

CITY OF JEFFERSON
Regular Council Meeting
November 12, 2020
3:30pm Via Zoom

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

COUNCILORS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Sarah Cook, CM/R; Jeff Buskirk, PWD; Deputy West and Vogel, MCSO

I. **CALL TO ORDER** – After experiencing some minor delays due to technical difficulties with zoom audio, Mayor Myers called the meeting to order at 3:34pm. A few moments were given to allow staff and other Councilors to join by phone.

II. **OLD BUSINESS**

2.1 Memo Re: Utility Late Fees

The memo from the City Manager provided information on the number of delinquent accounts, which were few, and included a suggestion to hold off reimplementing late fees & shut off's until January, if the Council was considering starting them up again at all. It would allow people to get through the holidays, provide staff time to get the word out, and personally reach out to the few that had significant balances in an attempt to enter into a payment plan. Working through the technical difficulties, all Council agreed with the suggestion to reinstate late fees and shut offs in January 2021.

III. **NEW BUSINESS**

3.1 Proposed Amendments to Public Camping and ROW Regulations

Mayor Myers called upon each Councilor to share their thoughts on the proposed amendments, which would provide greater enforcement options for public camping in the right of way and bring the existing, outdated code in line with Marion County. Most agreed with the suggestions in the draft document, noting they had either seen homeless people in the area or felt it could become a problem down the road, and that mirroring the County's code would provide more consistency. However, Councilor Campau suggested the first penalty should be increased from \$25 to \$50 and Councilor Webster strongly expressed her disagreement with the idea of enforcement against the homeless without first providing them a shelter or other safe place to go. Since Jefferson did not have those means available, she suggested the City start with that proactive approach, noting they were homeless for a reason and shouldn't be pushed down the road. Deputy West referred to the City Attorney's memo, noting being homeless was not illegal in Oregon; however, it was the rest of the activity that tended to come with it that was the problem. He further commented that there were other minor things in the draft that needed tweaked and one main concern he had was in regards to the habitation portion, which appeared to have eliminated or replaced the section about storage of vehicles on the street, which was not a good idea. He felt they were similar, but different and both needed to remain: living in a vehicle on streets vs. storage of vehicles on a street. All Councilors agreed. Sarah Cook had noted the questions and would relay them to the City Attorney and bring back a final draft as soon as it was prepared.

IV. **DISCUSSION/INFORMATION**

4.1 Memo Re: Coronavirus Relief Funds - FYI

The memo was provided to the City Council summarizing the totals in various areas of assistance that the City Council had previously agreed upon, with the sole purpose of offering assistance to those in the community that had been adversely affected by the Coronavirus. Areas of assistance included business grants, grocery cards, fuel certificates, and help with Pacific Power and NW Natural Gas bills. Sarah Cook explained the application process and was happy to inform them that the City was able to provide some form of assistance to everybody that had applied.

4.2 DEQ Update on Old Gas Station – FYI

The DEQ had opened up a comment period for surrounding properties to issue comments about their proposed decision to declare a No Further Action Order on the property, which would allow the County to move forward with the sale of the property to the City. The information provided in the notice further explained their findings, noting little to no contamination remained, and that the City's proposed use of the property would not pose any threat to health or safety.

V. CONSENT AGENDA – Councilor Beyerl moved to approve the consent agenda as presented and to include the additional invoices added the prior day due to having just one Council meeting in November. Councilor Perry seconded. All in favor: Ayes – 6, Opposed – 0. **APPROVED.**

VI. VISITORS – none

VII. COUNCIL/STAFF COMMENTS

Sarah Cook provided an update on the Salem to Albany Transit plan in the works with Cherriots bus service and the AAMPO, noting that it was looking pretty positive for future bus stops to/from Jefferson. She also informed the Council of a decrease in the interest rate on the waste water treatment plant loan from 2009, which would save the City nearly \$200k in interest over the remaining loan term. Last, she indicated a settlement had been reached on the first half of the legal fees the City had been awarded in regards to the long drawn out case with the Select Reform Committee of Jefferson. The second award, totaling about \$10k would be sought after next.

Councilor Rossiter indicated he had attended the 1st MC breakfast held since the beginning of the pandemic and the discussion was primarily about the fires.

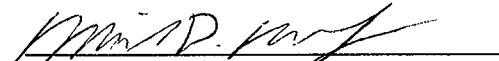
Councilor Watkins noted the MC Broadband project was up and running again. He also expressed concern that the City was not aware of the schools plans to build the amphitheater and thought there should be better communication between the agencies. Councilor Webster reminded them that she had been assigned as the Council liaison to the School Board; however, with the baby coming she had stepped back from that and the Council never assigned it to anybody else. Further, she explained the school boards change of rules in how and when comments were received, which a lot of people felt cut off from; however, she noted it was not done in a sneaky way. Mayor Myers added that the bond taking so much time and the transition to a new superintendent could have played into things; however, he was aware that a survey had gone out to the community about what to do with the green space and very little response was received back. In the end, the board supported the recommendation of the Superintendent to move forward with the amphitheater. He agreed the City did need more presence there and looked forward to re-assigning liaisons in January.

Councilor Campau was pleased to see the feasibility study for public transit moving forward. She also noted the Historical Society had been going full speed and they looked to move the museum into the Conser House sometime the next summer. She also congratulated Mayor Myers and David Watkins on their re-elections.

Councilor Webster noted they had signed papers on the sale of their house that day, but given the December meeting was early in the month, she should still be able to attend and finish out her term. She further noted, for the record, that she was not in favor of the proposed ordinance that would allow for enforcement of public camping in the City's right of ways and thought they should display more compassion.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – Councilor Beyerl moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Campau. All were in favor and the meeting closed at 4:30pm.

MINUTES APPROVED this 10th day of December, 2020.



Michael D. Myers, Mayor

ATTEST:



Sarah Cook, City Manager/Recorder