

## **MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**March 6, 2021**

The minutes of the proceedings of a work session meeting of the City Council of the City of Coos Bay, Coos County, Oregon, held at 9:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 500 Central Avenue, Coos Bay, Oregon.

### **Those Attending**

Those present were Mayor Joe Benetti and Councilors Drew Farmer, Stephanie Kilmer, Phil Marler, Carmen Matthews and Rob Miles. Councilor Lucinda DiNovo attended remotely by teleconference. City staff present were City Manager Rodger Craddock, Finance Director Nichole Rutherford, Deputy Finance Director Melissa Olson, Public Works and Community Development Director Jim Hossley, Library Director Sami Pierson, Fire Chief Mark Anderson, and Deputy Police Chief Chris Chapanar.

### **Discussion of the City Council Goals**

The Mejorando Group Consultant Patrick Ibarra facilitated the discussion for the day, provided the results of the Council's individual interviews for Council goals, and defined the outcomes for the day.

Identification of the Council priorities for the next two years to make policy decisions, explore new opportunities, and allocation of scarce resources (staff time, Council time, and funds). Maintaining focus on the broader priorities would be important as there would always be more needs than capacity within the limited time permitted. The Council would provide broad oversight to the City Manager who would develop the budget and implement the Council's priorities.

### **Identify and Discuss Benefits from Good Government**

Group discussion about the benefits of Good Government, the "role of local government was to be the protagonist/advocate for a better quality of life", in the City of Coos Bay Mission statement – quality of life. Trying to accomplish: equity, trust, growth, improve quality of life, protection, safety and security, create opportunities, create a vision, economic vitality, variety of businesses, strong infrastructure, next decade decisions, sustainability, adapting, bringing outlying areas into the core, and messaging.

### **Enhancing Credibility as a Governing Body**

The group reviewed the Seven Factors which comprised a credible Governing Body: results achieved, employees, financial, services, citizens, ethics, and political. Three types of citizens: fans, fickle, and frustrated cynics and skeptics; need to enlist the fans to advocate for the community, public policy, and not allow them to become frustrated. Be more aggressive, assertive, and intentional telling the city's story online for those outside the community dictating the story. Engage the citizens to become volunteers and make sure employees know what they say and do represents the city. Discussed some strategies for creating a more collaborative effective governing body based on thought, action, behavior, and engagement for a strong shared vision.

## City Manager Update

City Manager Rodger Craddock reviewed the accomplishments for 2020 and plan for 2021: maintenance and improvements of the city's wastewater system; maintenance and repair of the city's streets, intersections, parking, and street lamp infrastructure; annual report listing street maintenance and improvement projects completed, accounting for funds used, and list the planned project for the upcoming fiscal year; evaluate traffic patterns and competing transportation uses of Front Street to develop a traffic and pedestrian safety plan; economic development complete the Jordan Cove Community Enhancement Plan and changes to the URA façade grant program; work with key partners to analyze lodging capacity in Coos Bay; focus on approaches to increase the supply of housing and decreasing the incidence and impact of homelessness; communication with citizens as a priority; city parks creation, maintenance, and safety as a priority; support continuation of the South Coast Interagency Narcotics Team through funding, assistance, and/or the assignment of personnel; public safety as a priority by promoting the opportunity for reserve police officers and volunteer fire fighters; and disaster preparedness by promoting the goal of 1,200 homes being "two weeks ready".

Mr. Craddock provided status on completed, in process, and projects not yet started from the key issues identified as priorities for 2019-2021 which were:

Goal 1: Learning and Innovation from Other Entities – Working with Key Partners: Council noted an interest in learning what has worked in other communities with the intent to follow successful plans which are in line with the focused goals of the Council. Additionally, Council believes projects approached with a sustainability aspect are important, as well as collaborating on projects with our community partners, such as the City of North Bend.

Council Schedule and Development of Staff Relationships – Working Well Together: Discussion around Council meeting schedule included possibility of having all meetings begin at 6:00 p.m., consideration of limited meetings during the summer and holiday season, as well as moving meetings into the community by having one meeting a quarter in Eastside, Empire, or Englewood. Continued discussion is necessary to determine the most effective way to conduct business in a manner which encourages and supports community involvement and input.

Additionally, Council discussed opportunities to connect with staff to provide feedback and appreciation for efforts made by staff to bring Council goals to fruition. The Council noted the goals were lofty, but attainable, and wanted to be assured staff felt they could partner with Council to accomplish the goals

Wastewater system: While the City has invested more than \$33 million in capital improvements, the overall system is aged and continued capital improvements are necessary. The following wastewater projects have been planned:

- Eastside wastewater lagoon road repair.
- Pump station #8 upgrades/replacements.
- Wastewater Treatment Plant #1 upgrades.
- Pump station #17 upgrades/replacements.
- Installation of a wastewater line under the bay to convey wastewater from Eastside.
- Review current policies related to improving and maintaining privately-owned sewer laterals.

Goal 3: Transportation system: Much as the wastewater system is challenged due to the age of the system, the City's transportation system is also in great need of repair. The infrastructure is aged and available funds for regular maintenance have continued to decrease over the years. To provide a much-needed funding source, the Council recently adopted a Transportation Utility Fee (TUF). The following street infrastructure projects have been planned:

- Development of a five-year rolling street maintenance and improvement plan.
- Production of an annual street report presented to Council and available to the public.
- Evaluation of possible LED street light upgrades.
- 4th Street capital road revitalization.
- Eastside Safe Routes to School sidewalk project.
- Development of parking lots in the Downtown District.
- Empire District road improvement projects (\$2.8 million).
- Front Street traffic and pedestrian safety plan.

Goal 4: Construction of new Library facility: The library continually experiences building degradation due to failure of foundation pilings. The circumstances of this failure will result in abandonment of the current building and construction of a new facility. The Empire District Urban Renewal Agency (URA) purchased a lot for the future site of the library. A fundraising campaign feasibility study and potential bond funding have been planned. The following is a focus of the Council:

- Consideration of co-locating community resources for unmet community needs, while potentially providing access to additional funding opportunities.
- Consideration of results from the feasibility study for development of fundraising activities and strategies.

Goal 5: Economic Development: The City continually strives to invest in the economic vitality of the community through the various partnerships within the community. Council noted support of the following options for economic development:

- Complete and encourage adoption the Jordan Cove Community Enhancement Plan, along with plan for use of development funds.
- Consider changes to URA facade program to incentivize redevelopment.
- Explore a loan program within the URA districts as an additional tool for redevelopment.
- Analyze lodging capacity, alongside community partners.

Goal 6: Housing Supply & Homelessness: The City is currently experiencing a lack of housing in general, and specifically low-income, which is a challenge to those who choose to live and work in this community. Homelessness is a significant hurdle for this community to overcome, causing impacts to health, safety, and livability for the community as a whole. Council wishes to focus on the following:

- Encourage upper floor development in the Downtown and Empire Districts.
- Be a leader in the homelessness conversation.
- Develop ways to incentivize supportive housing development, along with middle-income housing.
- Assign an officer to work as a community liaison with our partners and the homeless population.
- Evaluate potential policy approaches, with the assistance of the Homeless Work Group

- Consider the possibility of establishing a new URA District with the goal of incentivizing future housing development.
- Work on the Englewood School property in order to transfer to Oregon Coast Community Action (ORCCA) for supported multi-family housing development.

Goal 7: Communication with Citizens: Of utmost importance to the Council is regular, timely communication to the citizens of Coos Bay. In order for the community to be an active partner in the process of government, information should be shared which encourages participation. Council is interested in the following communication areas:

- Require staff to prepare news releases as part of preparation of materials to be presented to Council.
- Avoid usage of technical language in news releases and other communications.
- Research the possibility of a phone app to allow citizens to report issues and receive notifications.
- Hold one Council meeting each quarter within one of the areas of the City: Eastside, Englewood & Empire.
- Explore option to stream Council meetings via Facebook Live.

Goal 8: City Parks: Community parks provide a quality of life the City of Coos Bay values. Parks increase community vitality, provide recreational space for kids and adults alike furthering the community connection, and offer economic development benefits. Several projects have been identified by Council:

- Bridge replacement at John Topits Park.
- Reduction of brush at John Topits Park.
- Environmental analysis of Mingus Pond dredging and potential fishing enhancements for Mingus Park.
- Consider options to enhance the Preway.
- Review options for a potential park at old Wastewater Treatment Plant #2 site.
- Evaluate potential location for ball fields/facility development.

Goal 9: Public Safety: Public safety is of great importance to the City of Coos Bay. Challenges of addiction, mental illness, homelessness, and poverty are often factors of crime. Disaster preparedness is also an element of public safety the City values. Council has indicated the following aspects of interest:

- Support the continuation of South Coast Interagency Narcotics Team (SCINT).
- Develop and support a recruitment plan for volunteer fire fighters and police reserve officers.
- Promote the "Two Weeks Ready" campaign, with the goal of having 1,200 homes identified as meeting the campaign requirements.

### **Hot Topics**

Items identified by Councilors prior to the meeting were discussed.

- Periodic updates for strategic plan – keep list with status of project progress for council and staff, provide updates to community of accomplishments.
- Community:

- Housing – multiple studies done over time, review urban growth boundary, develop second stories of commercial buildings, recreate vision for downtown, cooperation of out of area owners to update buildings, organized retreat away from waterfront; be a good partner to developers, and encouragement to look at the city as a whole versus a small area.
- Homelessness – more multifaceted than originally thought; multiple smaller locations to provide services with levels of progression; the more focus put on lower-level income issues changes the feel, look, and culture of an area; more helpful for service providers to have a known location where people will be; potentially partner with Coos County to look at the Shutter Creek facility; partner with community partners to facilitate the acquisition of property to site these locations; change messaging around the issue; and establish a list of criteria for standards an agency would need to make in order to operate a certain sized shelter would need to meet a certain requirements for each type of shelter.
- Mental health services – affects people of all levels; state is not addressing and closing facilities; partner with other cities to put pressure on state level to make them accountable; hold community agencies accountable to show up at homeless sites; ensure everyone along the chain is involved; and for the city to be a facilitator not providing services directly.
- Beautification and cleanliness – would promote development; help lift an area by purchasing blighted areas; create a consistent look; and partner for incentive program.
- Environmental – parking lot bioswells; charging stations; and Styrofoam ban partnerships.
- Amenities
  - Library – focus on getting new library in the next couple years; plan if lack in funding; and promote value the library as a community resource
  - Parks – have to be most adaptable to people’s lifestyles; how relevant, modern, and accessible; concern for fit, sustainability, and up-keep; master plan for a sports complex; and intended versus actual use.
- Infrastructure – good goals already in process; deconstructing buildings versus demolition to recoup public funds; and possible fees on downtown businesses to maintain parking lots.
  - Streets/roads
  - Streetlights
  - Wastewater
- Economic Development – create a masterplan for Empire and Eastside Districts; look at annexation and urban growth boundary
  - Downtown – look, feel and composition
  - Urban renewal – adjust boundary and maximum indebtedness
- Shutter Creek – partnership to repurpose of facility
- Regionalism – strengthen the relationships and collaborate for the community.
  - Port of Coos Bay
  - City of North Bend
  - Tribes

## **Role as Community Builder**

Group discussion of the city's role as a community builder reflecting on its past role, present approach, and possible future role. Want to be more assertive with future role on core services; work on partnerships; and move faster, sooner on common goals.

## **Objectives**

Based on the "hot topics" discussion, the Council identified specific objectives, relevant to one of the nine Council Goals already in place, to pursue moving forward with the intent to create an overall list of priorities for 2021-2023: housing (finalize developments), mental health, beautification, Styrofoam ban, library, parks (future concept, master plan updated, how does a sports complex fit, funding opportunities), downtown parking lots, urban growth boundary annexations, economic development (Front Street, Empire Master Plan, Urban Renewal Agency, expanded Coos Bay Downtown Association), Shutter Creek, regionalism, infrastructure, communication to evolve with technology, phone app for community to report issues, and website cleanup.

## **Priority Setting**

Council factored in the list of goals and determined the top five objectives to work on were: housing, a new library, investigating the idea what a sports complex would look like and cost to determine how it would fit and funding; economic development of Front Street and updated Empire Master Plan; and a compilation of homelessness, mental health, beautification, and regionalism as one affects the others. Staff also provided a list of streets, parks, wastewater, and other projects with actions and funding sources for consideration.

## **Next Steps**

Patrick Ibarra would send a summary of items discussed and staff would begin working to develop plans to complete Councils goals and add current priority list to provide to Council for review if they fit in and if not to lower them on the ranking list. Plans and project schedules would be presented for review and discussion with Council at a future meeting.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Benetti adjourned the meeting. The next regular Council meeting was scheduled for March 16, 2021 in the Council Chambers at City Hall. These minutes were approved as presented by City Council on March 16, 2021.



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Joe Benetti, Mayor

*Nichole Rutherford*

Attest: 

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Nichole Rutherford, City Recorder