

**March 17, 2021  
Regular & Executive Session  
City of Gaston  
Zoom Videoconference**

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

**Absent:** Washington County Deputy Jarrod **McCreary**.

**Staff Present:** City Recorder Wenonah **Blanchette** and Public Works Specialist Rick **Mapes**. Others present include Gaston Resident Billy **Nice**.

- I. Mayor David **Meeker** called the regular meeting to order at 7:05 PM.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** City Recorder **Blanchette** conducted the roll call for the record with:  
Councilor Mario **DePiero**: Present  
Councilor Bill **Martin**: Present  
Councilor Dave **Benson**: Present (*arriving at 7:10PM*)  
Mayor David **Meeker**: Present  
Councilor Margaret **Bell**: Present  
Councilor Seat #5: *Vacant*  
Councilor Don **Richter**: Present
- III. **LETTER OF INTEREST:** A letter of interest was received by Billy **Nice** who lives at 314 Park Street to fill the vacant seat on City Council. Mayor **Meeker** called for questions from the Council to fill the vacant seat with Councilor **DePiero** asking if he is in attendance with Billy **Nice** responding that yes, he is present at City Hall. Councilor **Bell** responded that she's known Mr. **Nice** as early as elementary school and that when he commits to something he follows through. Councilor **Martin** recommended Mr. **Nice** to serve on City Council and would not have chosen someone that he did not think could do the job. Councilor **Bell** motioned to appoint Billy **Nice** to fill the vacant Council seat following second heard by Councilor **Martin**. Voting Aye: **Meeker, Martin, DePiero, Bell, and Richter**. Nay: None.  
Mayor **Meeker** administered the Oath of Office to Billy **Nice** and appointed him to seat 5 to serve on Council for the City of Gaston.

Recorder **Blanchette** announced the budget committee meeting scheduled at 6PM was cancelled due to publishing errors and will reschedule it for next month. Previously approved meeting dates will require rescheduling, but the budget committee will have time to review those dates before notices are sent for publication.

- IV. **ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS:** Mayor **Meeker** called for additions or deletions to the agenda at this time. Councilor Richter stated going west on Church Street in front of 400 Church Street mud needs to be removed and replaced with gravel. An 8- or 10-foot area about 50-75 feet long. Public Works Specialist **Mapes** responded that he is waiting for the area to dry out before he begins maintenance in the area.
- V. **CITIZEN COMMUNICATION:** No citizen communication was heard or received.
- VI. **STAFF/COUNCIL/COMMITTEE/SUPERVISOR REPORTS:**

**Police:** Deputy **McCreary** was not present at the meeting to provide his report but previously provided stats to City Councilors that were included in packets for review. No action taken.

*(due to technical difficulties, there is a 10-minute gap of silence in recording)* Recorder **Blanchette** asked Mayor **Meeker** to call on a local resident who is present and would like to

speak to City Council concerning her water bill. Mayor **Meeker** called for local resident Evelyn **Reimers** to speak before Council. **Reimers** stated that when she received her water bill it was extremely high and when calling City Hall to inquire found out that the Water Department had been estimating bills for several months. Discussion heard on lack of communication from the Water Department to customers and how there are many residents not happy about their water bills because of previous estimating. Public Works Specialist **Mapes** apologized for estimating water bills and apologized for the lack of communication the last couple months regarding water bills. He will contact **Reimers** tomorrow and follow up with additional information for her. Recorder **Blanchette** announced a complaint was filed by a local citizen regarding the same issue concerning estimating water bills and lack of communication. It was decided to discuss this complaint later in the meeting.

Mayor **Meeker** called for further public comments hearing from Gary **Hedin**, Gaston School Athletic Director announcing the School can play their spring sports and will be utilizing use of the ball fields at Brown Park. Use of the fields will begin this month with games beginning April and wanting to know how to address spectators of games during current social distancing restrictions. Councilor **Bell** inquired if the school will be limiting spectators to strictly home team games with Rick **Mapes** responding that he will look at what OSSA and other school sports information out there to determine if the City will need to further restrict Brown Park. Councilor **DePiero** stated to follow the same guidelines that the School is following.

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

- A hit and run accident reported a truck hit a city hydrant approximately 11:30PM on March 13<sup>th</sup> on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Church Street. The hydrant separated from the isolation valve when hit and had contractors working Sunday morning to repair the water line from leaking, but the hydrant is out of service until Monday evening when the hydrant was repaired. The hydrant was not installed correctly noting that as the water system receives upgrades, the Public Works Specialist will need to supervise all improvements made toward the City to ensure all work is performed correctly.
- Construction on Cottonwood Street sidewalk is nearly complete waiting for asphalt to be laid with contractors on site tomorrow to clean up and back fill areas that didn't have enough fill dirt. Final walk through is scheduled for next month.
- Met with Tim **McDonald**, Tony **Marris**, Kris **Kittridge**, and Brooke **Harrison** last week to discuss installing underground utilities within the upcoming weeks.
- Construction at the Fire Station is underway and approved the use of the Onion Lane and Brown Park parking area for their construction vehicles and material parking during the project.
- Maintenance done and gravel laid between Onion Lane and the Fire Station. This area is being prepped for a public works yard as more meters are installed this area will be used for extra dirt.
- Will begin researching the process for hiring a public works intern with Council approval before beginning April and ending October.
- Hydrant on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Church is out of service until a gasket is replaced. Parts and tools have been ordered.
- Public Works Specialist **Mapes** announced he is going on vacation beginning Saturday and spoke with Kyle from LA Water Co Op and is available in the event of emergencies.

Discussion had amongst Council and Public Works on damage done to the hydrant on 3<sup>rd</sup> and Church Street. This incident will be filled as a claim against the individual's motor vehicle insurance because it is reported as a hit and run with a police report filed. Public Works also explained to Council new hydrants being installed will be engineered and installed as recommended by state and federal regulations including review and approval by the City Engineer.

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

- Legal: The attorney is now working directly with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street property owners with property negotiations. Waste Management is reviewing the draft franchise agreement as prepared by the City attorney.
- Financials: As provided in her report, fund balances amongst all 12 funds are in the positive. Due to publishing errors with the Forest Grove News Times, the budget officer recommends the budget committee make changes to the budget calendar, shifting all meetings one month forward. Meeting dates must comply with publishing notices within a specific timeframe and must be met before holding a meeting. Due to the error in publishing, the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting will be scheduled for April instead of March. Still finalizing the 2019-2020 audit with Pauly Rogers Co and expect it within the next three weeks.
- Planning/Land Use: A request made from Gaston Heights to extend their application an additional 12 months to allow for recording of the plat with Washington County which is the final step in Gaston Heights Phase Two. According to Code Gaston Heights would be required to file a new subdivision application as several extensions have expired. 114 Front Street approved a sign permit for the Ace Tavern
- The Gaston Municipal Court was held the day prior with six arraigned to appear before the judge and no one attended. Court was scheduled as a videoconference, so no one was arraigned to meet in person due to social distancing restrictions. Due to COVID-19 traffic court has slowed significantly with the first traffic ticket written today in several months.
- On the agenda for later review is a water request credit for 432 Hedin Terrace. Additional information was requested last month and will reconsider their credit this month with an explanation that water consumption has been high since originally moving into the property further discovering a leak that had been ongoing for years. Would like the Council to consider a credit request for some or partial of the leak usage since it was occurring before they moved in.
- An executive session is scheduled at the end of the meeting for the Public Work Specialist 6-month review.
- SEI filings will be available for all City Council members and is required by the State of Oregon Ethics Commission to disclose associations and sources of income for all public officials. These will be sent to email addresses and must be filed electronically by April 15<sup>th</sup>. Contact Recorder **Blanchette** for additional information.
- Billings for Gaston Heights development fees were sent to Tim **McDonald**. These represent the last two years of billings incurred on behalf of Gaston Heights from the City Engineer, City Planner, and legal billings by the City Attorney and an attorney that specializes in land use development.
- Fire alarm for the City Hall building was damaged resulting with the cancellation of fire monitoring through the building security system. The City will continue to have alarm monitoring and video recording services with monthly fees reduced. Due to current building codes, permits are required for commercial security systems and would require commercial structural and fire suppression upgrades to the building which the City cannot take on at this time.
- Spring Clean Up and Bulky Waste Day will be May 11<sup>th</sup> for the 6 bag- curbside pickup and May 15<sup>th</sup> for the Bulky Waste collection day at Brown Park between 9am and 2pm.

The Recorder went on to announce additional items that include Gaston Youth Sports park use for baseball and softball, request to close 1<sup>st</sup> Street May 15<sup>th</sup> for a wedding reception, two separate record requests submitted with requested information provided. Also, the Recorder mentioned no updates on painting sidewalks and potentially changing the use of the 3-bay garage area for commercial investment opportunity. Other items mentioned include requesting Council update the contract and extend completion date to May 5<sup>th</sup> for the Cottonwood Safe Routes to School Grant and contact was established with Ziplly Fiber to begin updating telecommunications franchise. Training is scheduled for the Recorder June 8-17<sup>th</sup> to continue efforts towards CMC (Certified Municipal Clerk) certification. This training is usually scheduled for a weeklong

conference in Washington State. Because of COVID-19 this training is being provided at a reduced cost without leaving the office.

**VII. PRESENTATIONS:** None currently.

**VIII. CONSENT AGENDA:** Mayor **Meeker** called for a motion to adopt the consent agenda with Councilor **Martin** motioning to approve. Second heard by Councilor **Richter** with the motion passing. Voting aye: **Meeker, Nice, Martin, Benson, DePiero, Bell, and Richter**. Nay: 0.  
*Bills Payable March 2021*  
*January 20, 2021 Regular Council Session*  
*Change Order #6 Cottonwood Street Sidewalk*

Public Works Specialist **Mapes** provided information relating to the final change order (#6) for Cottonwood Street Sidewalk. No action taken or needed.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS:**

**National Community Development Week April 5- April 9, 2021:** Mayor **Meeker** read aloud the National Community Development Week April 5-April 9, 2021 Proclamation. Motion to accept the proclamation for National Community Development Week, was made by Councilor **DePiero** and seconded by Councilor **Martin**. Aye: **Meeker, Martin, Benson, Nice, DePiero, Bell, and Richter**. Nay: None.

**432 Hedin Terrace Water Credit Request:** Recorder **Blanchette** explained usage history was provided to Council in packets for review with Public Works Specialist **Mapes** reporting meters were tested to confirm accuracy based on the meter check request made by the same individual. The water meter when tested reported at 103 % accurately. Public Works stated he personally feels something is going on with the water lines at Hedin and Trail Street but uncertain what that might be; however, there is nothing uncertain of the water meter usage reporting accurately before and after being tested accurate. No similar complaints have been received with meters reading higher than normal usage. Councilor **DePiero** stated the City did their due diligence in checking the meter for accuracy with the resident ultimately responsible for all their water usage. A mutual consensus of the Council was agreed upon denying the requested credit for 432 Hedin Terrace.

**Safe Routes to School Cottonwood Street Contract:** Original grant contract ended December 2020 with Brooke from Tetra Tech assisting staff in requesting the extension which has been approved. The original contract will need to be updated with a new contact and asking the Council to consider adopting the updated Safe Routes to School Cottonwood Street Contract provided the completion date for May 5, 2021. Motion to approve the contract was made by Councilor **Bell** with second heard by Councilor **Benson**. Motion passed: Those voting Aye: **Meeker, Martin, Benson, DePiero, Nice, Bell, and Richter**.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Waste Management Franchise Discussion:** Recorder **Blanchette** as previously mentioned legal review is being conducted by the City and by Waste Management reviewing the updated franchise agreement. No updates currently.

**COMPLAINTS:**

New—

**104 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Stagnant Water:** Public Works Specialist **Mapes** reported an above ground swimming pool in the back yard at the residence which backs up to the cul-de-sac on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and can see the pool is ¾ of the way full of water growing algae. Motion to declare 104 2<sup>nd</sup>

Street in violation of the Nuisance Ordinance for stagnant water was by Councilor **Martin** and seconded by Councilor **Benson**. Aye: **Meeker, Martin, Benson, Nice, DePiero, and Richter**.  
Nay: 0

**Old—**

**101 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Multiple Dogs Complaint:** No updates currently.

**Railroad Easement Briers:** No updates currently.

- X. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Mayor **Meeker** closed the special meeting and opened the executive session at 8:32PM asking those audience members in attendance to leave the room at this time. *(There were no audience members in attendance)*. This executive session is scheduled to review and evaluate employee performance pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(i) to review and evaluate the employment-related performance of the chief executive officer of any public body, a public officer, employee or staff member does not request an open hearing. Executive session closed at 8 45PM.

**Public Works Specialist 6 Month Review:**

Motion to approve Rick **Mapes** as a Public Works Specialist full-time employee, passing the probationary period was made by Councilor **DePiero**. Second heard by Councilor **Richter**.

Vote-Aye: **Meeker, Martin, Bell, Richter, Benson, DePiero, and Nice**.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion to adjourn was made by Councilor **Richter** with second heard by Councilor **Martin**. Motion carried unanimously closing the meeting at 8:48PM.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor David Meeker

Attest:   
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Recorder Wenonah Blanchette