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**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

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**CITY OF MILTON-FREEWATER  
CITY COUNCIL MINUTES****February 12, 2024**

The Council of the City of Milton-Freewater met in regular session on February 12, 2024 in the Albee Room of the City Library, 8 SW 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue at 7:00 p.m.

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

Councilor Brad Humbert was absent.

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

Guests and citizens present were: Julie Culjack, Dave Prock, Maryelizabeth Garcia, Kevin Smith, Donna Sheridan, Theron Sheridan, Patty Key, Suni Danforth, Cindy Timmons, Kelly Hahn, Carolyn Hahn, Arlen Calley, Emily Holden, Tillie Makepeace, Danny Sanchez, Vickie Becker, Randy Reese, Joyce Kalesse, Kay West, Emily Martin, Ryan Westman, JeanAnn Mitchell, Michella Moore, Cliff Carson, Markie McRae, Jacque Fox and Dave Fox.

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

**UPDATE FROM CLIFF MOORE OF PROTHMAN ON THE CITY MANAGER  
RECRUITMENT**

Cliff Moore of Prothman called into the conference phone to give an update on the city manager recruitment. He reported there were seventeen applications received with one applicant withdrawing due to accepting another position. His early pre-screening showed approximately eight possible applicants that met the qualifications of the job profile. He explained the next step in the process was to schedule a meeting with the council where he would review with the council those applicants and for the council to decide on the number of applicants to formally interview. He suggested having a public reception which would allow the chance for citizens to meet the candidates. Interviews would be the following day with two panels, one panel would be the city council and the other panel would be made up of community stakeholders and staff. Mr. Moore suggested having a draft agreement written up to present to the chosen applicant. He asked if there were questions about the process and there were no council or audience questions.

**CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS:**

The consent calendar items consisted of:

- Council minutes from January 8, 2023
- Accounts Payable January 3, 2024 – January 16, 2024
- Accounts Payable January 17, 2024 – February 5, 2024

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

## **BUSINESS ITEMS:**

### **REQUEST FROM MILTON-FREEWATER CHAMBER DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE FOR AN INCREASE IN THE PERCENTAGE OF THE TRANSIENT TAX REVENUES THEY RECEIVE**

Milton-Freewater Chamber Downtown Alliance (MFCDA) President Kevin Smith and MFCDA Executive Director Maryelizabeth Garcia approached the council with a request for an increase in the percentage amount of the city's transient tax revenues. The city has a transient tax ordinance in place which imposes an 8% tax on the gross revenues of all rentals of hotel, motel, short term RV space, bed and breakfasts, and vacation rental homes inside the city limits. Of the total received, the city currently sends 25% to the Chamber (MFCDA), which is set in the annual budget. Mr. Smith, on behalf of the MFCDA requested a 12.5% increase for a total of 37.5% of the total of the tax received. He stated MFCDA would be grateful for the city to consider this increase or another consideration was to increase the percent of the transient tax and each entity continue to retain the current percentage. He recommended the tax go from 8% to 9%.

Councilor Lyon asked if increasing the transient tax to 9% would get the MFCDA where they wanted to be.

Mr. Smith stated that by increasing the transient tax rate from 8% to 9%, it would get them approximately a 12.5% increase in revenue and that was essentially what they were asking for.

Councilor Koklich stated he appreciated the work that MFCDA is putting in.

Councilor Irving disclosed that his wife was a volunteer with MFCDA and asked if anyone had any opposition of him voting on the agenda item.

There was no opposition to Councilor Irving's disclosure and in regards to him retaining his vote.

Councilor Lyon motioned to direct staff to explore revising the Transient Tax Ordinance for Council Consideration potentially increasing the percentage assessed to 9%. Councilor Irving seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### **APPOINTMENTS TO ADVISORY COMMITTEES; LIBRARY BOARD, BUDGET COMMITTEE AND RECREATION COMMITTEE**

Mayor Key stated he was recommending Tricia Perez be appointed to the Library Board for a 3-yr term, Emily Holden to the Budget Committee for a 3-yr term and George Gillette, Ryan Westman and Danny Sanchez be appointed to the Recreation Committee for 4-year terms.

A discussion ensued regarding whether or not to go back out for another round of advertising for the remaining openings/vacancies on the advisory committees.

There was a consensus of the city council to re-advertise for the vacant positions.

Emily Martin made a request to have the advertisement in Spanish.

Councilor Lyon motioned to appoint the names recommended by the Mayor to the respective board and committees. Councilor Garcia seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### **MILTON-FREEWATER CHARTER REVIEW**

Assistant City Manager/City Recorder (ACM/CR) Leanne Steadman stated that there was a citizen request for the city council to consider a formal review of the Milton-Freewater Charter. This had been brought up twice and she stated it was placed on the agenda for the council to discuss.

Councilor Lyon suggested the action be tabled until such time that a new city manager was in place.

Councilor Irving agreed with Councilor Lyon.

Suni Danforth, 225 Maple Ave. – suggested that work could still be done like getting a real estimate of attorney fees and start a review committee.

Councilor Irving again stated that he wanted to wait until the new city manager was in place and then it could be addressed at that point.

There was a council consensus to wait until a new city manager was in place to consider whether or not a Charter review was necessary.

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

Clifton Carson, NE 6<sup>th</sup> & Ward – spoke about his interest in the Neighborhood watch program and inquired when the meeting would be rescheduled.

ACM/CR Leanne Steadman stated the Neighborhood Watch meeting will still happen just at a later date.

### **COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councilor Reino inquired about filling the City Councilor Youth Representative position.

ACM/CR Steadman stated that it had been a while since there was a youth representative. Councilor Irving has attempted to spark interest in this in the past by speaking to high school classes. Steadman's recommendation was to work on a youth representative packet and have both Councilors Reino and Irving present it to the Milton-Freewater Unified School District Superintendent for a student recommendation to apply for the position. She also suggested starting this in August at the beginning of the new school year.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

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Lewis S. Key, Mayor