



SCAPPOOSE *Oregon*

MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2024
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=DTYNjh8MM.

Call to Order

Mayor Backus called the April 15, 2024 City Council meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Joseph A. Backus	Mayor	Larry Lehman	Interim City Manager
Tyler Miller	Council President	Brian Jensen	Interim Public Safety Director
Kim Holmes	Councilor	Carol Almer	Finance Administrator
Andrew Lafrenz	Councilor	Susan M. Reeves	City Recorder
Marisa Jacobs	Councilor		
Ty Bailey	Councilor		

Remote: Councilor Jeannet Santiago; Public Works Director Dave Sukau; Associate Planner NJ Johnson (left at 8:40pm); and Elizabeth Millager.

Oath of Office for Ty Bailey

Mayor Backus went over the Oath of Office with Ty Bailey. Councilor Bailey was officially sworn in at City Hall on April 8, 2024.

Approval of the Agenda

Council President Miller moved, and Councilor Holmes seconded the motion to approve the agenda. Motion passed (7-0). Mayor Backus, aye; Council President Miller, aye; Councilor Santiago, aye; Councilor Holmes, aye; Councilor Lafrenz, aye; Councilor Jacobs, aye; and Councilor Bailey, aye.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Consent Agenda ~ April 1, 2024 Council Work Session minutes; April 1, 2024 City Council meeting minutes; and Appointment of Sara Jones-Graham as Full Member on the Planning Commission

Councilor Bailey moved, and Council President Miller seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda ~ April 1, 2024 Council Work Session minutes; April 1, 2024 City Council meeting minutes; and Appointment of Sara Jones-Graham as Full Member on the Planning Commission. Motion passed (7-0). Mayor Backus, aye; Council President Miller, aye; Councilor Santiago, aye; Councilor Holmes, aye; Councilor Lafrenz, aye; Councilor Jacobs, aye; and Councilor Bailey, aye.

Proclamations

National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Mayor Backus read the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Proclamation.

National Volunteer Week

Mayor Backus read the National Volunteer Week.

National Small Business Month

Mayor Backus read the National Small Business Month

Old Business

Ordinance No. 918: Franchise with CenturyLink

Mayor Backus explained Ordinance No. 918: Franchise with CenturyLink is on second reading. Is there any discussion?

Council President Miller explained he had a discussion with Interim City Manager Larry Lehman, and he proposed language that didn't lock the City into a rate that could be potentially adjusted by law at a later time. He would like to propose that Council go ahead and approve the ordinance with the contingency that we change the term to four years.

Council President Miller moved, and Councilor Bailey seconded the motion to amend the previous motion adopting Ordinance No. 918: Franchise with CenturyLink, with the amendment of the term to four (4) years.

Councilor Santiago asked if we amend the term would there be a problem with CenturyLink?

Interim City Manager Lehman replied he doesn't believe so, as he can't imagine any problems.

Motion passed (7-0). Mayor Backus, aye; Council President Miller, aye; Councilor Santiago, aye; Councilor Holmes, aye; Councilor Lafrenz, aye; Councilor Jacobs, aye; and Councilor Bailey, aye.

Definition of on duty coverage, survey questions and supplemental information from the city relating to 24/7 policing services in the City of Scappoose

Councilor Kim Holmes explained following up to the request that came from Council at the last meeting, that Councilor Lafrenz and she worked on developing a survey to go out to residence. She explained after a few back and forth on some survey options and versions, it's clear that she thinks this Council needs to do a little bit more work fundamentally to define both what it means to have 24/7 coverage and how we talk about it and then what we want to get out of the survey itself. She explained there's one piece of supplemental information that City Recorder Susan Reeves was able to print and provide to Council, which is just some versions of the surveys that we bounced back and forth. She is not asking for any sort of decision on a survey format. She explained she is providing this just so Council can see that how the approach we choose would play out and how we design the questions themselves. She explained what she would ask is that this Council have a discussion about how we view 24/7 coverage and what that means and how we talk about that, both in purposes of this survey, but also too for our own department if we're asking them to create a strategic plan around how we achieve that level of service and coverage. She stated what are we asking them to do effectively, and what is the expectation on the level of service from Council. She explained she would like to ask that we have that discussion today and then also discuss kind of revisit what the purpose of this survey was. She explained in her mind, we wanted to understand is when presented with tradeoffs of different scenarios, what would the preferences of residents be, and she thinks Councilor Lafrenz maybe had a different goal with the survey. If he would like to go ahead and expand on that, she would be happy for him to share that, but she thinks also if we are going to take the step of doing the survey, we need to really define what it is that we want, and what is the information that we want to get that we'll be useful for us in the decision making process.

Councilor Jacobs stated before we dive into the conversation of how the survey exercise went, can we first start with definition because she thinks that will help to frame up how we need to move forward. She would like to offer up, if we could first start with what current coverage is and if someone would like to define what we currently have, whether someone on the Council can do it or we have our Public Safety Director Jensen provide that information.

Interim Public Safety Director Jensen explained currently we provide essentially 24/7 coverage, in the sense that we have officers on duty actively patrolling from the 7:00am to 2:00am and from 2:00 am to 7:00am, we have Officers that are on an on call status, which means if there were an emergency type of call or a call that we felt needed a Scappoose Police Officer to respond, Dispatch would then call the on call officer, who would then respond. It would be a little bit delayed in the sense that it wouldn't be as quick as if someone was actually on duty in the City at the time. If it is an emergency, though, the Sheriff's Office does provide 24/7 coverage. So essentially either a Deputy from the Sheriff's Office or a State Trooper, if a Trooper was available, or even a St. Helens Officer could respond in an emergency type of situation to a secure the scene and make sure the scene is safe and then a Scappoose Officer would come to essentially do the investigation and any follow up investigation.

Councilor Jacobs replied it sounds like to her based on how Interim Public Safety Director Jensen explained it we do have 24/7. She asked are we accepting that definition.

Councilor Holmes replied that is up to Council to decide because she would contend that yes, there is someone to call 24/7 but that level of service is not the same uniformly throughout that 24-hour period.

Mayor Backus asked Interim Public Safety Director Jensen if we had three more officers, because we are understaffed, would one of them be in the City during those hours?

Interim Public Safety Director Brian Jensen potentially yes. He explained we would look at where the staffing is needed most, which typically we look at the call volume and where the calls are needed, where the general public needs it more. He stated typically 2am to 7am is very, very low call volume. Whereas 8am there is a bunch going on, we have traffic, school and businesses opening. He explained he thinks if we did have all of our officers operational that we currently are allotted. He stated it would look much different if we chose to have someone on that 2:00 AM to 7:00 AM shift.

Councilor Jacobs explained in doing her own due diligence through the course of these several months and hearing all of the materials we did as a community vote a levy in for the Sheriff's Office. She explained we all pay for that levy and if there is a call that comes in between 2am and 7am, yes, we have someone on duty, but the sheriff is obligated to respond to us. She stated when we say do we have 24/7 coverage, when we say just that, the answer to that question to her is yes.

Councilor Holmes explained she will share that the Sheriff did provide an email to herself, Mayor Backus and Councilor Lafrenz which the Sheriff stated considers that arrangement 24/7 coverage. She explained if there is someone being victimized at 2:00am and the call comes in and his Deputy is often in Mist/Birkenfeld, it could be an hour before they get into town, and she is not sure that that's the type of response that this community necessarily wants. She explained Mayor Backus and her talked about how they have heard from residents through the campaign for the election, that there was a concern that we have a gap in on duty coverage. So,

she went back through some of the social media posts that were driving that concern and it's well documented that there are car prowlers, 5am attempted car break-ins, the car wash has been broken into, the owners of Mogamor came in and gave public comment on September 7, 2021 about ongoing break-ins during that period of time asking for more police support. Another reference to a vehicle being stolen from Fred Meyer and the response time was five hours by the police after it was reported because it was during these off-hour times. She explained there is documented need from the community desire for there to be an on-duty police presence during this time and so she understands that this is the arrangement that we have been forced to function with because we've had we've been short staffed, our officers are working very, very hard to cover what they can. But when we define 24/7 coverage, is that what we're talking about or are we talking about on duty? Because that really does define how we shape the survey questions. She explained what she would say what we should aspire to for 24/7 coverage would be having at least one officer on duty around the clock to give the same level of response and service consistently throughout the day. That none of those hours are going to be treated differently or service would be offered differently during those hours. That would be her ideal. She explained in the surveys, and you'll see there in the survey options, she does offer kind of multiple ways to approach it. She explained we can talk about this is 24, there's 24/7 coverage, but what we currently have is 24/7 coverage that is split between on duty and on call. Then there's 24/7 on duty coverage, so we can call it 24/7 coverage, but she thinks we need to qualify what it is the level of service that's being delivered and offered to the community during that time.

Councilor Lafrenz stated just to add some context one of the reasons why he thinks this is the definition is so important is he was getting a lot of feedback from the community that people would literally come up and based on narrative of this whole exploration in the past four months now, people have been asking him, it sounds like they assume that no one's going to pick up 911 when they call during the gap in coverage and that's far from the truth. He thinks the general feedback from the community is someone's going to answer and someone's going to respond, depending on the level of priority and of course, the response thing is a real issue. He thinks it is pretty easy to argue that we have way more priorities. For example, we have periods during the week where we only have one officer, during high volume call periods, during the day. He stated that was one of his issues with the way that the original draft was put together, it's assuming that this is a Council priority and it's assuming the community wants it. The reality is we need to keep the officers we have safe by not having them by themselves, during these high priority calls during the day.

Councilor Holmes stated it is a Council priority. She explained we have a Council goal to conduct feasibility study with community outreach to increase to 24/7 public safety coverage. So again, that kind of goes back to why this discussion is so important, we have to define what that is.

Councilor Lafrenz stated that was the third goal under Goal #3. If you remember the first one, 3.1 was to retain officers and that's what we should be focusing on right now.

Councilor Santiago explained she does think all the Council members might have a different definition of what a 24/7 means for them but she thinks the real question is we're trying to ask

the question to the public, to the residents of Scappoose how important is it, is it the needs or the wants. She stated is it the need to have one officer and to aspire to having two officers on duty. She thinks those are the questions because personally she would love to have two officers on duty, not all by themselves for safety reasons, but that's her opinion. She stated she thinks we should take ourselves out of that and really just ask the question to the residents how important is this to you? Ultimately if we want to create the Police Department, if people are really wanting to keep this in house, then what does that really look like and we're going to have to put more money into the Police Department because how it is right now, it hasn't been working. She asked so what is it that we need to do to retain. We need to recruit quality officers, recruit a qualified chief ultimately, and so we need to build that infrastructure first and then we can build a Police Department, whether we want to keep it in house. She thinks we should just pose a question to the residents and how important it is to them and ultimately are they willing to pay for it if we need more money.

Council President Miller explained he thinks one of the differentiations that we need to make here too is this question is just about what we defined 24/7 365 coverage as and it doesn't necessarily relate to contracting with CCSO. He thinks there's two different topics here and this is an opportunity to define what 24/7 365 coverage looks like to our community so that if we do keep the police department internal and we know what to aspire to, we know what the goal is, and we know what to work towards based on what the community's input is. The question about the cost in between internal police department and CCSO, or is a completely different topic, but he does think we need to set aside that difference there.

Councilor Lafrenz replied he agrees and that's why he didn't want to get into asking the community about funding issues like that and in our own scheduled or levies. He thinks we fundamentally need to know are they currently happy with the service we have. He hasn't heard otherwise. The only thing we've heard is public comments about prospects support. It's been months and many of us have heard nothing, but that people want to keep the local Police Department.

Councilor Bailey asked reading through the stuff to do we even have time, other than definitional, if we're talking finances, do we even have time to actually make decisions at this point since the budget meetings are in two weeks. He explained even trying to get a survey out in May, it means we're probably not actioning anything until next fiscal year anyway. He doesn't see how we'd be able to align those. He thinks we have run out the clock on the current situation and we have time to talk to the community. He asked is there an interest from a physical standpoint for moving to a county setup? Even if that's the case, what is the definition community wise for the level of coverage that they're willing to pay for or want. He thinks right now it feels there's a level of urgency that the reality isn't going to allow us to actually act upon personally.

Mayor Backus explained they have looked at the budget and there is some funds this year for some growth. We may not have been able to define it yet, but based on the numbers that we have, there is some room in there for a step.

Finance Administrator Carol Almer explained we are two weeks out for her to have the budgets printed and ready to go and that's really pushing it. She can go forward with the budget that Brian and she have proposed, which gives increases to the officers and is actually a lower number than we have in our current budget. We've tried to save money wherever we can, and once we get all of our officer positions filled, that would give us eight officers, plus the two sergeants and the chief.

Council President Miller stated if he is understanding this correctly, one of the things that we've heard is that the Police Department personnel understandably wants us to make a decision on this, but if I'm understanding what I just heard correctly now there's no rush. He stated in his opinion we do have to make a decision to move the City forward.

Mayor Backus explained he really does thank Councilor Holmes for spearheading this discussion. He stated regardless of the outcome, he thinks this is a valuable exercise. It's really going to help educate him on our Police Department, on the County Sheriff's Department and many inputs and thoughts from our citizens. This will help us go forward and build and make this a better, stronger department. He explained we do have goals, 3.1 was to develop and implement a plan to retain the Police Department. Goal, 3.3 was conduct feasibility study with community outreach to increase 24 public safety coverage and to him that was what he was really focusing on, and he felt bad that the first headline is Scappoose is considering dissolving their Police Department when that is not the thing that we're trying to do. When these studies come out and thoughts come out, it did come out that you can contract with the County and a lot of people have, so doing our due diligence and Councilor Holmes really wanting to stay transparent really said we have to look at all this. He explained he has been going around this over and over, and talking to a lot of people, and just with budget timing, and talking to the Police Department, he does think we do need to make a decision. He really is leaning towards, it's just his opinion, and he is not trying to sway any of the Council, but he would like to see what we could do with our local Police Department. If we could get with the Director and come up with a strategic plan to get where we want to go and define that 24/7 public safety coverage. He explained the survey question to him was on a scale of 1 to 10, how important is having a local Police Department cover your city or contract with the County. He is thinking that he is ready to move on and that we do need to make a decision. He does appreciate what we've been doing, and he wants to use that going forward though, as we define our coverage and where we can be to grow and be stronger. He stated he thinks it is important we define that level of service that the citizens desire and deserve the cost and the time frame that will take to get us there and a funding mechanism if it's not within our own budget. He stated it kept coming up retaining police officers, we have a retention issue, we have a lateral hiring issue, we have a leadership issue. He thinks we have seen that; we've identified that. He stated we have a new Council, and he thinks we're ready to try to develop a department that we can be proud of and grow with and it just keeps coming back to that. He explained at the very beginning he looked at all the options and everything kind of was out there, but everything he is looking at now keeps him thinking and from what he is hearing that's where our citizens want us to be.

Councilor Holmes explained she thinks through the discovery process, we all have a very clear

picture of what contracted services would look like for us. What she doesn't think we yet have a clear picture of and she would ask Brian to offer for us is can we get a better picture of what success for this department will look like. The other thing she doesn't want to do is say, well, we've done this discovery, let's just keep doing what we've been doing, because it's been a revolving door in the department and she thinks our police officers deserve better than that. If we want to retain them, we have to create the road map for success. She stated if it's the right time to pause and ask for that from the City, what does success look like and how will we achieve it then she thinks that's a great next step. We do need to give you direction on what your target is, what are we asking you, what level of service are we asking you to strive for.

Interim Public Safety Director Brian Jensen replied he agrees. He thinks that it is appropriate to put together a strategic plan and present it to the Council, so you are very clear on where we're going and our plan to get there. Which he believes we absolutely can get there. It's going to take time and it may take funding. It is achievable. He explained you have great staff over there now. He explained we've identified some of the problems in the past and he thinks we're cleaning that up and again, he thinks if it is put to bed, we're going to hit the ground running tomorrow morning. We have openings that were just waiting for a decision to be made. He explained he talked with the Council President Miller and has agreed to help him with this strategic plan, so it's something that the Council can have an input on exactly what you're looking for and he is confident that we can put that together and move forward.

Councilor Lafrenz replied he appreciates that proposal, but he does have a concern about the word pause, though. We're going to lose officers if we just label it as on pause, meaning we could go back and push play on it. There's not anyone on this Council that would apply for a job where the companies looking at a merger and we have to decide on whether to close this or.....

Councilor Holmes explained she would like to hear from others if they've got opinions, but she thinks we have to do something different going forward and she thinks we need to define what that is, and we need to see what that looks like before we say we're all done here.

Councilor Bailey explained he doesn't think we're going to be saying we're all done for a while. We've had three police chiefs in less than ten years. He stated we do a lot of training of staff and then they go somewhere else so that revolving door is very expensive, so we're going to have to figure that out. He doesn't know if contracting services actually solves any of that fundamentally, it's still local policing challenges. He thinks we would be having the certainty of the local as we get a new city manager and if we find the right people, that's going to be the critical thing. It's a bad look to have a fourth police chief in ten years.

Councilor Santiago stated first, she'd like to thank Councilor Holmes for all her hard work, because she did put a lot of time, her personal time to look into it and she personally appreciates that. She thinks what she is hearing is that we are needing a plan. She explained she does need a plan to figure this out, being that she has been in the Council about a year and a half/two years and she is so glad that this is a whole new Council, it seems like it's very

different from the Council when she entered. She explained she feels that we need to not just think about the chief, but also our leader, our next leader, which is a city manager, has to be a strong city manager that we need to recruit. Someone that's going to be transparent with the Council on what's going on with the Police Department, because she thinks that has been the problem/the issue. We as a Council did not know what was going on and there was no transparency. We as residents of Scappoose, we were hearing things outside the chambers on our Police Department and that's not good. We need to come in and make sure that a city manager is clear on sharing everything that's good and bad and the ugly with the Police Department. She thinks that we need to see how we can work that out with the new city manager. She loves the idea of the strategic plan because if we keep doing the same thing over and over, that's just not going to work. Personally, she is for keeping the Police Department and looking into that with the conditions of having a strong strategic plan, getting a strong city manager that would hire a strong chief and would be transparent with the Council.

Mayor Backus stated he is hearing it, and like Councilor Lafrenz had mentioned about the word pause. He asked what would make Council feel comfortable about the word pause. He asked can we vote to move on with the local Police Department pending the strategic plan and potential survey of level of service that we want to maintain with a local Police Department and just go forward with that?

Councilor Lafrenz replied going back to the Goal 3.3 it talks about exploring this and he feels comfortable that we have explored it, and he thinks using anything that suggested that this was just on hold would set us back tremendously.

Council President Miller explained his idea of a strategic plan is that it would address what we have funding for now and how we utilize what we have now. He explained when he says now, he means we have eight funded patrol officer positions, two sergeants, one lieutenant and one chief. He stated some of the public probably isn't aware of this, but we've had issues within our police department where it has caused some of those folks to go on admin leave and so they're being paid, but they can't work. That was one of the big concerns that this Council had. However, as we move through the motions of clearing those up and we actually get those positions working like the City would like, he does think that we can get to 24/7/365 coverage. It may not be two on at all times, but as we already know, the Sheriff's Office does have Patrol Deputies on 24/7, so at least our officers have cover until we can get the funding and figure out a plan which he would hope the strategic plan will address for how we can have our own officers, because ideally for him he does want to see two police officers on duty at all times within the City limits. He thinks that's a safety issue for our police officers, and he thinks that just common sense tells us if somebody's in our City limits and there's an emergency within our City limits that our local police officers within that area are going to be able to respond a lot quicker. It's just a matter of time before those emergencies happen, especially as we grow. He doesn't think that we need to pause, he thinks that if this Council has enough information at this time to go forward and just say we're going to do this strategic plan using the internal police department model, he thinks as you heard earlier, he agreed to help Brian with the

strategic plan. He thinks they can come up with something really great and that this Council will be very proud of.

Mayor Backus explained we have signed an intergovernmental agreement with the County, we are building that relationship, and he thinks it will be a good partnership. The County helps field train our officers and he thinks we can continue that and build that relationship. He stated we need to do something tonight and move on. He asked are we ready to take either a vote or a thumbs up, thumbs down, ready to move on and focus on keeping as an internal Police Department while developing a strategic plan moving forward and working on the budgets for this year and next.

Councilor Lafrenz made the motion to close the exploration in to contracting with the Sheriff's Office with the expectation that there's a strategic plan in place. (Motion dies due to lack of second).

Councilor Holmes explained she would like to amend that motion to add with the Police Department providing their recommendation of what 24/7 coverage is potentially before the strategic plan is complete so we can have that discussion here. She wants to ask the Police Department what is the level of service that you would try to achieve in that strategic plan.

Interim Public Safety Director Jensen replied he thinks that is going to be a multi layered right where we're at now, where we're going to be in two years and where we're essentially want to be in five years. He stated ideally, we get as many officers on as we can and as often as we can, but the reality is he thinks we first go towards being fully staffed and fully operational, which would give us 24/7 coverage if that's what we choose to do with it as opposed to maybe heavy loading the day shift, the swing shift and then going super light. He stated he thinks right now we are technically at 24/7 coverage. If you call us at 3:00am and there's an emergency, a police officer is going to show up. So that technically in his opinion is 24/7 coverage now. He stated what is it that we're really talking about, we're talking about having an officer in Scappoose on duty all the time, and we're not there. He explained he thinks is the common 24/7 coverage. He stated again once we become fully operational, which he is with working City manager Lehman and they're doing everything they can to make sure that we can get fully operational. There's some legal things that we have to jump through, of course, but we're working at it, but that's strategic plan will address where we're at now, hopefully where we are going to be at in a year, two, three and we will probably go out five years with where we need to be given the City is growing and with an increase in population is going to be increase of speeders, increase of crime, all those things that come with it and he will work with Council President Miller and they will address it in the strategic plan.

Mayor Backus explained he a motion by Councilor Lafrenz mainly to focus on the internal police department moving forward and how we can build a strategic plan and we need to define 24/7 and the number of officers that we have in our budget and come up with a plan going forward internally.

Council President Miller stated if we are removing the whole pause concept, there's really no hurry here to get the strategic plan done. He explained Public Safety Director Jensen and he can work on the baseline, what they think the Council is really going to like, and they can bring it back and we can have constructive dialogue about what this strategic plan looks like with all of Council. There's no rush to get it done, we'll get it done in a timely manner, but the point being is because there's nothing holding advancing the internal PD up now, we have time to have that dialogue with Council.

Councilor Jacobs moved, and Councilor Bailey seconded the motion to close the discovery process for contracting the Police Department with Columbia County. Motion passed (7-0). Mayor Backus, aye; Council President Miller, aye; Councilor Santiago, aye; Councilor Holmes, aye; Councilor Lafrenz, aye; Councilor Jacobs, aye; and Councilor Bailey, aye.

Mayor Backus stated the thought of contracting had nothing negative to do with our current officers and leadership. It really had to do with the loss of officers in the past. He stated for him it was nothing to do with the great officers and people we have working for us now.

Councilor Holmes moved, and Councilor Santiago seconded the motion that Council approve the Police Department to work on a strategic plan with a recommendation for the appropriate level of service over time. Motion passed (7-0). Mayor Backus, aye; Council President Miller, aye; Councilor Santiago, aye; Councilor Holmes, aye; Councilor Lafrenz, aye; Councilor Jacobs, aye; and Councilor Bailey, aye.

New Business

Scappoose Senior Center Update

Clara Pell, President of the Board at the Scappoose Senior Center, gave an update on the Scappoose Senior Center.

Mayor Backus asked Clara Pell if there is anything the City could help with.

Clara Pell explained they do still owe their accountant.

Pete McHugh explained he thinks what they are asking is for the balance of the funds that were previously given to the Senior Center because they have use for the money.

Finance Administrator Carol Almer will check into the balance of the funds and let Council know.

Mayor Backus moved, and Councilor Santiago seconded the motion that Council approve to cut a check to the Senior Center for the remaining balance of the \$20,000 that the City budgeted for the Scappoose Senior Center.

Council President Miller would like to get and update on the remaining balance at the next Council meeting.

Finance Administrator Carol Almer explained she will get that information to Council prior to the next meeting.

Clara Pell thanked the Mayor and Council.

Motion passed (7-0). Mayor Backus, aye; Council President Miller, aye; Councilor Santiago, aye; Councilor Holmes, aye; Councilor Lafrenz, aye; Councilor Jacobs, aye; and Councilor Bailey, aye.

Council Discussion on City Committee's

Mayor Backus went over the discussion on the City Committee's. He explained we have two standing committees that Council is responsible for, Park and Rec Committee and Economic Development Committee. He explained each committee has a council liaison, Parks and Rec liaison is Marisa Jacobs and Economic Development Committee liaison is Jeanette Santiago. He explained he is looking for discussion on Council liaison role and responsibilities with these committees. These are our committees, so what is our vision for these committees? What is the function and purpose that Council sees for these committees? How are the agendas determined? How much staff time is dedicated to these committees? Does Council tasks the committees with things to do or do the committees propose and recommend tasks for them to do themselves? He explained as he sees it is usually a combination of both. He explained in the packet there are resolutions that were adopted late October of 2021 before he was on Council. He wanted to review this information. He has spoken with Councilor Jacobs and Councilor Santiago about this. He thinks these committees are important and he wants to maximize their potential and at the same time use staff appropriately and staff wants to understand their role because if we assign these committees then that is assigning staff to help with them and spend time and money on them. He just wants to touch base, especially since Councilor Jacobs is a new liaison to Parks and Rec, and Councilor Santiago just moved over to the Economic Development Committee.

Councilor Jacobs explained during her conversation with Mayor Backus and Councilor Santiago, they were discussed how do they want to activate the Committees and make sure that they're contributing to the betterment of the community. She thinks where they came out of that conversation was really we have these two Committees that can greatly impact our area and all of them come with a great set of skill sets and we should utilize these talented individuals, but how do we go about doing that in a thoughtful manner. She explained as it relates to Parks and Rec her idea is that while she is the liaison with Council and as well as to the Committee, she would like to see the Committee driving more within the framework of our master plan. We have completed a Parks Master Plan that provides the direction and guidance and how we want to advance and develop the park system. We have a Public Works Director, Dave Sukau, and he also has a body of work that he needs to move forward. She would like for us to be able to help prioritize what are the critical things that we're trying to do over the next year. She thinks if

we're able to round and root ourselves in our master plan and prioritize and move it forward, she thinks there'll be better engagement and involvement with the committee members and a sense of accomplishment. She doesn't want to see us just go to a meeting on a monthly basis to have a conversation just to have a conversation to keep going around in conversations. That's not beneficial use of time. She would like to see our committees activated in a joint partnership. We're guiding and directing, but they're participating and they're helping to bring these things to life.

Councilor Santiago agrees with Councilor Jacobs in regard to the direction that they both have in mind for these two Committees. They are great, talented individuals, who are very committed and have great ideas. What she kept hearing from the Committees is, especially the EDC, was why are we here, what's the purpose of this committee and it's been something that is been going on for years, she would say. They have lost good Committee members because of the lack of direction throughout the years, and she doesn't want to see that happen. The EDC is working on an economic development strategic plan on how they plan to support the economic growth in Scappoose. This is not something that they'll need a consultant for. This is something that the group, with their combined talents that they have, will see what they can do as individuals, as residents of Scappoose can do for the City. As the liaison she would like to be more in between, for example, like assisting with the agenda with the Committee Chair or Co Chair. If there are any questions or directions that would go through to the liaison also. She would like the staff just to be there to note take, not necessarily go back and forth and answer questions. If there are any questions that the Committee may have, she would like it to be directed more to the liaison and then if the liaison doesn't have the answer or information, they'll take it back to the Council. That's kind of how she would like to structure moving forward on those meetings. Staff would be there again to note take and then the liaison would be more the in between working with the Committee.

Mayor Backus replied thank you. He does think that if the Committee has questions or comments during their meeting that they should direct them towards the liaison versus staff and let the liaison determine if they can answer them or if they're going to have to go back to Council to get more direction. He stated it does show that we will send a secretary or someone to open the room, turn on the lights, get the recording going, keep summary minutes but they may not be very involved in the operations of that meeting, and the agendas will be determined by the liaison and the chair. He does want Council more involved, maybe if the liaison can come to Council to get some direction or if there's questions, ask us because we want to task the Committees with stuff to do so they do feel like they're being listened to and that also then kind of dictates some staff time that might be needed to do research. He wants to bring up some decorum. We have had issues over the years and just to be respectful to each and every staff member and Committee members and public, because they are all public meetings and quite a few people do listen and watch them, and he wanted to make sure he noted that. He thinks these committees can be good. He just thinks they need direction, and he thinks the strategic plan for the EDC is good and it's actually in their bylaws. He wants to make sure they feel that they've got all the information they need to move forward on that and that is one that he thinks they're working well with staff on and developing that strategic plan.

Interim City Manager Larry Lehman explained his understanding is the liaisons will operate with the Committees and the desire for the city staff, is simply to facilitate the meeting, open up the room and have someone take minutes and so forth meaning then that the department heads don't need to be there. Then the liaison would go back to that department head or whatever they need to do in order to facilitate the activity.

Councilor Jacobs replied she thinks we should start with that intention but there may be a week where one of the department heads may need to come. She thinks they want to try for the liaisons to really be that conduit to help limit the number of touch points and consolidate the information to bring back to the Committee.

Interim City Manager Larry Lehman explained if the liaison requested a department head to be at certain meetings to do certain things, absolutely no question about that. He doesn't think we want to have department heads just sitting there, if not needed.

Council President Miller asked what the procedure for requesting city staff is so that everybody can be on the same page with that.

Interim City Manager Larry Lehman explained they can make the request directly to staff or to him, either way, it doesn't matter.

Councilor Santiago replied she would prefer to go directly through the city manager on that.

Council President Miller explained he just wants to make sure everybody is on the same page, so we know what the SOP is here because these Committees keep coming up with issues on an annual basis. The more that we can clarify on SOPs, he thinks the better at this point.

Christine Turner, Chair of the Economic Development Committee (EDC), explained they do get partnership updates from different community members, which includes a City update but that's really the only time, every other month, somebody from the City comes and does a little report for us. That's part of the premise of EDC is so we can report out that information to other community members.

Mayor Backus stated he still sees that as valuable to have staff give the Committee updates on local businesses or what's been happening. That is the same for the Parks and Rec Committee.

Councilor Jacobs stated she thinks it probably goes without saying, but she'll just say it for clarification, City Manager Lehman, when we talk about responsibility of staff like opening up the doors, getting the meeting going, that would also be publishing the agenda, but the agenda will be on the responsibility of the Chair and the liaison in terms of crafting the agenda, but could we have staff publish the agenda onto the website?

Interim City Manager Larry Lehman replied correct, that would be for staff to take care of.

Council President Miller stated just to be clear who is going to do the agenda, the liaison or the chair?

Councilor Jacobs replied what she believes is the order of operation should be, is that the chair working with their Committee creates the agenda and they can send it to the liaison for review, and then that would be signed off by the liaison to then move forward to the City.

Councilor Santiago replied that is exactly what we discussed.

Christine Turner explained she appreciates the clarity as well. She explained that is the preference that we create our own agenda and have it approved by Councilor Jeannet Santiago.

There was a discussion on having meetings and putting forth the agenda.

Public Works Director Dave Sukau explained if he is going to be on an invite basis, because the agendas usually aren't created, that he is aware of, until mere days before the meeting that doesn't leave a lot of time to get on calendars. If that's going to be the protocol, maybe those agendas could be targeted like a month in advance or a little more forethought on what those are going to look like.

Mayor Backus replied he agrees.

Public Works Director Dave Sukau explained in all honesty, it's his intent to be at every meeting, unless Council wants him to be at an invite only, he will do his best to be at every meeting.

Mayor Backus explained he thinks they would appreciate him there as much as he possibly can.

Public Works Director Dave Sukau explained in the where his fears are and he'd be curious to see how your new liaison approach works, because in the past, what's end up happening is the staff member that is facilitating the meeting is getting backed into the corner on some very heated questions and it's been very uncomfortable for that position. He has usually been trying to attend to take that heat off of our staff members because at one point it was interns that were doing that role who don't have the ability to make a judgment call and it just hasn't been very fair to them. He is really intrigued by the new liaison dynamic and if that works and he doesn't need to be there, he appreciates that also.

Paul Fidrych explained he is on both Committees, and both Committees are quite different. There's no head of EDC in staff. The EDC's goal is to hopefully come up with enough interesting ideas to eventually present the Council, and that's pretty much it. Parks are a lot different because Dave is ahead of parks. In the past some of the Councilors have been on these Committees, and there's been a disconnect. For instance, there are some extra money and then Dave goes in front of City Council with an idea that on parks that we've never even heard of and so there's a disconnect because Dave didn't talk to us. They had no idea what was going on. He explained like the Committee is working on something for instance, we just had a lot of

feedback from citizens that they want this, this, this, this and this and then something else comes from the other side. Then conversely when Dave has been in the meetings, what we feel is a great role for us is we are the citizens and we can help you with decisions. If you need us to go out and ask the citizens what is more important to you, is it this or this or this we could help him decide. What's been great with Dave being more connected with us is Dave has said, hey, we have ideas around pickleball for instance, and since some of us on the group play pickleball, we came back to him with research on from the USASA Pickleball Association on what it would take to build pickleball courts, what the costs are, what they recommend for distances, etc. That hopefully took some time that he didn't have to work on, and that has been really successful. He would love to have Dave continue because his role is a lot different than the EDC section because there's not an EDC lead in the staff. That is if Dave is interested in doing it, because he thinks if we continue to work together, we could be much more functional and be very supportive of Dave and to take some load off of him.

Public Works Director Dave Sukau explained he 100% agrees with Paul. He just goes back to originally, we were individual conduits through Council and if we can partner on the front end, he thinks that that definitely helps streamline things. At the end of the day, for the big decisions, obviously that will still go before Council, but if we're both in agreement when we do that, I think it definitely cleans things up. He agrees with the pickleball discussion and now we're working on a reduced version of Grabhorn right now that we're going to be talking about this Thursday and different dynamics. He thinks right now we're on the right track.

Mayor Backus asked if staff has something for the Committees to discuss or if the Committees have something for staff would they go through the liaison?

Public Works Director Dave Sukau explained he just wants to follow whatever direction you all prefer.

Mayor Backus is in favor of our liaison working with the department head and the chair and determine what will work, what they feel will work best for this group and try to determine that.

Councilor Holmes explained having served in the Parks and Rec committee, it can be frustrating, right, because there has been a disconnect. It's good to hear that that's improving between what staff is doing and what the parks and Rec committee is discussing and presenting to Council. She explained we continue to struggle with these Committees, and she sees them working successfully in other cities and she is wondering if the League of Oregon Cities can be a resource to us. Maybe there is a model that we should be looking at for how these groups are structured, how information flows from the committees to Council and staff. If there's just some successful framework that we might want to look at to inform, as these groups continue to evolve and hopefully be successful because you all are very talented people and we're very lucky to have you and happy volunteer week according to the proclamation, we appreciate you!

Mayr Backus explained he will do that; he will look that information up.

Christine Turner explained she and Brian have been on the Economic Development Committee since its inception and through the different city managers, we've acted differently. Two Prior city managers ago was very involved in the EDC and he was very motivated and economic development was very much his focused, so he was an active part in our Committee, as was the former mayor and then we changed city managers and then we kind of just got left to flounder and figured out, go do you and so we kind of tried to do us and then we then we had a liaison, but we never saw that liaison and then all of a sudden we had Andrew and he started participating and then we had a better connection with Council and less connection with staff and that actually helped us quite a bit and so we're still evolving. We're changing gears all the time and think we're making some headway over the last six months. She thinks they've started to do some really good things and work well together, and she would hate to lose that and be limited by that.

Council President Miller stated to Christine's point, if we could get something like a policy for how we operate our committees, and he thinks the baseline for that start would be to see what other cities are doing. We are going to have constant rotation of Council members, liaison, city managers, hopefully not city managers like we have had move along so far, but that does illustrate a need for having policy on this issue.

Mayor Backus explained he will look up LOC and committees and if anybody else wants to as well. Basically, he is going to let the liaison take a little more ownership and give that some time and come back and tell us how it went and if there are any changes or decisions that need to be made. He stated he appreciates all the help and work on this.

Announcements – information only

Calendar

Mayor Backus went over the calendar.

Updates: City Manager, Police Department, Councilors, and Mayor

Interim City Manager Lehman explained they are working hard with the Police Department and the Police Union.

Interim Public Safety Director Jensen thanked Council for making a decision tonight. He appreciates the hard work that was put in. He gave some updates on the Police Department.

Councilor Jacobs stated Happy Tax Day! She would like to thank Interim City Manager Lehman. She really appreciates him stepping into this role and tidying up house a bit and taking on some critical items and moving them through and creating wins and capacity for us. She thanked Councilor Holmes for shepherding in a large project and she came under a lot of scrutiny and sort of took the brunt of all of that for Council and she just wanted to thank her for doing the hard work and seeing it through in a transparent manner and know that the work was not done

in vain. It was done for the betterment of all of us, so thank you! She reminded everyone about Earth Day on Saturday. She explained we do have a critical role that we are hiring, which is the city manager, and she thinks if anything, she hopes tonight really sort of amplifies the need for us to hire leadership. We have two critical roles really that we need hired within our City, It's the city manager and a police chief and leadership is really critical and she thinks if all of us going through here on Council, it's going to be our responsibility to make that higher and she thinks for all of us, just to keep in mind that yes, having good tactical skills is important, but you can teach tactical skills. You can teach things that you can learn in a book, but what you can't teach is leadership, and that is really what our city needs.

Councilor Lafrenz he explained he just wants to clarify a couple of things. The conversation about contracting with the County was never for him and he doesn't think for anyone else on Council about putting the Scappoose Police Department against the County. He has a tremendous amount of respect for the County Sheriff's Office, the Deputies, and their Staff. He has no concerns about their ability to perform the services that we were looking into. It was more about the strong belief and faith he has in our core of Police Officers, our Staff, our Interim Director, and Lieutenant Fluellen. He just thinks we're in a unique opportunity where we can correct some of the mistakes of the past. He also does want to clarify, no matter what your definition of 24/7 is clearly there are differences, but he does share the goal of getting two officers on patrol in Scappoose. He does agree with Sheriff Pixley that the levy has been great for the community, and has only made our County safer, but we do need to move towards that. He does think that the priority of making sure that our Officers are safe because they have a second Officer, that the Officers are not going into a dangerous call at 10:00 PM on a Sunday because we're not fully staffed. He thanked Councilor Holmes and Sheriff Pixley for looking into this as well. He stated again, he has a lot of respect for the Sheriff's Office. He stated thank you.

Councilor Holmes replied thank you for the acknowledgement of the work and thank you for everyone who participated in the process. It really was a lot of work to bring together. She thinks we are in a better place having had the discussion, arriving at developing a strategic plan, we're in a better place than we've probably seen this department have real potential in a very long time. She stated thank you everyone for participating. She will say it is quite unfortunate the discourse and the dialogue, she thinks, that devolved around this process to the community. Please reserve immediate judgment and try to continue to have constructive discussions and really base those discussions in facts and she thinks we will all be able to move forward and continue to move forward in a very productive way. She is excited to see what our Police Department can put forward for us and collaborating to support them. She would also note the League of Oregon Cities is going to have their Region 1 meeting on May 3rd in St Helens. The discussion will be some of the challenges that cities are facing in terms of funding, particularly with general fund funding, so it's a timely discussion. It's something that she thinks all of us are struggling with, and so she would encourage Council to attend that, and she looks forward to reporting the learnings out from that.


Councilor Santiago stated first, she'd like to echo what Councilor Jacobs was saying in regard to Interim City manager Larry Lehman and also Councilor Holmes. Also, if in regard to the leadership that we really, really need and seeking for city manager and then hopefully also a new chief. Besides the Earth Day, it's a busy week. On Thursday, April 18th, there is a Columbia County Career Fair going on at OMIC. There's also the Grant Watts Spring Auction on April 20th at 4:30 PM. Spring Cleanup is also taking place this Saturday, April 20th from 8:00 AM to noon.

Council President Miller state thank you Councilor Holmes for her work on the exploration project. He knows it was a lot of work and thanks to the Sheriff's Office too, for participating and providing all the information that they did. He looks forward to helping the Police Department with the strategic plan and he thinks that we can accomplish something really great.

Mayor Backus stated he did also want to thank Councilor Holmes for asking the hard question, taking a lot of pressure off of him. He appreciates that, but the work is not done. It really has just begun and maybe some of the questions won't be as hard, but our goal is always going to be up there. He read the goal of Create a safe city with a visible public safety presence so that is going to be there every day, every meeting we talk about that will be an important thing. He does look forward to the strategic planning and working and growing our Police Department and all the good things.

Adjournment

Mayor Backus adjourned the meeting at 8:52 pm.



Mayor Joseph A. Backus

Attest:



City Recorder Susan M. Reeves, MMC