
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**October 14, 2024****CITY COUNCIL MINUTES**

The Council of the City of Milton-Freewater met in regular session on Monday, October 14, 2024 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 Wes Koklich, John Lyon, Brad Humbert, Steve Irving, Jose Garcia and Damien Reino.

Staff members present were: City Manager Chad Morris, Assistant City Manager/City Recorder Leanne Steadman, Police Chief Joe Shurtz, Finance Director Laurie Bubar, Fire Chief Shane Garner, Library Director Lili Schmidt, Conservation Specialist/Engineering Technician Ryan Westman, Engineering Technician Tina Kain, Court Clerk Tracy Martinez, Police Sergeant Anthony Martinez, Detective James Farr, Code Enforcement Officer Jason Schaffner, Police Officers Craig Robinson, Dylan Garcia, Greg Bunker and Jesse Myer.

Guests and citizens present were: Patty Key, Kay West, Arlen Calley, Kenneth Jenkins, Emily Holden, Tammy Seaquist, Paul Seaquist, David Prock, Melissa Porter, Kaden Myer, Kim Munk, Kasia Loiacono, Merri Ann Huber, Randy Resse and Destiny Jensen.

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

CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS:

The consent calendar items consisted of:

- Council minutes from September 9, 2024
- Executive Session Minutes from September 9, 2024
- Work Session Minutes from September 19, 2024
- Accounts Payable September 4th – September 16, 2024
- Accounts Payable September 17th – October 7, 2024

Councilor Lyon reference the accounts payable registers and asked if the payment to S & K Mountain Construction was the last payment for the new police station building.

City Manager Chad Morris stated there would be another payment to close the project out.

Councilor Lyon asked what the “dark charcoal police car wrap/lettering” was from Morris Signs & Graphics.

Manager Morris stated the police cruisers were getting updated graphics so that they were all consistent.

Councilor Lyon asked what the spraying for Freewater substation orchard was for.

Manager Morris stated the orchard was no longer being leased as the previous renter retired. The neighboring orchardist was concerned with the orchard not being tended to and offered to spray the orchard for pests. This was the seconded time it was sprayed and the city was only charged for the labor to spray, the first time they did not charge. He stated the orchard will more than likely be torn out as the trees have not been watered this year and the Horticulture Society has also expressed their concern for the orchard.

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

PRESENTATION ITEM:

UPDATE FROM WEEKEND @ THE BLUES FESTIVAL COMMITTEE

Kim Munk, representing Weekend @ the Blues Festival committee expressed her appreciation for all the help city staff provided for the festival that was held August 2nd and 3rd. She shared the festival was a success and they are planning to change the days of the festival from a Friday-Saturday to Saturday-Sunday next year.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

APPOINTMENT TO CITY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

Manager Morris stated at the September 9th city council meeting there were six of the seven-member Charter Review Committee appointed. Since then, there has been one more application received. The application was received from David P. Prock. The application was provided to Mayor Key who made the recommendation to appoint Mr. Prock to the committee.

Councilor Humbert motioned to appoint David P. Prock to the Charter Review Committee as recommended by Mayor Key. Councilor Irving seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 2551 – MAKING APPROPRIATIONS DUE TO UNFORESEEN REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

Manager Morris reported the Police Chief secured grant funding for an e-ticket system. The funding was projected to be received in fiscal year 2024, but it crossed over into the current fiscal year. The grant revenue was not budgeted for in FY25 therefore an adjustment is necessary to stay in compliance with local budget law.

Councilor Irving motioned to adopt Resolution No. 2551, Resolution Making Appropriations due to Unforeseen Revenues and Expenditures. Councilor Humbert seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

ADOPTION – LIBRARY FINE-FREE POLICY

Manager Morris presented a new Library Fine-Free Policy. The policy would do away with overdue fines, but patrons would still be responsible for lost or items needing repair. Of the twelve libraries within the Umatilla County Special Library District, Milton-Freewater is one of two remaining libraries that charge overdue fines. The approximate budget impact, based on last year's numbers, would be approximately \$1800. Manager Morris recommended this new policy as he stated he believed it would be a way to keep people coming to the library.

Councilor Irving reported the Friends of the Library most recent book sale generated almost \$3,000 which paid for the library's reader board repairs.

Councilor Koklich expressed his concern with forgiving library fines and stated he believed the city was giving away money.

Manager Morris then shared a personal experience he had in Florida. He stated he believed the benefits to the citizens was greater than the dollar amount and the trade off was beneficial. He did agree, every dollar counts.

Councilor Irving motioned to adopt the Library Fine-Free Policy. Councilor Reino seconded the motion which passed with Councilor Koklich being the dissenting vote.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Morris reported Officer Craig Robinson was still under a doctor's care, but seemed to be improving. Oregon State Police have concluded their investigation and has turned their report over to the District Attorney's office. He reported a couple members of the police unit approached him with concerns of staffing levels and they recommended hiring another police officer. One of their concerns were that at times an officer was patrolling solo. He stated his understanding was that during the budget process there was an additional officer requested. The request was left in the budget narrative, but funds were not included in the budget. He explained his plan was to use the funds that have not been used due to positions not being filled. He said he will likely advertise/hire sometime in January. A budget adjustment will be taken to council soon to add another police officer and he stated he would figure out how to fund this officer for future years.

Councilor Reino stated by adding another officer it could help with having to pay out as much overtime.

Manager Morris stated there would still be overtime in the police department simply due to the nature of the department. Currently, all positions are filled in the department. One officer is finishing up with his training and should be solo in a couple of weeks and one is at the academy for training through December. By adding another officer, it will help to have two officers on the patrol, with the exception of sick and vacation leave.

Councilor Lyon asked if there were enough police cruisers if another officer was hired.

Police Chief Joe Shurtz stated there would be, but if more officers were hired, they would need more vehicles.

Sheila Hagar asked what staff positions are being left unfilled.

Manager Morris replied, Public Works Engineering Technician, City Planner and Electric Department Journeyman Lineman were budgeted for the whole year, but have not been filled.

Emily Holden asked what would it take for there to be two to three officers for coverage.

Manager Morris replied three to four more officers from where we are now.

Melissa Porter encourage looking at the budget, as she stated it would be cheaper than paying out a family for an officer that didn't make it home.

Councilor Irving stated fortunately this community supports the police department which was proven with the passage of the bond measure for the new police.

Manager Morris reported there was a structure fire on County Road of a storage building/barn. One firefighter was injured as he twisted his knee. He handed out the SGR (Strategic Government Resources) draft report from the two meetings, one with the community and one with the city council. He asked council to review the report and it will be discussed/adopted at the November council meeting. Next, he reported he and Councilor Irving would be attending the League of Oregon Cities Annual Conference in Bend October 17 – 19. Councilor Irving will be the voting delegate for the city at the conference. While in Bend he may also attend a meeting with OMEU (Oregon Municipal Electric Utilities) as their annual meeting will be at the same time in Sisters, Oregon. The Washington and Oregon Downtown Association Conference is taking place and the group will be taking a tour of Milton-Freewater on October 17th. He had a meeting with Representative Greg Smith and Aaron Duff, M-F Unified School Superintendent to discuss funding opportunities for recreational facilities. The last item he reported was that he received notice from Blue Mountain Human Society of their intent to terminate their contract with the city. They indicated they still want to contract with the city, but they need to adjust their rate of services. He will be meeting with Code Enforcement Officer Jason Schaffner regarding the contract.

COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilor Irving announced that the Make a Difference Day on Saturday, October 12th was a success.

Councilor Koklich asked if the new fire truck had arrived.

Manager Morris stated it was scheduled to arrive tomorrow (Tuesday, October 15, 2024).

Councilor Koklich asked if anyone looked into the fire truck that the City of College Place had for sale.

Fire Chief Shane Garner said he inquired about it, but was told it couldn't pass a pump test so he was not interested in it.

Councilor Lyon asked what the cost of the fire truck the city was receiving cost.

Manager Morris stated the truck was \$40,000 with approximately \$10,000 in shipping to transport from Michigan.

The council adjourned to executive session at 7:45 p.m. pursuant to 192.660 (2) (i) to review and evaluate the employment-related performance of the chief executive officer and any public body, a public officer, employee or staff member who does not request an open hearing.

The council returned to open session at 8:11 p.m.

Councilor Humbert motioned to give the City Manager a 7% cost-of-living increase retro back to July 1st. Councilor Irving seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Councilor Humbert stated at the time of the City Manager's contract negotiations he was trying to protect the tax payer's money and didn't negotiate an increase into the contract.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Lewis S. Key, Mayor