

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

February 19, 2002

The minutes of the proceedings of the regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Coos Bay, Coos County, Oregon, beginning with Council interviews at 6 p.m. and proceeding to the regular meeting at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 500 Central Avenue, Coos Bay, Coos County, Oregon.

Those Present

Those present were Mayor Joe Benetti and Councilors Anna Marie Larson, Jeff McKeown, Don Spangler and Judy Weeks. Councilors Cindi Miller and Kevin Stufflebean were absent. City staff present were City Manager Bill Grile, Deputy Recorder Joyce Jansen, City Attorney Randall Tosh, Community Services Director Shanda Shribbs, Finance Director Janell Howard, Fire Chief Stan Gibson, and Police Chief Chuck Knight.

Council Interviews

The City Council interviewed Mark Daily, Jon Eck, Rick Kenin, Susan Nowlin, Richard Rudder, and Tom Williscroft for consideration of appointment to the Budget Committee.

Flag Salute

Mayor Benetti opened the meeting and led the assembly in the salute to the flag.

Consent Calendar

Mayor Benetti reviewed the consent calendar which consisted of approval of a cardroom permit for Sandra Jean Awram owner of the Coney Station, approval of the January 23, 2002 minutes, and adoption of Resolution 02-06 ratifying declaration of an emergency on February 7, 2002 by the city manager. Councilor Weeks moved to approve the consent calendar as presented. Councilor Spangler seconded the motion which passed with the Mayor and all Councilors present voting aye.

Introduction of OMI Project Manager Steve Simpson by Community Services Director Shanda Shribbs

Community Services Director Shanda Shribbs introduced Steve Simpson, the new OMI project manager for the city of Coos Bay. Mr. Simpson reported he grew up in the Coquille Valley and after ten years with Roseburg Forest Products he received training in wastewater management. Before coming to Coos Bay he worked for Bandon, Sutherlin, Roseburg, Cambridge Island, Washington, and Lebanon. Mr. Simpson expressed appreciation for the opportunity to return to Coos County where both he and his wife have family, and is looking forward for working with the city. Mayor Benetti presented an appreciation plaque to Gary Young and expressed the city's appreciation for his dedication and hard work over the past several years. Ms. Shribbs presented Mr. Young with a city t-shirt and expressed staff's appreciation for his professionalism in the operation of the city's wastewater treatment facilities. Mr. Young commented the past five and a-half years have been great and the partnership between OMI and Coos Bay has been a win-win. It has been a pleasure to work with City Manager Bill Grile and the City Council, and it is an honor to receive the t-shirt and plaque.

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Department Head Report by Finance Director Janell Howard

Finance Director Janell Howard reported she has received department heads' budget requests and is in the process of preparing a draft budget for review by the city manager. She reported review of the budget requests with department heads has been scheduled for the first week of March and dates for Budget Committee meetings have been scheduled at the library for April 22, 23, 30, and May 9.

Approval of Proposal to Reorganize the Library Department

City Manager Bill Grile reported the library has had the office manager position for many years and over time the position has taken on supervisory and confidential duties. The library director is proposing reorganizing the library by creating a staff supervisor position. Mr. Grile commented the AFSCME Union representative has been notified of the reorganization and they have 14 days to bargain the impact. Library Director Carol Ventgen reported the position has developed to the point of being part of the management team and it would benefit the department to have the position as a non-represented employee. Councilor Weeks moved to approve the reorganization of the Library. Councilor Spangler seconded the motion which passed with the Mayor and all Councilors present voting aye.

Approval of the Request for Proposals for Public-Education-Government Access

City Manager Bill Grile reported the subscriptions to the education/government channel have worked well and the channel is run well, however, the revenue is not where it needs to be to support the program. Currently, the annual revenue from subscriptions is \$29,000 and the manager's contract is \$8,000 over that amount. As discussed previously with the Council, staff is proposing the Public-Education-Government channels be operated by a non-profit organization and Mr. Grile noted there is strong interest throughout the community for a public access channel. The current education/government channel would remain on channel 14 and the non-profit organization would arrange for the public channel. The city would continue to contribute the studio and certain other assets would be transferred to the non-profit. Mr. Grile explained staff is requesting the Council approve the RFP for operation of PEG Access.

Councilor Spangler expressed concern about again offering a public access channel due to the problems previously experienced by the city. Mr. Grile explained the city would not be involved in the operation of the public access channel and funding for PEG access would be through the non-profit. He explained additional funding is required to replace and add new equipment, and general fund money is currently supplementing the operation of the studio. Mr. Grile commented it is important to the community to keep the government channel viable, as well as meeting the citizen's need for a public access channel. Mayor Benetti commented control over the government channel would be part of the agreement between the city and the non-profit. Councilor Spangler stated if the city sends out the RFP the city will have to enact a tax/PEG fee to cover the operation expenses, and he does not support more taxes.

Mark Daily, Coos Bay, commented a non-profit would have access to grants and funding not available to the city, and they would also be able to actively seek funds for both the public and government channels. Another benefit would be the ability to share equipment between both channels and there are number of volunteers willing to support the PEG channels. Mr. Daily commented there are a lot of good programs in the community available for public access and the channel can also be used to promote the Bay Area. Mr.

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Grile noted programming such as the weekly forums presented by the Independent Business Operators provide excellent information about the area and could be shown on the public channel. Mr. Daily reported a group has been meeting for the past year and a-half and they now have their non-profit status.

Mayor Benetti commented Ashland has a successful program and it is run through a non-profit. City Attorney Randall Tosh reported the proposal is similar to programs in many Oregon communities. Councilor Weeks supported moving ahead with the RFP but expressed concern about adding another fee for citizens. There was further discussion on the purpose and use of the franchise fees collected from Charter Communications and the current practice of subsidizing the government channel with general fund revenue. Also discussed was how to handle airing tapes for the public channel and Mr. Daily commented a fee structure would be used which would provide for a larger fee for tapes from outside the area. Councilor McKeown commented the city would still have some control over the government channel and he supported putting out the RFP.

Julia Spangler, Coos Bay, requested the Council not rush into a decision and expressed concern about the lack of control over public access. She commented Eugene and Springfield have had a lot of problems with their public access channel and she expressed concern about increasing the franchise fee. Mr. Grile explained there would not be an increase in the franchise fee, although Council may wish to consider a PEG access fee in the future. Mayor Benetti noted there is a need for replacing equipment and covering operation costs, and he would like to see a partnership with a non-profit to operate the PEG channels. Councilor Weeks moved to approve the RFP and direct staff to proceed with the process. Councilor McKeown seconded the motion which passed with the Mayor and all Councilors present voting aye.

Appointments to the Budget Committee

Appointments to the Budget Committee were made by ballot and Jon Eck and Richard Rudder were appointed to three-year terms and Rick Kinen was appointed to fulfill the unexpired term.

Public Comments

Geno landrum, Coos County, asked for an update on the pedway project. Mayor Benetti reported the project has been postponed for a number of reasons and basically due to non-cooperation from the building owner.

City Attorney's Report

City Attorney Randall Tosh reported the notice of intent to appeal the Council's decision not to vacate a portion of Myrtle Avenue and North 7th Street had been received from the Confederated Tribes. The appeal will be made the Land Use Board of Appeals.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Bill Grile requested Chief Knight report on an incident dealing with the South County 9-1-1 Center. Mr. Grile noted the center was down ten hours and this is a serious problem. He further commented locating one center at Bay Area Hospital would be in the best interest for the county.

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Chief Knight reported 9-1-1 service to South County was disrupted last Thursday night at midnight due to equipment failure in the center and all calls were rerouted to the North County 9-1-1 Center in Coos Bay. He commented the time period was mid-week during quiet hours so there were only 21 calls. Chief Knight reported since the North County 9-1-1 Center was activated in 1985 Coos Bay has not lost service once and there is a backup plan in the event of equipment failure. Coos Bay has done preplanning for emergencies which includes an emergency kit in the center in the event they must evacuate to another location.

Chief Knight explained the Legislature passed a law requiring development of one 9-1-1 center per county, although a process is in place to apply for more than one center. Currently North Bend routes their calls through South County. Chief Knight commented the Bay Area is the population center for the county and Verizon's equipment hub is located in Coos Bay. He will continue to work with Coos County and will also continue to work to justify locating a center in the Bay Area. Mr. Grile noted the state must approve the plan for a new center, and at one time the hospital had offered space for the center.

Mayor and Council Comments

Councilor Larson expressed condolences to Councilor Stufflebean and his family for the recent loss of his mother. She requested a banner be placed at the Sportsman Plaza announcing plaza coming soon, public parking next right. Councilor Larson commented on a discussion she had with employees at Rite Aid regarding their dissatisfaction with the Anderson Alternative. They were under the impression two-way traffic would continue to 4th Street. Mayor Benetti commented it was explained at the meeting that the two-way would not go all the way to 4th Street and the Council had received letters supporting the alternative from downtown businesses and property owners, otherwise the change would not have been made. Mr. Gile commented Rite Aid Manager Diane Wallace had stated she would not attend the council meeting because she does not like public speaking and lives outside of town.

Councilor Spangler suggested staff poll downtown businesses after an appropriate amount of time to determine how well the alternative is working. Mayor Benetti commented he has talked to businesses in the area and they are happy with the change in the traffic pattern. Councilor McKeown stated he is part of the downtown businesses and he likes the Anderson Alternative. He further noted change takes some time to adapt to and he has received positive comments on the alternative.

Councilor McKeown commended city crews, and police and fire officers for their professional response to the February 7th storm.

Councilor Weeks also expressed condolences to Councilor Stufflebean and his family for the loss of his mother, and thanked the citizens who applied for positions on the Budget Committee. Councilor Spangler joined in expressing condolences to the Stufflebean family and noted Joanne Stufflebean was an outstanding person who will be missed by the community.

Mayor Benetti expressed sympathy to Councilor Stufflebean and his family from the City Council and city staff. He noted services for Mrs. Stufflebean will be held Wednesday at 2 p.m. Mayor Benetti reported the Council will meet on March 9th to review and update the Council's goals, a town hall meeting regarding pedestrian safety will be held at Sunset Middle School on March 14th, and he has been invited to read at Blossom Gulch School as part of a birthday celebration for Dr. Seuss.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Benetti adjourned the meeting to March 5, 2002 at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

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Joe Benetti, Mayor

ATTEST:

Joyce Jansen, Deputy Recorder