

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

March 19, 2002

The minutes of the proceedings of a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Coos Bay, Coos County, Oregon, held at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall, located at 500 Central Avenue, Coos Bay, Oregon.

Those Attending

Those present were Mayor Joe Benetti and Councilors Anna Marie Larson, Jeff McKeown, Cindi Miller, Don Spangler, Kevin Stufflebean, and Judy Weeks. 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, Library Director Carol Ventgen and Police Chief Chuck Knight.

Flag Salute

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

Department Head Report by Library Director Carol Ventgen

Library Director Carol Ventgen reported upgrading the library's computer system is moving along and will include new software. The Author's Night series is going well, storytellers for the children's program will be held April 6th, and computer classes will start in April. The library had 16,000 visitors in February.

Annual Report from the Coos Art Museum

Coos Art Museum Director Reed Lockhart reported it has been a successful year for the museum and the board expressed their appreciation to the City Council for their continued support of the museum. The museum board has accomplished their five-year plan and the new plan identifies areas of themes and interest to guide the board in sustaining the museum and promoting the arts through exhibits and programs. Mr. Reed reviewed the museum's funding sources and programs.

Approval of Renewal of the Contract with Wall and Wall for City Audit Services

Councilor Stufflebean suggested staff go out for quotes for audit services. City Manager Bill Grile reported Wall and Wall have been the city's auditor since 1998 and prior to that time, Yergen and Meyer was the city's auditor for many years. Through the efforts of Finance Director Janell Howard, \$10,000 has been saved on the annual audit. Ms. Howard commented there is a learning curve in performing a municipal audit and three years ago when staff did an RFQ for audit services, Wall and Wall was significantly lower than other firms in the area. Councilor Stufflebean moved to award the contract to Wall and Wall for one year. Councilor Miller seconded the motion which passed with Mayor Benetti and Councilors Larson, McKeown, Miller, Spangler and Stufflebean voting aye; Councilor Weeks voting no.

General Discussion Regarding Fiscal Year 02/03

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Budget Forecasts

City Manager Bill Grile presented a power point report which reviewed the city's revenues and expenses, and estimated carryover for next fiscal year. Department heads have been instructed to cut back on spending and closely review budgets for further cuts. Mr. Grile reviewed the loss of 911 funding for North County 911 and the effect this will have on the Coos Bay Police Department. There was further discussion on possible location of a central 911 center, the number of dispatchers and 911 dispatchers needed, how emergency calls placed on cell phones are routed, and the possibility of adopting a telecommunications business license ordinance. City Attorney Randall Tosh reported the telecommunications business license ordinance is currently before the court for review.

Mr. Grile reviewed the Public Employees Collective Bargaining Act, the city charter requirement for police and fire officers, and the amount of employee salaries and benefits. The budget was closely reviewed by the management team for areas to cut and it is the consensus of the team to propose 12 positions be cut in the current fiscal year. Finance Director Janell Howard reported after the layoffs there would be 98 employees; 40 covered by the charter and 12 in the Library Fund, and basically there are 28 employees the council has fiscal control over. The Council discussed use of gas tax funds, maintenance requirements of the 23 lanes miles from the ODOT jurisdictional exchange, use of funds from the interest from the jurisdictional exchange fund, pursuing shared services agreements, and Oregon's taxing system.

Melanie Johnston, Coos Bay citizen and city employee, stated \$1.3 million is not accounted for and questioned whether there has been a mishandling of funds. She suggested an independent audit be performed and the Council look at cutting management positions. Randy Miles, Coos Bay resident and city employee, stated there is no need for an assistant city manager, the Finance Department does not need two supervisors, the city attorney costs are too high, Community Services has more supervisors than employees, and the Police Department is very efficient and only has four supervisors for 38 people. He commented the Fire Department does not need five chiefs and could save money by not filling the Battalion Chief positions, and overtime is necessary because the department is short handed. Bob Miles, Coos Bay resident, suggested the city sell some of their property. Mr. Grile noted urban renewal properties cannot be sold to offset city budget deficits. Neil Benarczyk, AFSCME representative, inquired why the Council negotiated a 5% increase for AFSCME employees if they knew there would not be funding to support the raises. Mayor Benetti reported the Council felt AFSCME should be treated equally with the police and fire unions. Mr. Benarczyk requested the Council consider postponing the layoffs until he could meet with city administration.

Ms. Howard reported there was \$1.7 million on June 30, 2001 and the projected ending fund balance is \$730,000. She further stated there is no missing money and in order to balance the budget, employees will be laid off just to get to a zero carryover. Mayor Benetti commented the audit is done by an independent accounting firm and is a public document. Mayor Benetti commented the Council and staff need to work together for a solution, it is not the desire of anyone to see jobs go and even with cost saving measures, the city needs to find other revenue sources. It is possible the Council may need to look at a public safety levy or bond levy. Councilor Spangler suggested cutting expenses by not having the city attorney attend all the Council meetings. Councilor McKeown commented Janell Howard is an unbelievable asset and she has saved money through her expertise, and the Fire Department reorganization is to make the department more efficient. Councilor Weeks recommended cutting management salaries and management positions.

Public Comments

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Flora Lee Lockhart, Coos Bay, expressed problems with skateboarders and asked that more signs be put up in the downtown area. She stated the Anderson Avenue change is not liked by the businesses and it has adversely affected her income. Mayor Benetti noted a number of businesses supported the change. Councilor Spangler moved to waive the ten o'clock rule. Mayor Benetti seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Vernon Brown, Coos Bay, asked if anything could be done about the cable increases by Charter Communications. Mayor Benetti commented they are a private business and the Council cannot control the rates. Sargent Webster, North Bend, agreed the Council should cut management positions and management salaries.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Bill Grile commented the city has a lot of great employees, staff would like to have a work session with the Council to discuss the business license ordinance, and he exhibited a signed poster of the USS Carl Vincent which was the first responder for Operation Enduring Freedom.

Council Comments

Councilor Weeks commented it was nice to have Councilor Miller back. Councilor Spangler reported Mrs. Elsburg complimented Mike Martin for handling a situation in her neighborhood. Councilor Miller stated she is pleased to be back and thanked everyone for their cards and flowers. Councilor Larson also welcomed Councilor Miller back. Councilor Stufflebean commented by working together, the city will get through the budget process. Councilor McKeown also welcomed Councilor Miller back and commented the budget process will be difficult this year. Mayor Benetti welcomed Councilor Miller back, reported the USS Dolphin will be in port July 16th, and the Spring banners are up and they look very nice. He further commented the city has excellent employees and the Council does not want to lay off anyone as all employees are an important part of the City.

Executive Session

Councilor Stufflebean moved to go into an executive session pursuant to ORS 192.660 (1) (h) for the purpose of discussing current litigation with legal counsel. Councilor Miller seconded the motion which passed with a unanimous vote. The Council reconvened into regular session.

Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Benetti adjourned the meeting to April 2, 2002 in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

Joe Benetti, Mayor

ATTEST:

Joyce Jansen, Deputy Recorder