

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

September 3, 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, 500 Central Avenue, Coos Bay, Oregon.

Those Attending

Those present were Mayor Joe Benetti and Councilors Jon Eck, Roger Gould, Anna Marie Larson, Jeff McKeown, and Kevin Stufflebean. Councilor Cindi Miller was absent. City staff present were City Manager Bill Grile, Deputy Recorder Joyce Jansen, City Attorney Nathan McClintock, Community Services Director Shanda Shribbs, Battalion Chief Mark Anderson, Police Chief Chuck Knight, and Finance Director Janell Howard.

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 adoption of Resolution 02-26 calling for local public contractors to have a drug testing policy in place for their employees and subcontractors, adoption of Resolution 02-27 authorizing interfund borrowing and loans during FY 02/03, approval of an intergovernmental agreement to provide judicial services for Myrtle Point, and approval of the minutes of the July 2, and 16, 2002 meetings. Councilor Stufflebean moved to approve the consent calendar as presented. Councilor Eck seconded the motion which passed with the Mayor and all Councilors present voting aye.

Department Head Report by Community Services Director Shanda Shribbs

Community Services Director Shanda Shribbs reported a brochure of services available in the downtown area has been developed for distribution to users of the city dock facility. The brochure was developed with the help of a student from SWOCC. There was a brief discussion on the user-friendliness of the dock and Ms. Shribbs noted the city's facility is not a marina, and in boating circles is known as a transient dock. Ms. Shribbs reported on the various community events taking place to commemorate September 11th. The Cities of Coos Bay and North Bend have arranged a memorial for Wednesday evening in Mingus Park beginning at 7 p.m. and professional lighting and sound equipment will be provided by Music on the Bay. Ms. Shribbs reported the speed trailer purchased last May has been used in a number of locations throughout the city and has been successful in reminding drivers to slow down. The trailer is set up for four days at a time and then brought in to download computer information.

The Historic Design Review Committee has been successful in coming up with cost effective ways for property owners to meet the design standards. The Empire bumpouts have continued to take substantial damage from vehicles running into them. When possible, the driver's insurance pays for the repairs and the city also applies to district court for victim's assistance repayment. Repairs to the latest damage is expected to be completed in the next few weeks.

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Appointment of a Council Member to Serve on a Citizens Advisory Committee for the Transportation System Plan

Mayor Benetti explained staff is requesting a representative from the Council to serve on the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Transportation System Plan. Councilor Eck volunteered to serve and consensus of the Council was to appoint Councilor Eck to the committee.

Appointment of a City Representative to the Fiber South Consortium

Mayor Benetti reported the city is currently without a representative on the Fiber South Consortium due to Councilor Spangler's resignation. Tim Enright is knowledgeable in fiber technology and the School Board is supportive of Mr. Enright's appointment to Fiber South Consortium. City Manager Bill Grile noted the partnership between the city and the school district is proceeding very well. Consensus of the Council was to appoint Tim Enright as the city's representative.

Consideration of an Ordinance Vacating a Portion of Brule Street Located North of Lindberg Avenue

Planning Administrator Laura Barron reviewed the location of the proposed street vacation and reported the city initiated the vacation of a portion of Brule Street prior to rezoning property in this area. A letter from Kevin Davis was submitted to the city stating he would be willing to absorb the property and an easement for the sewer line crossing Brule would be provided to adjacent property owners.

Councilor Stufflebean voted to enact the ordinance vacating a portion of Brule Street and Councilor McKeown seconded the motion. Deputy Recorder read the ordinance by title only and polled the Council with the following results.

Aye: Mayor Benetti and Councilors Eck, Gould, Larson, McKeown and Stufflebean
No: None
Absent: Councilor Miller

Consideration of a Request to Adjust the Hours City Hall Administrative Offices are Open to the Public

City Manager Bill Grile reported last week Governor Kitzhaber issued a press release of the state's ongoing budgetary problems, and the League of Oregon Cities issued a press release three weeks ago regarding the problems cities throughout the state are having. Coos Bay also has financial challenges and staff has worked to find creative ways to try to respond to those without asking for additional taxes. Several constructive meetings have been held with department heads, Mayor Benetti, and Councilors McKeown and Eck. Mr. Grile explained the city is operating out of balance with the revenues coming in, and the budget was balanced by drawing down on the carryover, but at some point the city must consider increasing fees or asking the voters for an operating levy. Staff will continue to look for ways to minimize the affect of the strain they are experiencing and at this time staff is requesting authorization to not open to the public for two hours a day. The additional time would give staff an uninterrupted period of time to work and would better enable them to continue giving excellent public service for the time people are at city hall.

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Councilor McKeown commented the city needs to do something to help the remaining employees accomplish their workload. Councilor Gould reported the courts have already adjusted their hours as well as some other state offices. Mr. Grile noted there are fewer phone calls and customers between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. than at other times; however, those who would be most affected by the closure would be building contractors. The building inspector carries a cell phone and will be available to the contractors. Councilor Eck stated he works with Community Services staff through his business and is sympathetic to what staff is experiencing. Councilor Larson agreed with closing city hall two hours a day due to the less staff to do the work. Councilor Stufflebean objected to the closure stating that city hall is for the community and needs to be open when needed.

Community Services Director Shanda Shribbs commented the city has hired people who are very customer oriented. There has been a 25 percent reduction in staff, but the level of demands has not decreased. If staff made themselves unavailable to customers under the current hours, it would require customers to come back two or three times when they could have gotten the service they needed in one trip. The two-hour block seemed to be the best solution for allowing staff to catch up on the paperwork. She noted that a number of things simply are not getting done.

Deputy Recorder Joyce Jansen commented although staff would rather not close city hall, with the cutting of 12 positions, there are not enough staff to get the work done. She reported a number of options were considered by department heads and the two hour block in the morning seemed to be the one that would impact the public the least. Ms. Jansen commented it is important to give consideration to the remaining staff for their workload and ability to continue to complete required tasks. She also expressed concern that employees working under great stress will experience burnout and health problems. Mr. Grile reported he has already requested that Ms. Jansen discontinue working 60 hours a week.

Councilor Gould commented the city has fewer people and the natural consequence is that city hall will be open fewer hours; people will get used to it. Mayor Benetti commented the city could begin with the two-hour a day schedule and make adjustments in the hours if it is needed. He noted there will be more cuts down the road. Councilor Stufflebean restated his disagreement with closing city hall and in his job with the state, they have reduced staff but have not reduced his office hours.

Mayor Benetti commented the public has not seen a lack of services, despite the cut in positions and loss of funding. Councilor McKeown commented that many staff are working 60 hours a week as the city manager mentioned, and they should be compensated for their work, but the city cannot afford to do so. It was the consensus of the Council to authorize closing city hall from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. Monday through Friday.

Adoption of Criteria for the Evaluation of the City Manager **– Public Input is Required Prior to Council Adoption**

Mayor Benetti explained the purpose of adopting the criteria for the evaluation of the city manager and the requirement for public input. Council had reviewed the criteria a few weeks ago for changes. Mayor Benetti asked for public input on the criteria and no comments were given. Councilor McKeown suggested it would be appropriate to utilize the employee survey in conjunction with the evaluation. Consensus of the Council was to approve the criteria as presented.

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Report on the 911 Center Issue

Police Chief Chuck Knight reported his department had been working with Sheriff Andy Jackson and it seemed that they had agreed on an emergency center plan for submission to Emergency Management in Salem. At the eleventh hour, Coos County withdrew their support for the agreement. Chief Knight commented a joint plan of north and south county would save considerable money for all taxpayers and would be more efficient. Mayor Benetti inquired if the plan had been approved by the North County agency and Chief Knight reported a meeting had been held on August 27th and the agreement was approved and signed. He further explained House Bill 3977 mandates a joint plan be submitted by August 30th and all 36 counties' plans will be presented to the 2003 Legislature. Chief Knight noted that Sgt. Kevin Hedgepeth had spent many hours developing the plan and coordinating the many changes requested by south county.

Councilor Gould commented emergency services is important for all county residents and asked what the real problem is. Chief Knight responded that in south county, they support one another and in north county they do not. Councilor McKeown commented the 911 center issue has been very frustrating for a long time. Mayor Benetti inquired if the sheriff had approached Coos Bay regarding a joint plan and Chief Knight responded in the affirmative. He further reported north county agreed to house the center in Coquille until a new board could conduct a study and make a recommendation for a location. Councilor Gould asked why the location of the center is a political issue and Chief Knight responded it is the control of the governing body. He explained that in a joint 911 center, the users would have input into the operation of the center; however, in a contract center, the users would not have a say in how the center is operated. Councilor Gould commented the issue is whether the county commissioners are in control or a user board is contracted.

Mr. Grile commented the hospital had offered space in the new earthquake proof building if everyone in the county agreed to one location for the 911 center and there is a real savings of several hundred thousand dollars if the county has one 911 center. The telephone switching station is located on 4th Street in Coos Bay and being on this side of the system is a benefit. He further reported that last year there was a period of several hours when south county did not have phone service and Coos Bay handled all the calls. Chief Knight stated his department isn't going to give up because one center is the best idea. Councilor McKeown commended Chief Knight and Sgt. Hedgepeth for their efforts to make this happen.

Public Comments

Officer Cal Mitts, representing the Coos Bay Police Officers' Association, read a letter to the Council requesting a short term levy for public safety be placed on the ballot. The association is willing to work with the Council in support of the public safety levy. Mayor Benetti asked if he represented the Firefighters Association as well and Officer Mitts replied the firefighters have similar concerns. Mayor Benetti noted that when a levy was suggested before, neither police nor fire came forward with support. Officer Mitts stated at that time they couldn't show that there was a need for the levy. Councilor McKeown inquired if he had communicated with the Firefighters Association and Officer Mitts responded that no official comments have been made. There was further discussion on the budget process, concern was expressed by the police association as to whether the budget was balanced, explanation of revenues and expenditures, and funding for the charter amendment. Mr. Grile suggested he and the finance director meet with the association members to go over revenue and expenditure information. Mayor Benetti commented the Council would also be willing to attend the meeting.

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City Attorney's Report

City Attorney Nate McClintock reported he has communicated with the attorney for the owner of the McAuley hospital building and anticipates they will need to file an action to get the people out of the building. It will be approximately 30 to 60 days before people are totally out the facility and the building is secured.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Bill Grile reported the agreement with Eric Hovee has been signed for the preparation of the consolidated city budget. The scope has been revised and will also include a written opinion on the budget that was turned in as well as on the hypothetical budget Mr. Hovee will be preparing. Mayor Benetti noted the League of Oregon Cities had backed down so they could remain neutral and the city is using the firm that the League would have used. Mr. Grile reported one possible revenue for the city would be to use city properties for advertising and he would like to look into this idea. Consensus of the Council to proceed.

Council Comments

Councilor Larson reported receiving a number of complaints about the state parks signs and a complaint that the Chamber would only hand out old maps. Mayor Benetti commented volunteers help out at the chamber office and perhaps there was a misunderstanding. Councilor Stufflebean reported the Blackberry Arts Festival was a success, volunteers will be installing new playground equipment at Blossom Gulch School, and he will be out of town next Tuesday through Friday. Councilor McKeown commended staff's work on South 10th and 11th Streets, SCDC met last week and there is a potential new business for the Bay Area, and SCDC provides county-wide representation. Councilor Eck invited everyone to attend the September 11th memorial in Mingus Park.

Councilor Gould reported the Charter Commission process is going very well and it is definite that the four members are not directed by the two councils. He and Jerry Lesan share a common approach to the development of the new charter in that it will be a simple charter which will allow the new council and citizens to expand the document as they desire. He further commented there has been discussion on whether to include a public safety charter amendment and although he is a strong supporter of our police and fire officers, he is not recommending the amendment be included in the new charter. Mayor Benetti expressed concern that the water board continue operating as it does now when there is some financial gain if changes are made. Councilor Gould reported the language will allow the new council to have input on the administration of the water board. Councilor McKeown also expressed a desire that the charter be flexible enough to allow the new council to make operational changes. Councilor Gould noted the commission must approve a charter by September 24th and then file it with the two cities.

Mayor Benetti reported the Chamber IBO lunch is tomorrow and the Coos Bay Council will present the program. He reminded everyone of the Art Museum fundraiser scheduled for September 28th and the September 11th memorial in Mingus Park. Mayor Benetti requested input from the Council regarding attending the League of Oregon Cities Conference in November. The Council's meetings and travel budget was cut substantially and not all the Council will be able to attend the conference. Consensus of the Council was to have two members of the Council attend the conference.

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Mayor Benetti expressed concern about a letter from the water board regarding their meeting to look at the sewer billing issue. He noted the city pays \$51,000 to the water board to handle the billing. Mr. Grile reported the city couldn't do the billing for that amount, although it doesn't cost the water than much to do the billing and he noted the finance director will be attending the meeting. Mayor Benetti said he would also attend the meeting and would also like another member of the Council to attend.

Mayor Benetti moved to continue the meeting after the Urban Renewal Agency meeting. Councilor McKeown seconded the motion which passed with the Mayor and all Councilors present voting aye. The City Council meeting reconvened following the Urban Renewal Agency meeting.

Executive Session

Councilor Eck moved to go into an executive session pursuant to ORS 192.660 (1)(h) for the purpose of discussing potential litigation. Councilor Stufflebean seconded the motion which passed with the Mayor and all Councilors present voting aye.

The Council reconvened into regular session.

Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Benetti adjourned the meeting to September 17, 2002 in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

Joe Benetti, Mayor

ATTEST:

Joyce Jansen, Deputy Recorder