



SCAPPOOSE *Oregon*

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2023
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
REGULAR MEETING 7:00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
33568 EAST COLUMBIA AVENUE
SCAPPOOSE, OREGON 97056**

Disclaimer: These minutes are intended to summarize the conversations that took place in this meeting rather than provide a full transcript. Anyone wishing to view the full conversation can find a recording of this meeting on YouTube at:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJM6Zmhgflg&t=703s

Call to Order

Mayor Backus called the October 16, 2023 City Council meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Joseph A. Backus	Mayor	Alexandra Rains	City Manager
Megan Greisen	Council President	Isaac Butman	Assistant to City Manager
Kim Holmes	Councilor	Susan M. Reeves	City Recorder
Andrew Lafrenz	Councilor		
Marisa Jacobs	Councilor		

Excused: Councilor Tyler Miller and Councilor Jeannet Santiago

Remote: Michael Durant; Phil; Joel Haugen (left at 7:12pm); and Legal Counsel Ashley Driscoll (joined at 7:43pm).

Approval of the Agenda

Council President Greisen moved, and Councilor Jacobs seconded the motion to approve the agenda. Motion passed (5-0). Mayor Backus, aye; Council President Greisen, aye; Councilor Holmes, aye; Councilor Lafrenz, aye; and Councilor Jacobs, aye.

Public Comments

Paul Fidrych, Scappoose, explained he is here this evening to discuss community festivals, focusing specifically on the Adventure Fest. He was on the core planning team for the Centennial event and the last three years he has been the race director for the Run with Neil, so he has a pretty good perspective on the events. He explained firstly the essence of community festivals is to bring the community together and planning, participating, and attending these events. He stated secondly the event serves as a catalyst for sustained growth and enthusiasm for our town. He stated the Centennial celebration exemplified this spirit by uniting our community. He explained the event was embraced by nearly everyone with a dedicated core team of volunteers spearheaded by Susie Wilson, Janet Williams, and Mike Sykes, and they brought invaluable insights with their involvement from previous festivals. He explained during the planning of that event we had an all-volunteer team and a few months before the event itself Treadway Events was brought in by City staff which was not really what was asked for by the group. That brought about some communication issues and some conflicts because volunteers had a way to do it versus how Treadway wanted to do it. He stated despite that though the Centennial was a great success and primarily due to the support of the sponsors, volunteers, and the community at large, but he wanted to give some background. He stated after the Centennial the volunteer committee, which was about thirty people, proposed a scaled down annual event without the involvement of Treadway, something smaller, easier to handle. However, that path was not chosen, and Treadway was once again brought in, and the volunteers were asked to not participate. He stated this decision resulted in the 2022 Adventure Fest, a lackluster experience that failed to capture the essence of our town. He stated this event, despite substantial financial investment nearing six figures suffered from poor attendance and a lack of community spirit and engagement, as President Greisen said this last meeting. He stated the name and logos that had citizens questioning what it was, had mountain bikers and kayaks on it, made little sense. He stated afterward the September date was attributed to the poor turnout. The 2023 event was moved to August with an expenditure over \$90,000 the outcome remaining disappointing. He explained there are two reasons that an organization is going to sponsor an event; one is a cause like the Centennial and two is brand return, which this event did not have and that is why there were no sponsors. He stated it is clear that this approach is not yielding desired outcomes and at close to \$100,000 the process has not been fiscally responsible. He gave examples of other events in other towns. He explained the Garlic Festival costs North Plains \$5,000 versus \$90,000. He explained the Vernonia Salmonfest's annual budget is \$3,000 and it has great success. He stated neither of these events use event coordinators and these examples highlight the need for fiscal responsibility, in fact that we're going about it the wrong way. Further, he concurs with Councilor Holmes observation regarding frustrations with vendors and prospective vendors with Treadway Events. He worked with them for three years on Run with Neil, and while they are nice people, their communication gaps have poised significant obstacles. He explained many times they tried to communicate on issues such as wrong race times on the website, safety concerns with vendor move in, and never once did they get back to them. He stated some of these mistakes lingered ongoing for years and the same mistakes kept repeating. He

stated operationally there were many holes in the event itself that had our staff trying to assure safety of our runners. He explained they tried in vain to get a meeting with them to address these issues. Finally getting one scheduled after months of trying only for them to not show up without warning, they never even showed up. He explained to sum up working with them as super frustrating. He urges the City Council to hit pause and seek input from experienced citizens that have run successful events in the past, and also JJ McKay for amazing work on Movies in the Park, their invaluable insights will help create a sustainable event that we would be proud of going forward. He thanked Council.

Council thanked Paul.

Phil Lager, Scappoose, thanked Council for the opportunity to address the Council this evening. He explained he is here as a community member, parent and an advocate for kids and our community as a whole. He stated tonight he is giving public comment on an important choice for the members of the greater Scappoose community. He is here to encourage Scappoose voters to approve Measure 5-296. He stated this investment is generational in both its reach and its scope. He explained by this he means that Scappoose is at a crossroads as it relates to deferred investment in our facilities and infrastructure. Town continues to grow and as such the development of modern schools, accessible community centers, and public spaces to learn and recreate are desperately needed. He stated let there be no mistake this is an investment. He knows of no other opportunity when a community the size of ours can directly see the benefit from their tax dollars at work. He explained their last bond was passed in 2008 and they built a modern grade school, and auditorium, a gymnasium at Grant Watts, and classroom additions to other buildings. He explained before that the bond that built their current high school was the last major bond passed in this community and that was more than 40 years without any capital improvements to our school campuses. He stated there will truly never be a good time to spend hard earned taxpayer dollars and he argues with data and confidence that these needs will only continue to grow, and the cost will continue to rise. Lastly, there is a call by some in our community to go back to the drawing board, find a cheaper option. It is his personal belief that this is a stalling tactic by the opposition. He stated if there was a viable cheaper option, the past two years of work that has been done by the community committees facility assessment grants and our district, would have pursued these. He explained the work is imminent and the time is now. He appreciates Council's support with the resolution and bringing forward the MOUR that further moves our community in a positive direction for all who enjoy what this community has brought to them and their families. He thanked Council.

Councilor thanked Phil.

Dan Naegeli, Scappoose, explained he is bringing this to your attention, and he just noticed as he came over here that the callbox is not functional and there's a tag out. He stated the way that he was treated was dismal. He explained he came into the office, the Scappoose Police

Department, last Monday to file a complaint, immediately dismissed and was told there's a callbox outside. Totally unaware that her own equipment wasn't functional. He pushed the button several times, attempting to get a response, nothing. He stepped into the operations office and address staff there, completely dismissed, in fact that is not our problem. He stated that's fine, he wants to know whose problem it is. He sees that there is a tag, you guys did take care of it in the sense of saying hey it doesn't work but where is the accountability. In addition to that where is the sensitivity. Somebody comes in to file a complaint. He explained he has been sitting here for six months not saying a damn word and that is the way he is treated. He asked how worse are you treating the rest of the members of the community? He thanked Council.

Council thanked Dan.

Mayor Backus asked Dan to fill out the form, so they have information to get back to him.

Consent Agenda – October 2, 2023 Interviews; October 2, 2023 City Council meeting minutes

Councilor Jacobs moved, and Councilor Holmes seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda – October 2, 2023 Interviews; October 2, 2023 City Council meeting minutes. Motion passed (5-0). Mayor Backus, aye; Council President Greisen, aye; Councilor Holmes, aye; Councilor Lafrenz, aye; and Councilor Jacobs, aye.

New Business

Facilities Master Plan Update

City Manager Alexandra Rains gave an update on the Facilities Master Plan RFP and proposals. She explained the project is within her signing authority, but they wanted to give Council just a brief update on what they are doing and how they are moving forward. She explained within this project we would then be looking at and potentially assessing the middle school site as part of that project. She explained they are hoping that it will tentatively be completed by end of April 2024. She explained we will be signing a contract this week.

Assistant to City Manager Isaac Butman explained the process that will take place with this.

Personnel Policy Handbook Update 2023

Assistant to City Manager Isaac Butman asked Council if they have any questions? There were no questions from Council. He went over the big changes in the proposed personnel policy handbook.

Council President Greisen thanked Assistant to City Manager Isaac Butman for all of his work on this.

Councilor Holmes moved, and Councilor Lafrenz seconded the motion that Council adopt Exhibit A of the City of Scappoose Personnel Policy Handbook. Motion passed (5-0). Mayor Backus, aye; Council President Greisen, aye; Councilor Holmes, aye; Councilor Lafrenz, aye; and Councilor Jacobs, aye.

Memorandum of Understanding between School District and City regarding Middle School Facility

City Manager Alexandra Rains explained the Memorandum of Understanding is outlining memorializing agreement between the City and School District essentially to assess the Middle School as a potential location for a City Hall. Of note, the term is for five years, it's non-exclusive, it's non-binding and ultimately if we were to ever move forward with using that space there would be additional agreements and things that would follow. She explained this is simply outlining our intent to essentially look into it and assess the middle school as part of the Facilities Master Plan work and take a look at it to see if we feel it is appropriate for our use.

Councilor Holmes explained she appreciates the work from both City staff and the School District bringing this together. It is something that we have been talking about and hoping to see for at least the duration of this Council. She thinks this is a great step forward. She explained she has worked on a few MOU's in her career, and she likes the structure of this, she likes to see MOU's that have very clear goals, but she also likes to see timelines associated with achieving some of those goals. She doesn't know if that is something that has been discussed to help keep things on track and moving along. She went over the items that she would like to make sure that work commences on them, maybe in six month to a year periods, to keep things moving along. She explained what she would not want to happen is things to languish for three years, we decide something is not workable and then we are starting from ground zero again. She thinks there is a lot of value that this will bring to the community and if this doesn't become an option, we have to go to plan b.

City Manager Rains replied at this point we haven't had specific conversations about additional timelines after the assessment. She explained we will have some information on that relatively soon, which is good news, at which point we'll decide if we're moving forward essentially or not if it will suit our needs, but we haven't gotten that far yet, but it is certainly something we could discuss at a later time after the Facilities Master Plan is done or we could start doing that now. She explained if we go through this process, and we don't feel like it is the right thing to do the Facilities Master Plan will also be looking at other alternatives, and within that conversation we will be talking about all of those options.

Councilor Jacobs asked does it behoove us to wait to see what happens with the vote and if the vote moves forward then come back and bring the MOU and put some timelines together, then vote it in?

City Manager Rains asked do you want the specific timelines in advance of knowing if the assessment shows if it would be a space we'd want to use?

Mayor Backus explained he doesn't think we need to wait necessarily. He stated there is a bond measure on the table and he thinks having this done shows our willingness to look into this opportunity.

Councilor Holmes stated even before there was the introduction of the bond, she thinks there was a desire particularly on the parts of the parks and rec committee to maybe have an mou with the School District even for shared field usage or facility usage to facilitate more recreation. She asked if the bond does not pass could this mou be restructured to kind of parlay into a discussion that is outside of that specific building and facilities?

Tim Porter, Scappoose School District Superintendent, explained he thinks the School District is open to exploring any possibilities with the City.

Council President Greisen moved, and Councilor Lafrenz seconded the motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the School District and City of Scappoose regarding Middle School Facility as presented and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement as presented. Motion passed (4-0). Mayor Backus, aye; Council President Greisen, aye; Councilor Holmes, aye; Councilor Lafrenz, aye; and Councilor Jacobs, abstained.

Announcements – information only

Calendar

Mayor Backus went over the calendar.

Updates: City Manager; Police Chief; Councilors; and Mayor

City Manager Rains gave an update of the conferences she recently attended. In addition, she also attended the City/County meeting. She thanked Isaac for his efforts on the personnel policy manual. She explained it took a lot of months before it even got to Council. She thanked Susan for everything she does for us.

Councilor Jacobs congratulated Isaac on the handbook. She has done a similar exercise before in her career and she knows how laborious that work can be, but it is really important work.

She stated it is the guiding principle that every employee can go back to and reference. She stated thank you for doing that, well done.

Councilor Lafrenz explained with Halloween coming up he would like to encourage everyone to slow down every day.

Councilor Holmes explained along the same lines, it's getting dark earlier, and she knows our school zone speeds only extend to like 4pm or so but we have kids leaving sports much later than that and they will be crossing Highway 30 and we have had some close calls in the past and so just be cognizant of all of our community members.

Council President Greisen explained last Monday she gave a public comment at the Board meeting of the School District, she read the resolution that Council passed in favor of the bond on behalf of Council. She explained as mentioned, last Monday the School Board approved the MOU between the City and the School District and because they made that approval they passed it on to us and now we've approved it as well. She explained several of you have actually touched on it in terms of traffic safety, there was a pedestrian hit at the crosswalk of the Middle School last week. She thinks some of those drop off times can get kind of dicey, people are in a rush, but unfortunately people are so in a rush that they are not paying attention to who's on the road. She stated she feels this message is so pertinent due to the election, they had an elementary principal send an email last week that she just wanted to take some snippets from, and the heading is entitled seek first to understand and she thinks that she has been completely guilty of this as well. She stated you show up and you are coming in with your assumptions, you are ready to sort of attack and fight, but you don't have the full story at the time. She thinks that people who either make public comments or just out in the public engaging in conversation with each other they don't always seek first to understand. She explained what the principal is getting at is that it's so easy in the moment of anger and fear and angst and we are not truly representing who we are to one another and we should just take a moment in our communications to first seek to understand, ask a question and she thinks there's so many people that come with blanket statements and they have taken the time to really get information first and ask a question and again she has totally been guilty of this. She thinks it is just a phrase that she's really repeated to herself lately in the last few weeks ~ just seek first to understand. She stated probably amongst staff that is important, and amongst each other.

Mayor Backus explained as far as the election it is pertinent because it is the school and said to educate yourself on the topics. He explained Councilor Santiago brought up that October 9 was Indigenous People's Day and asked if we are interested in looking at a proclamation within the next month. He explained he attended the childcare meeting today via Zoom and gave an update on that meeting. He explained we are really trying to develop a Columbia County childcare group.

Council President Greisen explained maybe with Council Goal setting there might be a liaison assigned to the County Childcare consortium.

Mayor Backus talked about the letter that was received today from the Columbia County Fire Defense Board and he is interested in seeking Councils feelings of where we could go from here. He stated you could authorize him to write a letter in response or we could have Legal Counsel Ashley Driscoll, City Manager Rains and him come back with a response and bring it to a meeting to review and make a decision together.

Council President Greisen explained undoubtedly there needs to be a response from Council. She stated again seek first to understand. There's a lot of accusations coming at them as a Council and not the one member of Council and so she is in favor of enlisting Legal Counsel Ashley Driscolls support to write a response.

Mayor Backus explained Legal Counsel Ashley Driscoll will need to know what part of the letter we want to address.

Council President Greisen explained she personally wants to specifically address the lawsuit and who has filed that lawsuit and who hasn't filed the lawsuit.

Mayor Backus talked about reviewing the role of the liaison and that in this aspect they are there to gather information and bring it back to Council. He stated we know the liaison is not part of the advisory board or committee, it is a representative from Council to gather information and bring back.

Council President Greisen explained she personally feels at the time the previous Mayor assigned or even created this liaison role because there was a moment in our community where there was a need to be understanding the information that was being presented in this group. She doesn't know personally if that role has exhausted itself because this Special District has sort of resolved what it had been working on. She stated if this is not a goal for Council moving forward in January, then she doesn't see the need and maybe it would just sort of dissipates, not because of the specific liaison person, but because those goals would be sort of teetering out and no longer needed by Council.

Legal Counsel Ashley Driscoll went over what she heard from Council and will work on drafting a response. She asked if Council would like her to draft something on behalf of the City Council and have it come back to the City Council for approval before it goes out or is it something Council would like her to respond to regarding the legal position of the City regarding that lawsuit.

The general consensus was to have a draft letter come back to Council for their review.

Councilor Holmes explained there is one other piece of the letter that she finds particularly troublesome, and she thinks is worth responding to is where it says if one of our staff (career or volunteer) is hurt, if a community member dies because of a failure of the communication system, we will deflect criticism, complaint, and lawsuit of our response to the City of Scappoose. She stated however we address that is not an acceptable option or position for them to take.


Legal Counsel Ashley Driscoll will make the updates and bring them back to Council.

Council President Greisen explained it is her perspective that we really just point at the accusations of the lawsuit and not really address what they are talking about in Urban Renewal. She stated that is a separate letter, a separate issue and that was just sort of thrown in she feels like. She would like to just stick to the topic at hand and it has to do with the lawsuit and the accusations of the City being held accountable for anything that might result from that.

Mayor Backus thanked Legal Counsel Ashley Driscoll for joining us tonight.

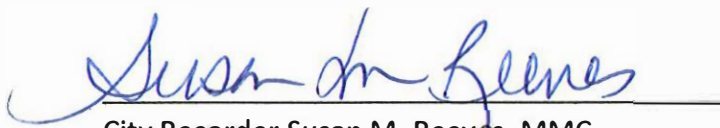
Adjournment

Mayor Backus adjourned the meeting at 8:07pm.



Mayor Joseph A. Backus

Attest:



City Recorder Susan M. Reeves, MMC