

**City of Rock Creek  
City Council Meeting  
Approved Minutes  
April 9, 2026**

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**Mayor Dick Johnson, called the City Council meeting to order at 4:58 PM.**

**Members present:**

Mayor Dick Johnson, Council Members: Dan Saumer, Nancy Rys, Don Ramberg, Sam Christenson

**Members Absent:**

**Others present:**

Deputy Clerk Ashley Rauschnot, Don Burger, Chelsy Lindman, Julia Risland

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Julia Risland Update – Employee Handbook**

Julia Risland provided an update on the development of the Employee Handbook and asked questions to guide continued work. She noted that another City's handbook is significantly more detailed than what Rock Creek currently has, particularly regarding hiring practices, drug testing, and other testing requirements and internal hiring preferences. She also observed that the City Sample appears to include provisions related to union employees, which does not currently apply to Rock Creek.

**Employee Classifications & Hours**

Discussion was held regarding employee classifications, including full-time, part-time, and temporary/seasonal. Julia advised that state statutes generally define full-time employment as 30+ hours per week, with unemployment thresholds at 32+ hours. The Council discussed defining full-time as 40 hours per week. Julia cautioned that any changes to classification or hours would require notice to employees and would impact benefits such as healthcare reimbursements. Employees cannot be grandfathered into previous benefit structures.

**PTO, ESST, and Benefits**

The Council discussed transitioning to a PTO system that meets or exceeds state ESST requirements, eliminating the need for a separate ESST policy. Julia clarified:

- PTO must begin accruing immediately upon hire and cannot be delayed due to a probationary period.
- Accrual during probation with front-loading after completion is permissible.
- PTO payout upon separation is not required unless stated in an offer letter or wage notice.
- Employees returning within 180 days retain previously accrued PTO.

Council Members Dan Saumer and Sam Christenson expressed interest in implementing PTO accrual for all employees, with part-time employees capped at 80 hours unless adjusted for years of service. The Council also expressed a preference for no PTO payouts upon separation.

Julia noted that seasonal employees must be allowed to accrue PTO. Healthcare

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reimbursements and other non-PTO benefits may be delayed until after a probationary period.

**Policies, Procedures, and Administration**

Julia will include recommendations for additional policies not currently in place and will develop a standard procedure for future handbook updates. She also plans to outline chains of command for each position.

The Council directed Interim Administrator Ashley Rauschnot to draft welcome letter templates for full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees.

Discussion included implementing direct deposit for payroll and allowing overtime with supervisor approval.

**Additional Items**

Nancy Rys raised a question regarding minimum hours required to qualify as an employee (80 hours/year). Julia advised caution with this definition, and Nancy will follow up with the City Attorney.

Nancy Rys also proposed establishing a Personnel Committee consisting of the City Clerk and one to two Council Members to oversee hiring practices.

Julia noted that employees must be notified of policy changes within 90 days, and updated offer letters should be issued to reflect those changes.

**Timeline & Next Steps**

Julia's goal is to provide an editable draft of the handbook by May 1, 2026, and a final version by June 1, 2026. Ashley Rauschnot will serve as the primary contact, consulting with Dan Saumer and Sam Christenson as needed. Julia will return for further discussion at the April 23, 2026 meeting.

**Clerk/Treasurer Position Discussion**

Council members discussed the possibility of promoting Interim City Administrator Ashley Rauschnot to a combined Clerk/Treasurer position. The Council directed Rauschnot to consult with the City Attorney regarding the requirements and process for combining the positions, including a potential timeline.

A 90-day probationary period during the transition was discussed, with a plan to revisit the decision at the end of that period. Dan Saumer expressed interest in holding a closed session to outline expectations, training, and direction for the position.

**Position Structure, Hours, and Compensation**

The Council discussed whether the combined position should be full-time and how it should be compensated. A 40-hour per week schedule was considered; however, there was disagreement among Council members regarding whether the position should be salaried (exempt) or hourly, with some members preferring to retain an hourly structure.

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Sam Christenson and Nancy Rys supported making the position salaried (exempt). The inclusion of dedicated training and development hours for ongoing education and job requirements was raised by an audience member and generally supported by the Council.

Ashley Rauschnot addressed the Council and stated she believes the duties could be completed in approximately 30 hours per week. She indicated a preference for either a 30-hour schedule with increased hourly pay or a salaried position, but not a 40-hour requirement due to family obligations and her assessment of the workload.

**Additional Considerations**

Nancy Rys expressed concern about hiring externally for the position, noting it may be inappropriate for Rauschnot to train a newly hired supervisor. She also suggested the future creation of a Budget/Finance Committee.

Nancy Rys further commented on the forensic audit, stating her opinion that it could be completed internally and recommending it be postponed for the time being.

**Upcoming Discussion**

Dan Saumer noted that discussion of a retroactive pay increase for the Interim City Administrator is scheduled for the next meeting. Council members were encouraged to consider options and be prepared for that discussion.

**Don Ramberg motioned, seconded by Dan Saumer to adjourn at 6:45PM. Motion carried with all ayes.**

Ashley Rauschnot  
Deputy Clerk