

CITY OF JEFFERSON
Council Worksession
April 11, 2019
6:30pm

COUNCILORS PRESENT: Dave Beyerl, Bob Rossiter, Audrey Webster, Edna Campau, David Watkins, Walt Perry,
Mayor Michael Myers

COUNCILORS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Sarah Cook, City Recorder; Jeff Buskirk, PWD; MCSO Deputy Garrett Olson, Deanna Donato, City Clerk; Carrie Connelly, Speer Hoyt

I. **COUNCIL MEETING CALL TO ORDER** – Mayor Myers called the meeting to order at 6:30pm and led in the flag salute.

II. **WORKSESSION TOPICS**

A. ODOT Planner, James Feldmann

James Feldmann noted the area manager, John Huestis was unable to attend; however, Lisa Nell was the area manager for the Jefferson area. James went on to share information about himself and his role at ODOT, which was primarily short and long term planning, noting he worked out of the Corvallis office. He hoped to work on a Jefferson TSP over the next few years, where he would be the administrator on the project team. He was the MPO liaison, noting how interesting it was that Jefferson was split over two County's. Mayor Myers explained the purpose of the invite was to seek education and an understanding of the process from a local level to the state, and beyond, in regards to how highway projects were determined and where Jefferson was in that process. He was also curious in knowing what Jefferson needed to do to move it up the priority chain faster. With that, Mayor Myers called upon the City Council for questions or comments, fully understanding that Mr. Feldmann may or may not be able to answer everything at that time, but asked that he forward any subsequent information to the City Recorder.

Councilor Perry was interested in looking for direction with streetscaping. James Feldmann shared a similar situation was going on in Halsey and he felt there was a lot of resources to help, noting other places going through those processes.

Councilor Webster spoke on the number of bikes on the road from Enchanted Way all the way into Jefferson and wondered if there had been any consideration of safety and visibility concerns with the lack of shoulder/bike lane. James was not specifically aware of that stretch but he shared an office with somebody who dealt with it so he would verify that with them. He also said new projects did require more of a bike lane. Continuing, Audrey Webster expressed concern for the serious maintenance problem at Hazel & 2nd St., where severe potholes develop constantly. The subgrade was sinking, so even filling the pot holes never lasted long because almost immediately, a new pothole formed. James noted he knew of some maintenance coming, but no major projects were scheduled that he was aware of. He indicated he was a point of contact and if the City came to him with some issue, he would certainly pursue the channels and see what he could find out in any case.

Mayor Myers had specific questions and asked Mr. Feldmann to please take notes so that he could forward them on to others in the organization that might be better equipped to respond to them. He went on to share the information received from an ODOT representative, which was in their Council packets and stemmed from an inquiry on any traffic studies performed in our area over the last ten years. What was sent lacked any clarity or explanation of what the statistics were reporting and felt that was a good example of the importance

of proper communication with a customer because the report was of no value to him in the state it was presented.

Moving on, Mayor Myers noted the area around Jefferson, indicating specific improvements that had taken place along Jefferson-Marion Rd, which was great and added value. However, coming into Jefferson, there had been no improvements since at least the 60's and with the improvements to the outlying roadways, all the semi-trucks were now coming through town. He explained the improvements made to the area bridges to handle the oversized trucks, yet the roughly 6,100 feet of highway through Jefferson had been left unmaintained, noting the weight and continuous traffic of such heavy loads was doing immeasurable damage. To his question, Mayor Myers inquired of the process for state Hwy 164 to get fully redeveloped and what the City needed to do to get that dialogue started, and who all the players involved would be. James noted it was a matter of getting the project into ODOT's capital improvement plan. Mayor Myers knew of other cities that went directly to their senator and he understood there was a federal and state role, but didn't care for that process because it could lead to problems down the road and he preferred to start with ODOT, noting this was not just a small concern for 3,000 people in a town, but a regional problem, affecting a large area of transportation.

James Feldmann shared that ODOT was currently planning for the 2021-2024 time period, noting the Jefferson highway was not a project on that list, so they would be looking at some time after that and he would present the information and request and get back to the City. There was discussion about the slow movement of such processes and the importance of having it on the radar. Mayor Myers shared cost information he'd received from the City's engineer, noting in today's dollars, it would cost about \$6.7 million to completely re-do the 6,100 feet from the Conser Bridge to Talbot Road. He felt it was important for James to relay to his colleagues that the City had done their homework and investigation and that they understood the City's need in addressing the most critical issue, which was the safety of those using the roads, students walking to/from, bicycle clubs utilizing the highway, etc., noting it wasn't a crisis at that point, but it would be.

Mayor Myers last point was regarding the earthquake safety of the small bridge crossings in town. Mr. Feldmann noted all bridges and culverts were evaluated every 2 years. He would look into the two small bridges/culverts in town and see where they were in the que to verify that they had been evaluated and ranked. In regards to the Conser Bridge, there was some discussion about the safety of pedestrians having to step into traffic to get on/off. James explained ODOT was still scoping it and he would know this Fall if it was selected as a project.

Dennis Persons, Talbot Rd, commenting from the audience, inquired about the responsibility of the expense of the project when a 2-lane highway went through a City, curious if it was a shared expense, or otherwise. James Feldmann thought it would be ODOT's sole responsibility since it was their facility. There were no further questions or comments and the Council thanked James for coming and looked forward to any follow up correspondence.

B. Storm Water Fee Public Education Forum

Mayor Myers noted the public education mailers were sent to every address and the information has been available on social media regarding the upcoming \$2 stormwater fee, which was to address stormwater runoff and regulations from DEQ and EPA.

City Attorney, Carrie Connelly offered a brief introduction and explained she had done stormwater utility fees in many different cities, noting it was as very long time ago that federal regulations changed that forced cities to start reacting differently to manage and monitor stormwater that they never had to do. She represented about 27 Cities and 100 special districts, so she was very familiar with the subject and while it was troubling to

citizens at times, it had been uniformly adopted to address these forms of regulations. She was happy to address any questions or concerns of the Council or public as they went on.

Mayor Myers spoke on the 5-year deferment the City was granted and explained how the requirements for stormwater runoff were the same for Portland as they were for Jefferson. Also, cities were not just addressing fees, but new development had also been impacted, noting how often times you'd see ponds in new housing developments, drainage areas with plants in parking lots such as Les Schwab or the new WinCo in Albany, all done to address stormwater. Jeff Buskirk further explained it was not only to reduce the flow, but also to treat the stormwater before it went back to the stream by removing bacteria, sediment and any oils. Green infrastructure would be used, such as bioswales to help treat and infiltrate water, or mechanical plants at each outfall, not through the City's own plant. Developing more of these through town will cost the City and over time, the soil and swales will become contaminated from everything they'd filtered, so those plants would need to be removed and replaced. When that time came, that sediment would have to be hauled off to Arlington, WA, which was another expense.

Dennis Persons, Talbot Rd. - confirmed the City had an SDC for stormwater runoff and inquired about information in the flyer. Jeff Buskirk explained how the City had been slowly building the program for the last 15 years, noting they'd stopped spraying ditches, applied stickers on all the storm drains, provided public education on the website, etc. City Attorney, Carrie Connelly, added the City's stormwater SDC was restricted for new growth or development only. The fee discussed at this meeting was something different; to retro-fit what was already here for everybody.

Councilor Webster referred to a letter from Westech that was included in their packets and provided estimates of the stormwater work to be done, which would run about \$714k. Implementing the \$2 fee per EDU, and more for larger plots with more impervious surface, would raise about \$30k per year, so it was just to get the City going in the right direction. Mayor Myers spoke on the importance of forward thinking and future planning, noting there was currently no supporting funds from the state or federal agencies, which he found very frustrating. Like with anything else, the Mayor explained, there was no guarantee the costs wouldn't go up, but if history was a guide, the requirements for stormwater would be handled very much the same as water and sewer. If the City was forward thinking and set aside funds for expansion, they could at least mitigate or limit cost increases, but they wouldn't ever reach that point in the near future if they did nothing.

Michelle Nunes, 2nd St. – clarified it was a flat rate and not based on water usage. She also questioned how citizens could create bio-swales on their own properties or what could be done to offset costs. Councilor Beyerl offered examples, indicating as much as he could, the runoff from his roof and driveway were channeled into his yard, rather than his street, which ended up in the drains. Councilor Webster added that certain plants absorbed and held water better.

Responding to a question from the audience regarding when the City would build a chemical plant, Councilor Beyerl explained the City had no plans for that, but rather natural planted areas, which would include new piping, drainage, etc.

Mayor Myers shared that public works had worked with DEQ for years on the steps, had a really good working relationship with them, and they saw the steps Jefferson had taken. The City could have continued down the same road; however, dollars were coming out of the street fund, which was limited by itself, and that took away much needed funds and delayed street projects. The Public Works Director had proven his ability to handle funds extremely well and he was confident they could do quite a bit with \$2/month. Councilor Rossiter shared that the City of Salem had 900 detention basins and 22,000 storm drainage structures in the City and while Jefferson would not require near as much, they still had to come up with the money to build enough for this community.

In closing, Jeff Buskirk explained the storm water permitting came from the safe drinking water act of 1974, and they were just now getting around to enforcing it. It was all about making the water safer; the cleaner the City could keep the streams, the safer the water would be to use for drinking, and about 80% of cities did it. Mayor Myers noted the stormwater fee would be implemented in July and show up as a separate line item on the utility bill. A second educational forum would be held at the May 9th Council meeting.

C. Jefferson Fire Department Re: Local Option Levy

Chief, Kevin Hendricks spoke on the proposed .39 cent local option levy, noting the City of Millersburg's withdrawal from the fire district hit their budget hard. They've heard rumors that they are also considering having Albany provide their ambulance service as well, which would be another \$40k. In an effort to save money in-house they had reduced the full-time fire chief to part time, as well as other positions and contingencies, and increased some user fees. They planned to use the funds to replace a 2004 ambulance and two 1982 tenders with 1 modernized one and update the pumping on one of the other tenders. Another need was staffing, as most of their positions were not full time. In doing that, they needed to provide more competitive wages and improve sleeping conditions at their 3 locations. He further noted the local option level would be used for equipment and staffing only. They held 2 public meetings so far, which he believed provided very good feedback.

Call for questions from Council or public:

Councilor Beyerl inquired about raising Fire Med fees, to which Kevin noted they had done the year before. He felt it was a competitive rate as it was, so he wanted to leave it alone, rather than risk losing people due to increased fees. It was noted that the local Fire Med was recognized by other jurisdictions, which was helpful when traveling; however, it was pointed out that Stayton did not honor it because Santiam Hospital was private and they did not have a Fire Med program.

Questions arose about the equipment stored in Millersburg and if it could be sold to recoup money. Kevin explained the only thing they could sell would be the station itself; however, they still had about 20 square miles of coverage in Linn County so they needed that station. He shared that the certified EMT's were only making \$11/hour. Councilor Rossiter added that the part-timers were pulled from a pool and were not Jefferson Fire District employees, so they can be called upon from other agencies. Dennis Persons, commenting from the audience questioned the plan for increased wages. The Chief explained he'd like to get EMT wages to \$15-\$16/hour and it would take place over a 5-year plan, not all at once with the proposed levy.

Councilor Campau inquired about an equipment replacement fund, to which Kevin explained they had one; however, when they went out for bids, they came in much higher than expected. They had made other needed improvements within the district, with their whole idea being to build for the future and do as much as they could with what they had, much like what the City was doing with the stormwater fee. He spoke on the importance of all working together.

A question was posed to the Chief whether not being a part-time chief was permanent. Kevin explained what happened when Jon Zeilman retired. Special Districts called him asking for a transitional person to fill the spot. He knew the area and past fire chief's so he accepted. After one month the Millersburg thing happened and he went to the board and told them they could not afford a full time chief. They asked him to stay on part time and he agreed. Kevin went on to share about the financial downturns he'd experienced over his career and how he overcame them. More info on the levy would continue to be distributed and he thanked the Council for their time during their meeting.

D. Food Truck Pod Discussion – Cont'd from last month

Mayor Myers wanted to hear Councilors thoughts on the proposal and proceeded down the table. Councilor Campau was not in favor of it, though she thought it was very creative, she felt it would be a losing situation for the City long term, for local establishments, property taxes, etc.

Councilor Watkins was in favor of brick and mortar businesses. He was concerned the food pod idea was a novelty and wondered how long they would last. He would be interested in a pilot program to try it for a while.

Councilor Beyerl was curious if the Thai food cart had a negative effect on the cafe, to which Michelle Nunes indicated it had. She went on to say brick and mortar businesses had higher operation costs than a food cart, as they paid more overhead, employee wages, etc. She felt if the City were to put food carts up, it would only take a month or two and the café would have to close because they wouldn't make it. She wondered how many more food options were needed, noting the food pod in Millersburg and another small one near Knox Butte were close by. She went on to say that even a summer program would have a negative impact on the café and when business slows down for food pods they pick up and go somewhere else, where local businesses couldn't do that.

Councilor Webster noted Michelle had pointed out several places outside of Jefferson for food options, but if you wanted to grab something quick, you're tired, and you just want to go home and eat, there aren't many options. While there was overlap in the style of food at some places, food pods could offer even further variety, and she was confident there was a demand for it from people that live in town. She understood there was money to be made for the City if they chose to go that direction, which could help in working toward a 3rd officer, but it could also be a big hurt. So, while what's in front of them might not be the right solution, she thought they needed to figure out a way to entice more variety in town.

Mayor Myers felt it was a bigger issue than that, pointing out there were essentially 3 brick and mortar restaurants in the community, not really counting Tommy's bar. There was no doubt limited menu options and limited population. Businesses had come in and out and changed hands several times, noting the current Mexican restaurant was once a burger place. He added if a food truck or two would destroy an existing business in town, that business likely had other serious problems and that it was not an issue of a food pod, but more of an issue of financial sustainability for a community. He didn't think the amount of money brought in from one or two food trucks would provide a 3rd deputy and he was unsure how the Council wanted to go, but it was a bigger picture for him, in that he wondered what could be done to improve the business climate within the community to increase peoples interest in food.

Sherry Diehl, speaking from the audience, agreed with Councilor Webster, noting that if people went to Millersburg or Albany to their food pods for more food options, they would also likely stop in those towns for their milk or other needed items while they are there. Having variety in Jefferson would keep people in town.

Chris Giffin, Main St. – made a point to support local businesses and thinks it would be unsustainable for Jefferson to bring in more diverse food options. She felt they needed to support what was already there. Councilor Watkins agreed, but added that was a main function of the Chamber.

Councilor Perry spoke on the need for local businesses to get loud and flashy, like the food trucks had, and not sit silent. Food truck pods came in with a bang and made their presence known. He thought Jefferson and its local businesses needed to do the same and that competition was the price of doing business. Other Councilors agreed.

Mayor Myers confirmed he was hearing a consensus from the Council to hold off on this. Brief discussion took place and it was suggested and agreed upon that they would revisit the topic next Spring.

III. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE - Councilor Beyerl moved to approve. Councilor Watkins seconded. All in favor: Ayes – 6, Opposed – 0. **APPROVED.**

IV. VISITORS

Michelle Nunes suggested the City Council read the book “How to Make Your Community’s Economy Sizzle”, something the Chamber was starting to look into.

V. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Bob Rossiter thanked the booster club for the fantastic auction. He also attended the monthly Commissioner’s Breakfast where Nick Harville of Sedcor presented on skilled trades.

Audrey Webster reminded everybody of the FOL Bunco fundraiser on Saturday and the Spaghetti Dinner on April 20th at 5pm to learn more about the levy.

Edna Campau pointed out the memo from Patti Ball regarding the award of \$2k grant from Cultural Trust.

Mayor Myers complimented Deanna’s work in preparing the packed welcome to Jefferson folders, which is handed out to all new-comer’s. He also reminded everybody that the next meeting would be at 9:30 in the morning at the Community Center so they could better accommodate the 2019 senior class.

VI. ADJOURNMENT – Councilor Beyerl moved, seconded by Councilor Webster. All were in favor and the meeting closed at 9pm.

MINUTES APPROVED this 23rd day of May, 2019.



Michael D. Myers, Mayor

ATTEST:



Sarah Cook, City Recorder