COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL
VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 11, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jeff Gowing called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

ROLL CALL

City Recorder Trudy Borrevik called the roll. The following were

PRESENT IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS:
Mayor Jeff Gowing and Councilor Kenneth Michael Roberts

PRESENT VIA GOTOMEETING:
Councilors Greg Ervin, Candace Solesbee and Jon Stinnett
Jake, Boone, Mike Fleck and YAC Representative MJ Raade

COUNCIL ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS:
Police Chief Scott Shepherd and City Recorder Trudy Borrevik

STAFF PRESENT VIA GOTOMEETING
City Manager Richard Meyers, Public Works & Development
Director Faye Stewart, Finance Director Roberta Likens and City Planner Amanda Ferguson

CITY ATTORNEY:
None

MEDIA PRESENT:
Damien Sherwood, The Sentinel
Cameron Reiten, KNND Radio (Virtual)

OATHS OF OFFICE

City Recorder Trudy Borrevik gave the Oath of Office to Mayor Jeff Gowing and Councilors Kenneth Michael Roberts, Jon Stinnett and Greg Ervin.

STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Mayor Jeff Gowing gave his State of the City Address which is attached hereto and marked Exhibit “A”.

1 – Council Meeting Minutes 1/11/2021
ITEMS ADDED TO THE AGENDA

10(f) Letter of Support

IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILOR FLECK AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR BOONE THAT ITEM 10(f) BE ADDED TO THE AGENDA AND THE CURRENT 10(f) ITEM BE MOVED TO ITEM 10(g).

The vote on the motion was as follows:

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APPEARANCE OF INTERESTED CITIZENS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

(a) Approval of December 11, 2020 Agenda Session Minutes
(b) Approval of December 14, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes

IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILOR FLECK AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR BOONE TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.

The vote on the motion was as follows:

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RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES

(a) Second Vote Ordinance 3135 Amending Chapter 5.28 of the Cottage Grove Municipal Code Regarding Used Merchandise Businesses

Councilor Solesbee declared a conflict of interest and recused herself as she owns a Second Hand Store, Five Flying Monkeys.

City Manager Richard Meyers said Council held the first vote on the Ordinance at the last City Council meeting. He said the Ordinance reduced recordkeeping requirements, removed the penalty provisions and added cell phones, computers and other personal electronic devices to the list of used merchandise. He said the City Attorney was working on a draft general penalty clause to be added to the Code that wasn’t as restrictive as the old one.

IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILOR FLECK AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR BOONE THAT ORDINANCE NO. 3135 BE ADOPTED.

The vote on the motion was as follows:

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Mayor Gowing announced that Ordinance No. 3135 had been adopted.

BUSINESS FROM CITY COUNCIL

(a) Municipal Court Judge Contract Renewal and Amendments

City Manager Richard Meyers said the Municipal Court Judge Contract was for one-year terms expiring on December 31st of each year. He said Council held an Executive Session in December to evaluate the Judge and the attached Municipal Court Judge Performance Evaluation reflected that evaluation. He said the Municipal Court Judge Contract Renewal and Amendment was also attached with an end date of December 31, 2021.

IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILOR FLECK AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR BOONE THAT COUNCIL APPROVE THE RENEWAL AND AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL COURT JUDGE CONTRACT AND AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO SIGN THE CONTRACT AMENDMENTS AND ACCEPT THE EVALUATION.
The vote on the motion was as follows:

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(b) TMDL Implementation Plan Background & Erosion Prevention Standards

City Planner Amanda Ferguson said the Memorandum provided to Council walked them through the history of the TMDL Implementation Plan in Cottage Grove to provide background information for the proposed draft code for surface water management. She said the City originally adopted a TMDL Plan in 2008 based on the TMDLs that were established by DEQ in 2006. She said TMDL stood for the Total Maximum Daily Load and talked about the OAR addressing TMDLs. She said the City had updated the plan every five years.

Councilor Fleck thanked staff for the information provided which was very valuable.

Councilor Ervin also thanked Amanda for putting together the information for Council. He said if dirt was the main issue the City was trying to prevent from getting into the storm drain system, if there was any attention being focused on log trucks driving through town off gravel and dirt roads. He commented that construction sites were addressed, but asked about other ways that dirt was getting into the systems and if those would be addressed in the plan.

Public Works & Development Director Faye Stewart said one key component of the City’s plan was the street sweeping program which captured the soil brought in from outside vehicles into the community.

Councilor Ervin asked why the need for new restrictions if the street sweeper was capturing most of the soil.

Amanda said the street sweeper was only functioning around the City once a week and construction sites could be right next to a storm drain and put a lot of material into the river before the street sweeper.

Mayor Gowing said in the mid 1990’s there was a requirement from ODOT that a fleet of trucks have a truck wash to keep soil off the streets.

(c) Proposed Modification to Draft Code 14.35 Surface Water Management

City Planner Amanda Ferguson said staff was following up on discussion from the last City Council meeting. She said in order to comply with provisions of the City’s TMDL Implementation Plan, staff had been preparing an ordinance to establish construction site erosion control standards. She said over the last decade staff had laid the appropriate ground work.
through the adoption of other necessary codes such as hillside standards, riparian development standards, improved floodplain development standards and adopted a grading standard, etc. She said there had been education of both staff and the public on riparian issues and water quality concerns and made major strides within our own wastewater and drinking water systems. She said the adoption of construction site erosion control standards was the next strategy to implement to meet the water quality goals. She said the draft ordinance was attached for Council’s review. She said text to be removed had been struck through and the new text was in red and explained each proposed change. She said the item was for Council’s discussion only and the ordinance would be brought back at a future Council meeting for a Public Hearing and possible adoption.

Councilor Boone said he liked the changes and said staff dealt with the items Council had been struggling with.

Councilor Fleck said he agreed with Councilor Boone and said the changes addressed Council’s concerns.

(d) Planning Commissioner Appointments

City Planner Amanda Ferguson said there were two vacancies on the Planning Commission, Chloe Beckes and Beau Solesbee. She said only two applications were received from the incumbents. She said the Council Subcommittee was recommending reappointment of Chloe Beckes and Beau Solesbee for three-year terms expiring December 31, 2023.

IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILOR BOONE AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR FLECK THAT CHLOE BECKES AND BEAU SOLESBEE BE APPOINTED TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR THREE-YEAR TERMS EXPIRING DECEMBER 31, 2023.

The vote on the motion was as follows:

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(e) Budget Committee Appointments

Finance Director Roberta Likens said the Budget Committee had three openings, two from expiring terms and one from a resignation. She said three applications were received and it was the recommendation of the Council Subcommittee that Donn Rust and Chalice Savage be appointed to full three-year terms expiring December 31, 2023 and Armando Garza be appointed to fill the vacated position with the term expiring December 31, 2022.
IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILOR ERVIN AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR FLECK THAT DONN RUST AND CHALICE SAVAGE BE APPOINTED TO FULL THREE-YEAR TERMS EXPIRING DECEMBER 31, 2023 AND ARMANDO GARZA BE APPOINTED TO THE TERM VACATED WHICH EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 2022.

The vote on the motion was as follows:

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(f) Statement of Support

Mayor Gowing said he signed a statement with other Mayors in Lane County on the actions at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. He said there was one that had been prepared for the entire Council to support.

Richard provided Council with a copy of the statement prepared by Lane County and signed by the Lane County Commissioners Board Chair, Eugene Mayor, Springfield Council President, Oakridge Mayor, Westfir Mayor, Coburg Mayor and Mayor Gowing. He said originally they had specifically asked that it be Mayors and Chairs to sign the statement primarily to get it out quickly, however he said if Council wished, they could sign on and support the statement.

IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILOR FLECK AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR BOONE THAT COUNCIL SUPPORT SIGNING ON TO THE LETTER ALONG WITH OTHER LANE COUNTY ENTITIES.

Councilor Fleck said he appreciated the Mayor bringing this to Council however he was glad that the Council as a whole could support it. He said it was about democracy and not partisanship, favorites and unfavorites. He said it was very strong and all parties and backgrounds supported the countries rules and standards and if they disagree to do it peacefully.

YAC Representative MJ Raade, said she appreciated it as well and fully supported it. She said from a youth point of view, it was a real leadership opportunity and respect from the Council. She thought the language made sense for what we are doing. She commented that it said today and wondered if it would be better to say the date.

Lane County Commissioner Heather Buch thanked the Council and said she appreciated them signing on to the letter. She said the idea of maintaining our democracy regardless of any political persuasion we know that we are very partisan in our country right now but this shows that we together in our communities and our own Lane County, we know the difference between what is right and wrong and commit to working together to maintain a sense of knowing that we can internally all work together, we commit to that and I appreciate you bringing this forward to
your Council.

Councilor Ervin said he wanted to qualify his support for the letter and said “we cannot mistake what is happening today in Washington D.C. for lawful and peaceful assembly, it doesn’t mention specifically the unlawful acts, rioting, breaking and entering, the disruptions that occurred, there were a lot of people peacefully assembling that weren’t included so he would qualify his support to recognize that he was condemning the unlawful acts.

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(g) Concerns from Council

Councilor Boone said he received an email from a constituent regarding contractor work by his home together with photos and a narrative of what occurred, asking him to bring it up at the next Council meeting.

Faye said the email had been forwarded to staff and he had looked into it. He said a pole had been installed and the contractor left some rock and debris on the sidewalk. He said they also left a cable that had been attached to the pole in the strip between the road and sidewalk. He commented that if the person would have contacted staff on the day it occurred he would have had City staff clean it up. He talked about the City’s process in issuing a permit for this type of work. He said staff was preparing a letter to the subcontractor about concerns the City has with the work. He commented about the other issue in the email which had to do with replacing top soil where the pole had been replaced instead of rock. He talked about the City’s process which the contractor followed. He said the City would review the requirements to see if changes need to be made.

Richard said if the City had been contacted when it occurred, the City could have cleaned it up and billed the contractor for the work.

Councilor Roberts thanked the City and Community Sharing for the warming shelters. He said he took the course through Community Sharing and was impressed with White Bird and was looking forward to getting more involved. He said he toured the Community Center recently and talked with the Library staff and said the remodeling taking place was impressive. He thanked the voters of Cottage Grove for re-electing him and thanked Chalice Savage. He said she wanted to get involved and was now on the Budget Committee.

Councilor Fleck talked about the warming shelters and how the City and Community Sharing got involved. He said last week they received some criticism which he addressed. He said they had
never run a warming shelter before and it had taken longer than he expected to get everything set up. He said they had hired three people and would be hiring an additional three to work with volunteers at the site. He said they would activate when the temperature was going to be below 30°. He talked about what they were doing differently from Beds for Freezing Nights and said with the pallet shelters they could house couples and families together and pets would also be allowed. He said if people were interested in volunteering, they could contact Community Sharing at (541) 942-2176 or email to info@communitysharing.org

YAC Representative MJ Raade said the Youth Advisory Council was asking Council to consider sponsoring the “If I Were Mayor Contest.” She said they had discussed it at their meeting and there were several members who were interested in participating.

Councilor Stinnett commented about the recent incident in Washington D.C. and said he just took an oath to defend the Constitution. He thanked Council for appointing him to Council in September, it showed a vote of confidence which he appreciated. He thanked the citizens in Cottage Grove for electing him and hoped to spend his time on Council encouraging a renewed and strong bond between citizens and their government.

“After last week’s tragic and disgusting lawlessness in the nation’s capitol, I feel it’s more important than ever that we discredit and abandon the division, the violence and the victual that have come to define our national conversation and our national politics. These are not the pathways to sustain success to understanding, to prosperity of happiness for any of us. Throughout our history, Americans have done their best work and made their most lasting contributions together. Togetherness will be essential in confronting the challenges of our future. Now is not the time to withdraw from our neighbors or treat each other as enemies or others. Rather it is essential that we reach out to each other, reaffirm our common bond, our common goals and plan together for a prosperous and inclusive future. I am proud to represent the City of Cottage Grove but I’m more proud to represent the 10,000 or so soles who call this beautiful community our home. I consider the word “community” to be a verb, the coming together of those with a shared purpose and common interest, it is my honor and privilege to community with all of you.”

Mayor Gowing thanked the voters for giving him another term and said his plan was that this would be his last term. He thanked City Staff and said Richard’s leadership in the City was unique and he had done an amazing job through COVID. He said every time an obstacle has come up, he has continuously worked to address it. He said it’s reflected in staff, they were all top notch and he was blessed to be a Mayor of something that worked like a fine tuned watch. He thanked Commissioner Buch for attending and said they had a good working relationship.

Mayor Gowing said the election of Council President and the appointment of Council to Boards and Committees wasn’t on the agenda tonight but would be at the next Council meeting.

Mayor Gowing asked Richard about the liquor license fee waiver and if it needed to be on a future Council agenda.

Richard said yes it would need to come to Council for approval at a future meeting.
Mayor Gowing said he had an awesome Council and thanked them for making his life easier. He said to have the support, leadership and insight to ask the correct questions, it was a true blessing to be working with them.

**BUSINESS FROM CITY MANAGER**

(a) Approval of Electric Line Right of Way Easement

Public Works & Development Director Faye Stewart said the request was for an electrical line right-of-way easement with Pacific Power for the warming shelter site.

**IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILOR FLECK AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR ROBERTS TO APPROVE THE RIGHT-OF-WAY EASEMENT WITH PACIFIC POWER FOR THE ELECTRICAL SERVICE SERVING THE WARMING SHELTER SITE AND AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO SIGN THE EASEMENT.**

The vote on the motion was as follows:

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(b) Memorandum of Understanding Extending the Current Collective Bargaining Agreement

City Manager Richard Meyers said the City had a bargaining agreement with the Police Guild that represented the patrol officers and dispatchers. He said the agreement was a two year agreement which expired June 30, 2021. He said the Police Guild sent a letter to the City in November requesting to begin negotiations. He said the City proposed extending the agreement for one year and the Memorandum of Understanding before Council extended the existing agreement for one year to June 30, 2022. He said the Memorandum also included the addition of a one per cent increase in wages for all unit members and a COLA of a minimum of two percent and a maximum of four percent. He said the Police Guild had voted and approved the extension and it was before Council for their consideration and approval.

**IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILOR BOONE AND SECONDED BY COUNCILOR FLECK THAT COUNCIL APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE CITY AND THE COTTAGE GROVE POLICE GUILD EXTENDING THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT AND AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO SIGN THE MOU ON BEHALF OF THE CITY.**

Councilor Fleck said Council didn’t have a copy of the MOU that outlined the one percent
increase and the one year extension and if it needed to be added to the motion.

Richard said yes it could be included in the motion to recognize that.

COUNCILOR BOONE AMENDED THE MOTION WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COUNCILOR FLECK TO REFLECT THE MOU CONTAINED A 1% SALARY ADJUSTMENT IN ADDITION TO EXTENDING THE EXISTING AGREEMENT FOR ONE YEAR.

The vote on the motion was as follows:

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(c) Report from City Manager

City Manager Richard Meyers thanked everyone for their comments and thanked Commissioner Buch for attending. He said the City appreciated working with her and the County on the pallet shelters and were excited they were up and going.

Richard said the agenda was now searchable and Council could search for key words, etc.

Richard said the League of Oregon Cities Virtual City Hall Day was Thursday, January 28th and if any of the Council were interested in attending to let the City Recorder know.

Richard said the City received a notice that the Corona Virus Relief Fund monies that were received from the State through the Federal Government and had an expiration date of December 30, 2020 were extended to December 31, 2021 with the passage and signing of the appropriation bill. He said the Department of Administrative Services sent out a notice to cities asking if they want to amend the agreement to include the extension with their deadline of June 30, 2021. He said the City will have spent all the Corona Virus Funds by the end of December, 2020. He said should something happen on the Federal level where more relief funds are available, he was going to DAS amend the city's agreement to include the June 30, 2021 deadline. He said if Council was fine with that, the City would proceed with having the agreement extended.

Richard said the City had purchased white flags for the warming shelters and when the warming shelter were activated, a white flag would be put out on Main Street and at the shelters to advise people they are open.
BUSINESS FROM CITY ATTORNEY

(a) Report from City Attorney

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Gowing adjourned the regular meeting of the City Council at 8:15 pm.

The next regular City Council Meeting will be held January 11, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

Trudy Borreilk, City Recorder

Jeffrey D. Gowing, Mayor
2020 was a rough year – the Coronavirus and the COVID-19 pandemic the likes of which the world had not seen since 1918; the sudden passing of one of our own City Councilors and friend Bob Ehler; wildfires which created the worst natural disaster in the history of Lane County; the smoke from all the fires around the west that shrouded our community; civil unrest in our country; and a very divisive state and federal political environment. As 2020 started, I had great hopes for the year. We had just recovered from the 50 year snowstorm and we had some amazing events and activities planned for the year.

However, through the rough year, I was so proud of the way the citizens of Cottage Grove responded to all of the challenges of 2020. It really makes me proud to call Cottage Grove home. We all came together, even with differing views, values and opinions. Even while facing our own challenges we stepped up and generously helped our neighbors.

2020 got off to a great start with the City purchasing 300 trees to give away to community members to plant during the year to help replace some of the trees that were lost in the previous snowstorm. EPUD gave a donation of an additional 50 flowering Dogwood trees to be included in the giveaway. The tree give away was a great success, 215 of the trees were given away with the remaining trees planted on City properties.

We also were excited last year to present the 2020 South Lane County Resource Guide which was a rebirth of the Resource Guide previously prepared and published by Dian Missar and had not been published for several years after Dian’s passing. The new resource even included a digital version of the guide available online. Over 2,500 copies of the Resource Guide were distributed and more copies were wanted. Little did we know that the guide would become very valuable for our citizens to get in touch with resources as the things began closing down in March as a result of the pandemic. The 2021 edition of the South Lane County Resource Guide is currently being printed and will be out for distribution soon. What was amazing is that throughout the pandemic, when everything was changing or closing, the digital version was regularly updated to keep citizens informed and help them find the valuable resources they needed. As we start to recover the digital guide will again be a valuable aid in the steps to recovery.

We all made major sacrifices during 2020. We are all affected. To protect friends and families handwashing, masks and social distancing have become the norm. Businesses have been closed or operations restricted. Schools closed. Events and activities cancelled. Everything that makes life in Cottage Grove wonderful seems to have quarantined.

We have found ways to stay connected with friends and families through cameras and screens. We conduct meetings, hold conferences and spend time with each other virtually. It is still not the same and we all long for the days when we can shake hands, hug, meet together or just stand closer than six feet of each other. It will happen, some of the changes we have made will likely endure beyond the pandemic.
One of the changes that I hope does not become permanent is the closure and damages to our local small businesses. Those small businesses represent real community members, parents, friends and neighbors to all of us. Whether they are the owners that had a dream to run a small business and serve a need in the community or the employees that make those businesses work, I hope that all of us can step up and help them recover and restore our community back to what it was and better then before the pandemic hit.

I am happy that the City of Cottage Grove acted early and designated $100,000 for loans and eventually used a portion to match State funding for grants for our local businesses. We were able to leverage a portion of our $100,000 to secure additional funding for our local businesses. As a result, in partnership with Lane County using State and County funds we were able to provide 11 grants to Cottage Grove businesses totaling $85,000 and 3 loans totaling $30,000. Loan funds remain and we as a Council may need to look at other ways to possibly use the remaining funds. More assistance is needed.

Our local small businesses not only provide jobs but they are a big part of making all our events and activities in the community a success. They support Concerts in the Park, youth sports, school athletics, Bohemia Mining Days, our museums and so much more. They make living in Cottage Grove wonderful. So as we begin to recover let’s do all we can to restore our whole community. Tonight I want to start off by requesting the City Council to consider waiving the liquor renewal fees for those businesses in Cottage Grove that had to close operations during 2020. It is a very small start but I will be working with the City Manager to explore other opportunities to assist and hope to bring more back to the City Council for consideration. The City Council has already removed the license requirements and fees for taxi services in 2020 and tonight will be considering the Ordinance to remove the license and fee requirement for used merchandise businesses.

I am sad to say this just barely scratches the surface of the impact that our community members have felt as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions. I have voiced and will continue to voice my concern to State and County leaders regarding this impact. Our City staff has partnered with the Chamber of Commerce and Lane County to search and advocate for expanded support to our local businesses.

However, in spite of what 2020 threw at the community we have many positive things from the year. There are so many in the community that deserve recognition for how they have weathered 2020 and what they have contributed to the community during this rough year. I have selected three to recognize tonight for their contributions this year.

The first is the Covered Bridge Brewing Group who opened in one of the less desirable times but were following their plan rather than the pandemic. They partnered with so many other businesses to be successful bringing food carts to provide a different venue for dining, partnering with Buster’s to have breakfast and lunch delivered and I think they chose the perfect name for their beer partnering with the Coast Fork Brewing Company collaboration. That is what they have been doing since they opened and is an example of the type of business community that Cottage Grove is. Thank you Christy. (Christy attended virtually and was not in the Council Chambers to receive her certificate).
Next I would like to recognize Ernie Olson. Ernie has a lot on 16th and Main that he wanted to develop as a retirement project. When Clarence the Waver passed away, I asked Ernie for permission for the City to install a bench on his lot. Ernie was more than willing to allow this and since that time he has transformed the lot into a unique piece of property with two retail business spaces on the ground floor and two apartments on the second floor, one of which he lives in. The best thing about it is the unique landscaping that has been done, bringing sculptured art is becoming an attraction to the community and will attract more people into our business community. Ernie was in attendance in the Council Chambers and the Mayor presented him with his certificate.

The last recognition is for the first time to my knowledge, I would like to recognize an outstanding youth, Ethan Bearden-Tanton. Ethan saw a need to think outside the box for Halloween, since we were unable to have a celebration as we have had normally in the past. Working with the City, Main Street and the Chamber, a drive through Halloween was put in place. It was a very successful event and allowed us to still provide a festival for the community. (Ethan attended virtually and was not in the Council Chambers to receive his certificate).

I also want to take this moment to congratulate Councilor Jake Boone for a successful term as President of the League of Oregon Cities during 2020. Councilor Boone demonstrated resilience, leadership and flexibility as President during a year that demanded nothing less.

But 2020 was not all bad. Even through all this the community has stepped forward with positive results that are addressing community needs.

Prior to 2020 the City Council had recognized the drastic need for housing in the community. The Housing Needs Analysis showed a dire need for additional dwelling units across all types of housing. 2020 saw great strides in addressing the housing shortage in our community. In 2020 we saw 29 single family homes completed; 1 duplex; 1 triplex; 1 fourplex; 9 tiny homes from Cottage Village Coalition; 4 tiny homes from Homes For Good in the Legion Cottages (which I am proud to say are housing 4 veterans one of which was displaced by the Holiday Farm fire); 3 Accessory Dwelling Units; 6 Land trust homes by DevNW; and then 37 new units at Magnolia Gardens. If my math is correct that is 97 new dwelling units – in the Housing Needs Analysis our goal was 69 new units a year.

2021 is looking even better for housing. We have 4 more tiny homes at Cottage Village underway; 14 townhomes are currently in the approval process; a 42 unit apartment complex is also in the process; and discussions are underway for an 84 unit development that plans on being complete before the end of the year. What a great start, I look forward to even more opportunities to continue to address the needs of unsheltered individuals.

Last Fall the City learned that Beds for Freezing Nights would not be able to operate this cold weather season. It is also exciting that after a short turn around the City and Community Sharing have partnered to open a Warming Shelter. With the assistance of Lane County the project is now ready to go. Trainings were held last week and I believe we are waiting for a cold night to activate. Later in the meeting we may get a report from Councilor Fleck about the project since he is quite familiar with the project as Director of Community Sharing.
In addition to the warming shelters, the City and Community Sharing have also partnered on a shower trailer. The trailer is under construction and should be here late this month or early February. The City purchased the shower trailer and Community Sharing will be operating the program to provide showers for those in need in the community. The Shower Trailer will also fill emergency response needs.

Our City staff has done amazing work during 2020. The staff took extra steps to stay safe and maintain services to the community. While many other government organizations closed and services became cumbersome to access our employees innovated and found safe ways to interact and continue to provide valuable services. For example – when the community had no businesses providing notary services – City staff continued and found ways to provide the service by appointment. In previous years, City Staff normally performed 180 notary services, in 2020 they performed over 385 services. Staff kept Court functioning. The library reopened with limited staff and is providing curbside service as well as delivery (Books of Wheels) to those that are homebound. Building inspections were done virtually with videos or photos. City staff is using the closures to perform major remodels at the Community Center and Armory to be ready when Senior Centers, Senior and Disability Services and the Genealogical library can reopen. In order to continue to safely provide services we have installed air purification equipment in all City buildings with HVAC systems. The equipment will address air quality under the current pandemic as well as provide another layer of treatment to remove smoke or other pollutants. This opens the Community Center and City Hall as possible locations for respite in the case of wildfire smoke.

Although the pandemic and wildfire smoke did slow a number of major projects they are quickly nearing completion. The Safe Routes to School project and related water, wastewater and stormwater work is nearly complete. Final paving should be occurring in the next couple of weeks, depending on weather. This was a huge project and had so many interconnected parts with other utility providers and the school district. It will be a major safety improvement for the youth of our community for years to come. As a result of the City’s efforts of acquiring grant funding local property owners will not be faced with costs except for special requested additional work. Even with a number of unexpected issues that were uncovered during the project it still continues to be under budget.

Many of you have probably noticed the large pond that has been constructed just north of the Cottage Grove Connector. The pond will store treated water from the wastewater plant so it can be used for irrigation. The Water Plant has also been expanded to provide an additional 2 million gallons of water treatment capacity. All these improvements were designed and implemented to responsibly and sustainably provide for the future needs of the community.

I want to close by thanking the Citizens, the staff and my fellow City Councilors for the time and efforts they dedicate to making this community a better place. Around the world and country the norm seems to be to just sit at home and fire off complaints on social media, to attack those that are trying to do something or in the extreme cases cause damage to private property. I am glad that that is still not acceptable behavior in Cottage Grove. When a need is seen, people
here step up, they get together with others and they actually do work, they contribute resources and spend their time fixing, helping or supporting others. Thank you.

I like all of you look forward to the day I can remove this mask, go to the gym or a local restaurant or sit in the park and listen to a concert. Those days are coming. This will all be over eventually and by working together we will be better because of it.