

**Official Minutes of the City of Mount Rainier
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE MEETING
DATE: February 4, 2020
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, UPPER-LEVEL CITY HALL**

Call to Order

7:00 PM, Council Chambers, City Hall, One Municipal Place, Mount Rainier, MD

Presiding Officer

Mayor Malinda Miles

Officials Present

Councilmember Celina Benitez
Councilmember Scott Cecil
Councilmember Luke Chesek
Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Staff Present

Interim City Manager Latasha C. Gatling
City Clerk John Hoatson

Minutes provided by:

City Clerk

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Motion to Approve Amended Agenda: Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Move: Councilmember Celina Benitez

Second: Councilmember Luke Chesek

Vote Recorded: 3-0-0, Motion Passed

Mayor Miles came later. Was attending the Swearing-in of New Police Chief in Cottage City, Anthony Ayers. Reception for Anthony Ayers was conducted at Bunker Hill Fire Station.

Event Announcements by Mayor & City Council

- Youth Scholarship Application Deadline is April 17, 2020 by 5:00 PM
- Walk to School Day – Monthly event for Mount Rainier Elementary
- Craft Club is meeting every Monday from 7:00 PM until 9:00 PM MRPD
- Renewal of Parking Permits is February 28, 2020
- Census Committee still looking for volunteers

- Building Native Ecosystem Event – February 22, 2020 10:00AM until 12:00PM Joe's Movement Emporium
- Catharsis on the Mall – Call for artist – \$20,000 in artist grants available. Speak to Councilmember Scott Cecil if interested.
- Volunteers for Mount Rainier Day still needed. Everyone is invited to be on the committee.

Amended Agenda Read by Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Mount Rainier Police Detective Swearing-In Ceremony:

Mayor Malinda Miles & Councilmember Bryan Knedler conducted the swearing-in of Mount Rainier Police Detective David Calloway. Detective Calloway verbally took the Oath of Office and signed the Ceremonial Oath of Office for the City. Lt. Col Linwood Alston filled in for Chief of Police Anthony Morgan. Detective Calloway made a few remarks and is looking forward to an extended career in Mount Rainier. Mayor Miles also personally thanked Detective Calloway for responding and assisting her with a recent family emergency.

LGIT Training Presentation by Tim Ailsworth, Executive Director with LGIT (Local Government Insurance Trust)

Tim Ailsworth made a presentation and provide the City of Mount Rainier two checks. Both are police department training grants. One check was for \$500.00 and the other was for \$1,650.00. The \$500.00 check was for "Train the Trainer" for emergency vehicle operation. The \$1,650 check was designated for force science regarding use of police force.

Presentation By FSC First Regarding FSC First Recommendation that Penny Royal Station and Sew Creative Be Awarded A 50K Forgivable Loan From The City of Mount Rainier's Economic Development Incentive Fund.

Dawn Medley, Senior VP of Business Finance and Ron Work, Commercial Loan Underwriter made a presentation with regards to the Mount Rainier Economic Development Million Dollar Incentive Fund. Two local businesses are ready for loan approval. Pennyroyal Station and Sew Creative. Nine business have made applications. Four have completed applications. Two are ready for financing.

Pennyroyal Station 3310 Rhode Island Avenue will use the money for equipment needs so they can get opened. FSC First recommended a forgivable \$50,000 loan.

Funds are controlled. Funds must be used in the business and has checks in place to guarantee it. Mayor Miles requested a timeline for opening. Pennyroyal Station is waiting on WSSC to get gas line in place. Hoping for an early Spring opening. They are currently working on cosmetics. 72-76 seat restaurant with 16 places at the bar. The patio will seat 60 people. Plans will be to do a soft opening. Dinner will be offered the first two weeks followed by the addition of brunch & then breakfast.

34 new jobs will be created with the opening of Pennyroyal Station. Pennyroyal station will definitely be opening. FSC will first invest in Pennyroyal station and then the fund from the City of Mount Rainier will be accessed.

Public Comment was offered. There was no comment provided.

Motion to Approve 50K Forgivable Loan for Pennyroyal Station Mayor Miles

Move: Councilmember Luke Chesek

Second: Councilmember Celina Benitez

Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed

FSC First (Ron Work) then made another presentation regarding Sew Creative, DBA Harmon Enterprises located at 3711 Rhode Island Avenue. Sew Creative currently employs 13 workers with the hope of adding two more positions. The money provided by FSC First will help to expand classes offered. FSC First made the recommendation to provide a 50K forgivable loan from the Incentive fund. The owner of the business Cisely was in attendance to answer questions. Councilmember Chesek spoke about the 6 industrial sewing machines currently in her possession. Sew Creative is hoping to use the money for signage.

Once again Public Comment was offered. There was no comment provided.

Motion to Approve 50K Forgivable Loan for Sew Creative Mayor Miles

Move: Councilmember Luke Chesek

Second: Councilmember Celina Benitez

Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed

Additional FSC presentations need to be made at the Work Session of Mayor & City Council going forward.

Public Comment

Two residents signed up to speak during Public Comment.

1. Austin Mack Crane 3500 Block of Varnum – Spoke about the Bike Coop. Currently the Bike Coop is being renovated. Bike Coop is currently using a shipping container to work out of. Mayor Miles stated that money was allocated in Fall, 2019 for a structural engineer. Interim City Manager Latasha C. Gatling stated that the deposit and contract have been sent for the structural engineer. Work should begin soon.
2. Intizar Hamid spoke out about Resolution 04-2020 Pitt Bulls. Hamid expressed concern as to why this resolution would be created if it is County law? Everything should be left in place as it currently is. Residents are very concerned and it should be rescinded. Councilmember Cecil stated the law is flawed and unenforceable. Intizar walked out of meeting.

Old Business

This Ordinance is being created to have a roof permit in place. Contracted roofers will have to show proof to the City they are bonded and licensed. Inspections of the roof will not be done from the City. County permits will still be required. This will make changes in the City Code. There currently is a \$200.00 fine, per week if residents don't have permits. Councilmember Benitez stated that fees need to be removed from the Ordinance and placed in the Schedule of Fees. Councilmember Knedler stated it will be changed once fine and fees are in the schedule.

Ordinance 01-2020 Amending Chapter 3, Building Code, Mount Rainier Code

Motion to Approve Ordinance 01-2020 Amending Chapter 3, Building Code, Mount Rainier Code Mayor Miles

Move: Councilmember Luke Chesek

Second: Councilmember Celina Benitez

Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed

New Business

Resolution 0-5-2020 Resolution of the Mayor & City Council of Mount Rainier to Authorize Negotiations of the Verizon Franchise Renewal & Together with Prince George's County & Other Municipalities, to Jointly Negotiate the Renewal of the Verizon Franchise.

Mayor Miles stated that the Verizon agreement is expired and will need to be renegotiated. The City also has an agreement with Comcast.

Public Comment regarding the resolution was offered. No one from the audience spoke.

Motion to Approve Resolution 05-2020 Verizon Franchise Agreement – Mayor Miles

Move: Councilmember Celina Benitez

Second: Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Vote Recorded: 3-1-0, Motion Passed (Councilmember Cecil no vote)

1st Reading of Ordinance 02-2020 Amending the Schedule of Fees For the City of Mount Rainier. (NO VOTE JUST 1st READING OF ORDINANCE)

Councilmember Knedler stated that the fees and penalties are mixed. Mayor & City Council would like to have the document separated into three columns. Fees | Fines | Description. Mayor & City Council want to make it easier for residents to understand. Fee Schedule will go into effect at a vote and not be retroactive. Councilmember Cecil stated that this entire process took too long. Councilmember Cecil wanted to know if this could be amended before the second meeting? Mayor Miles stated yes, that it could be done.

Action Item: Lawyer was asked to amend the schedule of Fees to include three columns: Fees | Fines | Description. Will be voted on at the next legislative meeting of Mayor & City Council barring no changes.

Vote To Support Proposed NCOZ Standards

Not many changes were made to the standards. The language has been cleaned up. Residents will now be allowed to change back walls and roofs on their houses. They will also be allowed to renovate one window and door versus two windows. Multiple dormers would also be allowed under these standards. Recommendations need to be voted on to send to County Staff. There will need to be a public meeting on final draft once completed. Councilmember Knedler stated that the Design Review Board had done a lot of work on the standards and thanked them.

Motion to Adopt Proposed NCOZ Standards – Mayor Miles

Move: Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Second: Councilmember Luke Chesek

Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed

Vote On Attorney Services – Elissa Levin – Funk & Bolton

Ken Sigman, former City Attorney resigned and moved on. Mayor & City Council just completed a search and selected Funk & Bolton as new legal counsel for the City. The City is receiving discounted cost for legal services at a rate of \$245.00 and hour for attorney, \$195.00 an hour for Senior Counselor and \$75.00 an hour for a Paralegal. Councilmember Knedler is requesting quarterly reports. Mayor and City Council are requesting monthly reports. Mayor Miles requested 30 to 60 day notice of termination from the firm. Mayor and City Council advised Interim City Manager Latasha Gatling to add the following language to the agreement.

1. Monthly status and billing report requested
2. 45 to 60 day notice if firm terminated contract
3. Town Hall change to City Hall in contract
4. Training with previous counsel (Ken Sigman) before departure.

Motion to Adopt Attorney Services – Mayor Miles

Move: Councilmember Celina Benitez

Second: Councilmember Luke Chesek

Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed

Adoption of Minutes from Previous Meetings

September 3, 2019 Legislative Meeting

September 17, 2019 Work Session

September 24, 2019 Special Session

October 1, 2019 Legislative Session

October 15, 2019 Work Session

November 5, 2019 Legislative Session

November 21, 2019 Work Session

December 3, 2019 Legislative Session

December 17, 2019 Work Session

Motion to Adopt Minutes From Previous Meetings (Any changes need to be turned in by Friday February 7, 2020 close of business) Mayor Miles

Move: Councilmember Celina Benitez, Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Second: Councilmember Luke Chesek

Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed

Council City Manager Reports

Councilmember Celina Benitez:

County Executive Alsobrooks created the Latino Advisory Board – Celina Benitez has been asked to serve on the board.

Census Count Committee will be door knocking for Census 2020. Information is forthcoming.

A Census Challenge to another City / Town will also be forthcoming

Councilmember Luke Chesek:

Community Meeting was held recently to create a Native Food Garden (Forest Garden) for 31st Street Pocket Park. One resident is a landscape architect and is giving services for free.

34th Street Streetscape will be added to the February Work Session for discussion.

Councilmember Luke Chesek also gave out his Thank You's.

Mayor Miles:

Gave a Thank You to everyone involved in the Mount Rainier Library Grand Opening. Mayor sent Thank you letters to all of the partners.

Black History Month celebrations going on in other municipalities near City.

Mayor participated in the swearing-in of Tiffany Green, first black female fire chief of Prince George's County.

Mayor Miles is working on the Bond Bill.

Motion to Adjourn Meeting: Mayor Miles

Move: Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Second: Councilmember Celina Benitez

Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed