

**City Council
Work Session Minutes
August 26, 2023**

The Lowell City Council held a work session on August 26, 2023. The meeting location was Lowell City Hall at 70 N. Pioneer St., Lowell, OR 97452. Mayor Bennett called the work session to order at 9:11 am.

City Councilors present: Mayor Don Bennett, Gail Harris, Maureen Weathers, Jimmy Murray
City Councilor absent: Tim Stratis
Staff present: City Administrator Jeremy Caudle

CA Caudle provided an overview for the work session. This included a summary of progress so far, as well as a recommendation to focus in the next year on the basics. This includes budgeting, risk management, staff training, and infrastructure. CA Caudle recommended a conversational approach for City Council's deliberations on the items listed in the packet.

The City Council then discussed each of the items in the meeting packet in order:

Projects

Selecting an auditor. On track for approval at the September 19, 2023 City Council meeting.

Request for proposals (RFP) for water/wastewater rate study. Recommended to issue RFP in fall of 2023.

At this point in the discussion, Mayor Bennett discussed the following issues: The City Council needs to see numbers for water capacity and usage, along with projected number of new homes. This is intended to calculate how many more homes can the city accommodate. Additional questions: How soon does the city need an upgrade to the city's water plant? What is the impact of growth on water pressure throughout the city?

Councilor Weathers discussed the need to complete a housing inventory/buildable land study.

CA Caudle responded that City Engineer could prepare estimates on water capacity versus usage. CA Caudle also mentioned grant funding through the Division of Land Conservation and Development for a housing inventory/buildable land study.

The City Council decided that a 1-year timeframe to start a housing inventory/buildable study is reasonable.

Place dumpster at City Hall. The City Council stated that a City Hall dumpster should be placed at the water plant or sewer plant and not on the City Hall campus. CA Caudle stated that he would discuss options with staff.

Cybersecurity updates. City Council stated that the benefits for increasing coverage exceed the approximately \$800 increase in premiums. This project includes updating information technology policies.

Electronic document storage. This is necessary since we need to remove permanent records from the old City Hall.

Solid waste assistance program. The City Council will not pursue this project at this time.

Sale of surplus properties. The City Council will hold work sessions in January to revisit the Rolling Rock Park master plan. This includes evaluating not selling the northeastern quadrant of Rolling Rock Park, as identified in the downtown master plan and parks master plan. This also includes selling the southern lots that the city purchased and paying off the debt that the city incurred to purchase those lots. The City Council supports selling the old City Hall property.

Start procurement of PLC/SCADA system. The City Administrator will work on developing a scope of work for City Council approval.

Review existing ordinances for state law compliance. End of year timeline targeted for ordinance updates regarding camping on city property, system development charges for accessory dwelling units, long-term occupancy in recreational vehicles, and updates to building code ordinances.

At this point in the conversation, Councilor Weathers discussed adding food truck regulations to the list of ordinance updates.

Codify ordinance updates. Wait until other ordinance updates are completed and bring everything as one package to City Council to approve the quote with MuniCode to issue a new supplement.

E-permitting for building permits. Anticipated start date early January 2024.

Library donor recognition. Staff will coordinate on ordering bricks and Public Works will install. Staff should hold an end of the year fundraiser.

Wastewater master plan completion is targeted for some time in spring 2024.

Special event policy. Complete in 2024, using the model from CIS.

City parks grants for restrooms and security. Public Works will repair fixtures and keep the bathrooms open at limited hours during the workweek. Consider putting a time lock on the restrooms. If vandalism continues, then the city will consider keeping the restrooms closed until the city can install vandalism-resistant fixtures. The Council supports applying for grants for vandalism-resistant fixtures and security cameras.

Sunridge Subdivision vacant property and rail trail. Explore the possibility to transfer ownership to private individuals so that city no longer has responsibility for maintenance. In the meantime, limit maintenance to 20-foot buffer, per city's code of ordinances. Determine in lower portion of park has value for logging companies.

Paul Fisher Park shade tree program. The Parks Committee should create design guidelines for memorial plaques. Donors are responsible for purchasing their own memorial plaques in accordance with the design guidelines.

Wastewater treatment SDC update. Work on once the wastewater treatment plan is complete.

Personnel policy update. Complete in spring next year based off CIS model.

Complete caboose repairs by the end of 2024.

Policy issues

E. 1st Street repairs. The city will not complete a short-term fix at this time. Instead, continue placing gravel and dust control product on the street until the city is ready being reconstruction on the road.

City Hall open hours. The City Council discussed ways to make it easier to take minutes to avoid shortening City Hall open hours.

Pavement preservation plan. To be presented at a later City Council meeting for input and approval.

Law enforcement services levy. The City Council will not at this time refer a measure to the voters for a law enforcement services levy. The City Council may revisit this item in the future if it appears significant proportions of the public request increased police services in the city or if public safety in the city significantly declines.

Fees for services. The City Council will not implement new fees for services such as maintenance, and so on.

Urban renewal district. The Council is interested in revisiting this topic sometime in the future. Revisit in fall 2024.

Reimplementing franchise fees on city utilities. The City Council does not support reimplementing franchise fees on city utilities. For the 2024-2025 budget, make up the decrease in revenues to the General Fund through cuts, paying off debts, and other strategic decisions.

Code enforcement expectations. Priorities for enforcement are severe instances of noxious vegetation, trash issues that pose a direct risk to health, safety, and livability, and dangerous buildings.

Operational issues

Expanding Blackberry Jam Festival. Keep the festival's scope the same as this year's—one full day on Saturday, half a day on Sunday.

Parttime finance director. Determine if this is feasible during the 2024-2025 budget process.

Financial reporting. Create a financial report dashboard for inclusion in monthly meeting packets. The dashboard should call out, in narrative form, key transactions that occurred during the month. The dashboard should present summary information for each major fund.

Staff training. The City Council supports training and career development for Public Works employees. If gaps in coverage occur in other areas of city operations, consider partnering with other jurisdictions to fill those gaps.

Library programming. The Library Director will continue publishing book reviews in "The Bridge," as well as increasing opportunities for programming.

Mayor Bennett adjourned the meeting at 1:30 pm.

APPROVED:



Don Bennett, Mayor

ATTEST:



Jeremy Caudle, City Recorder