

City of Springfield
Work Session Meeting

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSION MEETING OF
THE SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL HELD
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2009

The City of Springfield Council met in a work session in the Jesse Maine Meeting Room, 225 Fifth Street, Springfield, Oregon, on Monday, September 21, 2009 at 6:00 p.m., with Mayor Leiken presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present were Mayor Leiken and Councilors Lundberg, Wylie, Leezer, Ralston, Simmons, and Pishioneri. Also present were City Manager Gino Grimaldi, Assistant City Manager Jeff Towery, City Attorney Joe Leahy, City Recorder Amy Sowa and members of the staff.

1. Planning Commission Interviews.

Planning Manager Greg Mott presented the staff report on this item. The City received three (3) applications for one vacancy during a three month recruitment process.

Ms. Sheri E. Moore resides at 1955 N. 16th Street; Springfield; and is a retired teacher with Marcola School District.

Mr. Garold D. Ropp resides at 4691 Holden Ct. Springfield; and is employed at McKenzie D & D Inc., as an Architect Designer.

Mr. Jonathan L. Siegle resides at 540 E Street, Springfield; and is a retired teacher with Springfield District #19.

The Springfield Planning Commission is a seven member volunteer Commission appointed by the City Council. The members serve four-year terms. Of the seven members, two appointments may live outside the City limits and two appointments may be involved in the Real estate profession. Positions are "at-large", and do not represent specific geographic areas.

Currently the Planning Commission had one member, Commissioner Moe, who lived outside the City limits, and none that worked in Real Estate.

The Council decision to appointment was scheduled for tonight's Regular Meeting.

Mr. Grimaldi noted that Jonathan Siegle would not be available for the interview during the work session, but had been told he could come by at 8:00pm and Council could interview him at that time.

Council agreed to wait to interview him at that time.

Introductions were made to each of the candidates.

Council chose the questions they would ask of each applicant and interviewed Sheri Moore and Garold Ropp.

Council used the following questions for each of the applicants:

1. Why do you want to continue/ to serve on the Planning Commission? (Mayor)
2. The Planning Commission generally meets two evenings each month and additional evening meetings are sometimes necessary. There are also materials to be reviewed in advance of these meetings that may take a couple of hours to read. Given your work and/or family demands, can you fully participate as a Commission member? (Wylie)
3. Many of the land use laws applied by the Planning Commission are state or federally mandated. During a Planning Commission hearing how would you reconcile your own personal opinions with the applicant's interests when those interests do not comply with the land use laws? (Simmons)
4. The City is currently updating all buildable lands inventories in anticipation of adopting a new urban growth boundary for Springfield sometime in 2010. What is your opinion about balancing the need to accommodate future urban growth and preserving farm and forest land adjacent to the urban growth boundary? (Lundberg)
5. What roll do you think the Planning Commission should have with the revitalization of downtown? (Ralston)
6. What is your general understanding of the relationship between the Planning Commission and City Staff, the Planning Commission and the City Council? (Leezer)
7. How would you recommend balancing the community's need for attractive commercial and industrial development with the rights of property owners? (Pishioneri)

Mayor Leiken thanked the applicants for taking the time to apply for the Planning Commission.

Mayor Leiken said they would deliberate after they interviewed Mr. Siegle.

(see conclusion of discussion at end of these minutes)

2. Ambulance Transport System Update.

Fire and Life Safety Chief Dennis Murphy presented the staff report on this item. The Springfield Ambulance Fund ended FY09 in a deficit and Fund Reserves no longer existed. Increased operating costs and decreasing revenues across the system had created a serious financial challenge for Lane County ambulance services.

Since the Joint Elected Officials Ambulance Transport Summit in January 2009, a JEO Task Force had studied the problem and identified some possible solutions. Two options were eliminated as long-term solutions, 1) continuing to raise ambulance service rates, and 2) turning the region's ambulance service over to the private sector.

Although many options remained, they fell into just two categories: general tax support, or the formation of a new taxing entity that would support ambulance service.

Ambulance service systems in Eugene and Springfield service areas had historically been self-supporting through fees for service. This was no longer possible, largely due to decreased

reimbursements from Medicare and rising operating costs. A change in public policy could redirect General Fund dollars away from other public services, to support the ambulance transport system.

Creating a new tax-and-service entity was a lengthy and complicated process, requiring voter approval to enact. Policy decisions would be needed regarding district boundaries, proposed level of taxation, services to be provided, governance, transition, etc. before any ballot measure could be offered to voters.

A series of nine Public Input Forums were scheduled from Sept 15th - Oct. 1st to solicit public input on the options available.

Chief Murphy thanked Councilors Wylie and Ralston for serving on the JEO Task Force. This was a very difficult topic with a lot of information.

Chief Murphy gave a brief history of the ambulance service in Springfield. He discussed the other agencies that were provided ambulance billing services by the City of Springfield. He noted the difficulties that the ambulance service was facing at this time, due in large part to the decrease in reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid.

Mayor Leiken asked for the amount of reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid.

Chief Murphy said Medicare reimbursed \$300-\$450 per call and our rate was set at \$1600. Medicare was seventy percent of our patient transport volume. The decrease in reimbursement would be cut even further in the next year. The Medicaid rate was the same as Medicare. The City was allowed to collect a co-pay from Medicare patients, but rarely did because of the difficulty for those patients and the low collection rate.

Councilor Wylie asked what was needed from Medicare and Medicaid to cover our costs.

Chief Murphy said it would be about \$570 if everyone paid for the cost of service. He noted the loss because of the 70% on Medicare and Medicaid.

Councilor Wylie said that needed to be relayed to the public.

Chief Murphy said the editorial in the Register Guard did address that.

Councilor Leezer asked about the percentages of Medicare/Medicaid, FireMed, and full fares.

Chief Murphy said of the 70% Medicare/Medicaid population, about 70% were of FireMed members. Only about 10% of FireMed members used the ambulance services. FireMed worked and took care of its members.

Councilor Leezer asked what percentage of rides were full fare of \$1600.

Chief Murphy said some portion of 17%, but those were subject to certain guidelines of how much insurance carriers would pay and how much were co-pays, which were often difficult to collect. He noted that there were public forums scheduled, with the first public forum in Springfield scheduled on Thursday, September 24 in the Library Meeting Room, and the next at Fire Station #3 the following week. Several forums had already taken place in Eugene and

Veneta. The topics of the forum presented to the public came from the JEO Task Force: 1) using General Fund support; and 2) formation of a new taxing entity that would support ambulance service. Citizens so far had asked that other options be explored. He referred to the question of using General Fund support. Citizens wanted every option explored before taxing. Public forums were not an accurate way to poll, but gave some insight.

Councilor Pishioneri said he recalled that the Medicare rate was based on east coast numbers.

Chief Murphy said it was just a figure on what Medicare needed to cut. He did note the lower cost in New England states due to a large number of volunteer services.

Councilor Lundberg said she was interested in hearing what citizens had to say, although she knew forums were not scientific. She would like to see a comment card of some kind online to get more input from the younger citizens. She hoped there would be more opportunities for citizens to participate.

Chief Murphy noted there was information available online with survey monkey attached for those that could not attend the meetings. They were inviting everyone from all affected communities to all of the forums.

Councilor Ralston said it was important to note that FireMed had been self-sufficient and also added funds to the General Fund in the past. The question was whether or not it was a core service. If so, it should be funded by the General Fund. If we didn't have additional revenue to support it, another revenue stream was needed. If the cost was spread over all of Lane County, the bill would be about \$40 or \$50 a year for everyone. The solutions were coming down to just a couple of options. It had been determined that service would not be reduced or turned over to a private industry. He liked the idea of the online commentary. The Register Guard had done an excellent job of laying out the problem. It was important to get the public onboard. One of his key issues was who would have control over decisions. One option would be to fold into an existing district, but then that district would have control. The subcommittee was working on a lot of details, and getting feedback from citizens was critical.

Chief Murphy said the task force planned on giving the elected officials a decision by December 7, unless the elected officials asked for a delay.

Councilor Wylie said the Chief had done a good job of keeping the Council informed. In the best of all possible worlds, a metro fire district would be created. Short of that, support was needed from the public and the federal government. She asked if there was a contingent talking with Congressman DeFazio and other Federal representatives about raising the Medicare and Medicaid rates. The State of Oregon was working on a health plan, and we needed to find out where ambulance rates were in that process. If we could get an increase from the State and Federal governments for Medicare and Medicaid, cities wouldn't have to go so deep into our General Fund. We needed to look at multiple sources of funds in the long-run. This was not something that could be solved overnight, but we needed to be vigilant.

Chief Murphy said the fire merger and ambulance service were tied together, but it was determined that they needed to survive independently.

Councilor Pishioneri referred to the Chief's statement that it would be great if everyone bought FireMed. Councilor Ralston had stated that a taxing district would cost everyone about \$50. If not

everyone was electing to buy FireMed, it was unlikely the public would vote to pay a tax of equal amount. He asked what the back-up plan was if it was put to the voters and failed. He did not believe that a taxing district would pass in this economy. The public would ask a lot of questions and may be reluctant.

Mayor Leiken said one of the issues was to make the case, which was the fact that the federal government had again turned their backs on communities. He asked if Council would have another update on this issue.

Mr. Grimaldi said staff wasn't expecting a decision tonight, but rather wanted to introduce the topic and bring Council up to speed.

Chief Murphy noted the dates and locations of the next two forums.

Mr. Grimaldi said a work session would be scheduled prior to the December 7 joint elected officials meeting regarding the merger. They could include a discussion on this topic as well and get input from Council on the direction they would like to take.

Councilors Pishioneri and Lundberg said they were not supportive of a taxing district.

Mayor Leiken said the next step was to hear the public's input. He suggested plenty of time was scheduled for the next discussion on this topic.

1. Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grant and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Procurement-Franklin Blvd.

Mr. Grimaldi said staff wanted to determine whether or not to go forward with the NEPA process and let Council know what this would look like if the grant was awarded.

Mayor Leiken asked the City Attorney if there were issues if the Council took extra time in the work session and started the regular meeting a few minutes late.

Mr. Leahy said there would be no legal issues.

Transportation Manager Tom Boyatt and Planner David Reesor presented the staff report on this item. The City did submit a \$49,500,000 TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant application for federal stimulus funds to completely reconstruct Franklin Blvd. in Glenwood by the deadline, and had received word that it had been accepted. Mr. Reesor distributed a copy of the application. Mr. Boyatt noted that the application was very time intensive. He acknowledged the assistance from Lane Transit District (LTD) and City staff. A link to a site regarding the TIGER grant was on the City's webpage. TIGER grant awards were expected in January of 2010. Congressman DeFazio and Senators Wyden and Merkley also supported funding a large portion of this same project as a High Priority Project for federal transportation reauthorization, which may occur within the next 24 months.

If the City received TIGER grant funds for design and construction of the Franklin upgrades, the City could begin receiving funds as soon as January 2010. However, release of TIGER grant funds for design and construction were contingent on completion of NEPA analysis and findings. In order to proceed to construction rapidly upon receipt of a TIGER grant, the NEPA process

must be completed by summer 2010. Given the extremely short time frame for potential grant award, the staff recommended that the City begin the NEPA analysis by winter 2009.

Due to the tight timeframes, staff advertised a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) seeking a qualified engineering, planning and environmental firm(s) capable of providing professional engineering and environmental services to prepare a NEPA analysis and findings for the Project. Staff identified \$350,000 for NEPA activity using a mix of LTD (\$50,000), Glenwood Urban Renewal (\$200,000) and Transportation Improvement SDCs (\$100,000). Current NEPA estimates ranged from \$200,000 to \$500,000. Staff proposed to contract a two stage NEPA process so that early data gathering and NEPA process identification could occur prior to the TIGER award announcement. Then, should the City be fortunate enough to receive TIGER funding, a decision could be made on completing the bulk of NEPA activity, and potential gap funding identified at that time.

Although TIGER grant funds were uncertain at this point in time, the Project looked promising for the reauthorization of the Federal Transportation Bill. If the City did not receive TIGER grant funds, the City would still be required to complete the NEPA analysis in order to construct the Project with Federal T-Bill funds.

Mr. Boyatt said if the grant was awarded, there would be a lot of work for City staff to do on this project. He discussed the NEPA process and said it would be a two-stage contract; the first for work needed anyway; and the second to complete the process based on award of the grant.

Councilor Lundberg asked if the \$200,000-\$500,000 was for the entire NEPA process. Yes. She asked which part of that amount was for the early stages.

Mr. Boyatt said about \$25,000 to \$50,000 and the TIGER grant wouldn't pay for that cost. The City could still move forward even if the grant was not received.

Councilor Leezer asked if those funds were already budgeted.

Mr. Boyatt said \$25,000 was budgeted in anticipation of a NEPA study. He didn't believe there was funding in the SDCs, and LTD was not in our budget. There was project funding in the urban renewal district.

Community Development Manager John Tamulonis said there was enough money in the urban renewal budget to make adjustments to projects.

Assistant Public Works Director Len Goodwin said there were enough funds in the Transportation SDC reserves to do a supplemental budget to cover the needed costs.

Councilor Wylie said the I-5 Bridge project had to do a lot of environmental assessments. She asked if they would also be doing a NEPA process.

Mr. Boyatt said they did go through an Environmental Assessment (EA). One of the things that strengthened our application was that the project was on flat ground in an existing transportation corridor. The EA done by LTD for the first phase of the EmX line would be helpful. They would be using that information as they could.

Councilor Wylie said that could provide some savings.

Mr. Boyatt said they were proud of their application and were getting good feedback. They were limited to twenty-five pages and that was the length of their application. There was no form, but rather certain items to be addressed.

Councilor Pishioneri asked how many of the anticipated job increases were pre-existing and preserved government jobs versus private enterprise jobs.

Mr. Boyatt said he did not have that information. That statement came from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) as a co-applicant. He was not sure if it differentiated between preserved or added jobs, but said he could get that answer.

Councilor Pishioneri said he would like to see information by the State regarding local builders. He referred to the project on I-5 that he understood had local contractors who had subcontracted with businesses outside the local area. He asked if the City had anything in place that could maximize using local business.

Mr. Boyatt said he did not believe we did for this project. Part of the challenge was the time frames they were given with the stimulus funds which didn't allow us time to put programs such as that into place. It would be contracted through Federal contracting requirements.

Councilor Pishioneri asked if there was something we could do internally or if we were prohibited now that the application was submitted.

Mr. Boyatt said we were not prohibited from doing anything.

Mr. Grimaldi said staff could explore that further.

Mayor Leiken asked if February 2010 was when we would find out if we were awarded the grant.

Mr. Boyatt said the latest was that we would know in January, but that date could change.

Mayor Leiken asked if the Obama administration had talked about pushing back the reauthorization.

Mr. Boyatt said that could come in up to two years too late. He discussed that further.

The meeting was recessed at 7:06 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened at 8:09 p.m.

Mayor Leiken noted that Mr. Siegle had not yet arrived for his interview.

Councilor Wylie asked why Ms. Moore was only appointed for two years on a four year appointment.

Councilor Leezer said there were three positions that became vacant at once, so they staggered the terms. One of the positions was appointed for a four year term, one for a three year term, and Ms. Moore was appointed for a two year term.

Councilor Wylie said considering that and considering Ms. Moore's energy and qualities, she was interested in re-appointing her.

Councilor Simmons said Ms. Moore had done an excellent job. He would support reappointment.

Councilor Ralston said the City was fortunate to have such good applicants. He knew Mr. Ropp and had talked to him about this position. He felt he would be very good on this commission. He agreed that there was a steep learning curve and he would prefer to stick with experience at this time. He thought Mr. Ropp would make a very good commissioner for a future vacancy. At this time, he supported reappointing Ms. Moore.

Councilor Lundberg said she agreed with the Councilors' comments. She liked diversity of perspectives on all of our boards or committees and Ms. Moore had a perspective that was reflective of the citizenry. She had a good questioning mind and it would be good to allow her to put that acquired background to work.

Councilor Leezer said she had worked with Ms. Moore on the Planning Commission and felt she brought good questions and went beyond in her researching. With the work on the urban growth boundary (UGB), it was important to have someone that was up to speed on the commission.

Councilor Pishioneri said Ms. Moore was experienced and qualified.

Consensus was to re-appoint Ms. Moore to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Grimaldi said staff could bring this to Council for formal approval at the next Council meeting on October 5.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned 8:13 p.m.

Minutes Recorder – Amy Sowa


Sidney W. Leiken
Mayor

Attest:


Amy Sowa
City Recorder