



## MINUTES

Tuesday, January 24, 2023  
Special Session  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
**Approved: February 8, 2023**

### Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Alex Johnson II called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

### Roll Call

Councilors present: Mayor Alex Johnson II and Councilors Steph Newton, Ray Kopczynski, Jackie Montague, and Marilyn Smith. Councilor Matilda Novak arrived virtually at 3:18 p.m.

Councilors absent: Councilor Ramycia McGhee was excused.

### Welcome, What to Expect

City Manager Peter Troedsson introduced the session.

### Presentations, Continued from Monday, January 23, 2023

Finance – Jeanna Yeager, Finance Director

Yeager introduced finance department employees and listed the department's core services. She mentioned ongoing problems with the Munis financial software.

Councilor Marilyn Smith said many other local governments use Munis. Are they having the same problems? Yeager said some of them are.

Mayor Alex Johnson II asked if there has been an increase in attempts to intrude into the computer system. Yeager said there are always phishing attempts, but none have succeeded in the last couple of years.

Councilor Steph Newton asked what percentage of work is being done remotely. Yeager said very little.

Yeager said the finance department would like to hire a grant administrator who would serve the whole City, and also hopes to hire someone who could help Purchasing Coordinator Diane Murzynski.

Library – Eric Ikenouye, Library Director

Ikenouye read the mission and vision of the library. He spoke briefly about some successful library programs. He mentioned the Scharpf Foundation and the Friends of the Library as important supporters of the library.

Challenges facing the library after Covid include extending open hours, when staffing is already low. The library has not had books challenged recently, but that may change in the current political climate.

Newton asked what the council can do to support the library. Ikenouye said the council can support volunteering, which is a major benefit to the library.

Ikenouye also talked briefly about the ADA self-evaluation and transition plan. The goal is to have a report to the council at the end of June 2023.

#### Break

The council took a short break at 4:06 p.m.

#### Parks and Recreation – Kim Lyddane, Parks and Recreation Director

Lyddane briefly explained the structure of the Parks and Recreation department and facilities. She said staffing is down 25 percent since 2018. Recent successes include the new fitness court at Burkhart Park and replacing 50-year-old play equipment at Henderson Park, as well as rebranding and remodeling the old Senior Center. Challenges include continued limited staffing and aging infrastructure. Cleaning up transient camps takes more staff time than ever.

Lyddane said her department also benefits from grants from the Scharpf foundation and other grantors and supporters, but needs sustainable funding in order to keep up with programs and infrastructure.

Newton asked how much the department will need. Troedsson said that discussion will happen later, but it's almost guaranteed that there will be a shortfall. Lyddane said the parks master plan lists over \$50 million of needed improvements.

Councilor Jackie Montague asked if the parks and recreation department would benefit from the proposed grant writer. Lyddane said yes.

Councilor Ray Kopczynski asked how our parks and programs compare to other Willamette Valley communities in scale and cost. Lyddane said per capita, Albany is well ranked, but a lot of our facilities are located centrally so areas of recent growth don't have amenities close.

#### Community Development – Matthew Ruetters, Community Development Director Seth Sherry, Economic Development Manager

Sherry reviewed the economic development group's mission to attract, retain, and diversify business in Albany. Recent accomplishments include identifying underused grants for a key project, and creating a more transparent policy for spending transient lodging tax funds.

Ruetters explained that the Community Development department has two divisions: building and planning. The building division acts on authority delegated by Linn County to administer the state's development code. Having online permitting available during the pandemic helped the division continue to provide services.

Ruetters said the planning division's responsibilities are based on compliance with state laws that regulate growth, including long-range planning, short-range planning, and flood planning. The division also uses Community Development Block Grant funds to work toward alleviating poverty and making housing more affordable.

Break

The council took a short break at 5:38 p.m.

Public Works – Chris Bailey, Public Works Director

Bailey introduced key public works staff. She reminded the council that the Public Works Department is not dependent on the general fund. Albany is a full-service public works department with four divisions: engineering, financial, operations, and administration. She briefly listed some of the functions of each division.

Public works accomplishments in the current biennium include completing the wet weather lift station on Water Avenue, building the compost facility for the wastewater treatment plant, and doubling Linn-Benton Loop service.

Challenges in the new biennium will include workforce problems. It's difficult to find new workers with degrees in operations specialties. Funding needed infrastructure maintenance will also be a challenge, and current litigation will continue into the future.

Johnson II asked if the airport generates revenue for the City. Bailey said the airport is self-supporting. The council discussed several possibilities for airport use.

Closing Remarks, What's Next – Peter Troedsson

Troedsson spoke about plans to hire a deputy city manager and why one is needed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Allison Liesse  
City Clerk

Peter Troedsson  
City Manager