

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE TRINIDAD CITY COUNCIL**  
**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2010**

**I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

- Mayor Binnie called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. Council members in attendance: Ratzlaff, Binnie, Fulkerson. **Morgan and Bhardwaj – Absent.**
- City Staff in attendance: City Manager Steve Albright, City Clerk Gabriel Adams.

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**III. ADJOURNMENT TO CLOSED SESSION**

A closed session was held prior to the meeting for the following purpose:  
Personnel issue: Section 54957(b), City Manager.

**IV. RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION**

**Mayor Binnie** announced that the City Council accepted a letter of resignation from City Manager Albright effective February 03, 2011. Albright offered to assist with the transition. **Fulkerson** praised Albright for excellent management of the City.

**V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*Motion (Fulkerson/Ratzlaff) to approve the agenda as written.*

**VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**October 13, 2010 cc2**

*Motion (Ratzlaff/Fulkerson) to approve all the minutes as amended. Passed 3-0.*

**VII. COMMISSIONERS REPORTS**

Binnie:

- **TRAILS:** The Van Wycke Trail is still temporarily closed due to bluff instability.
- **HCAOG:** TDA claims approved. Also approved appointment of 3 new members to the committee.

Bhardwaj: Absent.

Morgan: Absent.

Fulkerson: PG&E Wave Connect project has been suspended.

**VIII. STAFF REPORTS**

City Manager - Albright: Summarized staff activities report and highlighted various other accomplishments. Also noted the following updates:

- Consulted with property owners along the Van Wycke Trail and met with City Engineer to discuss drainage improvements within the City right of way.
- Saunders Park construction is underway.
- Becky Price-Hall has been hired part time in anticipation of the City's Stormwater grant award that will fund her position full time in the coming months.
- Thanked the City and Council for the opportunity to work as City Manager. Retiring for personal reasons. Dealing with government can be difficult and often frustrating. Not leaving the area, and willing to assist the new Council and consult with ongoing projects.

**IX. ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR**

*(Three (3) minute limit per Speaker unless Council approves request for extended time.)*

**Silvia DeRoy** – Trinidad Area Resident

Announced the Navy's plan to conduct warfare programs along the Northwest Coast. Board of Supervisors recently responded to this program and she believes every coastal town should echo their position against such training excersizes.

**John Spyropoulos** – Trinidad

Requested an update on sensor lights under the freeway. Albright explained that Caltrans is planning a major retrofit of the overpass and doubted that any investments will be made for lighting.

## X. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Staff Activities Report through October, 2010
2. Financial Status Reports for September, 2010
3. Proclamation 2010-07 Supporting the "Great American Smokeout"
4. Proclamation 2010-08 Supporting National Family Caregivers Month"
5. Announcement of Planning Commission Expiring Terms
6. Rancheria/City MOA Amendment

*Motion (Fulkerson/Ratzlaff) to approve the consent agenda as submitted. Passed 3-0.*

## XI. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Approval of "Guidelines" for the OWTS Ordinance Implementation

City Manager Albright explained that the proposed Guidelines were first presented to the City Council at its October 2010 meeting. Earlier this year, the Council adopted an ordinance that has created the Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) program for Trinidad. To begin implementing this program, a key remaining action by the City Council will be the adoption of "Program Guidelines" that establish the steps and processes necessary.

Three months ago, the Council amended the OWTS Ordinance to transfer the responsibility for adopting the Guidelines from the Planning Commission to the City Council. This was at the request of the Planning Commission. However, the Commission had previously worked with the City Planner in preparing and reviewing the contents of the proposed Guidelines. The only edits to the proposed Guidelines made since the October Council Meeting have been typo corrections

Council questions for City Planner Parker included:

- Fee Schedule
- Maintenance Schedule
- Scope of the program seems overwhelming. How will it work?

Parker explained that every system gets inspected, achieves a rating based on the guidelines, and the inspector performs future inspections based on the performance rating. She also explained that 20 of 200 systems in Trinidad have been inspected, the cost for an inspection is \$250 + labor (if necessary) + pumping (if necessary), and over 50% of systems in Trinidad have little or no records on file with the Health Department.

Public comment included:

**Tom Davies** – Trinidad

Seems conflicting to have a contractor performing inspections. There should be options available to the public for this service. Maybe a city employee should be trained to perform inspections?

**Adora King** – Trinidad

I took advantage of the free inspection 2 weeks ago. Steve's Septic Service performed the inspection. The owner of Steve's Septic Service is married to Wes Green. My experience was ugly. I wish I would have waited. My system was too old for filters and risers. I can't believe the City is requiring this without providing financial assistance if major problems are discovered. This could become a nightmare for the City.

**Parker** responded, stating that there are several State mandates regarding zero discharge into Trinidad Bay, and others regarding septic maintenance. We want to stay one step ahead otherwise they will step in and run the program from Sacramento. We have put in a request for additional grant funds for repairs but there are certainly no guarantees.

**John Spyropoulos** – Trinidad

Roto-Rooter inspected and pumped our system and gave a \$7000 estimate for installing a new, updated system. Wes Green came out for a second estimate and he too quoted us \$7000. We filed for a \$750 repair permit with

the County Department of Environmental Health as suggested by the City. The City awarded us \$6000 from the grant. Upon investigation by the Health Department, their design was more complicated and the estimate for the project grew to \$14,000. The City did not agree to fund the difference and we decided to deny funding.

**Richard Johnson – Trinidad**

The City should train one of it's own employees to perform inspections and resolve transparency issues. When you have an inspection, you are not required to make repairs immediately. It is a performance based program, and I certainly endorse more public outreach.

Council comments included:

**Fulkerson:** I endorse the guidelines but we should set into motion a serious public outreach campaign, develop an accurate fee schedule, and explore the possibility of training City staff for inspections. Also, further grant programs to assist in funding repairs should be explored. The fear factor must be reduced.

**Binnie:** We should schedule at least 1 additional public meeting to update residents on the program.

*Motion (Fulkerson/Ratzlaff) to endorse the guidelines, set into motion a public outreach campaign, develop an accurate fee schedule, explore the possibility of training City staff to perform inspections, develop a list of qualified inspectors, and explore further grant funding to assist residents with septic system repairs. **Passed 3-0.***

2. Report on Clean Beaches (Septic Systems Improvement) Grant

City Manager Albright presented the following information on the grant program to date:

**Prop 50 grant funds were received by the City several years ago for the following purpose:**

- Baseline and source track water quality sampling and monitoring.
- OWTS Improvements
- OWTS permit assessments
- Project demonstrations and ongoing monitoring.

**Basic Program Guidelines:**

- Property within the City's watershed
- Failed or failing systems
- Qualify and obtain repair permits
- Work completed by October 31, 2010.
- Set priorities and construction requirements

**Current statistics**

- 23 systems were replaced or repaired
- 6 within city limits / 17 in Westhaven
- Construction cost totaled \$279,186
- 4 licensed contractors performed work
- Total grant = \$470,000

*Presentation item only. The Council thanked Albright and staff for implementing the grant successfully.*

3. Annual or Bi-Annual Selection of the Mayor and Vice Mayor

City Manager Albright explained that in recent years, the City Council has been selecting its Mayor and Vice Mayor from the five City Council members every two years following a November election. This practice was put in place by Ordinance by the City Council in 1997. The Ordinance also allows for the removal of a Mayor or Vice Mayor if the majority of the Council chooses to do so.

Some cities, and also Humboldt County, have selected a process whereby the position of Mayor or Board Chairman automatically rotates amongst its members on an annual basis. This spreads the responsibility and also gives each member the opportunity to hold the position. If the Council desires to change the current process, then it would require a change to the current Ordinance.

Council comments included:

**Binnie:** We have 4-year terms and 5 members. If we rotate every year, not everyone will have a chance to become Mayor. Our system seems to work fine. Let's wait to discuss this at the next meeting when the new Council is in. **Fulkerson** and **Ratzlaff** agreed.

Public comment included:

**Tom Davies** and **Dwight Miller** both agreed that the current system doesn't seem to be broken. Why change it?

*No decision was made. Continued to the December meeting.*

4. Town Hall Maintenance Fee Discussion

City Manager Albright explained that this agenda item was requested by the City Council at the October meeting. It was placed on the agenda because the Council members were concerned that there is no plan to make ongoing maintenance/improvements to the rented facility. Also, there is no firm or consistently applied policy on the requirement for a deposit when Town Hall is rented either for a private or a public event.

As an option, the Council could choose to either set aside a portion of the existing fee to be transferred to a "Town Hall Improvements" account. The Council could also choose to increase the existing fee by some nominal amount (\$25) for the purpose of creating and building this account.

*Council and public agreed that this item should be continued and discussed at a future budget meeting.*

5. HWMA Membership Update Report

City Manager Albright explained that the Humboldt Waste Management Authority has recently accepted the City of Trinidad's request for membership to the board. That request needs to be ratified by the existing members as an amendment to the Joint Powers Authority agreement.

However, before the City can officially join it must satisfy some basic requirements:

1. A solid waste franchise agreement must be reached between the City and its current waste hauler, Humboldt Sanitation; and
2. That agreement must specify that all tonnage hauled out of Trinidad must go through HWMA's transfer station on Hawthorne Street in Eureka.

HWMA Staff recently sent the City Clerk samples of existing agreements that other cities have with their haulers. Before an agreement is drafted the City will meet with Humboldt Sanitation to discuss the issues that may arise.

The goal is to bring a proposed franchise agreement to the City Council for consideration in January, 2011.

*No decision made. Discussion/report only.*

**XII. COUNCIL REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

- Meeting ended at 9:35pm.

**Submitted by:**

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**Gabriel Adams**  
City Clerk

**Approved by:**

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**Stan Binnie**  
Mayor