MINUTES
City Council - Special Session - COPY Meeting
Thursday, July 1, 2021 VIA ZOOM 12:00 PM

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Mayor Teri Lenahan; Council President Russ Sheldon; Councilors: James Fage, Robert Kindel, Jr., Cameron Martinez, Trista Papen, Rickey Smith

COUNCIL ABSENT: Russ Sheldon

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Andy Varner, Police Chief James Haxton, City Recorder Lori Lesmeister

1  LOGIN INFORMATION TO ATTEND VIA ZOOM

Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85488615102?pwd=bnJJaa3plVWlqRFF3dFdXSktZcWNNnUT09
Meeting ID: 854 8861 5102
Passcode: 691847

Phone In (no internet)
253-215-8782
Meeting ID: 854 8861 5102
Passcode: 691847

2  CALL TO ORDER AT 12:03 PM

3  ROLL CALL
a) Councilor Russ Sheldon absent

4  NEW BUSINESS:
a) Prohibition of Fireworks in the North Plains City Limits

Discussion and questions on whether Council wants to adopt a ban on personal fireworks in the city limits.
Chief Haxton said that the Washington County Sheriff’s Office is relying on giving out information rather than specific guidance with regards to the topic. Enforcement is difficult. Haxton was asked about staffing for the 4th of July. He said that all three officers are scheduled to work in the morning, specifically during the parade, as well as the evening for the public fireworks display at Pumpkin Ridge Golf Course. He said that two officers will be at Pumpkin Ridge and one officer will be staying in town and that this can be adjusted as needed.
Councilor Fage asked Chief Haxton how they monitor the use of illegal fireworks. Haxton said that it is difficult, but they are able to seize fireworks, and can give out citations if needed, noting that it rarely happens.
Haxton said that the reality is that it would be impossible to monitor a ban on fireworks in town, and even with the ban there will still be those people that use fireworks anyway.

Mayor Lenahan asked what the fine if someone is given a citation. Haxton said that he believes it can be 'up to $500' but he needs to look specifically at the City Code.

Councilor Papen said that she feels the logistics of this make it hard to enforce and she feels that even if the officers are able to enforce a ban it would just be a drop in the bucket as they would not be able to cover every call received.

Councilor Martinez would like the city to get an educational message out to the public that includes telling them to call the non-emergency phone number if there is no immediate danger to people or property, to not put a ban in place but rather allow the police spend more time patrolling in town.

Councilor Papen said that in previous years it seems that calls to the police about illegal fireworks are not considered priority calls, and she is wondering if it is realistic that this year to expect a deputy to respond to a call. Chief Haxton said that if there is specific information given to the 911 Dispatch including a complete address then an officer will respond, with the emphasis being on the calls regarding illegal fireworks.

Papen then asked if we know how other surrounding cities are addressing this issue. Mayor Lenahan said that the mayor of Banks is leaving the decision up to their city fire department, and they are having a professional fireworks display at the Banks Speedway. Lenahan said that the Hillsboro Hops is having a professional display following their baseball game that night and the city of Hillsboro has put no ban on personal fireworks. The mayor of Cornelius is also leaving the decision up to their fire department. Forest Grove announced yesterday that there is a ban on personal fireworks in their city, along with the cities of Durham and Tualatin.

Councilor Papen has concerns that if we ban personal fireworks in the North Plains city limits that people will just use them outside of the city limits where there is even drier, brushy area.

Councilor Smith suggested that it might be good to give the statement that the City creates to all of the Home Owner’s Associations in town and they can email it out to all of their members to reach more residents. Mayor Lenahan noted that she spoke with Cindy Hirst with the Chamber of Commerce and she will email any statement out to all of the businesses that are Chamber members.

It was noted that Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue (TVF&R) has released a statement through social media urging people to not use fireworks of any kind this year due to the drought conditions and would like people to consider attending one of the professional fireworks shows that will be put on in our area, or watching an event on TV.

Mayor Lenahan then took a poll asking each Councilor if any of them are in favor of banning personal fireworks. It was a unanimous vote that nobody wants to ban personal fireworks. It was agreed that the city will put out a statement through the City App, the city’s webpage, social media along with posting in the two places in town that public meeting notices are posted.

5 ADJOURNMENT: 12:39 pm