

**TOPPENISH CITY COUNCIL**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**March 11, 2024**

Mayor Saavedra called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Attendees: Mayor Elpidia Saavedra, Mayor Pro Tem Loren Belton, and Councilmembers Naila Duval, George Garcia, Josh Garza, and Cristian Sanchez  
Staff: City Manager Debbie Zabell (CM Zabell), City Attorney Gary Cuillier, Assistant City Manager/Public Works Director Dan Ford, Chief of Police Joseph Mehline, Fire Chief Tim Smith, Budget and Finance Director Adam Vaughn, Public Works Superintendent Shaun Burgess, City Clerk Heidi Riojas (CC Riojas), and Community Television Manager Sean Davido

CC Riojas conducted roll call for each City Councilmember to respond their attendance at the meeting. Mayor Saavedra, Mayor Pro Tem Belton, and Councilmembers Duval, Garcia, Garza, and Sanchez responded their attendance during roll call.

**APPROVE AGENDA**

Mayor Pro Tem Belton moved, seconded by Councilmember Garza to postpone Item 6e to the March 25, 2024, Regular Meeting, and approve the modified March 11, 2024, Agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

**PROCLAMATION**

**Honoring Top-Hi Wildcats Boys & Girls Wrestling Teams, Team Coaches, and Volunteer Coaches for each Team Winning a 2024 State Wrestling Championship Title**

Mayor Saavedra recited a Proclamation honoring the 2024 Top-Hi Wildcats Boys & Girls Wrestling Teams, Team Coaches, and Volunteer Coaches for each team winning a 2024 State Wrestling Championship Title. In recognition for the outstanding athletic achievements, the Mayor proclaimed March 11, 2024, through March 15, 2024, as Top-Hi Wildcats Boys & Girls Wrestling Week and encouraged the Toppenish community to congratulate the young men, young women, team coaches, and volunteer coaches for their successes and bringing these honors home.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Councilmember Garza moved, seconded by Councilmember Sanchez to approve Consent Agenda items a through d:

- a. Approve Minutes of the February 26, 2024, Regular Meeting

- b. Approve Minutes of the March 4, 2024, Study Session
- c. Approve Payroll Checks Numbers 36604 through 36616 and Electronic Transfers EFTPR3130A, EFTPR3196 through EFTPR3204 in the total amount of \$207,387.63 dated March 6, 2024, and void Checks Numbers NR36551, NR36565, NR36581, and NR36595
- d. Approve Claims Checks Numbers 98547 through 98628 and Electronic Transfers EFTAP381 through EFTAP383 in the total amount of \$366,512.67 dated March 11, 2024

Motion carried unanimously.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Mayor Saavedra Read Ordinance 2024-01 into the Record: An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Toppenish, Washington, Creating a New Chapter 2.98 of the Toppenish Municipal Code to Relating to Indemnification for City Officials, City Employees and City Volunteers, Providing for Severability, and Establishing an Effective Date.**

Councilmember Duval moved, second by Mayor Pro Tem Belton to adopt Ordinance 2024-01. Motion carried unanimously.

**Resolution 2024-14: A Resolution Approving Task Order 2024-02 with HLA for the Jackson Street and Juniper Street Watermain Improvements, for the City of Toppenish.**

Mayor Pro Tem Belton moved, seconded by Councilmember Garcia to approve Resolution 2024-14. Motion carried unanimously.

**Resolution 2024-15: A Resolution Adopting the 2024 City of Toppenish Strategic Plan for the City of Toppenish, Washington.**

Mayor Pro Tem Belton moved, seconded by Councilmember Sanchez to approve Resolution 2024-15. Motion carried unanimously.

**Resolution 2024-16: A Resolution Approving the Allocation of Funds for the Replacement of the Traffic Control Signal Components and Cabinet at West First Avenue, for the City of Toppenish, Washington.**

Mayor Pro Tem Belton moved, seconded by Councilmember Garcia to approve Resolution 2024-16. Motion carried.

## **COUNCIL MEETING REPORTS/COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councilmember Garcia reported his attendance in a Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) tour and thanked staff for the informative tour.

Councilmember Sanchez reported his attendance in a WWTP tour and thanked staff for the time they took for the tour.

Councilmember Garza reported his attendance in a WWTP tour and thanked all the staff for the tour.

Mayor Pro Tem Belton had nothing to report.

Councilmember Duval reported her attendance in a WWTP tour and noted the extensive work and needed money for the WWTP improvements.

Mayor Saavedra noted that she will be attending a WWTP tour with staff in the near future.

### **CITY MANAGER REPORT**

CM had nothing to report.

### **INTERVIEW COUNCIL CANDIDATES**

Mayor Saavedra announced that the Council will interview two Candidates, Benita Polina and Ezequiel Morfin, to fill the vacancy of Position 4.

The Council queried each of the candidates on their thoughts regarding a variety of issues before going into Executive Session.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 7:59 p.m., Mayor Saavedra called for the Council to go into Executive Session for the purpose of evaluating the qualifications of the candidates for appointment to fill the City Council vacancy pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(h). The approximate time for the Executive Session is 15 minutes with anticipated action.

At 8:14 p.m., Mayor Saavedra reconvened the regular session back to order.

### **SELECT NEW COUNCILMEMBER BY MAJORITY ROLL-CALL VOTE**

Mayor Saavedra opened nominations.

Councilmember Duval nominated Candidate Morfin to fill Position 4 for the remainder of the term until a qualified person is elected. Councilmember Sanchez seconded the nomination.

Mayor Saavedra closed nominations.

Roll Call Vote: Mayor Saavedra administered a roll call vote on the nomination for Candidate Morfin:

Councilmember Garcia – Yes  
Councilmember Sanchez – Yes  
Councilmember Garza – Yes  
Councilmember Duval – Yes  
Mayor Pro Tem Belton – Yes  
Mayor Saavedra – Yes

Candidate Morfin was selected to fill vacant City Council Position 4 with six yes votes.

## **SWEARING IN OF NEWLY APPOINTED OFFICIAL**

CC Riojas administered the Oath of Office to newly appointed Ezequiel Morfin to fill Position 4 on the Toppenish City Council for the remainder of the term until a qualified person is elected at the next election.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.



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HEIDI RIOJAS, CMC, CITY CLERK



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ELPIDIA SAAVEDRA, MAYOR