

CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Municipal Court Room
Monday, February 11, 2008
4:00 p.m.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Konopa called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

Councilors Present: Dan Bedore, Ralph Reid Jr., Dick Olsen, Sharon Konopa, Bessie Johnson, and Jeff Christman

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

COUNCIL VIDEO IMPROVEMENT TIPS

Information Technology Technician Mike Cox reviewed the items on the memo provided in the agenda. He emphasized that the Council should speak into the microphones clearly and suggested they move closer to them when they wanted to speak.

Information Technology Director Jorge Salinas mentioned that they were expecting a sound technician to evaluate the Council Chambers on February 27.

Councilor Olsen arrived at the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

Councilor Johnson suggested using wireless microphones for Council members. Salinas will investigate that possibility.

PROPOSED COUNTYWIDE LIBRARY DISTRICT

Library Director Ed Gallagher introduced members of the audience including Ruth Metz, a Library Consultant, and representatives from the Linn Library League. Gallagher said he believes creating a countywide library district would fulfill the Council's Strategic Plan goal of providing an "Effective Government." He feels Albany and Linn County can learn from the many existing library districts throughout the nation and can build on the strengths of those districts. He asked the Council to support the League in forming a countywide library district and suggested he bring a resolution of support for the Council to endorse at the Wednesday meeting.

Metz explained that the formal process starts with the establishment of boundaries and cities elect to be in the boundaries. Until that is done, a tax base or service base cannot be calculated. She feels there is a great deal of interest for moving forward with the district in the community. They estimate costs to be around .68/1,000 of assessed property value. This would be the district's permanent rate. They have received information from the county regarding compression and feels it is not an issue. Her job to see if it is economically feasible to form the district and she believes yes, they can provide a good service plan for .68 cents.

Councilor Christman asked, are you saying the rates can never change? Metz answered yes; the rates would not change though the assessed value might go up.

Konopa asked, how will capital replacement be handled and does it come out of Albany's General Fund? She also asked about "under-levying". Metz said that in their budget the money would be spent in July even though it didn't get received until December. The district would take over operations of all the libraries in July at a service level less than the estimated funds to be received in December. New services would be implemented gradually. Metz was hoping that any carry over money would establish a capital replacement fund. If not, the local governments would need to pay for upkeep. There followed discussion regarding capital improvements and tax expenditures.

Olsen asked what amount each city was contributing. Metz said, together it is around \$2.2 million. Gallagher said their estimates from a year ago for each community are: Harrisburg, \$51,000; Scio, \$30,000; Albany, \$1.2 million; with Lebanon and Sweet Home contributing a portion of the rest.

Finance Director Stewart Taylor provided a handout regarding the impacts on Albany's current year line items. The "under-levy" would reduce current Linn County taxes by \$1.581 million and the Public Safety Levy would also decrease. It would affect internal charges, such as Information Technology, Equipment Reserves, and PERS bonds. Property taxes received are currently split 80 percent into the General Fund and 20 percent into the Parks Fund. A reduction in revenue would affect the Parks Fund. He said that revenues would be reduced more than expenditures. Taylor added that there would be major maintenance requirements from Albany's budget.

Johnson asked how the governing board is elected. Metz said candidates would be on the same ballot with the tax measure.

Johnson said, Albany just received a new library from a benefactor and questions the value of giving it away. She is also concerned about employees being retained with the same benefits and protections.

Councilor Reid, asked if you start operations in January 2010, who runs the Library? Metz said a Board of Directors. She explained that planning would take place from January to July 2009, basically an organizing time; then money would be borrowed from July through December to implement the plan. Taylor explained how General Fund revenues are received.

Metz continued a discussion regarding the tax rate and services.

Taylor said that if the City were to under-levy (request less than the permanent rate) for a year or so, there would be flexibility in reestablishing the permanent rate in subsequent years.

Wolf Dyner, an interested citizen, said that when the League surveyed the community for support, that survey suggested that it would be a tradeoff. Whatever the Library District received in taxes, would be the same reduction in City taxes. The League must keep faith with the community. It has to be permanent as long as the district exists.

Christman asked, does the capital improvement money need to come from the City? Metz said yes. In reviewing Albany's budget, she didn't see any transfers to the Library for capital improvements. She doesn't believe it is in the tax rate right now.

Olsen wanted to know what the compression is estimated to be, if the City were to go back to the \$6.40/1,000 tax rate after the district is established.

Johnson thinks the district should gather signatures in order to put the measure on the ballot.

The Council wanted more itemized discussion regarding costs for Albany, how compression would be effected, and more information about the organization of the Library District.

TITLE 18 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE QUARTERLY REPORT

Assistant Building Official Melanie Adams said the report has been available to the Council and asked if they had any questions.

In regards to a new disability access program that the Building Department has started, Johnson asked if they monitored disability access to public parking areas. Adams said they do and have had good compliance from business owners so far.

Johnson asked, can the City be fined for noncompliance with disability access? Adams said that is always possible, but if the City has a plan in place and is not neglecting its disability access, the Department of Justice will usually be satisfied. There is always the possibility of a private lawsuit as well.

Reid asked, are you working with the Oregon State Police regarding parking lot coverage? Adams said no, she is not familiar with any mutual agreement for cooperation.

Public Works Director Diane Taniguchi-Dennis said that the Building Department's disability access staff looked at the City facilities to make sure the City was complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Necessary changes will be identified through the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) process. She said the bus stops, which are currently being reviewed by the Building Department, would probably be the first project.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLAN UPDATE

Civil Engineer III Jeni Richardson distributed a new technical memo and explained that the Council would have six weeks to review it. She asked if they would take the map that has all the projects and project numbers and review written information with it, to identify potential other projects. She provided information on concepts of a neighborhood meeting.

Taniguchi-Dennis said the projects are for arterials and collectors. Local streets are a separate issue.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES IN TREE CODES

Parks and Facilities Maintenance Manager Craig Carnagey explained that the Tree Commission went back to the community, conducted public hearings, and posted articles in the local paper regarding these changes. He said there are no code language changes.

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City Attorney Jim Delapoer said that the Code currently requires the City to prove that a violator needed a permit to cut the trees. That is a hard burden to prove. He asked, does the Council want to change it? Basically, staff wants to put in new language that it is a violation to cut trees without a permit and it will not be staff's burden to prove they knew the law.

Olsen asked, if a homeowner cuts a tree by mistake, do they have any recourse? Delapoer said, yes, but it would be for mitigation of the fine.

Council requested staff to move forward with the changes.

COUNCILOR COMMENTS

There were no Councilor Comments.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

Management Assistant/Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith said because of other staff responsibilities the Charter revision election date has been postponed to November 2008.

Smith reported that staff had a meeting with the State Fire Marshal in which they discussed compliance actions regarding the Helping Hands Homeless Shelter. She expects them to appeal to the Council on Wednesday, but under state law there is no appeal. There followed discussion regarding numbers of people and types of people housed at the shelter.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Betty Langwell, City Clerk