
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 10, 2022**

The Council of the City of Milton-Freewater met in regular session on January 10, 2022 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, Damien Reino, Jose Garcia, Steve Irving, and Brad Humbert.

Absent was Councilor Wes Koklich.

Staff members present were City Manager Linda Hall, and Public Works Superintendent Brian Steadman.

Citizens and guests present were Suni Danforth, Tammy Jones, Nick Jones, Christy Badgett, Mark Driver, Ryan Westman and Cindy Timmons.

Representing the press were Sherrie Widmer of the Valley Herald and Sheila Hagar of the Union Bulletin.

Prior to any action being taken, the Manager asked the Council for an exemption to the audio recording of the meeting due to malfunction of the current system, which is almost 30 years old.

The exemption was granted.

CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS:

The consent calendar items consisted of:

- Council minutes from December 13, 2021
- Accounts Payable December 8-20, 2021
- Accounts Payable December 21-January 4, 2022
- Liquor License Application From Harry & David LLC

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

BUSINESS ITEMS:

First considered were the Mayor's recommendations for appointments to various advisory committees.

The Mayor stated he was recommending Frank Millar be reappointed to the Planning Commission for a 4 year term, Laurel Estes be reappointed to the Library Board for a 4 year term, Mike Charlo be appointed to the Budget Committee for a 3 year term and Ryan Westman be appointed to the Recreation Committee for a 2 year term.

Councilor Irving commented the appointments looked good to him, and motioned that the Council approve all the Mayor's recommendations for the committees. Councilor Lyon seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the authorization of an agreement with the YMCA to provide staffing services for the 2022 season of the City's aquatic center.

Public Works Superintendent Brian Steadman stated that the city has had a very successful relationship with the YMCA providing lifeguarding staff for our aquatic center and this year we would like to expand the agreement so the YMCA provides all the staffing, lifeguarding plus the concession stand and front counter staffing. It will continue to save the city money—it is estimated this will save approximately \$12,000 over the previous arrangement. The total cost of the staffing proposal for the entire season would be \$120,425.54.

Councilor Reino asked if not having the pool be open over the Labor Day weekend was saving a lot of money.

Mr. Steadman replied that it saved a little money, true, but the real reason was that the attendance was extremely low during that weekend and the cost of the staffing did not justify the extension of the season with that extreme low attendance.

Councilor Humbert motioned to adopt Resolution No. 2476, Resolution Authorizing Signature to an Agreement with Walla Walla YMCA for lifeguarding services, general administrative and concessions for the City's Aquatic Center 2022 season. Councilor Irving seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Next considered was the authorization of an agreement with Oregon Department of Transportation to construct ADA (American with Disabilities Act) compliant curb ramps on ODOT jurisdiction areas within the City limits.

Public Works Superintendent Brian Steadman reported that this agreement had been very carefully reviewed and evaluated by him and his staff. They had made some recommendations to the State to have many of the current ramps closed, but all but six of those recommendations had been denied.

Councilor Humbert motioned to adopt Resolution No. 2477, Resolution Authorizing Signature to Cooperative Improvement Agreement No. 35254 with the State of Oregon acting by and through its Department of Transportation. Councilor Irving seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Next considered was the purchase of a replacement pick-up truck for the public works operations.

The Public Works Superintendent reported that staff was seeking approval to purchase a 2022 Dodge Ram 1500 4-wheel drive pick up to replace a 1993 Chevrolet pick-up that has been used for very hard miles on the city's farm and other purposes. The proposal before the Council is a greatly discounted price available through the State Fleet pricing system. The proposed price of the pick-up truck is \$33,834—a great savings over the current price of 4 wheel drive trucks. He concluded by reporting the purchase was included in the budget.

Councilor Lyon asked what the current vehicle is being used for and if it is a flatbed.

Mr. Steadman replied that it was a flatbed and is being used as the farm truck, and delivery of the big 300 gallon and 94 gallon garbage cans to customers, as well as several other purposes.

Councilor Lyon asked if the new pick up would be a flatbed.

Mr. Steadman answered that it was likely staff would want the new pick up to be a flatbed as well.

Councilor Irving motioned to award Vehicle 196, a 2022 Dodge Ram 1500 4x4 to Ontario Auto Ranch Chrysler for a total purchase price of \$33,834.33. Councilor Lyon seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Next discussed was the authorization of employee signatures for making financial transfers in various city accounts and investments.

City Manager Linda Hall reported that due to the retirement of former long tenured (39 years) Accounting Supervisor Luke Billings in the City's finance department, there was a need to have her replacement, Laurie Bubar, authorized to make financial transfers in the Local Government Pool as well as the City's Fidelity Investment Account. Also, City Recorder Leanne Steadman will be added to the authorization of the Local Government Investment Pool signatories.

Councilor Lyon motioned to adopt Resolution No. 2478, Resolution Authorizing Certain Employees to Make Transfers in the Local Government Pool and Fidelity Investment Account. Councilor Humbert seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Next on the agenda was the consideration of financial support for the MFDA (Milton Freewater Downtown Alliance) and the Chamber of Commerce.

City Manager Hall reported the two entities had recently merged their organizations and were seeking financial support from the City. Both organizations share similar goals of supporting the vitality, economic well-being, tourism and promotion of the City and its businesses. Both organizations have struggled to find sustainable funding over the years, a plight shared by similar organizations in cities across the nation in all likelihood.

Councilor Irving spoke, stating that in the past the Chamber has been self-sustaining financially speaking and he thought it was important that this combined organization should seek that as a goal. He understood that times are difficult and he was not opposed to supporting it for a few years, but that he would expect that the organization be very transparent when it came to accounting and communication of finances. He stated that he would also like to see the organization make a better profit margin on events such as the annual banquet. He commented that he did not mind assisting financially, but had a number more in mind of \$20,000 rather than the \$40,000 he understood they were requesting. But he reiterated that he believed this organization should be self-sustaining hoped the Board was working toward that goal.

Councilor Humbert stated that he would support keeping the funding at the current amount that is being allocated to the Chamber from the transient tax revenues. He stated he was reluctant to take away funding from other community support purposes as they were important also. He stated he was not comfortable with a flat amount either, but rather a percentage of what the transient tax revenues are, as is being currently done. He added that he did not mind revisiting this issue in the

future if something else develops, or a special project is being taken on that would require more help.

Mayor Key stated that he was concerned that this would open up a can of worms in which many other local organizations would request similar funding—for example CDP—Community Development Partnership. He stated he was not sure how the Council would justify financially supporting one organization this much without supporting others or all of them.

Councilor Lyon asked the City Manager how other similar organizations to this were funded in other cities.

Ms. Hall replied she was not intimately familiar with other organizations similar to this, but thought that perhaps in Walla Walla their Downtown Association was heavily funded through dues that are charged to each of the participating businesses. She added she did believe they may also receive a share of the City's lodging tax revenues as well. She also mentioned that in other cities, such as perhaps La Grande, the City adopted an economic impact opportunity area ordinance, or a similar program in which the City designates a finite boundary within its commercial/business district areas and then institutes a small tax or fee that is assessed per business and passed onto an organization such as the Downtown Alliance or Chamber to invest the funding into programs and causes that directly benefit that area. She stated she had done research on this type of ordinance several years ago, but there was not any interest at that time in pursuing it.

Councilor Irving asked Mark Driver, the president of the MFDA/Chamber what their plans were for signage now that they have moved to their new location.

Mr. Driver stated that both entities had separate signs but there were plans for discussion on signage in the near future.

Councilor Reino asked Manager Hall how much transient tax revenues were being held from the previous year for the Chamber.

Ms. Hall replied she believe about \$8,000 from the previous 18 months.

Councilor Reino asked Manager Hall how much had been received in taxes the year before that.

Ms. Hall stated she did not have those figures in front of her but would guess it was a number around \$10,000.

The Mayor stated if monies were given the organization, there should definitely be a clear understanding of goals and deliverables defined between the city and this organization.

Councilor Irving motioned to earmark a maximum of \$15,000 between this fiscal year and next for contributions to the MFDA/Chamber organization.

It was clarified that \$8,000 for this current fiscal year would be made up from the monies being held from previous quarter's transient tax, and the remaining \$7,000 would be budgeted for in the upcoming fiscal year budget.

Councilor Lyon seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Next considered by the Council was the authorization to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with Umatilla County Corrections for providing work crews on occasion in the city.

Ms. Hall stated City Recorder Leanne Steadman had been working with Umatilla County Community Corrections Work Crew Supervisor Stephen Jensen on the details of an agreement that would enable the City to bring in the county corrections work crews for a fee of \$180 per day, no matter the size of the crew. That cost included their supervision services and transportation to the site. Ms. Hall stated she and her staff were recommending this program as she has seen it be very beneficial in the past as the city tries to work on big projects such as large abatements or manual labor projects.

Councilor Humbert stated he was a very big fan of this program and had seen it used very successfully to clear vegetation off the flood levee along the river.

Councilor Reino motioned to adopt Resolution No. 2479, Resolution Authorizing the Entering into an Intergovernmental Agreement with Umatilla County Corrections For the Purpose of Providing Community Corrections Work Crews. Councilor Humbert seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the opportunity for citizens to approach the council with issues not on the agenda.

Nick Jones, 164 SE 5th Avenue, stated he was here to express concerns with a compliance issue on his neighbor's property. He stated that there were numerous code violations occurring on this property and he had complained to the Code Enforcement Officer many times. He stated the neighbors have people living in RV's which are plugged in by extension cords, there is an unpermitted lean-to which has been constructed way too close the property lines and there are suspicious looking people coming and going from the property at all hours.

Councilor Lyon asked what the address was for the subject property.

Mr. Jones replied it was 160 SE 5th Avenue.

Councilor Humbert explained that the Code Enforcement Officer was legally limited to only certain actions, such as citations and warnings. These were often unsuccessful to get results as quickly as one would like. He explained that the city has to be cognizant of being sued if we do anything outside our legal jurisdictional boundaries.

Tammy Jones, 164 SW 5th Avenue, commented that it was very concerning to her that she had observed toddlers in the trailers with the extension cords being plugged in and worried for their well-being.

Christy Badgett, 154 SE 5th, stated she was concerned with these neighbors as well and upset that the lean to had been allowed. She also mentioned that there had been a fire from this residence several years ago and their houses were damaged but no restitution was made to them, and they even used her hoses and water to extinguish the fire.

Ms. Hall stated she would get a report from staff and be in touch with Mr. and Mrs. Jones.

Suni Danforth, 225 Maple Avenue asked if the City is entering into a county-wide agreement to share costs of a county wide warming station and shelter.

Ms. Hall replied not at this time.

Several members of the council stated they would have concerns with doing this.

Under Manager's Report, the City Manager asked the Council for input on whether to bring a tax measure resolution forward for action in order to continue the parks and recreation local option tax. She reported the current levy, which is for \$100,000 per year, would be assessed for the last time this fall unless it is continued. The levy must be approved by voters in order to continue, and if it was the direction of the Council, staff could bring the resolution to place the matter on the ballot to the next Council meeting.

The Mayor stated it would be good to be able to fund the remainder of the priorities that citizens had set for the tax revenue to accomplish.

After a brief discussion, it was clear the consensus of the Council was to direct staff to bring the resolution forward to continue the levy at the current rate of \$100,000 per year for five years.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Lewis S. Key, Mayor