

Siletz City Council  
Work-Session  
Wednesday, December 14, 2022, 4:30 PM  
Siletz City Hall

Present: Mayor Worman, T. Retasket, S. Trachsel

Excused: M. Cummiskey

Staff: Public Works Superintendent A. Middaugh, Public Works D. Viar, City Recorder B. Chestler

Guest: Rural Community Assistance Corporation Jason Carman, Dessa Wells, and Sabrina Strauss

### 1. Call Meeting to Order and Establish a Quorum

Mayor Worman called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM and established a quorum.

### 2. Rate Study Presentation and Discussion – RCAC- Dessa Wells and Jason Carman


Jason Carman addressed the council. He reported the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) provides training, technical and financial resources, and advocacy so rural communities can achieve their goals and visions. It was founded in 1978, and the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. He reported the city had reached out to the USDA for assistance with a water and wastewater rate study and was referred to RCAC. The relationship between the city and the RCAC was kicked off with introductions, who and what the Siletz rate study team and communications plan would be, the purpose and goals of the water rate study, and, sustainable utility management. Staff was required to complete the initial Technical, Managerial, and financial assessment.

Jason updated the council that he was on the operational side of their team, and Dessa and Sabrina were on the planning and financial side. The intent of the data gathering is to customize what works for the community. He stated that, so far, the data the city has is not great. The partnership with the tribe was discussed. The team added that part of the issue is that the analysis of the equity between customer classes does not fit into the traditional modeling rate structure. They can change the modeling to work and do what they need it to do, but going into this, it is not Atypical. Some of the inadequacies found are there are no financial statements, documentation that the city's legal obligations have been met with current loans, what the financial policies are for the city, the capitalization rate level, what the fixed and variable expenses are, what we own for assets, what our policies are for asset management, and the affordability index. Expressed were concerns regarding the affordability of services. RCAC advised the state will not allow us to be over the median household income, which for water cannot be over 2.5%, and the wastewater index is 2% of the median household income. The bigger questions become how we maintain what we do have and how do we have these conversations with the end users. We need help with outreach. Transparency and communication was suggested leading to building relationships. Council requested assistance with communications with the general public and with the tribe. Discussions included how engaged the public are with the council and if they come to meetings, being under-invested in infrastructure, how to make up for lost revenues, the useful life of infrastructure, proper planning, negative equity, and debt consolidation. The next steps were discussed. The city and the tribe will be having their first quarterly meeting at the end of January. Suggested was a mailer concept. The mayor stated he was

going to be making a newsletter message from the mayor to the community. RCAC offered help with writing the document regarding the rate study. There will be more conversations before ever coming out with new rates, it will involve community outreach and relationship-building with ratepayers. Dates of January meetings were discussed and future dates to collaborate on a working plan for the message and information to be shared with ratepayers.

### 3. Adjournment

There being no further information to share, the work session was adjourned by Mayor Worman at 7:20 PM.



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Mayor Will Worman



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City Recorder