

# MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

February 4, 2003

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

## **Those Attending**

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

## **Consent Calendar**

Mayor Benetti reviewed the consent calendar which consisted of approval of the minutes of January 21, 2003. Councilor Miller 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 Police Chief Chuck Knight**

Chief Knight reported the police log was removed from the internet after the department received complaints regarding personal information being posted. The log will be reposted after staff has revised the format. Chief Knight commented on the reorganization of the department due recent layoffs. The changes include moving two officers from investigations and one school resource officer into patrol. Although this will enable the department to run efficiently, it will be a reduction in service in the area of follow up investigations. Chief Knight noted the staffing level at this time is 24% less than a year ago. By classification it is 17% less in sworn staff, 30% less in 911 dispatch, and 66% less in records staff and at this level, the city has 1.53 sworn officers per capita. Chief Knight related an incident involving Officer Rob Scoville giving aid to a driver in need and presented Officer Scoville with the Medal of Merit. Chief Knight further commented the dedication and attitude displayed by Officer Scoville is department-wide and he is proud to serve with the officers and staff of the Police Department.

## **Introduction of the President of the Volunteer Firefighters Association**

Mike White introduced himself as the newly elected president of the Coos Bay Volunteer Firefighters Association and briefly commented on his experience and years of service as a volunteer firefighter. Mr. White commented he is looking forward to serving the city and invited the council to attend the annual awards banquet on April 12<sup>th</sup>.

## **Authorization to Proceed with the Bid Process for Construction of the Newmark Widening Project**

Community Services Director Shanda Shribbs reported the review and explanation of the Newmark Widening Project had taken place during the Urban Renewal Agency meeting and the action required from the City Council is authorization for staff to proceed with the project. Councilor Gould declared a conflict of interest on this matter. Councilor Miller moved to approve the final plans and specifications subject to review by the city attorney, and authorize staff to proceed with the bid process for construction of the Newmark project. Councilor Eck seconded the motion which passed with Mayor Benetti and

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Councilors Eck, Larson, and Miller voting aye, and Councilor Gould abstaining. Councilors McKeown and Stufflebean were absent.

### **Consideration of Approval to Purchase Easement for the Newmark Widening Project by Adoption of Resolution 03-08**

Community Services Director Shanda Shribbs reported a brief discussion of the easement requirements had taken place during the Urban Renewal Agency's review of the Newmark Widening Project. Councilor Gould declared a conflict of interest. Councilor Miller moved to adopt Resolution 03-08 authorizing the City to expend funds to purchase easements and right of ways necessary for the Newmark Widening Project. Councilor Eck seconded the motion which passed with Mayor Benetti and Councilors Eck, Larson, and Miller voting aye, and Councilor Gould abstaining. Councilors McKeown and Stufflebean were absent

### **Award of Contract for Engineering Consultant of Record**

Councilor Miller moved to award the contract for Engineering Consultant of Record to HBH Consulting. Councilor Eck seconded the motion which passed with the Mayor and all Councilors present voting aye. Mayor Benetti commented that Councilor McKeown had expressed concerns about the slide on Coos River Hwy being repaired satisfactorily by ODOT and recommended sufficient funds be retained in the Jurisdictional Exchange Fund to perform additional repairs if required. Ms. Shribbs explained the engineer has determined the slide was caused by drainage and the city will be monitoring this carefully. She reported there is also a slide on Ocean Blvd that is currently being investigated.

### **Consideration of Expenditure of Budgeted Funds for Improvements to the Skateboard Park**

Community Services Director Shanda Shribbs reported \$6,000 has been budgeted as a matching grant for skateboard park improvements. Although staff is sensitive to the funding challenges facing the city, this matter is being presented to the Council because of an offer from Dale Bishop of Skatewave to partner with the city to purchase \$4,000 in components for the park. Ms. Shribbs commented there are a number of skateboarders in the community and staff's recommendation is to move forward with the project. Councilor Miller moved to approve expenditure of the funds for improvements to the skateboard park and Councilor Larson seconded the motion. Councilor Gould recommended avoiding spending the \$6,000 due to fiscal considerations. City Manager Bill Grile commented the matching grant has been carried over for several years and Mayor Benetti noted the skateboard organization has been working to raise money for some time. Councilor Larson commented kids need activities and supported making the improvements to the park. The motion failed with Mayor Benetti and Councilors Eck, Gould and Miller voting no, and Councilor Larson voting aye.

### **Public Comments**

Juliana Seldon, North Bend, as representative of the wives of Coos Bay career firefighters, read a letter to the assembly supporting the Firefighters Association's vote of no confidence in Chief Stan Gibson. The letter is attached and hereby made a part of the record. Chris Hackett, Coos Bay, reported he has been a volunteer firefighter for 19 years and read a statement supporting Chief Gibson and expressing his concerns about the department. The statement is attached and hereby made a part of the record.

Christine Farmer, Coos Bay, commented on her involvement as a volunteer with the Coos Bay Fire Department since 1997. She further commented the morale of the department is poor and that it is unjust to lose three firefighters and have a volunteer speak out against career staff. Ms. Farmer stated the community wants safety and we owe it to them to provide that safety; that is why the department has

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volunteers. Brighetta Wilson, North Bend [did not sign the register, so spelling, etc. may be incorrect], commended Councilor Gould for voting down the skateboard park funds and noted there is money in the community for this use. She suggested the funds be spent to hire police and fire officers.

Sargent Webster, North Bend, also commended the City Council for not spending money on the skateboard park and proceeded to admonish the Council for spending the City into bankruptcy. He further commented people do not like Bill Grile because he is arrogant and doesn't listen, and Councilor Larson consistently speaks out against spending Empire Urban Renewal Funds. Steve Schniederman, Coos Bay, expressed support for not expending the skateboard park matching grant funds and encouraged community organization to support the park.

### **City Attorney's Report**

City Attorney Nate McClintock reported Judge Gillespie ruled the Charter Amendment requiring certain public safety staffing levels as unconstitutional and he will discuss the litigation aspect with the Council in executive session.

### **City Manager's Report**

City Manager Bill Grile congratulated Cindi Miller on receiving the Chamber's Volunteer of the Year award. Mr. Grile commented the recent layoffs have been very difficult, but city staff have a "can do" spirit and are providing the best service possible with the resources available. The Empire Community Building has been leased to Head Start and recently they requested the city consider selling the building. Mr. Grile commented the building is an asset to the community, but not to the city and requested the Council consider the request. Consensus of the Council to proceed with an appraisal and plans for the sale. Mr. Grile asked if the Council would be interested in meeting with department heads in work sessions twice a month to discuss city issues. The meetings would be held during the noon hour at city hall on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Consensus of the Council was to proceed with the meetings.

### **Council Comments**

Councilor Larson reported the Nancy Devereau Center is open again, and commended Councilor Miller for doing a good job chairing the Urban Renewal meeting. Councilor Larson responded to Mr. Webster that it is her right to vote as she believes and there are many citizens that tell her urban renewal money is being wasted. Councilor Miller reported she will be organizing a group to raise funds for the skateboard park, the Downtown Association's bridal fair will be held on Saturday, and she encouraged everyone to watch the Focus program on Channel 14 featuring Ken Strobeck from the League of Oregon Cities as guest speaker.

Councilor Eck congratulated Councilor Miller on being awarded Volunteer of the Year recognition by the Chamber of Commerce. Councilor Gould reported he will be attending his first Water Board meeting this week and is looking forward to learning more about fiscal concerns and how the water board's budget affects taxpayers. He will report to the Council on the meetings as the Water Board does not air their meetings on Channel 14. Councilor Gould commented the community is moving away from one another and he hoped that everyone can see there is common ground and begin to come back together.

Mayor Benetti requested the Council consider using the citizen-at-large members of the Budget Committee to review the City's budget for ideas and suggestions, and recommended the sub-committee begin meeting the first of March. Consensus of the Council was to proceed with the Mayor's recommendation. Mayor Benetti thanked Councilor Gould for accepting the appointment to the Water Board and expressed the City's appreciation to Mike Helfrich for serving on the board from 1996 through 2002. He thanked Councilor Miller for taking on the Focus program and also congratulated her on the Volunteer of the Year Award.

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**Executive Session**

Councilor Miller moved to go into an executive session pursuant to ORS 192.660 (1) (h) for the purpose of discussing pending litigation. Mayor Benetti seconded the motion which passed with all Councilor members present voting aye.

The Council reconvened into regular session.

**Acceptance of the Police Officers Association's Proposed Settlement**

Councilor Gould moved to accept the settlement proposal from the Police Officers Association to not appeal Judge Gillespie's ruling on the city charter and give up the City's claim for attorney fees. Councilor Miller seconded the motion which passed with the Mayor and all Councilors present voting aye.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Benetti adjourned the meeting to February 18, 2003 in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

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Joe Benetti, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Joyce Jansen, Deputy Recorder