone is happy with the agreed amounts, the City can move forward with construction.
- Meeting scheduled with Habitat for Humanity for January 21<sup>st</sup>.

**IX. CONSENT AGENDA:** Mayor **Meeker** asked for questions or comments for the consent agenda; calling for a motion to adopt. Motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Councilor **Richter** and seconded by Councilor **Martin**. Motion passed. Voting aye: **Meeker, Martin, Benson, DePiero, Bell, and Richter**. Nay: 0.

**X. NEW BUSINESS:**

**OLCC License Renewal:** Councilor **DePiero** motioned to approve the OLCC renewal following second heard by Councilor **Richter**. No further discussion. Voting Aye: **DePiero, Martin, Benson, Meeker, Bell, and Richter**. Nay: None.

**Appoint Signers on Bank Accounts:** The Recorder explained that bank signers on the accounts are designated as Mayor, Council President and Recorder. The appointment of Council President remains the same as before and require no changes; no action taken.

**Appoint Budget Officer:** Councilor **DePiero** made a motion to appoint Wenonah **Blanchette** as the Budget Officer for the 2021-2022 budget. Motion seconded by Councilor **Richter**. No further discussion, motion carried. Aye: **DePiero, Benson, Meeker, Bell, Richter, and Martin**. Nay: 0.

**Appoint Budget Calendar:** Council agreed by consensus to approve the budget calendar with no changes. No action taken.

**Adopt Budget Committee Members:** Councilor **Richter** suggested notifying eligible committee members to participate in the budget by sending notice in their water bills and by a consensus, Council requested notices be sent in next month's water bills.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Waste Collection Franchise, Waste Management :** Dean **Kampfer**, representative from Waste Management was present to discuss the draft renewal franchise explaining changes made previously from discussions with adding yard debris as a subscription service and not a bundled service and minor administrative changes in the agreement.

**Recology Western:** Dave **Larmouth** representative of Recology Western was also present and wanting to discuss with Council the possibility of changing waste collection services to Recology Western. Dave **Larmouth** said interest for providing Gaston with waste collection services through them is there but wanted to discuss options before drafting a franchise agreement. Further discussion heard on the legalities for moving forward in an RFP process vs. an informal process. Motion to accept the franchise agreement with Waste Management was made by Councilor **Richter** and seconded by **Bell**. It was decided to stay with Waste Management for waste collection services. Voting Aye: **Bell, Richter, Benson, Martin, DePiero, and Meeker**. Nay: 0.

**COMPLAINTS:**

New—

Old—

**101 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Multiple Dogs Complaint:** Recorder **Blanchette** asked the Council for direction on addressing the issue at 101 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. It was requested by Councilor **DePiero** to make contact with the property owner and determine if the complaint still exists. Public Works Specialist **Mapes** explained that when Washington County Dog Control was at the property the number of dogs were recorded as being more than what the City allows per Ordinance. The Public Works Specialist wanted to make contact with the property owner and see if the number of dogs had changed. By mutual consensus of the Council, it was agreed if there are more dogs than allowed per the ordinance to follow the nuisance process.

**Railroad Easement Briers:** Public Works Specialist discussed he made contacted with the property owner and filed paperwork for the vegetation management lease for the City to manage the blackberry briers. No other information

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn was made by Councilor **Martin** with second heard by Councilor **Richter**. Motion carried unanimously closing the meeting at 8:13PM.



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Mayor David Meeker

Attest:



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City Recorder Wenonah Blanchette