

Rockford Town Council Special Meeting
30 May 2015 1:00 PM

NOTE TO PERSONS REVIEWING THIS DOCUMENT: THIS IS NOT A VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT.

WHILE AN ATTEMPT HAS BEEN MADE TO DOCUMENT PERTINENT POINTS, THESE
MINUTES CONTAIN ONLY A SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION AND VOTING.

Mayor *pro tem* Carrie Roecks opened the special meeting to order at 1:50PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Ms. Roecks called the meeting to order.

Roll call was announced. The following Rockford City Council members were present:
Carrie Roecks, Micki Harnois, Clint Stevenson, Dave Thompson, Robert Tollefson

Ms. Roecks appointed Councilwoman Micki Harnois as clerk *pro tem*.

Ms. Roecks read the RCW pertaining to special meetings. She then stated the purpose of the special meeting: "To discuss office staffing and general operations of the Town of Rockford." Specifics of town operation would be discussed at the next Regular Meeting of the Rockford City Council.

Councilman Dave Thompson read the resignation letters from Alene Felgenhauer,

"Dear Councilpersons,

I have from the beginning made the decision that I would not allow myself to be used to satisfy anyone's personal agenda, be caught up in any drama, or be consciously misrepresented. I learned some time back that it was in my best interest to listen to the audio recording of the parts of the regular council meeting regarding anything that might have to do with my job duties as I am not asked to attend.

After listening to the May 20th regular council meeting, I was saddened and extremely frustrated by the uneducated assumptions made about how I was performing my billing duties. I feel as though it would have been appropriate to ask me to be present if my job performance was going to be examined, even more so if the examination was to be based on assumptions. I have never, at any time, been asked about providing further information regarding the accounts that were brought up by Mr. Tollefson on May 20th. I feel as though I should respond to the insinuation of the mishandling of owner/tenant accounts.

As to the late fees removed on the RAMKA account, I explained to VJ when he presented in the office that it was the owner's late fees and I would NOT remove them; Mayor Meyer was in the office and made that decision and directed me to go ahead with the adjustment. If you will notice under the adjustments section of your ordinance, the Mayor has the ability to make a decision regarding adjustments considering the circumstance

45 before it is taken up before the council, and I respect his decision even though it
46 undermined my own conclusion on the matter. I personally feel that Mr. Tollefson may
47 have some sort of personal agenda regarding the Rockford Minimart and is consciously
48 trying to micromanage the billing based on uneducated assumption.

49 Furthermore, ALL of the utility accounts are in the name of the owner and only the owners
50 have been pursued with regard to billing collections. Yes, it is true that I have spoken with
51 one tenant about providing them a copy of the bill, but I made it crystal clear that the
52 owner was responsible for all charges accrued on the account. This tenant explained to
53 me that the owner was elderly, confused and would probably not make a payment after
54 years of not having to worry about being responsible for the bill because this Town did
55 not make her responsible. I do not make judgments based on my heart as accused. I have
56 treated everyone the same. I was simply trying to avoid an unnecessary problem with a
57 potentially difficult situation collecting payments in the future by making a copy and felt
58 it was in the best interest of the town to go ahead and make a photocopy of the bill as
59 long as they were clear that it was not my responsibility to pursue them for the billings
60 and that the account always would remain in the owner's name. In regard to the RAMKA
61 account, there had not been a payment for months ever since the account was reverted
62 back to the owner. VJ was getting shut off notices at the store and RAMKA had not
63 responded to the certified disconnection letter sent by me. According to RCW 35.12.217,
64 the Town is required to provide the affected tenant the opportunity to open an account
65 in their name or pay the delinquent charges. I chose to make them a COPY of the bill and
66 allow them to pay it because that is what the law requires they were never allowed to
67 open their own account. The account has always remained in the name of the owner since
68 January and they have not responded to any attempt at collection of the bill. If the case
69 is, that I am not allowed to make any decision on any account then I just simply cannot
70 do this job. I have followed your ordinance to the very best of my ability and I believe
71 have adhered to it much more than it had been in the past.

72 I feel that there is a tremendous deficiency in communication here in most every aspect
73 with regard to how this Town is managed. I find it extremely difficult to perform my job
74 duties when the details are amateurishly micromanaged and the important things are
75 often disregarded. I have always maintained that I would have been happy to answer any
76 questions, at any time about the billing process or be present to represent myself at
77 council meetings to answer any questions if asked to do so. I feel that when these kinds
78 of things are discussed without proper investigation, in front of the public, without my
79 knowledge or response that the public will also make the assumption that they cannot
80 trust my judgment or abilities when handling their accounts. Public perception is
81 everything in this job. It has been very difficult to get the public to trust me or treat me
82 with respect regarding billing issues. I feel as though I have worked diligently and tirelessly
83 to help get this office back on track to better provide the customer with peace of mind
84 and confidence which they did not have before. It was in fact becoming, in my opinion, a
85 well oiled machine. I have over the past 8 months realized that there are some that will
86 always hinder this Town's ability to move forward and I can no longer look the other way,
87 it makes me part of it. It is with much frustration and sadness that I announce that I will
88 no longer represent the Town of Rockford as your Billing Clerk. I wish the best of luck to

89 the residents of Rockford on future endeavors as I will always hold this Town dear to my
90 heart.

91
92 Sincerely,

93
94 Alene Felgenhauer”

95
96 And Kim Freyaldenhoven,

97
98 “May 28,2015

99 Town of Rockford

100 20 W. Emma

101 Street

102 Rockford, WA

103 99030

104 RE: Notice of resignation of Clerk Treasurer

105 Council Members:

106 As of Friday, May 29, 2015, I am tendering my letter of resignation effective
107 immediately. As you already know, Alene Felgenhauer has also submitted her letter
108 of resignation for similar reasons.

109 Certain council members have made it difficult to perform our jobs and the insinuation
110 that the staff is violating ordinances is creating a hostile work environment. A certain
111 amount of "micro-management" is taking place also, which is totally inappropriate as the
112 Mayor is in charge of the Town Hall Staff.

113 I should have taken note when I received a letter from a certain council member
114 threatening lawsuit for something that I did not do and I ignored it. I thought that the
115 elected officials in this Town were supposed to protect the integrity of the Town. Also,
116 the Clerk Treasurer and Deputy Clerk have bent over backwards to do what the council
117 asks of us and lend our support to caring for the day-to-day operations of the Town of
118 Rockford.

119 We have gained the respect and support of our customers, the residents of Rockford, and
120 have enjoyed serving them in our endeavors. Steve Meyer, John Goyke and Alene
121 Felgenhauer have been a joy to work with.

122 I suggest to the residents of Rockford that you be aware of how your elected
123 officials conduct themselves as this can be very telling as to their integrity.

124 Sincerely,

125
126 Kim Freyaldenhoven”

127
128 Ms. Roecks responded with the suggestion of a study session or other public meeting to address
129 accusations made in the preceding letters of resignation. She remarked that she did not
130 understand the nature of the accusations as she had limited her communication with the
131 members of the town staff per the directives of the previous mayor. She re-emphasized her

132 desire to create as open and transparent a city legislature as possible and encouraged the Public
133 to be as involved with the Town legislative process as possible.

134
135 And Steve Meyer,

136
137 "May 28,2015

138
139 Town of Rockford
140 20 W. Emma Street
141 Rockford, WA 99030

142
143 Council Members:

144
145 I, Steven A. Meyer, am resigning my position as Mayor of Rockford. My Clerk Deputy and
146 Clerk Treasurer have already presented their letters of resignation and as such I do (sic)
147 have the time to hire, train and establish what we had here. Kim and Alene worked
148 wonderfully together and did an exemplary job in managing the accounts and doing the
149 reporting necessary for loans and grants.

150 As many of you know, my wife has been ill and requires that I be home more. In
151 considering all of this, I have made up my mind to resign as Mayor.

152
153 Regards,
154 Steven A. Mayer"

155
156 Councilman Robert Tollefson added for clarification that Mr. Mayer's letter also included a
157 letter of reference for Ms. Feyaldenhoven.

158
159 Ms. Roecks clarified her policy regarding breaks and break requests. She then addressed the
160 issue of City Hall staffing and the need for the City Hall to remain open 5 days a week, Monday
161 through Friday. Ms. Harnois stated that she had been in discussion with the Town's Risk
162 Management and insurance people, who had talked to MRSC who mentioned that there was
163 support for BIAS Software as well as possible resources to assist the Town during the transition
164 period until permanent office staff can be hired.

165
166 Ms. Roecks stated that she would be requesting permission from her employer to change her
167 work hours so that she would be available to perform essential duties in City Hall. She said that
168 she was thinking that the City might hire Temps or solicit Volunteers to staff City Hall until
169 permanent staff can be hired.

170
171 Ms. Harnois clarified that John Goyke's employment was unchanged.

172
173 Ms. Roecks stated that the duties of volunteers would be rudimentary: Answer the telephone
174 and take messages, and to receive monies and provide receipts for said monies. Cathy Creed
175 (resident) offered to volunteer some hours in this regard. She gave a brief description of her

176 qualifications. William Benson (resident) also volunteered, and gave a brief description of his
177 qualifications as well. Ms. Harnois stated that she would check into whether there was the
178 possibility of some form of compensation for volunteers working in City Hall. Alene Willmschen
179 (resident) offered volunteer hours as well. Ms. Roecks thanked everyone for their willingness to
180 volunteer.

181
182 Ms. Roecks then described the decisions that the City Council would have to discuss as far as
183 how many positions would be filled, how these positions might be advertised, and the nature of
184 the compensation and benefits for each position. There were several minutes of discussion by
185 council members and residents as concern over certain precedences set by previous
186 administrations were expressed. No definitive conclusions were reached, but there was
187 consensus that anyone employed in any position be a resident of Rockford.

188
189 Mr. Benson asked Ms. Roecks to briefly describe the process of filling the now-vacant Mayor's
190 seat for the edification of the Council and Residents. Ms. Roecks read the pertinent RCWs
191 regarding this issue. She said that the Council would take what measures were required at the
192 17 June Regular Meeting. Ms. Roecks also brought up that she was unsure whether a mayor *pro*
193 *tem* had the authority to hire, and would research that issue prior to the next Regular Meeting
194 of the City Council. Ms. Harnois read from the RCWs parts pertaining to the timeline required
195 by law to fill a vacated Mayoral seat.

196
197 Ms. Roecks then asked if the Council was in agreement to advertise an open position for the
198 Town Hall staff, and each Council Member answered in the affirmative. Cheri Taylor (resident)
199 commented that prior to filling a staff positions, that the issues and allegations presented in the
200 letters of resignation be addressed. Ms. Roecks agreed.

201
202 Ms. Harnois emphasized that, going forward, the Council was adopting a "clean slate" protocol,
203 in that all precedents would be examined, and changes in procedures and policies would be
204 considered in light of the Town's prosperity. She reiterated that it was the desire of the entire
205 Town Council NOT to dredge up the past, but to move positively into the future.

206
207 Mr. Thompson briefly described the progress of work on the Town's Personnel Policy. The
208 Council agreed to resume and expedite the revision process so that a finalized draft would be
209 available for Council approval as soon as possible prior to hiring a permanent staffer.

210
211 There was further discussion on the hours, compensation and benefits of a full time staffer. No
212 conclusions were reached.

213
214 Ivan Willmschen (resident) commented that he expected a reasonable standard of conduct
215 from anyone hired as Town Hall staff.

216
217 The possibility of reaching out to Ms. Felgenhauer to return as a part-time Billing Clerk was
218 discussed. The general consensus was that the Council would be very receptive to the idea.

Ms. Roecks moved on to the next issue, and announced that there had been nothing done towards the May utility bills. She said that the bills would be late, but that she was taking steps to get the bills processed and sent out as soon as possible. She described the issues of accessing the office workstations, and stated she was working to get the passwords to the computers so that these machines could be used.

Ms. Roecks informed the Council that Councilman Clint Stevenson was the only remaining signer on any of the Town's bank accounts. Mr. Tollefson made a motion to add Mayor pro tem Carrie Roecks as a signatory on the Town's bank accounts. Ms. Harnois seconded. Discussion included consideration of a third signatory, and it was determined that the third signatory would be filled upon hiring a permanent Town Billing Clerk.

Mr. Tollefson withdrew his original motion and then made a motion to remove Steve Mayer and Kim Freyaldenhoven from the Town of Rockford's Bank account signature cards (both Bank of Fairfield and Banner Bank) and safety deposit box, and add Carrie Roecks, as Mayor *pro tem*, to the Town of Rockford's Bank account signature cards (both Bank of Fairfield and Banner Bank) and safety deposit box. Mr. Thompson seconded. Motion was carried.

Ms. Roecks briefly addressed the need to prepare a deposit of the Town's funds into the bank, and said that she would prepare said deposit. Councilman Stevenson agreed to actually make the deposit on Monday.

Ms. Roecks addressed the issue of changing the locks of the Town Hall and other Town locks. There was consensus that the Town's buildings security must be maintained. The Council agreed that all Town locks would be changed.

Ms. Roecks advised the Council that Rockford's Annual BIAS Report had not been turned in on time. There was a question whether a fine would be involved.

Ms. Roecks stated the need to inform the Town's Health Insurance provider that Ms. Felgenhauer and Ms. Freyaldenhoven were no longer employed by the Town of Rockford as on 1 June 2015.

Ms. Harnois informed the Council that Deryk from RMSA would be at the 3 June 2015 meeting to answer what question were in his field of expertise. She also said that he advised anyone impacted by the flooding of May 28 to submit a tort claim for review by RMSA.

Mr. Stevenson advised that, during the transition period, the City Council should meet every week. Regular Meetings will be every Wednesday at 7:00PM at City Hall until the Council determine that there is no further need for them.

Ms. Harnois recommended that the Mayor *pro tem*, and Council review all standing committees for current membership. Ms. Roecks will include this as an Action Item on the agenda for the next Regular Meeting.

264
265 Ms. Harnois also brought up the need to establish “single points of contacts” when reach out to
266 outside agencies. Ms. Roecks stated that this was an issue that would be discussed among all
267 the Council members. She also addressed the need to establish clearer lines of communication
268 regarding Town Operations and Conditions.

269
270 Ms. Roecks reiterated that Mr. Goyke was an employee in good standing, and provided him
271 with guidance as to her expectations.

272
273 Ms. Roecks then asked the residents for their patience, understanding and input during this
274 transitory time.

275
276 Mr. Stevenson addressed communication issues with the Town’s well telemetry. He said that a
277 problem existed, and that steps were being taken to address the issue.

278
279 Ms. Roecks asked the Council to call the State DOT about cleaning up the aftermath of the 28
280 May flooding on HWY 27. Mr. Thompson said that he had talked to Mr. Goyke, and between
281 them found out that an insurance adjuster would be out to document flood damage early next
282 week, and he questioned whether it would be wise to conduct clean up prior to the arrival of
283 the adjuster. The response to this was concern that there is sewage in the mud on the streets.
284 Ms. Roecks stated that the delay was unacceptable, but did appreciate that Mr. Goyke had
285 been proactive in contacting the State.

286
287 Mr. Stevenson observed that the soil that had been moved by the 28 May flood was comprised
288 of clay, and it would be detrimental were it washed down the Town sewage and storm drain
289 system.

290
291 Mr. Willmschen said that he had overheard that the possible reason that the State DOT had not
292 moved quickly to clean the Highway was because a contract had not been renewed between
293 the Town and the State. None of the Council were aware of such a situation.

294
295 Cheri Tyler (resident) asked whether there was going to be an action item regarding the
296 clearing of vegetation out of the Spring Creek waterway. Mr. Stevenson will check with the
297 State to see if clearing out the culvert that runs under HWY 27 is in their jurisdiction to clear.

298
299 Art Grewe (resident) commented that he thought that Spring Creek was a Class A Waterway,
300 and advised that there might be restrictions as to whether the Town can clear it. Ms. Roecks
301 said that she would look into whether this was an accurate statement.

302
303 Ms. Creed asked whether Mr. Freyaldenhoven would continue to mow for the Town. Ms.
304 Roecks answered that he was not, and that mowing was being accomplished by Marshall, a
305 town resident, who works nights and can perform some work during the day.

306

307 Ms. Roecks stated that while she was open and invited contributions by the Public, she advised
308 that there would be a need to brevity during Regular Meetings, and questions could be asked of
309 individual Councilmembers.

310

311 Mr. Tollefson thanked Mr. Stevenson, Ms. Harnois' husband, Bill, and other for their proactivity
312 during the 28 May flood.

313

314 Mr. Stevenson made a motion to adjourn the Special Meeting. Mr. Thompson seconded.
315 Motion was carried.

316

317 Ms. Roecks adjourned the Special Meeting at 2:36PM.

318

319

320

321

322

323

324 _____
William R. Benson, Transcriber

Carrie Roecks, Mayor Pro-Tem