



ALBANY CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

Monday, June 12, 2023

Work Session

Council Chambers, City Hall

Approved: July 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, Ray Kopczynski, Jackie Montague, Marilyn Smith, and Ramycia McGhee (arrived at 4:56 p.m.)

Councilors absent: None

Business from the Public

None.

Water Master Plan Update

4:01 p.m.

Civil Engineer III Ryan Beathe showed PowerPoint slides.* He said the water master plan was last updated in 2004. It's a foundation of the Capital Improvement Plan. The water master plan objectives include assessing the Albany-Lebanon Canal. The update is being done in three phases: criteria development, system condition assessments, and producing the master plan document.

Beathe said staff is currently finishing the condition assessment stage and will start categorizing improvements next. All three phases should be complete by the end of December this year.

Discussion on Proposed Building and Electrical Program Fee Updates

4:27 p.m.

Building Official Manager Johnathan Balkema presented a letter of support from the Western Oregon Builders Association*. He said there are very few changes in the proposed updates since the last discussion with the council, on May 8, 2023.

Councilor Matilda Novak questioned raising fees when there is less construction happening. Balkema said the building division needs to maintain staff to provide services for those who are able to build.

Councilor Marilyn Smith said she believes building program fees were last increased in 2020 and electrical fees in 2010. Balkema said that's correct.

Alternative to Installation of an Emergency Responder Communications Coverage System (ERCCS)

4:35 p.m.

Division Chief - Fire Marshal Lora Ratcliff said that since 2010, some new buildings are required to install an amplifier system for public safety radio signals. Ten buildings in Albany now have these boosters. This can cause interference with emergency signals. An alternative to installing an ERCCS is to pay a fee into a fire department fund dedicated to improving the communications system.

The Albany Fire Department is still using the VHF spectrum for emergency communication, and improvements are expensive. Albany Fire would like to adopt the same fee schedule as Corvallis uses for this alternative. Businesses are asking for the waiver, which is cost saving for them.

Councilor Jackie Montague asked how long it would be before the fire department could upgrade their communications system and discontinue the fee. Ratcliff said there will be a continuing need for system maintenance and further upgrades, so the fee probably would not be discontinued.

Discussion to Update Fire and Life Safety Service Fees

5:10 p.m.

Ratcliff said due to changes in the building code, the fire department has more responsibility for plan review and inspection of new development. The department has only two inspectors. They spend a lot of time on inspections and have never charged a fee.

Albany Municipal Code Update, Title 17.28, Uniform Fire Code Update

4:43 p.m.

Ratcliff said the update removes language from the Albany Municipal Code (AMC) that is already in the Oregon Fire Code (OFC). It removes adoption of the OFC, and adds the third-party records management tool, which all local jurisdictions use. There is no cost to the City.

Resolution Governing the Display of Flags on City Property

4:45 p.m.

City Manager Peter Troedsson said the draft resolution in the agenda packet is modeled on the League of Oregon Cities' wording.

Smith read a statement* explaining her no vote on the May 10, 2023, motion to display the Pride flag at City Hall. She recommended amending the proposed language to remove the words "rather as a non-public forum," on the grounds that displaying a flag is not a forum or discussion.

Novak objected to the reference to "official government speech" of the city council. She said the council doesn't have any business making government speech in that manner. She asked what does flying a flag have to do with the City's mission to provide "quality public services for a better Albany community"?

MOTION: Councilor Ray Kopczynski moved to accept Smith's amendment. Councilor Steph Newton seconded the motion. Troedsson reminded the council that a suggestion also was made to remove the word "reasonable" from the phrase "reasonable or customary."

Johnson II said government buildings should fly government flags. Not all people are represented by one group's flag. He said if the council feels the need to make a political statement, the vote should be 6-0.

Novak said the only flags that represent all are the U.S. flag and the Oregon flag.

Kopczynski wished to withdraw his motion. The seconder agreed.

Councilor Ramycia McGhee arrived in the meeting at 4:56 p.m.

MOTION: Kopczynski moved to amend the resolution per Smith's suggested change and to remove the word "reasonable." Smith read the proposed amended language. Newton seconded the motion, and it passed 6-0.

The amended proposed resolution will come back to the council Wednesday, June 14, 2023, for adoption.

Business from the Council

4:59 p.m.

Novak read a letter from a constituent* objecting to the display of the Pride flag at City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:04 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.*