

**CITY OF JOHN DAY
CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
JOHN DAY, OREGON**

February 08, 2022

COUNCILORS PRESENT:

Ron Lundbom, Mayor
Shannon Adair
Heather Rookstool
Elliot Sky (virtual)
David Holland

COUNCILORS ABSENT:

Gregg Haberly

CITY STAFF PRESENT:

Nicholas Green

CITY STAFF (VIRTUAL):

Aaron Lieuallen

GUESTS PRESENT (IN-PERSON):

John Rowell
Bennett Hall, Blue Mountain Eagle
Judy Schuette
Sherrie Rininger
Jeanette Radinovich
Frances Preston

GUESTS PRESENT (VIRTUAL):

Ann
Caller
Christ Labhart
Dawn DeGrande
Logan Bagette, KJDY
Anonymous
Jim Spell
Louis
Roberta Fox
Morris

Agenda Item No. 1— OPEN AND NOTE ATTENDANCE

Mayor Lundbom called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., noting everyone was present.

Agenda Item No. 2— APPROVAL OF PRIOR MINUTES

None presented.

Agenda Item No. 3— APPEARANCE OF INTERESTED CITIZENS

Mayor Lundbom asked if anyone was appearing regarding an item not on the agenda. Mr. Rowell asked about his request for the City to put additional information on the city website about the progress of the treatment plant. Green said its on his list but is not up yet.

Action Item No. 4— CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

None presented.

Action Item No. 5 STRAW-TO-GOLD PRESENTATIO (7:01:30 p.m.)

Straw-to-Gold presented two videos and other digital content they are developing for the www.DiscoverJohnDay.com website. They presented the “merit badge” concept for stickers or badges that residents and visitors could get after visiting local area attractions (currently about 15 badges have been created). They provided examples of four of these to councilors and the audience. They discussed the status of the website launching this spring. They also discussed the segmentation of John Day’s resident base for purposes of communications into four categories: Open Locals, Oldtimers, Youth Audience, and New Prospectors, and described personality traits and interests associated with each. The team reviewed four or five “activations” that they were recommending the council consider as community development actions to help bring awareness to John Day and bring the community together. These activations were: (1) Main Street from Cyberspace, with the goal to apply best practices for online search, maps and more, helping to draw new traffic to local businesses; (2) the Lore of John Day, with the goal to respect and explore the living memories of the region and to capture these stories for future generations; (3) 4-H Animal Influencers, with the goal to encourage critical thinking and teach media production and social marketing tools for youth related to their animals; (4) Self-Pitch CoEd Softball League, with the goal of creating four adult softball teams and playing an eight game season to encourage a sense of town pride carried through local softball team brands and sportsmanship spirit; and (5) Sultry Domestic Arts, which emphasizes the greenhouse and bring locals with shared tastes together to swap knowledge, and a bite.

Council discussed their interest in pursuing the implementations and asked the city manager to get cost estimates for each one that could be reviewed during the budget committee process.

Action Item No. 6— AQUATICS CENTER FINANCING AND Q&A (7:38 p.m.)

Green reviewed the status of the financing agreement with D.A. Davidson, which would bridge the lottery bond grants until 2023 and allow the Parks & Recreation District and City to go into construction this spring on the pool. He said he would present their engagement letter for the interim financing placement at the next council meeting, which is about \$20,000, and we would have some legal costs from bond counsel and interest on the note. These are costs we would occur in the event council chooses to pursue interim financing and they would not be recovered through the grant funds but would allow construction to begin this year. He updated council on the status of the grant agreement with the Dept. of Administrative Services and that both the City and District would be listed as recipients, the City due to receiving the state appropriation and the District for ongoing operations and maintenance costs. He noted statements made in the letter sent to the council by Mr. Morris (that council asked Green to address tonight) indicated the District board expected to be a beneficiary of the grant, and Green confirmed that is true. He also agreed with some statements Mr. Morris made related to the complexity and rigidity of the land use development and public hearings process. He said he disagreed with other statements made by Mr. Morris in his letter to council, specifically allegations that the city misled the state legislature in the request for funding and that no meetings had been held to discuss the pool. Green reviewed his original request to the legislature from March 2021 (in the packet agenda) that clearly stated a bond would need to be issued and the pool would be subject to land use review. Green said that statement was accurate then and it is still accurate today. He also pointed out that half a dozen meetings had been held by the city council and parks district to discuss the pool and each of these constitutes a public meeting. He further noted many other statements in the letter that

were biased, inaccurate or unfair we would just have to agree to disagree and move on. He reiterated the City and District's intent was to allow voters to vote on a pool, which has never happened, and that is democracy in action. No resident has ever been given the chance to vote. He clarified in 2020, various city councils declined to participate in an aquatics center taxing district and that proposal died when they declined. When they city said they would not revisit that subject, it was in reference to the formation of a new aquatics taxing district, not replacing the pool, which has been a council and community priority for years. Green reviewed the timeline for the May 17 ballot measure, which is the responsibility of the Parks & Recreation District, and will go to voters within their District boundaries for the capital construction cost of a new pool. Green said his intent is to bring a package of information to the council at the next meeting for a decision on whether to proceed on the interim financing and that he recommended a joint meeting of the District board and city council.

Council concurred with holding the joint meeting.

Action Item No. 7— 2021 COPS GRANT AWARD - JOHN DAY (7:47 p.m.)

Green updated the council on the status of the COPS grant award, noting a new program officer has been assigned to replace the prior one who resigned. He said they had ideas for us but he was unable to connect with them prior to the meeting. He said there is some language in the grant that could potentially allow it to be transferred but their initial response was that it is non-transferrable. Green said he did anticipate layoffs and did submit under the Re-hire category, which would allow us to fill the positions with new or prior staff, but there are federal guidelines that are complicated and he will need to get more information. Councilor Rookstool asked if we had heard anything more from Commissioner Palmer, Mayor Lundbom indicated he had not.

Agenda Item No. 8— OTHER BUSINESS & UPCOMING MEETINGS (7:48 p.m.)

Budget committee. Green updated council on the budget committee timelines and process. He noted department heads had already submitted their department budgets and he was working on the capital outlay budget. He also noted we had a decent surplus of personnel funding due to not backfilling vacant positions. He updated council that both the Receptionist/Secretary and Sr. Account Clerk have now been filled with full-time employees.

GRO Coordinator/Community Development Director. Green mentioned to council he had final candidates (one local, one remote) for the GRO Coordinator/Community Development Director position. He reminded council that staffing decisions are the City Manager's, by charter, but he won't be the City Manager for most of this role's tenure, which is a five-year position. He said he's torn between local and remote and the varying skillsets and aptitudes they could bring to the role. Council concurred with his recommendation to have a meet and greet with the finalists to get to know them and reiterated they would support whatever decision the City Manager made.

Senior Planner. Green also discussed the complexity of the land use planning process and that he felt the city was at a crossroads. We either need to plan for growth, and staff for growth, or not. And if we were going to plan for growth, we need to decouple the Chief Planning Official role from the City Manager job description because there are just too many applications and they are too complex for one person to administer. Councilor Holland agreed, noting that under prior managers, there just weren't a lot of projects. The City's budget has grown significantly and there's too much work for one or even two people. He also pointed out one of the positions (CDD/GRO) is partly funded by The Ford Family

Foundation and the other Planning role was budgeted for but has been vacant for several months. He stated if we fill three different positions, we're not really adding any but one. This isn't a three-times increase in city personnel. We're down staff that are budgeted and paid for but we just don't have them. He felt we should take advantage of the situation and look at filling all three positions. Councilor Adair and Mayor Lundbom said they agreed. Green noted he's getting 2-3 new applications per week, and Oregon's statutory limit is 120 days to resolve those – including appeals. Given the number of days of notice required for each one, plus the city projects that require land use review and public facilities reviews like the treatment plant, result in an increased workload – at least for the next two years he does not see it slowing down. We have 100 homesites already approved through land use review for construction and about 100 more in the urban growth area in pre-application. That's what we've been working for, private sector investment, but we need to be prepared to be a good partner and process these applications efficiently. Holland pointed out the state also got in a bind on issuing building permits and were 3-4 months backlogged, and we don't need to be in that position if we can avoid it. Green said he would revise the city manager's job description to state they will oversee planning staff rather than being directly responsible for it.

City Manager Recruitment. Council discussed the city manager recruitment and grant applications in the queue and Councilor Rookstool noted the current workload will probably seem overwhelming to new city manager applicants. Green said he wanted the projects he started to finish strong and would be willing to talk with the council about working on them after he leaves his current role. Council discussed the hiring procedures for the new city manager and general terms for that process, including the option of hiring a recruiter. Green said he didn't see a lot of value for the cost and he recommended we look at adopting our own approach, perhaps with a communications firm that could help us with the messaging around our community and what's happening at this very exciting moment when we're going to be spending a million dollars a month for the next 2-3 years. He said he is trying to get these funds under contract before the end of June and recommended bringing a playbook and schedule to the meeting on February 22nd, with some non-traditional approaches to recruiting the next city manager. Green noted we are competing in a very difficult labor market and it's definitely an employee's market. He said he has not seen a city manager position advertised anywhere in Oregon for less than \$125,000 a year. He recommended we get to a pool of really solid candidates, 3-4 if we can, and then evaluate compensation. Holland reiterated his statement about hiring local, he values the input of local people, but he wants to make sure the candidates are qualified and can actually do the work regardless of where they're from.

Budget Reports. Council discussed the budget reports. Green said he forgot to tell Lindy to send the reports to council and that was a miscommunication on his part. He said he would ensure once a month the council was emailed the budget documents. Council discussed pros and cons of posting them online and the consensus was not to publish them online because it's a confusing report for the public and could potentially generate calls that staff didn't have the time to answer. Green noted the public has an opportunity to comment on the budget during the budget process, and the annual audits, and he would recommit to reviewing the financial status of each project quarterly. He also pointed out that he can't approve a contract valued at more than \$25,000, so council will see and approve most of the contracts for goods and services we approve. Holland reiterated it's not a matter of not wanting the public to know it, it's a matter of the public generally not understanding public-sector financing, but the report is always available to anyone who wants to see it. Green pointed out the city has cultivated a high-level of trust with our lenders and financiers and it's important to develop that same level of trust with the new city leadership team. We've never defaulted on anything, we've never had any of our financial management questioned, there's never been a legitimate complaint of any kind, and we need to continue that.

Councilor Rookstool asked about the vacant council position. Green noted Chris Labhart is the only applicant thus far. Green said his intent was to leave the position open until the end of February and have council make an appointment at the March 8 council meeting. He said they have advertised it on the radio and on the city website and Facebook.

Mr. Rowell asked if planning delays were going to cause issues for the City's projects. Green said not with respect to the local planning process since our facilities fall under a Public Facilities (PF) overlay in the code. But, the demand across the state for housing would likely slow down building permits due to an increased need for plan reviews at the state level. Council discussed the value of having a local building official capable of doing plan reviews and inspections. Green said it's possible to regionalize it but knowing when and how to scale staff is a challenge, but he said we do need to discuss regional capacity building around housing.

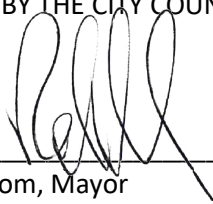
Councilor Adair discussed in general terms the surveys that had come back on downtown investments and she said it has gone out to about 50 emails. The survey is related to downtown improvements, The Pit Stop, parking and other needs, including how best to spend any city funds on downtown improvements. Green said he'd like to match \$200,000 in local investment with \$200,000 in ask from the Oregon Main Street Revitalization Grant, to give us \$400,000 total to invest in façade improvements, lighting, accessibility, signage and architectural features. He said he'd like to put about \$500,000 in reserve for parking and sidewalks, and about \$250,000 into landscaping and site improvements to connect downtown to Kam Wah Chung and Kam Wah Chung to the riverfront. He noted Ray Field has been doing a lot of this work for the city on other projects and with all the reclaimed water we are going to have, he really wants to showcase what we can do with that water. He pointed out that most people don't know the largest reclaimed water project in the country is the San Antonio Riverwalk, which is about 250 million gallons a day of reclaimed water and in summer months most of the water in the river is treated wastewater. Green said that our 250,000 gallons a day pales in comparison, but it amounts to about a million gallons per acre per year on the properties the city owns. He'd like to see us capture the value of that for local tourism and recreational developments. He said the concept being pursued at the state level is One Water, which is the idea that all water, whether fresh, storm, or waste, is part of the same system, and he feels the city has a tremendous opportunity for biohabitat restoration along the riverfront and dredge-mined areas the city has purchased and reclaimed – both the mile-long stretch of the John Day River and also the area around Canyon Creek. He also pointed out in discussions with Ray that we have a lot of old trees in the city, and many are overgrown. It's expensive to cut them down, and people don't want to cut them down, but they delay until it becomes an incipient hazard. Green said the city could create a program to incentivize homeowners to deal with those trees sooner but offering incentives to deal with them and to replace them versus going through code enforcement and fining our residents for having hazardous trees. This would allow us to incrementally deal with it rather than waiting until it becomes a problem.

Councilor Holland moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. Councilor Adair seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted:

Nicholas Green, City Manager

ACCEPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON FEBRUARY 22, 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ron Lundbom', is written over a horizontal line.

Ron Lundbom, Mayor