

# CITY OF WAPATO

Regular Council Meeting  
Minutes of November 18th, 2024

## **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: Chuck Stephen, Rita Alvarado, Frank Jaime, Ken Workman, Oscar Gonzalez, Elizabeth Villa, and Caroline Solis.
- b. City Staff in attendance: Interim Clerk Alondra Juarez, Fire Chief Bob Clark, Police Chief: Craig Janis
- c. Others that were present: Mid Valley TV Sean Davido.

## **MEETING AGENDA:**

For Additions & Deletions Mayor Margaret Estrada called for it to change to new business. Mayor Margaret called to the approval of the meeting agenda. Council member Rita Alvarado motioned to approve the meeting agenda. Council member Ken Workman seconded.

## **MEETING MINUTES:**

Minutes from November 04th, 2024, were presented for approval. Mayor Margaret Estrada called to approve the November 04th, 2024 meeting minutes. Council member Rita Alvarado made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Council member Frank Jaime seconded; motion carried.

## **CONSENT AGENDA:**

Mayor Margaret Estrada called for the approval of the consent of Claims, ARPA & Payroll Vouchers. Council member Frank Jaime made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Council member Chuck Stephen seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:**

**Kiona Dick:** I just want to give a shout out to these guys here because I know it was reported on the news for the overdoses in everything going on in Wapato. The news made it sound like it was all happening at Noah's Ark and it's not it's happening in alleys and everywhere and everything. But I do know I don't know that one particular incident we had there were the gentlemen was across the street and did not make it I can see the wear and tear on you guys answering all these calls all the time and everything. I have been at the Ark I have seen a lot of things, these people are being targeted I have seen people driving up looking to hand things off to them. I have been there where some people have coming running up to the building and I am not trained in it yet but I am going to take the training were I can administer but they come up those workers are so fast at the door with narc can giving it to these people on everything . But I do see all the responses I mean I run into Bob all the time it's like we need to quit meeting like this, every time I run the corner he is already there. But we do have people in there with health issues other than that but these guys have done a really good job and everything. I assure you it is not the Ark it's a lot of other things. These guys have done good.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS:****Interim Clerk: Alondra Juarez**

I would like to mention that we are getting ready to finalize the end of the year with budgets and also finishing up the quarterlies. Getting started for the annual report that is hard a little nervous as it is my first time but I am glad I have Chad to help me if I have any questions. Also this last week I have meet with the insurance, and Jeff to update our policy. That will be discussed this coming up week.

Mayor Margaret: With the insurance we are looking for a reduction, we have not had any issues that are alarming to our insurance that we might get a reduction.

**Fire Chief: Bob Clark**

Animal control: Very busy month, Today I have taken 3 animals.

Code enforcement: I'd like to request a Short Plat hearing to divide 1 large lot into 2 smaller lots at the East End of the French Lane project. I'm requesting that this hearing be set for our next Council Meeting on Monday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. You may have noticed the demolition work has begun recently on the old Hawk Wash Car Wash as the project for the new Little Caesar's is getting underway.

Fire department: 11/1 – 11/18/24 Calls For Service: 60. 11/1 – 11/18/23 Calls for Service: 45. Increase in calls for service: 15. % of increase: 33%. 1/1 – 11/18/24: 691 calls. 1/1 – 11/18/23: 689 calls. Increase in Calls: 2. % of increase: 1%.

Ladies and gentlemen I'm sure that you will remember the staggering numbers that I reported to you on the last council meeting in regards to our current Fentanyl Crisis. I'm saddened to have to report to you that the situation has grown even direr.

As of today we have 60 calls for service this month. Of those 60 calls 35 have been for overdoses with a total of 42 patients treated....all but one of those survived. That's 58% of all of our calls were overdoses. Last Friday was especially bad with 6 overdose calls totaling 7 patients. That coupled with our overdose fatality on November 5<sup>th</sup> has made this an exceptionally hard month. We are on pace to hit 100 calls....58 overdose calls....and 70 total overdose patients this month. Those numbers are staggering.

Recently I've been working with our County Commissioners, Congressman Newhouse, and I have a meeting with Senator Dent next Tuesday in an attempt to get some help with this crisis. I have also recently identified a contact with the Yakama Nation that I'm going to meet with soon to try and bring their weekly outreach program that they do in Toppenish to us here in Wapato. Also, I'm starting to work on looking into some fund resources with the Yakima County Health District as well. All of this will take time.

That's something that we don't have a lot of.

The strain that this crisis is putting on the Emergency Medical Services of our city is unprecedented. Even during the heights of the COVID Epidemic we weren't seeing numbers like this. In the year 2020 during COVID this city had 529 calls for the year.....as of today we're at 691 and are on pace to be close to 800 calls

On November 6<sup>th</sup> Commissioner Amanda McKinney paid our city a visit. Chief Janis and I showed her around and she was appreciative of being able to see for herself 1<sup>st</sup> hand the challenges that we are facing. She's also concerned about the effects that the high volume of overdoses are having on the mental health of our first responders. Speaking first hand this is a very valid concern to myself and my team.

### **Police Chief: Craig Janis**

For the last two weeks 170 calls for service. Majority of those calls are for overdoses that everyone knows about that is no secret. I am working with some of our federal partners to address that. Hopefully we will see more of a proactive approach in I guess in the short while, I can't go into details on what is going on but it is not being taken lightly. We will continue to address it and we will continue to respond to it. Our officers understand the importance of it and it is not taken lightly. Officer Tinajero who is recently hired today was his first day at the academy. We did lose one of our officers

that resigned. Union Gap PD offered to sell us a used vehicle they say that is in good condition. If that is something we want to move forward with I can bring it to council. Officer Ramirez finished his FTO program with flying colors that is doing for us. The new PD is almost ready to be occupied by police staff and once we are in there we will start the court side in the next couple of months. Created a domestic violence program with that consist of is officers to follow up and make sure that the offender is not back in the house or an ongoing on problem. A way to make sure everyone is safe. Spoke with the school a little bit about the traffic in the morning, middle school traffic. Suggested for a reroute through skone way.

Rita Alvarado: The car you are looking into is a police car?

Craig Janis: Yes.

**Mayor Message/Council Discussion:** We will discuss and add it to new business for call for approval of earlier start time for Council Meetings to will be start time at 6:00pm. We can revote next meeting. Council member Frank Jaime made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Council member Oscar Gonzalez seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

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

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Margaret Estrada, Mayor

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Alondra Juarez Interim Clerk