



MINUTES

Monday, March 20, 2023
Work Session
Council Chambers, City Hall
Approved: April 12, 2023

Call to Order

Mayor Alex Johnson II called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Councilors present: Mayor Alex Johnson II and Councilors Matilda Novak, Steph Newton (virtual), Ray Kopczynski, Jackie Montague, Marilyn Smith, and Ramycia McGhee

Councilors absent: None

Business from the Public

Joe Esker spoke in support of a conservation-based water rate schedule.

Bird Rides, Inc. Update

4:06 p.m.

TJ Birkel of Bird Rides Inc. showed slides* and gave information about the business. He said in 2022, there were 12,655 rides in Albany, for a total of about 20,500 miles. The aim is to reduce the number of car trips. Bird relies on strong working relationships with cities, and they have a good relationship with Albany.

Councilor Jackie Montague asked if user agreements were unique to each city. Birkel said they're a standard agreement. Montague asked how Albany compares to other cities our size, and Birkel said he will find out.

Councilor Ray Kopczynski asked how citizens can approach people who are not riding scooters appropriately or safely. Discussion followed. City Manager Peter Troedsson reminded the council that not all scooters in the city are Bird scooters, and the police can enforce traffic and safety laws.

Birkel said there were no accidents related to Bird scooters in Albany in 2022, and no scooters were stolen. They plan to use the same local fleet manager this year.

Councilor Steph Newton mentioned an article she read that said that Bird had considered declaring bankruptcy. Birkel said no; they left a handful of markets in 2022, but never considered discontinuing operations. They are fully committed to Albany.

Johnson II said he would like to have the fleet manager present the next time the council discusses the scooters.

Councilor Matilda Novak asked how Bird tracks the number of car trips replaced by scooters. Birkel said they use a formula that shows that one-third of total rides replace a car trip.

Public Works Utility Rate Presentation

4:23 p.m.

Public Works Director Chris Bailey presented slides.* She acknowledged Esker's comments and said when the current water master plan update is finished, staff will assess the rate structure. Bailey said rate updates are the end of a discussion of level of service and capital needs. Inflation and the costs of regulatory compliance are two factors in increased rates.

Public Works staff recommends a 3% sewer rate increase on July 1 of this year; a 4% increase in drinking water rates on January 1, 2024; and a 17% increase in stormwater rates effective March 1, 2024. The stormwater increase isn't as large as it sounds, because the rate currently is low. All three increases add up to about \$7 per month for typical single residential customers.

Councilor Marilyn Smith asked Bailey to define "non-discharging categorical industrial user." Bailey said a "categorical industrial user" produces certain types of constituents in waste. "Non-discharging" users produce those constituents but don't discharge them into our wastewater system.

Smith asked how many staff are dedicated to stormwater. Bailey said one FTE. Public Works also uses contractors, and the wastewater pipe crew works on stormwater pipes and charges back to stormwater.

Novak asked whether the City can get state or federal funds to help with the regulatory requirements. Bailey said yes, for capital projects, but not for compliance testing.

Montague asked if there is funding available specifically for PFAS removal. Bailey said there's money available from the state for treatment to remove PFAS from drinking water, but we don't have PFAS in our water system.

Councilor Ramycia McGhee asked if the water utility rates go up every year. Bailey said yes. Public Works will come back to the council later to explain what they think they need, but it's up to the council to approve or not. Kopczyński said there have been years when rates have not increased.

Johnson II asked if Public Works tests for microplastics. Bailey said no. Our water system uses such fine filtration that there are probably no microplastics in our drinking water.

Recess to Executive Session

5:26 p.m.

The council recessed to executive session to consider current litigation or litigation likely to be filed pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2)(h)

Reconvene

5:58 p.m.

The council reconvened into regular session.

Business from the Council

City Manager Report

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Allison Liesse
City Clerk

Peter Troedsson
City Manager

**Documents discussed at the meeting that are not in the agenda packet are archived in the record. Documents from staff are posted to the website after the meeting. Documents submitted by the public are available by emailing cityclerk@cityofalbany.net.*