

**Public Works Committee
Minutes of
February 3, 2016**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jason Leonard on February 3, 2016, at 3:00 p.m. at City Hall, 980 Applegate Street, Philomath.

ROLL CALL:

Committee: Councilors Jason Leonard, Eric Niemann, and Doug Edmonds

Staff: City Manager Chris Workman, Public Works Director Kevin Fear, Public Works Operations Supervisor Garry Black, Finance Director Joan Swanson, City Arborist/Public Works Utility Worker Lige Weedman, and City Recorder Ruth Post

MINUTES:

MOTION: Councilor Edmonds moved, Councilor Niemann second, to approve the minutes of the January 7 and January 12, 2016, meetings with scrivener's corrections. Motion APPROVED 3-0.

TREE BOARD BUSINESS:

Tree removal – 275 S 15th Street – Mr. Black reported that the homeowner at 275 S 15th Street requested that the three trees be removed due to buckling of the sidewalk and substantial pruning by the power company. He stated that these are City owned trees. Mr. Black had City Arborist Lige Weedman examine the trees. Mr. Weedman described the trees and reported on their health. Mr. Black described relocating the sidewalk at the curb after removal of the trees and before planting of new trees. There was discussion about removal of the stumps. Mr. Weedman stated these are a large tree species and the excessive pruning is resulting in them splitting at the top. Mr. Black stated the quote is between \$5,500 and \$6,000 to remove the trees and repair the sidewalk. He added that the wood will be donated to a local organization. Mr. Weedman stated the homeowner likes the trees but understands the issues caused by them. Mr. Black explained the plans for replacement of the trees and noted that the homeowner already has a tree in the front yard. He stated the City will perform the removal in-house to save money. There was discussion about getting quotes or keeping it in-house. Mr. Black noted that Mr. Weedman is a certified arborist and can perform the work in the course of his duties at Public Works.

MOTION: Councilor Edmonds moved, Councilor Niemann second, to have the trees that are identified as causing a hazard to be removed. Motion approved 3-0.

Tree removal – Westbrook Park – Mr. Black described the tree at Westbrook Park that staff recommends be removed. He stated that originally there was another tree next to it that fell in a storm. Mr. Weedman described the health of the tree and the damage around the base of the tree. There was discussion about the health of the tree and the stress placed on the tree because the other tree is no longer there. Mr. Black noted that the tree is approximately five feet from the curb and would need to be removed to install a sidewalk.

MOTION: Councilor Niemann moved, Councilor Edmonds second, to have the tree that is identified at Westbrook Park removed. Motion approved 3-0.

There was discussion about donation of the wood to local charities.

Other Business – None.

PUBLIC WORKS BUSINESS:

Water and Sewer Rate Discussion – Ms. Swanson reviewed the water and sewer rate comparison in the packet. She noted the rates provided are current rates. She explained the long-standing philosophy to keep base rates low so as to have as little negative impact on fixed income residents as possible. She stated that every city in the area is unique in terms of the age of their systems and expenses associated with their systems and it shows in the range of rates. She recommended no change to the water rates for fiscal year 2016-17 but reminded the Committee that there are major needs in the future for the water supply system and the need to save for those projects.

In the sewer rates, Ms. Swanson described the difference between the proposals of a \$1.60 increase to the base rate as a cost of living increase versus a \$7.00 increase to make progress towards the Council goal of replacement of failing 1952 sewer pipes. She stated this was a matter for the Council to weigh impact on customers against the needs of the system.

Ms. Swanson next discussed upcoming problems with the City's general fund due to lack of substantial growth during the recession years. She described the delay between starting to have growth in the tax base and actually having increased property tax revenues; however, in the meanwhile, General Fund revenues are not keeping pace with expenses. She suggested moving one of the franchise fees such as Comcast from the Street Fund to the General Fund but noted this will have a negative impact on Street Fund revenues. To compensate for this, she recommended increasing the street utility fee for residential customers from \$2 per month to \$4 per month.

Mr. Fear described impacts of increased DEQ regulations and reporting requirements associated with storm water management. Ms. Swanson explained her recommendation of increasing the storm drain fee by fifty cents. She reviewed the sewer fund status and the effect of a 1.57% sewer rate increase versus a 6.8% increase. A 1.57% increase would have a net impact of \$75,000 towards the 1952 sewer pipe replacement and a 6.8% increase would enable the City to replace \$200,000 in 1952 pipe. Mr. Fear stated \$200,000 would pay to replace approximately 750 feet of pipe. The Committee reviewed the map of sewer pipe and the locations of the remaining 1952 pipe. Councilor Niemann noted that this project would be piecemealed forever if the City doesn't apply some significant dollars towards it. There was discussion about ways to line and replace newer pipe if it fails.

Ms. Swanson stated that her goal was to keep the increase as reasonable as possible. Councilor Edmonds described concerns with the ongoing maintenance created by constantly replacing pipe. Ms. Swanson emphasized the preferred plan to set aside funds to pay for projects in the future but the lack of growth for several years has impacted that. Mr. Fear described the effect of a lack of maintenance in the end and the value of the City adding a sewer TV camera to its equipment to stay on top of areas that are failing. Councilor Edmonds contrasted always replacing a certain amount of pipe each year versus replacing all of it at once. Councilor Niemann questioned if it is financially feasible to replace all of the 1952 pipe. There was discussion about the current status of falling behind. Ms. Swanson suggested that a rate increase associated with replacing all or most of the pipe would be too high. Mr. Workman described the prioritization of projects and the coordination of improvements between sewer lines and street improvements. He suggested focusing on obtaining the camera and performing a complete inventory to ensure that the funds are designated where they are most needed. Mr. Fear described the positive impact of replacing a section of pipe and reducing the inflow and

infiltration and that this results in less expense to pump the flow in the sewer system during heavy rain events.

Councilor Edmonds suggested not focusing on the 1952 pipe as much as replacing pipe that is failing, irrespective of what year it is. Ms. Swanson explained the effect on the base revenue by subsequent annual increases and the philosophy of always having a cost of living increase.

Ms. Swanson stated that the Public Works Committee will make a recommendation to the City Council for inclusion on the March City Council agenda. The Committee discussed the balance of governing and hard decisions regarding raising rates.

MOTION: Councilor Niemann moved, Councilor Leonard second, to forward to the City Council an increase of \$7.00 in sewer base fee, \$2.00 in street fee and \$0.50 in storm drain fee for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Motion approved 3-0.

CIP Discussion – Ms. Swanson reviewed the proposed Capital Improvement Plan, beginning with the Equipment Schedule. She stated there are no equipment changes in the Water Fund and the Wastewater Fund includes the addition of a sewer TV camera. There was discussion about the benefit of having a camera to identify problem areas in a timely manner. Mr. Fear described the benefit of being able to TV pipe while it is still under the 1-year warranty from developers.

Ms. Swanson stated there is no new equipment proposed in the Street Fund and play equipment at Triangle Park has been added to the Park Fund equipment. There was discussion about the status of the street sweeper and mowers. Ms. Swanson reminded the Committee that Public Works takes good care of their equipment; and if equipment is still in good repair, it will be kept longer than the schedule indicates.

Ms. Swanson reviewed the Facility Improvement Schedule. She noted that the police building roof needs to be replaced and will be completed before the end of this fiscal year. She explained that city hall, the library and police building are funded through the General Fund; and the public works building is funded through the various public works funds.

In the Water Infrastructure Improvement Schedule, Ms. Swanson explained the combination of reserve funds and system development charges used to fund projects. She described the large projects on the list and stated that the replacement of the North 12th Street water line has been identified as a potential project for next year. Mr. Fear described the 4-inch water line in existence and the potential for the independent road district to upgrade the street to city standards. He explained the issues with fire protection and supply in providing service to the number of homes on that street and the benefit of putting that pipe in the ground before the road district makes surface improvements. He stated the replacement would be a 10 inch line.

In the Sewer Infrastructure Improvement Schedule, Ms. Swanson described a proposed \$249,000 project to replace 1952 sewer pipe. She explained that street infrastructure projects are coordinated to ensure that all water and sewer projects in those streets have been completed prior to improving street surfaces.

On the Storm Drain Infrastructure Improvement Schedule, Ms. Swanson noted that unanticipated costs in the 2013 Applegate Street reconstruction project results in \$17,700 in negative cash carryover that will be covered in interest income. There are no projects anticipated in the storm drain schedule. In the Bike Path/Footpath Infrastructure Improvement

Schedule, she described a project to light the Hunsaker Trail from Applegate to James Streets. Mr. Fear described the use of ground mounted lighting to improve safety and extend usability of the path without impacting the homes along the trail. Councilor Edmonds voiced concerns about the ongoing maintenance that projects create and the challenge of funding for that maintenance. Ms. Swanson agreed with the challenge that these projects create and cited the new Kugler Hall as a prime example. There was discussion as to how this relates to the City's Mission Statement.

Councilor Edmonds stated he would like to see the impact on the general fund of maintaining new improvements. Mr. Fear described improvements in efficiencies created by installation of the radio read meters as one example of a project that reduced overall costs. Mr. Black described additional projects that can now be accomplished because of staff freed up from meter reading.

MOTION: Councilor Edmonds moved, Councilor Leonard second, to forward the Capital Improvement Plan to the City Council as presented. Motion approved 3-0.

Discussion and forward Park Master Plan to the City Council for approval – Mr. Fear stated that the amendments requested at the January 12 meeting have been incorporated.

MOTION: Councilor Niemann moved, Councilor Edmonds second, to approve the Park Master Plan as amended and forward to the City Council for adoption. Motion approved 3-0.

Discussion on Main Street median plans – Mr. Fear reviewed the work presented by a citizen group to remove and restructure the medians located on Main Street. He noted the lack of water in most of the medians and the maintenance costs associated with weeding. He stated that the current request is to move forward with removal of the plants in the medians. Mr. Black described the priority of doing the 21st and 15th Street medians due to sight distance issues. Mr. Fear described clearing the plants out in coming weeks and possibly having some of the replanting underway by Fall 2016. He stated that the current medians have been a maintenance nightmare.

MOTION: Councilor Edmonds moved, Councilor Niemann second, to have the Public Works Department move forward with plant removal in the medians. Motion approved 3-0.

Yellow curbing 2000 block Applegate Street – Mr. Fear described the concerns received from the Philomath Connection bus driver regarding cars parking at the curb at Philomath High School at that bus stop and the need to extend the yellow "no parking" curb painting on the north side of Applegate Street.

MOTION: Councilor Niemann moved, Councilor Leonard second, to approve yellow painted curb at the north side of the high school bus stop. Motion approved 3-0.

Meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.