
CITY OF MILTON-FREEWATER GOVERNING BODY

Damien Reino At Large, Position 1
Steve Irving - Council President At Large, Position 2
Wes Koklich At Large, Position 3

Lewis S. Key Mayor
John Lyon Ward 1
Bradley J. Humbert Ward 2
Jose Garcia Ward 3

**CITY OF MILTON-FREEWATER
CITY COUNCIL MINUTES****January 8, 2024**

The Council of the City of Milton-Freewater met in regular session on January 8, 2024 in the Albee Room of the City Library, 8 SW 8th Avenue at 7:00 p.m.

The following members were present: Mayor Lewis Key, Councilors John Lyon, Wes Koklich, Damien Reino, Jose Garcia, Steve Irving and Brad Humbert.

Staff members present were: City Manager Linda Hall and Assistant City Manager/City Recorder Leanne Steadman.

Guests and citizens present were: Emily Holden, Paul Seaquist, Tammy Seaquist, Amber Kralman, Tim Sanchez, Robin Sanchez, Randy Reese, Kelly Hahn, Carolyn Hahn, Ryan Westman, Markie McRae, Gail Beeson, Emily Martin, J. West, Kay West, Suni Danforth, Joe Shurtz, Jason Schaffner and Laurie Bubar.

Representing the news media were: Sherrie Widmer of the Valley Herald and Sheila Hagar of the East Oregonian.

CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS:

The consent calendar items consisted of:

- Council minutes from December 11, 2023
- Accounts Payable December 2, 2023 – December 18, 2023
- Accounts Payable December 19, 2023 – January 2, 2024
- Resolution No. 2533, Authorizing Signature to Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund Services Agreement – Formula Funds with Umatilla County for City Managed Transit Projects
- Resolution No. 2534, Authorizing Signature to Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund Services Agreement – Formula Funds with Umatilla County for County Managed Transit Projects

Councilor Irving motioned to approve all items on the Consent Calendar. Councilor Humbert seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

BUSINESS ITEMS:**RESOLUTION NO. 2535 – AUTHORIZING SIGNATURE TO EXTENSION OF ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH FFA ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIORS FOR THE NEW POLICE STATION**

Manager Hall reported the new police stations original completion date was October of 2023. The General Contractor originally requested a one-month extension to November 17th, but in late October the owner of S & K Mountain Construction disclosed that the electrical panel and associated equipment was not scheduled to ship until mid-February of 2024, the equipment was ordered

December of 2022. The contractor stated after the main panel was received, there would be approximately 4-6 weeks of work after that. Manager Hall explained this contract extension was for FFA Architecture and Interiors who is the architect for the project. Their continued involvement and oversight of the project is crucial to the final project. This is the second extension, the first was based off the first request for extension by the General Contractor and was provided to staff on October 9, 2023 which was the day of the October council meeting so there was no time to add the item to the agenda for advertisement. The extension was brought up under Managers Report for consideration. Although, this is not staff's preferred practice, it is also not illegal to add an agenda item to an advertised meeting. The current agreement extension would provide continuing construction administration services to April 30th, 2024 for an amount up to \$40,000.

Paul Seaquist asked if there was a penalty clause on the contractor's agreement for being delayed.

Manager Hall replied there was and to-date liquidated damages totaled \$20,500.

Tim Sanchez asked if the electrical panel was the only item holding up the project.

Manager Hall stated the building was behind in other areas and explained briefly what some of those were.

Councilor Humbert motioned to adopt Resolution No. 2535, Resolution Authorizing Signature to Extension of Architectural Services Agreement with FFA Architecture and Interior Design for up to \$40,000. Councilor Irving seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

AUTHORIZATION TO EXTEND SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH WENAHA GROUP INCORPORATED FOR THE NEW POLICE STATION

Manager Hall reported this request for extension of services was for Wenaha Group, they are the owner's representative for the police station project. As reported earlier, the police station project is delayed due to key equipment not being expected to ship until mid-February. The Wenaha Group's services are also a crucial component to the police station project. They provide oversight, and have been on site helping research and mitigate various construction decision points on the project. Their contract extension would be \$14,164 per month, the same as the existing contractual cost, and would be extended through April 2024.

Mayor Key asked if they were on site daily.

Manager Hall stated there were on site approximately three times a week.

Councilor Reino asked if their services were still being used.

Manager Hall replied yes. She stated there was still concrete work, landscaping, fencing and the contractor was currently polishing the concrete floors and painting. She shared, like other construction projects, there have been some changes. For example, there have been changes to the card reader location, door hardware issues and there was a door in the interview that opened the wrong direction and was missing some parts.

Mayor Key asked about temporary power.

Manager Hall stated they do have temporary power and portable heat in the building. She said it has been very upsetting with the delay of the project but it was not unusual in construction projects with

the delay in materials. She shared that the City of Pendleton has a construction project underway at their water treatment plant where they are still waiting on key components of the project and it has delayed their project by over a year.

Councilor Humbert shared more details on the Pendleton water treatment plant project and the delays they are experiencing.

Manager Hall stated it was very disappointing in the delays to the police station project and the rippling effect of contract extensions. She stated the overall project was coming in under budget with approximately \$522,428 in savings and \$364,000 in contingency.

Tim Sanchez asked where the funds were coming from.

Manager Hall stated prior to the project breaking ground she wrote a grant which was granted through the State of Oregon that has helped the project.

Amber Kralman asked what the contract extension was costing.

Manager Hall stated it was \$14,164 per month, the same as the existing contractual cost.

Councilor Humbert motioned to approve the extension of the Owner's Representative Services Agreement with Wenaha for an additional four months, ending May 1, 2024. Councilor Irving seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 2536, TO CONSENT CITY OF MILTON-FREEWATER'S INCLUSION OF TERRITORY IN UMATILLA COUNTY ROAD DISTRICT

Manager Hall stated she was contacted by Umatilla County Counsel Doug Olsen with a request to consider allowing the County to include the city's city limits within a proposed Umatilla County Road District. Recent legislation change now allows the County to form a road district which allows incorporated cities within the county to be included for the sake of additional revenues to the county to assist in maintaining their county roads. Manager Hall stated Mr. Olsen has assured her, which she has in writing, that this inclusion in their road district would have no impact on the City of Milton-Freewater, would not include any request for permanent tax rate and will not result in the addition to or increase in the rate of property taxes for property owners. Manager Hall stated the city has a good working relationship with the Umatilla County Road Department for example they provide equipment for the city crew to perform crack sealing on city streets and they help with the spray program.

Councilor Reino asked if there was a request for a tax rate associated with this request.

Manager Hall replied no, the city only has one tax rate which is capped.

Councilor Reino asked if this will require the city to ask the county to do work on city roads.

Manager Hall stated no, this will have no impact on city roads.

Councilor Koklich asked if this will benefit the city and the county.

Manager Hall stated it will benefit the county.

Councilor Humbert shared how the Water Control District revenues worked.

Councilor Lyon stated the city streets are still the city streets.

Manager Hall stated when she first saw the request, she was suspicious of an impact to the city and or the citizens and that is why she asked Mr. Olsen to commit in writing that it would not. She stated the action was adoption of a resolution and it could be easily repealed.

Councilor Humbert motioned to adopt Resolution No. 2536, Resolution to Consent City of Milton-Freewater's Inclusion of Territory in Umatilla County Road District. Councilor Irving seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO APPROACH THE COUNCIL WITH ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Tim Sanchez, 102 S. Main – said the goals listed on the city website were for 2017-2022. He asked when are the 2023-2024 goals decided on.

Manager Hall stated the council set very complex goals for that time period. One of the goals was still being worked on which was the new police station building. She reviewed the goals there were listed on the wall in the Albee Room. She explained that goal setting consists of working with a goal setting facilitator which includes comprehensive planning, essentially city branding and she stated that will be best accomplished now with the new leader coming on board.

Mr. Sanchez asked why weren't the goals updated.

Manager Hall stated just because there wasn't something listed on paper that doesn't mean there isn't work being done. She explained there are limitations on what can be accomplished with funds and resources.

Mr. Sanchez stated he couldn't find the previous goals on the website.

Councilor Humbert stated the goal setting session was postponed due to the current construction project of the new police station.

Mr. Sanchez asked how could businesses be attracted when less people live here compared to three years ago.

Manager Hall stated that was not true that the city's population has decreased, it is growing. She asked Mr. Sanchez where he got his information.

Mr. Sanchez stated he Googled the Umatilla County website.

Councilor Lyon asked what page was Mr. Sanchez looking on under the Umatilla County website.

A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Sanchez asked what was being done to bring businesses to town.

Councilor Humbert stated the city was creating an environment where businesses want to be.

A brief discussion ensued regarding affordable housing, low utility rates, the expedited permitting process.

Emily Holden, 1325 College – stated that the City of Pendleton was giving out \$20,000 to new businesses and there could be more that could be done.

Emily Martin, 211 SW 12th – stated businesses were not helped during COVID other than a small amount off utilities. She said there was no disabled parking on Main and no snow removal. She shared the challenges of her disabled family member as well as her elderly clients.

Councilor Humbert stated there is handicapped parking spots on North Main, he could think of four he said.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the location of handicapped parking spots.

Councilor Lyon stated the city has recently purchased some new snow removal equipment.

Carolyn Hahn, 250 Powell Rd. – asked if the goals can be listed with a new date.

Manager Hall stated the goals can be reviewed.

Tammy Seaquist, 684 College – asked for an update on the City Manager recruitment.

Manager Hall stated the soft advertisement started in December and the hard push with the mass advertisement started January 2nd. Prothman representative Cliff Moore just gave an update and shared there had been five applications submitted so far but the first review deadline was February 4th.

John West, 712 College – asked how is the criteria set.

Manager Hall stated it was developed with the criteria set by the council and citizens from the public meetings held in November.

Councilor Koklich asked about COVID funds.

Manager Hall stated masks and gloves were handed out to businesses and along with the County, there were programs that gave out small business grants. There were also Community Development Block Grant grants in the amount of \$5,000.

Councilor Koklich asked what the money could be used for.

Manager Hall said there weren't restrictions but the application process was pretty personal in nature in that personal finances were to be disclosed. There was \$100,000 grant which had to be used in Public Health which was used to purchase aquatic center pool heaters, at the request of citizens.

Suni Danforth, 225 Maple – made a recommendation to form a Charter review committee for the city charter.

Councilor Humbert asked if there was a problem with the City Charter.

Ms. Danforth shared that there should be a requirement for department heads to live in the city and not live in another state or they should at least live within a reasonable distance from the city. She also stated there should be a requirement to have first responders live in city limits and stated that the Chief of Police should live in the city.

Councilor Lyon suggested adding the discussion of a charter review committee on the next agenda.

Manager Hall suggested having legal representation as part of a charter review committee. She stated she believed that residency requirements have been struck down in court. She said if you want your city manager to live within city limits to make that a requirement on the application. It's been guarded for the response time for the volunteer fire fighters, police and city manager. She said she would choose the best most qualified candidate possible for a position over where that candidate lived.

Mr. Westman asked what does a charter review process entail.

Manager Hall stated to do the process thoroughly you would start with the first page of the charter and work you way to the last page. It typically takes about a year for the process and if there are changes adopted by the council then it would need to be turned into a ballot measure and be placed on a ballot and voted on by the citizens.

Ms. Hahn stated the Chief of Police lives in Athena. She asked if his fuel was paid for.

Manager Hall stated he was a salary employee, is on-call 24/7 and receives no additional pay.

Kay West asked if citizens get to give input on the charter.

Manager Hall stated there would be a committee made up of 6-12 citizens appointed by the city council.

Ms. Holden shared her vision of the city. A few highlights were, she referenced youth sports, decline in school attendance despite new construction and dedicated educators, Yantis Park no longer feels safe to her to walk or run due to transient and drug users congregating there. Many parents take their children to Walla Walla for youth soccer and spend their dollars there instead of Milton-Freewater. She commended Jose Garcia with the soccer program he has created. She said she believes in the future of the community and is fortunate to be part of a group of people that feel the same way. In closing she asked for support and leadership from the city government and its leaders and encourage them to work with the citizens and help figure out the problems of Milton-Freewater.

Councilor Humbert asked Ms. Holden what she thought the role of government was.

Ms. Holden replied, the role of government was to make things possible. She then asked Councilor Humbert what the role of leadership was.

Councilor Humbert replied, to show people what is possible.

MANAGER'S REPORT – SCHEDULE WORK SESSION DATE REGARDING USAonWATCH (NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM)

Manager Hall said another Neighborhood Watch meeting was going to be scheduled because there were no volunteers from the first meeting that was held. The meeting will be in the form of a work session and a review of the graffiti ordinance along with updates of what staff is doing in regards to

graffiti will be reviewed. She stated the city has an abatement fund of \$3,000 with \$550 already being paid out to private painters for paint and supplies.

The work session was scheduled for January 22, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the Albee Room.

Mr. Sanchez asked why the work session wasn't before the current council meeting.

Manager Hall stated that some guests that staff had invited for the work session couldn't make it that date and hoping they can make it January 22nd.

Manager Hall reported that the Electric Superintendent and City Planner will be retiring effective March 1st. She announced this was her last formal city council meeting. She said she was very proud to serve the city for over 30 years. She was a Mac-Hi graduate, went away to college and lives on her family farm. She thanked the city council, department heads, co-workers, citizens and business owners.

Tammy Seaquist, 684 College – thanked Manager Hall for her service and said she was a Mac-Hi graduate and remembers her when she graduated and that she took all the awards.

Mayor Key thanked Manager Hall for her service and that 16-years was a record for serving as City Manager and he thought she was one of the top City Managers in the State.

Mayor Key and the Council honored Manager Hall with a plaque for her dedication and leadership for the past 30 plus years with the past 16 of those years serving as the City Manager.

Councilor Humbert said he had the pleasure of hiring Manager Hall and that what he liked most about her was her honesty and loyalty.

Councilor Lyon said in the short time as city councilor he could tell that the city meant everything to Manager Hall.

Councilor Irving commended the public works crew for the diligent job of picking up leaves on his street, going back and forth until they were all picked up and appreciated the no-charge Christmas tree pickup. He stated the city was very fortunate and blessed and thanked the city staff.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Lewis S. Key, Mayor