

City of Lowell, Oregon
Minutes of the City Council Regular Meeting
September 19, 2023

The Regular Session was called to order at 7:-- PM by Mayor Bennett.

Members Present: Mayor Don Bennett, Gail Harris, Maureen Weathers, Jimmy Murray, Tim Stratis

Staff Present: CA Jeremy Caudle, Public Works Director Max Baker

Approval of the agenda

Mayor Bennett amended the agenda to add "Discussion of air purifiers" under "Other business," as requested by Council Weathers.

Consent Agenda

Mayor Bennett removed the June 23, 2023 City Council meeting minutes. These were placed in the packet but not listed on the agenda, in error. City Council will approve these minutes at the next meeting.

Councilor Harris moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, second by Councilor Stratis. PASS 5:0

Public Comments

Bob Burr – 566 E. 1st St. Complemented the City Council for doing a good job.

Council Comments: None

City Administrator Report

Update on the city-wide code compliance review that CA and Public Works Director conducted.

- 16 abatement notices by first-class, certified mail to the properties that had the worst instances of noxious vegetation.
- Notice encouraged property owners to contact the city to work out a timeline for addressing their violations.
- Two property owners did, in fact, contact me, and we agreed on a timeline to address their issues.
- The owners of several other properties have since abated the noxious vegetation on their property, and they are now in compliance.
- **CA intends to revisit the list to determine which properties are still out of compliance.**
 - If the owners of those properties have not contacted the city to work out a timeline, then they will receive another letter giving them one more chance.
 - If the properties remain out of compliance after that, they will proceed to the next step in the process. That could include issuing a citation or abatement proceedings.

- **The compliance review also identified instances of trash accumulation and dangerous buildings. notices for those issues have not yet been issued. My goal is to do that by early October.**

Land use and development activities.

- September 12 approved a property-line adjustment after the required notice period. (Land use application 2023-01.) This was for a property located off Moss Street.
- August 22, participated in a pre-application meeting for a tentative partition plat proposal. This property is located off E. 6th Street.
- Staff are processing an application for a property line adjustment on North Cannon Street. (Land use application 2023-02.)
- September 7, participated in a pre-application meeting for a proposed Dollar General store and multi-family development on N. Moss Street.
- The city's contract planner and CA responded to multiple questions from the new owners of the vacant lot that we recently sold.

Bedrock fire.

- In mid-August, there was concern about the Bedrock Fire, as it had not yet been contained and was continuing to spread.
- During this time, CA contacted Lane Council of Government and another small Lane County city to ask if we could use their facilities to store city files in case of evacuation. Both organizations said that they would be willing to assist us.
- Also, during this time, a storage unit was rented in Springfield. CA relocated some of the city's permanent files, located in the archives at the old City Hall, to this storage unit. With the intention of moving all the permanent files to this storage unit until we develop a long-term solution to our storage needs.
- Staff also discussed the steps we would take to safeguard city files, and to ensure continuity of operations, in case of a city-wide evacuation order. We all agreed on the need to ensure wildfire preparedness at the start of each wildfire season.

Other items.

- The week-long leadership program with the Chinook Program, which was to start in early August. was cancelled this year due to lack of registrations.
- Submitted the complete budget document to the Lane County Clerk. State law specified a September 30 deadline to turn this in. State law defines the "budget document" as the budget message, detail sheets, resolutions, and public notices.
- September 15 received confirmation from Business Oregon regarding our \$306,420 grant for the water treatment plant upgrades. Next week, the CA and Public Works Director will meet with our integrator of record to discuss the next steps in the project.
- Next week, the City Attorney and CA are meeting to discuss updates to city ordinances to comply with changes in state law. That includes compliance with a new state law that requires cities to have designated camping areas.
- Also, next week, CA will meet with our IT consultant to discuss policies to improve our cybersecurity.

- City Councilors will now be required to attend at least one ethics training session during their term of office. The training will be through the Oregon Government Ethics Commission. This law goes into effect on January 1, 2024. When the Ethics Commission provides more information on the mandatory training, information will be forwarded to the City Council for your awareness.

Public Works Report:

Streets and Parks

- The new fixtures have been ordered for the Parks Restrooms. Once installed we will begin opening and closing restrooms daily Monday through Friday.

Water Treatment Plant/Distribution

- There continues to be an algae bloom on Dexter Reservoir. To date, all algae samples collected have been non-detects for cyanotoxins.
- The CA and I have a meeting with TAG, our new integrator of record, on September 25th, to discuss the PLC replacement project and the scope of services now that we have funding to complete the full CIP identified in our Water Master Plan .

Wastewater Treatment/Collections

- Staff members and Civil West had a Kick-Off meeting with DEQ on September 13th to discuss the Wastewater Facilities Plan that is in progress and possible changes to the NPDES permit.

Other

- The garbage and recycle dumpsters for City Hall/ Library have been moved to the Wastewater Plant. Sanipac increased the size to 3 yd dumpsters and eliminated the 1 yd dumpsters we had. After this Month there will longer be a charge for garbage and recycle for Public Works or City Hall/Library.
- On October 2nd staff will meet with USDA for a safety and security inspection at the Water and Sewer Treatment Facilities. This is a requirement every three years for our improvement loans with USDA.
- The city has closed their LUAs (Land Use Agreements) for Water and Graywater Disposal for the Bedrock fire.

Library Report

- **Statistics as of September 1, 2023:** Total Items in the catalog: 6040 - Total Library cards: 267 -Total Check outs: 1053 - Facebook posts: 23 - Program attendance: 174.
- **Statistics for July 2023:** Material added: 244 - Patrons added: 18 - Total checkouts: 305 - Visits to the library: 210.
- Summer reading continued to be our primary focus. Although we signed up close to 50 participants only 16 returned reading logs. Next summer we will do a better job of tracking sign-ups as well as we did with returned logs.
- The book sale was an overwhelming success. We collected over \$750.00. The books remained on display for the first two weeks in August. Many people browsed and bought during that time.

- The grant application for Summer Reading 2024 from the State was submitted. We will receive \$1,000 to build on this year's activities.
- The \$40,000 which we received from grant funding for collection development has been spent.
 - The last shelf ready books have been received.
 - Final reports for the grants have been submitted.
- Attended the first day of teacher back to school workshop at the Lowell School District at the invitation of Superintendent Scot Yacovich. Brought sample bibliographies of works in our collection that support the k-12 curriculum.
- Began the process of completely overhauling the volunteer manual. The document goes into depth on the various tasks that the volunteers are asked to perform.
- The first draft of the 2024 calendar has been completed.
- *Grant program in October for scanning*

Next steps

- Apply for Oregon Heritage Foundation Matching grant.
- Set up an evening event with a speaker.
- Print and market calendar.
- Set up and publicize Freedom to Read Week in conjunction with libraries across the country
 - Facebook Snapshot for August 2023 - Post reach 1,262 Comments - 50 Post engagement 440 - Shares 2 - New Page likes 33 - Photo views 19 - New Page Followers 37 - Link clicks 7 - Reactions 103

Police Report: July and August report provided in packet.

Old Business:

New Business:

- Review proposals for professional auditing services and vote to approve a contract with one of the firms that submitted.
 - CA Caudle's staff report reviewed the following:
 - The procurement process involved in selecting audit firms, including emailing firms on the State Audit Division's municipal audit roster, advertising on the city website and Daily Journal of Commerce.
 - Reviewing the 5 proposals received, including reference checks and interviews.
 - Scoring each proposer. The final scoring, as detailed in the packet, was Umpqua Valley Financial, 92; Accuity, 90; Hanford and Associates, 79; Sensiba, 66; KDP CPAs, 63.
 - Councilor Weathers made the following motion: "I move to approve and authorize the City Administrator to sign a personal services contract for auditing services with Umpqua Valley Financial for an initial term of 5 years for the amounts listed in Umpqua Valley Financial's fee proposal, contingent on the completion of the 'notice of intent to award' and bid protest periods." Second by Councilor Harris. PASS 5:0.

- Motion to approve Resolution 813, “A resolution adopting priorities for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.”
 - CA Caudle’s staff report: The memo attached to the resolution summarizes City Council’s consensus on the policy, operational, and policy from the August 26, 2023 work session.
 - Councilor Harris moved to approve Resolution 813. Seconded by Councilor Weathers. PASS 5:0.

- Motion to approve job descriptions for the Utility Worker 1 and Utility Worker 2 positions.
 - CA Caudle’s staff report: This item follows up from the 2023-2024 budget message, which outlined a career path for the Public Works employees.
 - Councilor Stratis moved to approve job descriptions for the Utility Worker 1 and Utility Worker 2 positions with the following amendments:
 - For Utility Worker 2 qualifications, under wastewater specialization, change duplicate listed of wastewater treatment level 1 to wastewater collections treatment 1, as soon as training and experience requires.
 - Correct scrivener’s errors identified by Councilor Weathers and provided to CA Caudle.
 - Seconded by Councilor Murray. PASS 5:0.

- Review U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) “Distressed Area Recompete Pilot Program” information provided by Lane County Community and Economic Development.”
 - CA Caudle’s staff report: Lane County Community and Economic Development is trying to organize a coalition of small Lane County cities to identify workforce development projects.
 - The City Council took no action on this item.

Other Business:

- Councilor Weathers stated that the McKenzie Long-Term Recovery Group contacted her about air purifiers. They shared 20 of these air purifiers with the city. The City Council discussed strategies on how to ensure that people who need the purifiers can receive them. Councilor Weathers will coordinate with CA Caudle on distributing the air purifiers.
- Councilor Harris discussed the need to start planning for the “Tree Lighting” event.

Mayor Comments: None

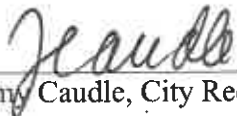
Councilor Comments: None

Community Comments: Bob Burr discussed the change in meeting time for the Fire District’s board.

Adjourn: 8:08 PM

Approved: 
Don Bennett, Mayor

10-17-23
Date

Attest: 
Jeremy Caudle, City Recorder

10/18/23
Date