

Official Minutes of the City of Mount Rainier

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE: May 7, 2019

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 (Vice Mayor)

Councilmember Luke Chesek

Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Councilmember Shivali Shah

Staff Present

City Manager Miranda Braatz

City Clerk John Hoatson

Minutes provided by:

City Clerk

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Reading of Agenda into Record by Councilmember Celina Benitez

Motion to Approve the Agenda: Mayor Malinda Miles

Move: Councilmember Shivali Shah

Second: Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed

Announcements

Council gave announcements. Parting remarks from Councilmember Shivali Shah at her final Council Meeting prior to retirement from Council were given. Congratulations were given to Councilmember Celina Benitez and incoming Councilmember Scott Cecil for winning the recent mid-term election. Charnette Robinson was thanked for running. MRTV Cable is still out due to lighting strike and will not be fixed this week, but there is live stream on Facebook, Instagram stories, and City's website.

Postal Service Issues

Regional Postmaster Botton (SP) and Carrier Manager Hawkins were in attendance at the Council Meeting. The Postmaster said the audit of postal service to the City that was to be done in April was postponed till May due to internal staffing issues. There is high turnover in post office due to mass retiring of employees that have reached 30 year mark. They have hired 19 new staff for Hyattsville and this has helped them in providing better service including not splitting routes and keeping the same courier per route. They have 9 more staffers coming on in the next two week. He apologizes to the community for past poor service. This Postmaster joined the post office in April and he is working on fixing more problems. The Post Office will be at Mount Rainier Day to outreach to the community about problems with mail, selling stamps, processing passports, and hiring. Councilmember Shivali Shah asked if changes at the Post Office will fix issue of missed days of mail and "The Message" being put in each box at the apartments. He said yes and if there are still issues, please let him know personally. Councilmember Bryan Knedler said that most people did get the "The Message" in time. Mayor Miles gives each mail compliant to the Postmaster. Postmaster said 19 new hires are mail carriers and 28 carriers is capacity and they are now filled. Postmaster discussed the post office inform delivery app and problems with it. The app informs user that mail has hit the plant and should be there in 24 hours, but it really may not arrive until 2 days later.

ADD Postmaster Contact Info

Director of Finance Report

City's Director of Finance gave his first official report to Mayor and Council. He discussed his first budget process with City, which he described as exciting. He said the City now has six classes in the budget. FY17 and FY18 audits are being prepped and he has contract help to work on audits. City has both the old and new firm working on audits and they are working well together. He does not have end date yet, but it should be soon. He is in constant contact with the State because the City does not have extension on FY18 Audit until FY17 is done. He working with new vendor for FY20 City accounting software. Paychecks is the new e-timesheet system for the City and it will streamline HR and Finance departments across departments. The Finance Dept. currently only has him as the Dir., so he looking at expanding it as needed. He is attending GFOA and Maryland GFOA conferences for professional development.

Councilmember Luke Chesek asked when Audit for FY18 due without extension. It is Oct. 30. Director of Finance hopes FY18 and FY19 will be done by then. Are there time deliverables for audit? No, there is not because the City could not deliver the accounting needed. As of July 1, Director of Finance will make audits is high priority. Councilmember Luke Chesek asked if new software will help with audits and if vacant tax is being taxed. Dir. of Finance said yes the software will help and vacant tax has been applied. Councilmember Shivali Shah asked for time frame for financial policies and procedures. Dir of Finance replied that he hopes to have them completed by September 2019 giving him the experience working on the audits and time to fine tune policy.

Public Comment

- Jimmy Tarlau, MRBA – Happy about participation in election. Looking for judges for Mount Rainier Day. MRBA is doing micro marketing for local businesses and he gave Council a booklet that highlights local business to Mayor and Council. Car chop shop place by 37th and Eastern will be an artist space.

Resolution 6 -19 for City to Create MOU GW for work with the City – EXPLAIN WHAT THIS IS?

Rep. from GW gave a report on work GW did with Library of Congress to Mayor and Council as example of their process to Mayor and Council. Councilmember Shivali Shah said resolution will allow staff to devote City staff time to create MOU with GW. It is nonbinding resolution if the discussion for MOU does not result in agreement.

Motion to Adopt Resolution 7 -19 : Mayor Malinda Miles
Move: Councilmember Celina Benitez
Second: Councilmember Bryan Knedler
Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed

No Public Comment

FY19 Budget First Reading – I WOULD INCLUDE SUMMARY

City Manager Miranda Braatz and Director of Finance gave reading and summary of FY19 Budget.

- Tax Rate is .81 cents per \$100 for Single Family and Townhouse residential properties.
- Tax Rate is .86 cents per \$100 for multifamily residential properties.
- Tax Rate is .81 cents per \$100 for commercial and industrial properties.
- Tax Rate is \$2.50 per \$100 for vacant properties.
- Tax Rate is .99 cents per \$100 for business.
- Tax Rate is \$2.75 per \$100 for railroad and utilities.

He gave summary of budget in total and by department \$7, 300,434.

Mayor Malinda Miles despite concerns about keeping the tax at .83 cents, she is proud of the budget and how the City is allocating its funds and managing them. Budget Supplement 2 will have summary of budget changes to be presented at next budget hearing. There was a discussion of taxing utilities, but that is already happening. Description in budget line for the utilities tax should show how much revenue from railroad vs. utilities. Dir. of Finance said he will ask for that clarity from the State in FY20. Councilmember Celina Benitez asked the word Council be removed from budget line on their salary. It makes Council look like it is getting 40K raise.

First Reading Budget Amendment 3 - Transfer of Unspent Funds into Street and Sidewalks

There was a discussion of Street and Sideways 250K budget. 124K will be spent on alleyways in the City Newton, Otis, Church Lane, Perry/34th, and 35th Street are on the list. 124K will go to implementing Tool Design recommendations for ½ million worth of road work. The list of work will be sent to Council. Councilmember Luke Chesek said Director of Public Work Kamali should attend second reading. City Miranda Braatz said the work can start in two weeks. Mayor and Council wants a map of alleys and description of work to approve alley work and approve.

Ordinance 4-2019 on Vacant Property - Second Reading

Councilmember Celina Benitez gave a summary of the legislation. Councilmember Shivali Shah said the legislation gives a slight change to vacant tax ordinance to exclude those who vacated property due to death or tragedy.

Motion to Adopt Ordinance 4-2019 on Vacant Property: Mayor Malinda Miles
Move: Councilmember Shivali Shah
Second: Councilmember Celina Benitez
Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed

Vote for Mayor and Council to Go into Summer Recess in July/Aug. 2019 and return in Sept. 2019

Motion to Adopt Resolution for Mayor and Council to Go into Summer Recess July/August 2019 and Return in Sept. 2019: Mayor Malinda Miles
Move: Councilmember Celina Benitez
Second: Councilmember Luke Chesek
Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed

Adding Teacher Appreciation Fund of \$1000 for Thomas Stone and Mount Rainier Elementary

The \$1000 will come out of left over revenue in Mayor and Council budget and new budget line will fund this item in future budgets.

Motion to allocate Teacher Appreciation Fund of \$1000 for Thomas Stone and Mount Rainier Elementary: Mayor Malinda Miles
Move: Councilmember Bryan Knedler
Second: Councilmember Shivali Shah
Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed

Ordinance 5-2019 Small Sales Legislation Update – First Reading

City Manager Miranda Braatz read the update. **ADD HER SUMMARY** There was discussion on urgency of passing this rule.

Motion to Suspend Rules to Vote on Amendments to Ordinance 5-2019: Mayor Malinda Miles

Move: Councilmember Celina Benitez

Second: Councilmember Shivali Shah

Vote Recorded: 3-1-0, Motion Passed

Motion to Approve Ordinance 5-2019 Amendments: Mayor Malinda Miles

Move: Councilmember Celina Benitez

Second: Councilmember Shivali Shah

Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed

Motion to Approve Ordinance 5-2019: Mayor Malinda Miles

Move: Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Councilmember Celina Benitez

Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed

Mayor Malinda Miles wants a discussion of poles at next Work Session.

Amend Resolution 7-19 for Rotation for Mayor and Council

Council asked Mayor to add dates for Vice Mayor. Councilmember Celina Benitez will no longer be Vice-Mayor after swearing-in and then Councilmember Bryan Knedler becomes Vice-Mayor. The dates and holder of office for Vice-Mayor May 13, 2019 to May 4, 2020 (Councilmember Bryan Knedler); May 5, 2020 to May 9, 2021 (Councilmember Bryan Knedler); and May 10, 2021 to May 3, 2022 (Councilmember Scott Cecil); May 3, 2023 to May 9, 2024 (Councilmember Celina Benitez). CHECK DATES

Motion to Approve Resolution for Rotation for Mayor and Council: Mayor Malinda Miles

Move: Councilmember Bryan Knedler

Second: Councilmember Celina Benitez

Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed

Resolution 8-2019 to Create Economic Development Committee for City of Mount Rainier

Economic Development Committee will give policy recommendations on outreach and implementation on the Economic Development Fund and to conduct outreach to homebased and artistic businesses. Community Coordinator will develop procedures and coordinate the Committee. Requirements to be nominated, appointed to Committee and processes for running for Committee will be developed and reviewed by Mayor and Council. This is policy recommendation Committee on Economic Development. Mount Rainier Business Association is separate group with another mandate.

Motion to Approve Resolution 8-2019 to Create Economic Development Committee for City of Mount Rainier: Mayor Malinda Miles
Move: Councilmember Bryan Knedler
Second: Councilmember Shivali Shah
Vote Recorded: 3-1-0, Motion Passed

Councilmember Shivali Shah will amend legal language of part 6 as requested by Councilmember Luke Chesek from “binding” to “sent to vote.” This item will go to Work Session.

Public Information Requests for Mayor Malinda Miles Request for Funds for City Events via Email

City and Mayor are collecting emails and will fulfill the request by 30-day deadline.

Variance 4204 in Mount Rainier Historic District

Changes had been made to the home that were concerning to the Design Review Board. To help costs, Design Review Board worked with the architect to move garage back to make it less noticeable. Councilmember Bryan Knedler read letter to support variance with conditions to make home in line with Historic District.

Motion to Approve Variance letter 4204 in Mount Rainier Historic District: Mayor Malinda Miles
Move: Councilmember Celina Benitez
Second: Councilmember Luke Chesek
Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed

Motion to Adjourn Meeting

Motion to Adjourn Meeting: Mayor Malinda Miles
Move: Councilmember Celina Benitez
Second: Councilmember Luke Chesek
Vote Recorded: 4-0-0, Motion Passed