

TOWN OF CUSICK, WA

SPECIAL MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

NOVEMBER 23, 2022 | 6:00PM

The Town Council of the Town of Cusick, WA held a special meeting and public hearings on Wednesday, November 23, 2022, in council chambers, at Cusick Town Hall, 111 S. 1st Ave.

All Councilmembers were present and accounted for, constituting a quorum. The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm, with Mayor Duane Schofield presiding.

Roll Call:

Present (In-Person)

Duane Schofield, Mayor
Everett Alford, Councilmember
Tina Alford, Councilmember
Afton Servas, Councilmember
Jessamyn Fitzhugh, Councilmember
Luke Servas, Clerk/Council

Patricia Foster, Member of the public
Dan Foster, Member of the public

Present (via Zoom/Phone)

Kate Hupp, WA. Dept. of Ecology
Cathi Read, WA. Dept. of Commerce

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance:

The Special Council Meeting for the Town of Cusick, WA was called to order by Mayor Schofield at 06:04 PM.

Review & Approve Meeting Minutes – 10/19/2022 & Agenda – 11/23/2022:

Jessamyn Fitzhugh motioned to approve the minutes from 10/19/2022. The motion was seconded by Everett Alford and passed unanimously.

Tina Alford made a motion to approve the agenda for 11/23/22. The motion was seconded by Everett Alford and passed unanimously.

Public Hearing - Water Rate Increase

The Public Hearing to discuss a potential water rate increase began at 6:09PM.

Patricia Foster asked why the meeting agenda was not mailed to utility customers. Everett explained the process for providing public notice of Council meetings, hearings, and agendas. Patricia asked who votes for rate increases, is it just Council or the entire Town? Council explained to her that Council votes after hearing and considering comments from the public/residents. Council then explained the need for the rate increase that is being proposed and why the PUD will most likely not be taking over the water treatment plant. If PUD were to take over the WTP they would sell the town water at wholesale rates and this would likely require that water rates be raised by at least 3x. Luke explained that he was actively looking for grants and other opportunities that would allow the Town to provide some sort of program for those on fixed income so that they can continue to afford their utility bills.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:24pm.

A vote on the proposed rate increase was called for. Jessamyn motioned to approve the rate increase as proposed, and the motion was seconded by Everett. The motion did not pass unanimously, with Tina Alford voting no.

Afton Servas said that maybe we should look at increasing the rates by smaller amounts, like 2%, every so often.

Public Hearing - Budget

The Public Hearing to discuss the budget began at 6:29pm. There were no members of the public still present, and no public comment was heard.

Mayor Schofield said that everyone wants more money and that salaries are the Town's biggest expense. Luke explained that for the FY2023 budget, with the capital expense projects, salaries would be approximately 3.5% of our overall budgeted expenses.

Jessamyn motioned to approve the budget for FY2023. Everett seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

General Business

Dog Ordinance, Licensing/Tags, Leash Law

Luke asked to table this issue until the December 6, 2022 Regular Council Meeting as he was still working on crafting the Leash Law and wanted to make sure the ordinances covered everything Council wanted to address.

Sacheen Sewer Services Contract

This item was also tabled until the December 6, 2022 meeting.

Winterizing Water Meters

Nathan (Sacheen Sewer Services) does not want to hire an employee under him as this would mean he would have significant expenses associated with L&I, insurance, etc. These costs would then be passed along to the town.

Council discussed the need to winterize the existing water meters that are currently installed at services, then in the spring the new smart water meters can be installed. For now the Town will ask Roger Brown if he could start insulating existing meters, starting with those that are most in need of insulation.

Maintenance Supervisor Position

Duane said that we should re-write the Town's current job posting for the Maintenance Supervisor position. Everett expressed, and Council agreed, that we should just put together a package that will be appealing enough to a well-qualified candidate. Luke asked if we should look in to purchasing health insurance for the right candidate. Increasing the pay rate for this position was discussed and Council was in agreement that this would likely need to happen in order to attract a candidate that is willing to do the work and is a good worker.

WWLS# 1, Water Treatment Operator

Luke shared that Nathan would be coming out on Monday (11/28/22) and that they would be working to install the new check valve. Luke also shared that he had spoken with Nathan and a level 2 WTP operator willing to work with Nathan to take on our water system as well. They spoke for over 2hrs. and the conversation was very productive. There was a question as to whether Rustin would be needed still and Tina told Luke that Rustin is the Town's cross connect operator which is different than water treatment.

Funding for Wastewater System Projects – Design/Engineering


Luke shared that he and Afton met with Kim Prisock, Greg Dobb, and Kate Hupp from Ecology and the Town can submit a request for funding for design and engineering of the lift station, collection system improvements, and groundwater monitoring projects. Ecology will fund 100% of these expenses and there are even funds leftover from the current cycle that can be applied so we can receive them that much sooner. This loan will be 50% forgivable upon completion and 50% low-interest.

SEPA Lead Agency

Luke explained the benefits to the Town becoming a SEPA lead agency and that there is no formal training. We just need to make a request. Jessamyn motioned to approve requesting to become a SEPA lead agency. Luke seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Adjourn

Luke asked Council for a motion to adjourn. Mayor Schofield said he will end the meeting and the meeting is adjourned until December 6, 2022 at 6:00PM.

Signed on this 6th day of December, 2022, by 

Duane Schofield, Mayor – Town of Cusick, WA

Attested by _____

Luke M. Servas, Clerk – Town of Cusick, WA