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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 - WORK SESSION MINUTES**

**April 8, 2024**

The Council of the City of Milton-Freewater met in a work session on April 8, 2024 in the Albee Room of the City Library, 8 SW 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue at 6:00 p.m.

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

Councilor Jose Garcia was absent.

Staff members present were: Assistant City Manager/City Recorder Leanne Steadman, Police Chief Joe Shurtz, Detective James Farr, Sergeant Anthony Martinez and Code Enforcement Officer Jason Schaffner.

Guests and citizens present were: Paul Seaquist, Tammy Seaquist, Randy Reese, Suni Danforth, Marelu Greco, Kenneth Jenkins, Krista Gannon, Kasia Losacono, Emily Holden, Donna Sheridan, Arlen Calley, Ryan Westman, Gail Beeson, Patty Key and Laurie Bubar.

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

**WORK SESSION**

**USAonWatch (also known as Neighborhood Watch), Review of City Code – Chapter 10 Graffiti Control and Explanation of NEW Graffiti Abatement Program**

Chief Joe Shurtz stated he was looking to gain volunteers for the USAonWatch program which is also known as Neighborhood Watch. This was his second attempt at getting a program started in Milton-Freewater. A Neighborhood Watch program is a group of people living in the same area who want to make their neighborhood safer by working together and in conjunction with local law enforcement to reduce crime and improve their quality of life.

The discussion centered around how many volunteers were needed, availability of grants for signs and literature and the boundary of the program.

Next item discussed was a current city code regarding graffiti. Chief Shurtz referred to the code language.

The discussion centered around the penalty language and the possibility of increasing the penalty fine amount, having a stair step penalty schedule for non-responsible property owners and the possibility of offering a reward for leads to the arrest and conviction of any person found guilty in the acts of graffiti.

Chief Shurtz then presented a new program which will involve partnering with Fry's True Value Hardware. He stated he got the idea from the City of Pendleton who currently offers the program.

How it will work is if you are a victim of graffiti on your property, you can now get a form from the Code Enforcement Officer that will allow you to go to Fry's True Value, the local hardware store, present the form and you will receive paint and paint supplies if needed at no cost to you. The City of Milton-Freewater has funds set aside to assist victims of graffiti. The goal is to help alleviate some of the costs to property owners who have been victimized by graffiti.

Paul Seaquist provided a hand-out that listed other options for graffiti removal to consider if the new program that Chief Shurtz presented is not successful.

There was no other discussion on the work session topics so the Mayor called the regular city council meeting to order.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS:**

The consent calendar items consisted of:

- Council minutes from March 11, 2024
- Council Special Session Meeting Minutes, March 26, 2024
- Executive Session Minutes, March 26, 2024
- Accounts Payable March 5<sup>th</sup> – March 19, 2024
- Accounts Payable March 20<sup>th</sup> – March 29, 2024

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

### **OLD BUSINESS ITEM:**

### **ORDINANCE NO. 997, SECOND READING AND ADOPTION – ORDINANCE AMENDING THE TRANSIENT TAX PERCENTAGE RATE**

The council introduced and held the first reading of Ordinance No. 997 at the March 11, 2024 meeting.

Councilor Humbert moved that Ordinance No. 997 be introduced by title only and full reading waived. Councilor Irving seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Assistant City Manager Leanne Steadman read the ordinance by title. Councilor Lyon moved to adopt Ordinance No. 997, an Ordinance Repealing Ordinance No. 982, and Re-establishing the Transient Room Tax. Councilor Humbert seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The ordinance will take effect July 1, 2024.

### **NEW BUSINESS ITEMS:**

### **APPOINTMENTS TO ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

Mayor Key stated there were two more advisory committee applications received and he was recommending that Julie Culjak be appointed to the Budget Committee for a 2-yr term and Jacque Barthel-Fox be appointed to the Recreation Committee for a 4-yr term. He announced that no more advisory committee applications will be accepted and that the regular procedure of advertising for openings and vacancies in November/December will resume.

Councilor Lyon motioned to appoint Julie Culjak to the Budget Committee for a 2-yr term and Jacque Barthel Fox to the Recreation Committee for a 4-yr term per Mayor Key's recommendation. Councilor Humbert seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### **ADOPTION OF CITY MANAGER AGREEMENT**

Assistant City Manager Leanne Steadman presented the City Manager Agreement which reflected the terms negotiated by the City Council and Charles (Chad) Morris who was selected as the next City Manager.

Councilor Humbert motioned to appoint Charles (Chad) Morris as the City Manager in accordance with the City Manager Employment Agreement and authorize the Mayor to sign the contract. Councilor Lyon seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

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

Suni Danforth, 225 Maple – announced there would be a Candidate Forum at the Community Building on April 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

### **COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councilor Lyon asked for an update on the Robbins Street project and water tower project.

Ms. Steadman stated the contractors were going to be on site April 15, 2024 for the Robbin Street reconstruction project and the city was invited to apply for the Community Development Block Grant (CDGB) for the water improvement system project and that application was moving forward.

Councilor Koklich asked about the motorhome that caught fire by Sykes.

Chief Shurtz stated the motorhome was a complete loss and it cost the city \$1,500 for a tow company to haul it away. Public Works crew had to finishing cleaning up the rest of the debris left behind on the sidewalk and street after the tow company left. He reported that the Fire Chief contacted the abutting property owner to inquire about security cameras to see if there was any indication of how the motorhome caught fire. There were no cameras in the area.

A discussion ensued regarding insurance requirements for an active traffic stop versus a parked vehicle.

Emily Holden asked if it was legal for cars using black garbage bags in their windows.

Chief Shurtz stated if it was a passenger car, no it was not legal, but if it was an SUV or Van, it could be construed as “tinting”.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

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Lewis S. Key, Mayor