

CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL
Council Chambers
Wednesday, April 27, 2011
7:15 p.m.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Konopa called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Girl Scout Junior Troop No. 20103 led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

ROLL CALL

Councilors present: Jeff Christman, Ralph Reid, Jr., Floyd Collins, Dick Olsen, Bill Coburn, and Bessie Johnson

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Business from the Public

Jo Rae Perkins, 1030 Maple Street SW, spoke about the Linn-Benton Loop bus route. She is currently a student at Oregon State University and a frequent user of the bus. She said she and fellow riders have become frustrated over bus break downs that cause delays. She thinks it is a chronic problem. It seems to happen every couple of weeks. The riders have to contend with work schedules and school schedules, and a late bus can make them late for classes or work. Also, there is no way of knowing what happened when the bus does not appear as no one answers the phone at the City transportation office before 8 a.m. She wanted to know if riders could be notified in some way, so they would have the option to make other arrangements rather than wait for a late bus. She praised the bus drivers.

She also spoke regarding the Albany Visitors Association (AVA) and the transient room tax. She is a member of the AVA Board. She appreciates Councilor Christman's suggestion for a fixed 40% of the transient room tax for AVA. She had some concerns about other proposed funding and mentioned the trolley. Based on numbers mentioned at the City Work Session and using the 40% the AVA would get \$100,000 less than they are currently operating on. She understands cutbacks, but thinks the AVA has done a great job for tourism. She suggested Linn County put in a 1% transient room tax.

Leigha Thomas, 1943 Kodiak Avenue SW, is director of sales for two hotels in Albany, and on the board of the AVA. She believes more of the money needs to go into bringing in larger events. Events at the Expo Center are a main driver for the tax. She read portions of a letter from Marty Rorick, of the Oregon Employer Council (OEC), saying that the OEC would like to bring its state wide conference to Albany in May of 2012, but had reservations because of the path between the hotels and the fairgrounds. That path was in disrepair and not up to code. Thomas said 30-35% of hotel occupancy in Albany is because of Expo Center events and wanted more monies given to them for upkeep.

Councilor Collins mentioned that the path was put in by the Master Gardeners to be used as a walkway, not an access way.

Councilor Coburn asked, what percentage of the customers are businesses or corporate guests? Thomas responded around 40-50% are corporate clients not related to tourism.

At this point Troop 365 of the North Albany Area Boy Scouts entered the meeting.

Adoption of Resolution

Waiving competitive bidding, establishing a class special procurement, and awarding a special procurement contract for Stryker Power Pro Ambulance Cots and related equipment to Stryker Corporation.

Councilor Reid declared a conflict of interest as he has stock in the company. He will abstain from voting on this issue.

Fire Chief John Bradner explained that these are motorized ambulance cots. He had provided a photo of one to the Council. Their official name is Stryker Power APro and Stair-Pro. He said the Fire Department has existing funds available to purchase the cots. Bradner explained how the cot is used, describing how the city of Lebanon has been using theirs.

MOTION: Collins moved to waive competitive bidding, establish a class special procurement, and award a special procurement contract for Stryker Power Pro Ambulance Cots and related equipment to Stryker

Corporation. Councilor Johnson seconded the motion and it passed 5-0, with Reid abstaining, and was declared Resolution No. 5998.

Adopting the Transient Lodging Tax Policy.

Konopa explained that the Council has had three work sessions in which this subject was discussed.

Councilor Christman wanted to make it clear that his proposal took the framework presented by the Transient Room Tax Task Force and applied it to his concept. His dollar amounts were based on staff projections. Taking the Fiscal Year 2011-12 proposed revenue from all sources; it comes to a little over \$900,000. The AVA gets over \$363,000. His plan doesn't take anything away from any group. Using the percentages, monies would be adjusted based on the revenues received. Christman said his proposal eliminated the collaborative tourism program and redistributed the funds to others. Basically everybody got a percentage piece of the funds. He also suggested that the Advisory Committee should have a local hotel and motel representative on it. Also, the representative from the Expo Center, Randy Porter, told him that he had requested some money for the Expo Center (\$12,000) based on his marketing budget, but had been ignored.

Konopa said the Task Force did discuss having someone from the motel/hotel association on the Advisory Committee and decided they would be represented through the Albany Visitors Association (AVA), as they are represented on the AVA Board.

Collins said all three suggestions have strengths and weakens. The Task Force has been working on their policy for a year. He would like to consider this a trial process, and receive reports from the recipients of the monies. He wants the Council to consider continuing support based on deliverables. He would also like to have a joint meeting with the Linn County Commissioners to create an unbiased, quantified, account of what is bringing folks to Albany.

MOTION: Collins moved to adopt the policy on the dais that included changes to the Advisory Committee, (removing the Linn County Fair and Expo Director and including a Linn County Commissioner or designee), and with an amendment to Section II, sub 1) to remove the Albany City Manager from the Advisory Committee and include a representative from the hotel and motel group. Reid seconded the motion.

Coburn doesn't like this being a permanent committee and considers some members of the committee to have a conflict of interest. Some groups are represented and some not; most notably Albany Millersburg Economic Development Corporation (AMEDC) is not. He said he feels like tax dollars are going directly into the pockets of members of the committee. He doesn't like the formation of the seven new programs and feels there are a lot of duplicate services. He likes Christman's usage suggestion but doesn't like there being reserves. He would prefer to have these agencies come before the Budget Committee with requests for funding.

Johnson agrees with Coburn. She said the Task Force should be finished with its "task" and not become a committee. She feels nothing is clear in what is presented before them.

Konopa said the Task Force completed their assigned task. An ongoing committee will be able to receive information from the community like the motel and hotel association.

VOTE: A vote was taken on the motion and it passed 4-3, with Reid, Collins, Olsen, and Mayor Konopa voting yes, and Christman, Coburn, and Johnson voting no.

Adoption of Consent Calendar

- 1) Approval of Minutes
 - a.) March 23, 2011, City Council Regular Session.

MOTION: Christman moved to adopt the Consent Calendar as presented. Reid seconded the motion and it passed 6-0.

Report

Receiving Code Enforcement Team Third Quarter Report for Fiscal Year 2010-2011.

Management Assistant/Public Information Officer Marilyn Smith noted from the report that Woodland Square, 1415 Salem Avenue, is an ongoing problem. Thirty-nine residents of the neighborhood around the mobile home park delivered a petition to City Hall on September 28, 2010, alleging that many of the structures were unsafe, possibly uninhabitable, unsightly, and degrading property values.

Christman asked if some of the homes at Woodland Square are owner occupied. Smith said yes, some are.

Smith reminded the Council of the community "Big Pick Up" on May 21.

BUSINESS FROM THE COUNCIL

Collins said letters were sent to the state representatives and senator regarding the issues that Linn County Commissioner Nyquist voiced at the work session; the City help fund the schools. Collins suggested the Council send a letter to the representatives and senator saying they are dealing with the issue locally and there is no reason for them to get involved.

Hare said he has received a request from the Linn County Commissioners asking the City to open conversations with them by appointing a Councilor and staff representative to attend meetings dealing with this issue.

Christman said he had a conversation with Greater Albany Public Schools (GAPS) School Board member Bill O'Bryan who said they were trying to get everyone together in a similar fashion. Christman is willing to talk about it. That doesn't mean he is willing to spend any money yet. He understands the work group would be to frame the issue, before coming together to discuss any money issues.

There followed discussion and general agreement of support for the meeting concept.

Collins said whoever represents the City should convey that the Council sees the issue as asking if the City and the County should be involved in helping the school district monetarily and if so, consider alternative funding, not just the Central Albany Revitalization Agency (CARA).

Olsen suggested the work group consider complications that could arise regarding boundaries as the schools, City, and county have different boundaries.

Johnson agrees and doesn't believe funding from the City will solve the schools money problems. She does believe by creating the work group everyone involved would be hearing the same thing and misinformation would not be so abundant.

Hare mentioned that the hope is that they could come to a common understanding. He encouraged the Council to participate.

Council consensus was to have City Manager Wes Hare be the staff representative and Councilor Jeff Christman to be the Council representative.

Hare will write letters to the state representatives and senators explaining that they are taking care of the issue locally.

Olsen asked, is there anything that can be done regarding the late buses?

City Transportation Supervisor Chris Bailey said the latest problem with the bus was that the wipers didn't work. That was a safety issue, so the bus could not run. She had thought of equipping the bus with a GPS transponder so people could track its whereabouts, including breakdowns and delays, online or with their smart phones. Information regarding breakdowns does come to the office, but staff doesn't come in until 8:00 a.m. Their first priority is always safety. Problems seem to come in spurts. When you have a system that depends on one bus with an older backup, it can be difficult to anticipate how long of a delay there will be before the problem is solved. It is the nature of their current system for this to happen. They are considering ways to keep riders updated.

Olsen asked, how much do the buses cost? Bailey said both buses cost around \$600,000.

Hare said there are additional resources the City is hoping to receive as a result of attaining MPO status. He said there might be a simpler way to let people know if and when the bus is delayed, and he would work on that.

Smith reminded the Council of a Special Work Session on May 9, at 6:30 p.m., in the Council Chambers, regarding Goal 5.

Konopa said she would be unable to make that meeting. Community Development Director Greg Byrne said he would meet one on one with her so she receives the same information as the councilors will get at the meeting.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Work Session of the Council is scheduled for Monday, May 9, 2011, at 4:00 p.m., in the Municipal Court Room, at City Hall. The next Regular Session of the Council is scheduled for Wednesday, May 11, 2011, at 7:15 p.m., in the Council Chambers, at City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Reviewed by,

Betty Langwell, MMC
City Clerk

Stewart Taylor
Finance Director