**City of Lowell, Oregon**

**City Council**

**Regular Meeting Minutes**

**January 2, 2024**

The Lowell City Council held a regular meeting on January 2, 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 7:04 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; Public Works Director Max Baker

**Approval of the agenda:**

No changes.

**Public comments:**

Bob Burr. 566 E. 1st Street. Wished everyone a “Happy New Year.”

Hall O’Regan. 62 E. 3rd Street. Discussed concerns about lack of numbers on houses. Also discussed concerns about abandoned vehicles stored on properties.

Larry Senn. The annual summary in “The Bridge” did not discuss people who had “dangerous stuff around their house.” Said the city needed to “put the screws to those people.” Wondered what’s being done with the old City Hall to “turn it into money.” Asked why the city’s insurance company has not paid for repairs to E. 1st Street damage.

Cathy Hatch. Carol Street. Expressed concerns about a Facebook post and letter to the editor on the Highway 58 Herald that mentioned the city is suing Jerry Bjornstad. Stated that the city’s expense of legal fees on this issue is a waste of money.

**Council comments:**

Councilor Stratis agreed with O’Regan that housing numbers is an important issue.

**New business:**

1. Motion to approve a “Retention Bonus Agreement” with Max Baker in the amount of $15,000 and to authorize the City Administrator to sign.

Councilor Harris moved to approve a “Retention Bonus Agreement” with Max Baker in the amount of $15,000 and to authorize the City Administrator to sign, which Councilor Stratis seconded. APPROVED: 5 yeses, 0 noes.

1. Motion to appoint City Administrator pro tempore during City Administrator Caudle’s scheduled vacation from January 5, 2024 to January 10, 2024.

Councilor Stratis moved to appoint Mayor Bennett as City Administrator pro tempore during City Administrator Caudle’s scheduled vacation from January 5, 2024 to January 10, 2024, which Councilor Murray seconded. APPROVED: 5 yeses, 0 noes.

1. Discussion of draft letter prepared by Representative Jami Cate requesting that Governor Kotek “advocate for a modification to Judge Hernandez’s 2021 injunction.”

Councilor Stratis declared that he was recusing himself from discussing or acting on this matter based on “the advice of counsel” and due to his employment with the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Councilor Harris moved to authorize signing on to the letter and to provide the city’s logo, which Councilor Murray seconded. APPROVED: 4 yeses, 0 noes, 1 abstain (Councilor Stratis).

1. Motion to approve a “Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund Letter of Interest” and to authorize the City Administrator to sign and submit the “Letter of Interest.”

Councilor Murray moved to approve a “Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund Letter of Interest” and to authorize the City Administrator to sign and submit the “Letter of Interest,” which Councilor Weather seconded. APPROVED: 4 yeses, 0 noes.

1. Motion to approve a “’One Stop’ Financing Meetings Information Request” form and to authorize the City Administrator to sign and submit the form.

Councilor Harris moved to approve a “’One Stop’ Financing Meetings Information Request” form and to authorize the City Administrator to sign and submit the form, which Councilor Murray seconded. APPROVED: 5 yeses, 0 noes.

**Other business:**

None.

**Mayor comments:**

None.

**Councilor comments:**

Councilor Weathers mentioned she would discuss doing a fund raiser for house numbers with the school district and fire district to make this a community project.

**Community comments:**

Hall O’Regan asked about the process for council to respond to comments that citizens make during public comment.

Mayor Bennett clarified that the council listens to comments when received. If the council deems the comments worthy of further investigation, then they refer them to the City Administrator. Public comment period is not meant to be a roundtable discussion.

Larry Senn stated that he has never received a response from the city regarding his questions. Senn stated that he “considers this group a do-nothing group.”

Bob Burr suggested to Senn that he allow the city to “do their job.”

Senn stated that he did not think the city is doing their job.

Steven Carothers. 503 Carol St. Discussed concerns about vehicles parking on the street and on lawns.

Bob Burr stated that he would discuss the housing number idea with the Fire Board.

Councilor Stratis emphasized the need to be vigilant about car break-ins and keeping vehicles locked.

**Adjourned at 7:43 pm.**

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| APPROVED: |  |   |
| Don Bennett, Mayor |  |  |
| ATTEST: |  |  |
| Jeremy Caudle, City Recorder |  |  |
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