

**City of Lowell, Oregon
City Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 7, 2024**

The Lowell City Council held a regular meeting on May 7, 2024. The meeting location was Lowell Rural Fire Protection District Fire Station 1 at 389 N. Pioneer Street, Lowell, OR 97452. Mayor Bennett called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

City Councilors present:

Mayor Don Bennett, Gail Harris, Tim Stratis, Maureen Weathers, Jimmy Murray

City Councilors absent:

None

Staff/others present:

City Administrator Jeremy Caudle

Approval of the agenda:

No changes.

Public comments:

None.

Council comments:

None.

Presentation:

1. Changes in consumer price index and changes in Sanipac's solid waste pick-up fee schedule.

Presenter: Chris Kjar, District Manager – Sanipac

Kjar discussed the consumer price index (CPI) increase in solid waste pick-up rates. Section 7.3 of the franchise ordinance with Sanipac allows an automatic increase in rates to adjust for changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The CPI increase is 4.21%. He gave an overview of Sanipac's expense categories and trends in changes. The price increase would be as of June 1. Sanipac would publicize the increase in its communications with customers.

2. Building inspection fee schedule update.

Presenter: Brandon Zipser, Operations Manager/Chief Building Official – Northwest Code Professionals.

CA Caudle introduced the topic as follows: The last time the city adjusted building fees was in 2012. An update is needed for several reasons. The first is to maintain the solvency of the Building Fund by ensuring that fees cover the costs of inspections and plan reviews. The second is to guarantee that fees are based on a methodology that complies with state law. The third is to ensure that we have an up-to-date fee structure on which to base our upcoming e-permitting initiative.

Zipser explained the steps needed to approve a new fee schedule, including coordinating with Oregon Building Codes Division and public notice requirements.

A discussion on specific fees listed in the fee template followed:

- Grading permit fees require adoption of an appendix related to grading for local adoption. The City Council discussed the value of having grading fees due to the volume of hillside development.
- Technology fee. To pay for computers and other hardware/software for public or employee use to process permits. The percentage listed on the draft may need to be reduced to match the city's needs.
- Items on the list of mechanical permits, such as water heaters, air conditioning units, dryer exhaust replacement, and so on. Zipser stated that these items are required to be on the permit fee schedule to match state requirements. That's because permits are required for work associate with these items.
- Investigation fees.

CA Caudle discussed the next steps to approve the new building fee schedule.

Zipser stated that he would calculate permit fees for comparison to include amounts due under current structure versus amounts due under new structure.

New business:

1. Process for the 2024 City Administrator performance evaluation process. – Discussion/
Possible action
Council sponsor: Jimmy Murray

Councilor Murray introduced this item. He stated that the proposed process follows what we followed last year. The City Council indicated their support for this process.

Councilor Stratis suggested adjusting the evaluation date so that it occurs during a time of year where there's not as high a workload.

2. Motion to approve a revised "Agreement for improvements" with the Lowell School District regarding the new building construction approved under land use application #2022-05 and to authorize the City Administrator to sign. – Discussion/ Possible action

CA Caudle introduced this item as follows:

The Lowell School District has requested a change to the required public improvements as specified in their "Agreement for improvements." This is associated with the new classroom and weightroom under land use application 2022-05. The conditions of approval for this land use application require a planter strip between the curb and sidewalk along the E. Main St. frontage. The need for the change is to allow for temporary sidewalks, instead of the planter strip, to accommodate existing conditions that are likely to change in the future. City Council approval is required to revise the "Agreement for improvements." Until the city and district agree on a way to address the planter strip issue, the city cannot release the final certificate of occupancy for this project.

After discussion, the City Council requested further information on the following items:

- What are the accessibility requirements associated with the door on the northwestern corner at the front of the building?
- Is an easement or other approval from the city needed to legalize the encroachment of the building (as shows on a survey in the packet) into the public right-of-way?
- In the meantime, the city should issue an extension to the temporary certificate of occupancy.

The City Council postponed action on this item until a future meeting to receive more information related to these questions.

Other business:

1. Reminder: Budget Committee meeting on May 9 at 6:00 pm.

Mayor comments:

None.

Councilor comments:

None.

Community comments:


Bob Burr of 66 E 1st Street shared his thoughts on the underground utility discussion that occurred during new business item #2.

Adjourned at 8:55 pm.

APPROVED:


~~Don Bennett, Mayor~~
Gail Harris Council President

ATTEST:


Jeremy Caudle, City Recorder