

CITY OF COTTAGE GROVE
CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA SESSION MINUTES
December 8, 2023

Mayor Solesbee called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Those in attendance virtually and in person: Mayor Solesbee, Councilors Dreher, Ervin, Fleck Merryday, Savage and Stinnett.

Staff present virtually and in person: Interim City Manager David Clyne, Assistant City Manager Jake Boone, Human Resources Manager Mandy Biehler, City Recorder Mindy Roberts, Public Works and Development Director Faye Stewart, City Planner Eric Mongan and Assistant City Planner Allison Crow.

Presentations

(a) South Lane Parks & Recreation District Formation Steering Committee Report

Public Works and Development Director Faye Stewart informed Council that a group of local residents formed a committee to explore the possible formation of a South Lane Park & Recreation District. He said the committee would be presenting to the Council the work they have completed to date.

Council expressed concerns and asked questions regarding compression, competing interest in the taxing district and the committees timeline.

Public Works & Development Director responded that the Finance Director Roberta Likens will be able to answer questions regarding compression and he provided a brief explanation of the timeline.

(b) Food Forest Presentation

Council President Ervin shared that PDX Food Forest will be present to explain the vision of a food forest and the possibilities of how it could work in communities.

Council expressed concerns and asked questions including; who would be making the presentation, how would implementing a Food Forest affect the Urban Forest Management Plan, if the Urban Forest Management Plan Committee had been involved with the concept and the need to utilize the community's current food resources

Council President Ervin shared how the idea came to fruition and at what level the committee had been involve.

Resolutions and Ordinances

(a) Resolution Adopting the Cottage Grove Urban Forest Management Plan

City Planner Eric Mongan presented to Council an amended draft Urban Forest Management Plan. He pointed out a scrivener's error and asked if Council had any questions.

Council asked for an explanation as to what changed in the plan.

City Planner responded that an item was added to the Community Needs section that would promote and amend the existing Community Garden program.

(b) Resolution Adopting a City of Cottage Grove Dress Code Policy

Human Resources Manager Mandy Biehler presented to Council a resolution to add a proposed Dress Code Policy to the current City of Cottage Grove Personnel Handbook.

Council expressed concerns and discussion was held regarding how the policy would affect employees whose clothes get dirty in the line of work, if supervisors had been trained regarding the crown act, if the bargaining units had reviewed the policy and if there had been issues with dress code violations in the past.

(c) Resolution Amending the City of Cottage Grove Personnel Manual

Interim City Manager David Clyne presented to Council a resolution that would amend the City of Cottage Grove Personnel Manual by providing the 6% PERS pickup for Non-Represented employees. He reminded Council that the proposed change would eliminate the EPSA stipend and he added that the funds are available in the budget to make the change.

Council asked to clarify the language used in the memorandum regarding the EPSA stipend and expressed concern that this be done in lieu of a pay increase until a salary survey is complete.

(d) Resolution Extending Workers' Compensation Coverage to Volunteers of the City of Cottage Grove

Interim City Manager David Clyne shared that this resolution would add volunteers at Middlefield Golf Course to the SAIF workers' compensation coverage. He added that Finance Director Roberta Likens would be available at the Council meeting to answer any questions.

Council expressed concern about any potential cost increases because of the change.

Business from the City Council

(a) Budget and Audit Committee Recruitments

Interim City Manager David Clyne shared that the Audit and Budget Committees are in need of members. He said the request is for City Council to appoint a three-member subcommittee to help with interviewing the applicants.

(b) Unhoused Reports

Interim City Manager David Clyne explained that there would be three phases to this report at the Council meeting on Monday night, consisting of reports from Jake Boone, himself and the City Attorney, Carrie Connelly.

Assistant City Manager Jake Boone presented Council information from the Highway 99 site, the Homeless by Name List data for Lane County and Cottage Grove and police call reports regarding the Highway 99 site and both designated camping locations.

Council asked questions, expressed frustrations and discussion was held with Staff regarding:

- The accuracy of the number of individuals at the designated camping locations.
- The amount of space occupied at the designated camping locations.
- A better solution for the layout of the sites.
- Landlord/Tenant laws.
- Addressing the condition and cleanliness of the sites.
- A sense of urgency to make progress in the processes.
- Engaging the community in conversation.
- New signage installed at the Highway 99 site.
- The need for Council to take leadership on how to handle the situation.
- Clarification on the data regarding the Highway 99 site.

Interim City Manager David Clyne expressed the need for Staff to have clear direction from Council regarding how to proceed with the unhoused situation and requested that Council set aside time to discuss the matter and come to a consensus.

Discussion was held about what type of direction Staff needs from Council and the best meeting format for Council to hold the conversation.

(c) Concerns of Council

Discussion was held about the annual review process for the Municipal Court Judge and his availability to attend. Council reached a consensus to have Judge Fisher's review in person or virtual, whichever worked best for his schedule.

Council shared experiences and asked questions regarding variety of topics including:

- Expressed interest to have individual discussion with citizen regarding email received.
- Expressed appreciation to the Police Department for recent actions to resolve an issue.
- Shared positive experiences from the Downtown Christmas event.
- Thanked the Public Works staff for correcting Stormwater drainage issues.
- Expressed concern for how the temporary Full-Time Human Resources Assistant position would be paid for and where the office will be located.
- Inquired if there is still one officer on Administrative leave.

Interim City Manager explained that an offer was extended to an internal candidate for the Human Resources position and Public Works & Development Director elaborated on what part of the budget the position would be paid from and location of the office space.

Interim City Manager shared that there will be an update from the City Attorney regarding the status of police matters to keep Council informed and help transition the new City Manager.

Business from City Manager

(a) Report from City Manager


Interim City Manager David Clyne updated Council on the City Manager selection process. He indicated that the final plans are being made and mentioned that all five candidates will be attending.

Interim City Manager shared that he authorized the City Attorney to work with a citizen who is proposing initiatives. He added that the City Attorney will helping to make sure the initiatives are operational and not necessarily supporting the initiative content.

Interim City Manager offered to help Council find a date, location and facilitator for a discussion regarding homelessness. Council agreed to consider adding an agenda item to the upcoming meeting to work out the details.

Mayor Solesbee adjourned the meeting at 10:03 am.


Mindy Roberts, City Recorder


Candace Solesbee, Mayor