

CITY OF WAPATO

Regular Council Meeting
Minutes of March 17th, 2025

CALL TO ORDER:

- Mayor Margaret Estrada called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.
- A. Welcome by Mayor Margaret Estrada
 - B. Flag Salute Led by Council Member Frank Jaime

ROLL CALL:

- A. Council Members in attendance: Position one is vacant, Rita Alvarado-Absent, Frank Jaime, Ken Workman, Oscar Gonzalez, Elizabeth Villa, and Caroline Solis.
City Staff in attendance: Interm Clerk: Alondra Juarez, Public Works Director Jeff Schumacker, Fire Chief Bob Clark, And Police Chief Craig Janis.
- B. Others that were present: Mid Valley TV Sean Davido.

MEETING AGENDA:

Mayor Margaret Estrada called for the approval of the meeting agenda. Council member Frank Jaime motioned to approve the meeting agenda. Council member Ken Workman seconded; motion carried.

MEETING MINUTES:

Minutes from March 03rd, 2025, were presented for approval. Mayor Margaret Estrada called to approve the March 03rd, 2025 meeting minutes. Council member Caroline Solis made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Council member Ken Workman seconded; motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Mayor Margaret Estrada called for the approval of the consent agenda, approval of claims and payroll vouchers. Council member Frank Jaime made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Council member Caroline Solis seconded. Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING:

- A. Community Development Block Grant for French & Kateri Lanes.
Open up the public hearing at 7:04pm Nancy from Grey's Osborn the project has not changed. The purpose of the hearing is for the public to ask particular questions and housing needs. Your particular grant is for funding the street improvements around there which of course serve Catholic Charities properties, inspire building to continue with their plan for housing. This public hearing was advertised in your local newspaper in Spanish and English so if anyone has any questions. Other than that the record

needs to just reflect that the public has giving an opportunity to comment. Public hearing closed at 7:07pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Kiona Dick:

The Wapato Lions Club is getting ready to do the Easter Egg Hunt. Easter is April 20th we will be doing it the 19th we will be using the park, we will not be needing help from facility we are doing ribbon and throwing out the eggs. Again if you guys would like to donate candy that's always welcome. It's really fun and great turn out. It will be the April 19th at 1:00pm.

Zenaida Rosas: Giving two different updates, starting up the garden again for this year. We are planning ahead for this year since last year was our first year. We have planned days in advanced March, April and June. I will be collaborating with the people that made the community garden. I'm requesting if we could have the similar recognition as last year with more preparation because it was more like last minute. A little bit disorganize. I encourage you locals to stop by this is a space accepting of all people. Another update on behave of reservation roots, this is a group that has been reserving the kitchen space at the community center and they make food and get items that are donated by the community make it by hand in the kitchen and donate to Wapato and Toppenish homeless. They have been successful they have donated up to 900-1,000 meals since February 02nd. Flyers in Spanish and English available.

Priscilla: I been using the kitchen at the community center and I want to thank you for being able to use it. Cooking is from 6-9:00am.

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Mayor Margaret Estrada called for approval for Utility Rate Adjustments. **Jeff:** The actual are lower than the workshop not by much, currently the city is looking at a shortfall in their five year period of capital expenses water, sewer. We have a water tower that is going on 75 to 80 years old. We have ten and thousands of lines that are 1940 on the north side that have be replaced eventually. To keep the city moving ahead in the proper expenditures in the next five years it needs to be applied in advance it has to happen. It can't keep going backwards or stay flat all the time the city can't keep up with the future cost expenses. For three years I have been fighting this like bat poop and you guys have heard me at different meetings. It has gotten to a point through our rate study and what I have gone through and engineers gone through but we are seeing that the city is looking for out water to be adjusted by \$6.00 increase at an average. Industrials will be paying a lot more, our large users

will be paying a lot more. Those bases need to move but I am the advocate to make sure nobody has to pay, but we got to a point this needs to go effect as soon as possible. I can give you some examples everyone is slightly different depending on their utility bill, regarding on usage watering the garden. On the city side we have done wage freezes, layoffs of four individuals, voluntarily layoffs so they actually volunteered, we are pulling grants and doing everything we can. Everyone needs to move up or consider the \$6 increase in the utility bill otherwise we start it backwards.

Judy Owens: Does that mean 2026 rates will go up more?

Jeff: Sewer and garbage no, water may have to go up another \$4.00 I cannot answer that for you.

Judy Owens: Well can Wapato bring in money to the city?

Jeff: Inviting new businesses, especially large water users. There is a plan to change those as well. Updating those there is 31 corrections to large water users. There is a resolution in front of you there council, we will be looking for a vote as soon as possible. We are thinking April 15th adjustment any longer the water starts going backwards.

Judy Owens: They don't get a 30 day notice?

Jeff: There has been public workshops for this already.

This has been thought out, fought and argued. It came to the last straw that it needs to be done. I'm looking for council to approve a lower increase.

Ken Workman: Does businesses, residents and industries have the same base fee?

Jeff: It's very intricate, we are going to be bringing forward, and I think most of you know that my retirement date is coming close but there is the city has been giving a break to industry after they surpass so many 10 and thousands of cubic foot. That package was put together in most towns many years ago that's unacceptable practices today in my opinion also in our engineer's opinion. That should not be granted and that needs to be brought up next council and ask for that be reversed at least by 50%.

Ken Workman: But they have the same base fee is what in saying.

Jeff: Yes.

Nancy Gray & Osborne: The goal is to change the rates for industrials.

Ken Workman: The poorest are paying the most.

Jeff: No I don't believe that. There is residents that pay \$200 and there is residents that pay \$160.00 for a utility bill so no I don't believe the poorest are paying the most.

Ken Workman: I'm not complaining about the \$9.96 it's just the way that it's applied that it doesn't seem right. It's not equal.

Jeff: It's equal for everyone for example for when we go to the gas station. All of this needs to be addressed. The resident has the right to water their lawn.

Ken Workman: I'm not fighting for it.

Council member Frank Jaime made motion to approve. Council member Caroline Solis seconded. Motion carried.

- B.** Mayor Margaret Estrada called for approval for Gray & Osborne for scope of work on parks plan. Council member Ken Workman made motion to approve. Council member Oscar Gonzalez seconded. Motion carried.
- C.** Mayor Margaret Estrada called for approval for New Fire Department Logo. Council member Caroline Solis made motion to approve. Council member Frank Jaime seconded. Motion carried.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Chief Police: Craig Janis

Overdose has a spike we are up to five. It wasn't as drastic as other places but it is going. As for police department we said goodbye to two of our officers. I have selected three new officers. There was an incident shooting this weekend, we caught them and have been arrested and working with the FBI to get those individuals charged.

Interim Clerk: Alondra Juarez

I would like to let you guys know that we had a meeting this morning with the state auditors with Juan. Went over some request and reports that were reviewed, also received an email from them giving us dates to complete the conference that will be the first week of April after that responding to findings. Looking at completing the audit for 2020-2023 by May we are hoping the first week depending on the findings.

Public Works Director: Jeff Schumacker

I just want to say that most of you know including engineers and my staff along with my colleges that I'm going to be you are still going to catch me for a couple more weeks after that I will be on my way. The city is currently advertising on a type of replacement for the job that I'm doing, and what I do. To my best ability we are where we need to be, and I'm happy to announce that.

Chief Fire: Bob Clark

Animal Control: 5 animals taken in.

Code Enforcement: Had meeting with school district regarding the upcoming constructions. New Pace High School in June and Elementary School June or July of next year.

Fire Department: 41 calls we are up 58% from last year. Spike in overdoses, yesterday we responded to a duplex fire we are fortune that no one was hurt. It is an active investigation.

Mayor Message/Council Discussion:

Will bring letters for position one next council meeting April 7th to be reviewed.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Margaret Estrada called for the adjournment of the meeting. Council member Frank Jaime made a motion to adjourn. Council member Ken Workman seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned.

Margaret Estrada, Mayor

Alondra Juarez Interim Clerk