

CITY OF JEFFERSON
Council Worksession Via Zoom
May 13, 2021
4:30pm

COUNCILORS PRESENT: Mayor Michael Myers, Walt Perry, David Watkins, Dave Beyerl, David Kellogg, Patrick McKenzie, Bob Rossiter
COUNCILORS ABSENT: None
STAFF PRESENT: Sarah Cook, CM/R; Jeff Buskirk, PWD

I. MEETING CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Myers called the meeting to order at 4:30pm.

II. WORKSESSION TOPICS

A. Public Safety Fee: Info & Discussion

Mayor Myers started off, noting it had been a long-time consensus of the Council to work toward a 3rd deputy. The information and figures in the packet had been updated since the last consideration of a safety fee in 2019. He asked each Councilor for their thoughts.

Councilor Kellogg indicated he had spoke to a couple people and the result was the same: initial buy-in about the idea, but then they concluded that it was money wasted because of lax Oregon laws that didn't keep people in jail. The people Councilor Beyerl had spoken to were in favor of it, as long as night patrol was added. Councilor McKenzie spoke to about a dozen people who were not as receptive to another added fee, but they did want more police coverage. Councilor Perry remembered a time when people were willing to pay any price for police coverage. He pointed out the added presence the City received since the new City Hall was built, which included a substation for all MCSO deputies to use. As far as the fee, he compared it to receiving your monthly cell phone bill with a new fee or charge on it, noting one would first be annoyed over the slight increase, but they would pay it because the value was more important than the few dollars it added. Councilor Perry expressed he would be happy to pay \$10 for added police protection, because he had a lot to lose. Further, he added, the Council had been talking about the addition of a 3rd officer for more than 5 years, so he felt it was time. All agreed more police presence was a priority.

Mayor Myers expected those types of comments, which was normal any time there was discussion of an added fee or an increase in costs; however, the City had not raised rates or added fees in 2 years. He explained the two approaches: 1.) Council could consider a public safety fee, which would not require a public vote by ballot, but a great deal of public education before Council acted. Or, 2.) Council could put a police levy on the ballot for the next election, noting there would be no guarantee of it passing and keeping in mind levy's expired after 5 years. Sarah Cook added funds from a levy would not be received until the year following a general election. The Mayor shared his thoughts, noting the commitment from the General Fund of \$40k annually, which was money freed up from the loan payment on City Hall. He would like to see the General Fund contribute enough to keep any proposed public safety fee at a maximum of \$10, which would require approximately \$19k more from the General Fund.

To get the pulse of the Council, Mayor Myers again went around to each one to see which approach they felt was best. Councilor Beyerl indicated seeking voter input was important to him; however, a levy had already been voted down once, and the Council had been discussing the need for more coverage for many, many years. He thought it had been talked about long enough and it was time for the City to take action, noting the importance of getting education out to the public about a safety fee. Councilors Perry and Watkins agreed, noting with new housing development coming, there would be more paying in, which would spread the costs and hopefully lower the fee over time. Councilor Rossiter noted if he had the choice, he would prefer going out for a levy; however, he agreed with Councilor Beyerl that they had already put it off for years and something needed to be done much sooner. Councilor McKenzie preferred a levy, noting the public should have the opportunity to vote. Councilor Kellogg questioned the levy process and why it took so long to see the funds, to which it was explained that the timing of placing something on the ballot revolved around election dates, and then the time for the collection process. He too felt seeking citizen input was important and while his gut said levy, he could be in favor of a safety fee with proper notification and input from citizens.

Mersha Studer, visitor, expressed concern about the Council implementing any fee without first educating and putting word out to the public. She, like many others, was retired and living on a fixed income. Mayor Myers assured her, and the Council, his intent was never to adopt a fee without public outreach and education. Sarah Cook explained it was required to hold public hearings before implementing such fees, noting the process would be very much the same as the \$2 storm water fee the City implemented a few years ago. After some discussion, Mayor Myers confirmed the general consensus was to move in the direction of a potential \$10 safety fee and that National Night Out would be the perfect venue to put information out about a safety fee idea and seek feedback from the public.

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

IV. VISITORS – none

V. STAFF/COUNCIL COMMENTS


Sarah Cook shared the preliminary information she had received regarding the ARP funds, noting more information would be coming. Jeff Buskirk announced 1 bid had been received for the 5th Street project for \$491k. In addition, he explained a brief setback on the water treatment plant project, due to an incorrect automatic switch and the delay in getting a new one.

Councilor Perry had passed along information to staff about redesignation of OR 164, which Sarah Cook indicated Catherine at AAMPO had that information and had relayed it to ODOT to look into. Councilor Watkins pointed out the poor condition of the 150th banners and Sarah Cook indicated the sign company was in the process of making replacements free of charge. Councilor Kellogg expressed interest in attending the meeting with MCSO. He also inquired about when in-person meetings would begin, to which Sarah Cook noted would occur when the County was moved to low risk status.

Last, Councilor Kellogg inquired about the school zone signage in the area of the old middle school, which needed removed because there was no longer a school there. Staff explained the multi-jurisdictional control over the area, which did not include the City.

VI. ADJOURNMENT – Councilor Beyerl moved to adjourn, seconded by David Kellogg. All 6 were in favor and the meeting closed at 5:20pm.

MINUTES APPROVED this 27th day of May, 2021.



Michael D. Myers, Mayor

ATTEST:



Sarah Cook, City Manager/Recorder