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## Council meeting lasts hours; city moving forward

October 16, 2010



The monthly city council meeting was held on October 14, and didn't end until nearly 11 p.m. as the City Council, city attorney and staff worked through all the items on the agenda including addressing citizen concerns that had been brought to the meeting.

The [meeting agenda](#) included a council discussion or review of the following:

Proposals for a new city attorney were distributed to, hopefully, reduce the city's legal expenses. The council was provided with proposals to take home and review to make decisions at the next meeting.

### **Council continues to ask for more oversight of Public Works**

Consideration was given to contract Yamhill County for park maintenance to keep Lafayette parks better maintained. The council discussed all the costs involved, and ended the discussion after much consideration stating that they want to know "what this buys the city" if they were to approve this added expense to taxpayers.

Council members wanted to know how Public Works would spend the extra time if they were to be relieved of park maintenance duties. Councilors stated that they have been asking for staffing schedule reports from Public Works and still are not receiving them.

The Mayor and Councilor Leah Harper agreed that, "We hired someone specifically for park maintenance almost two years ago and now we're hiring again because parks still aren't getting done."

Councilor Marie Sproul commented on weeds and poor maintenance already happening at the newly updated Plantation Park. "It hasn't been mowed in over two weeks," Sproul stated.

Council President Chris Pagella stated, "Again, I want a schedule of exactly what is done on what days." The council instructed city staff again that they "need answers" before proceeding.

### **City Council instructs staff to move forward on grant possibilities**

Consideration was given on a list of possible grant money projects for the city. The Council agreed with and prioritized the list provided by interim Administrator Joe Wrabek and instructed him to “Go for it.”

Wrabek commented that “it has been years” since Lafayette pursued grants in this arena.

### **New council makeup endorses support of volunteer citizen events**

There was a discussion on better communication with the citizenry. The Council discussed better ways they can get information to citizens including putting more information online and more on the city’s outside reader board.

They discussed detailing more events and happenings into a city newsletter. One resident commented that some citizens say they are not finding out about information until it’s over.

Councilor Harper stated, “Please understand that up until this time, putting most community event information on the reader board and in water bills was prohibited.” Current events are now being displayed and promoted by current leadership.

### **Council anxiously waiting on contractors for street quotes**

The Mayor had added “Street resurfacing quotes” to the meeting agenda for another shot at getting street repairs completed before the weather changes. However, Wrabek informed the Council that contractors have not responded to his request for quotes. The Council has been forced to wait to take any further action and will address the issue as soon as they receive the bids.

### **Decision final on Wrabek: “matter now closed”**

The Mayor and Council summarized their decision after finalizing investigations into Wrabek’s educational background issue, stating the full [council’s public statement on the issue](#) will be posted on the city’s web site.

Mayor Heisler, led the discussion to the citizens present, stating, “From my perspective and this council, he’s complied with everything asked of him and there ‘s no risk to the city. We went above and beyond what was necessary including a criminal investigation and our legal counsel and this council is recommending we move on and consider this matter closed.”

The City Council is in the process of recruiting a new permanent Administrator and interviews are being conducted this month. The city’s web site contains information on the [recruitment process](#).

### **Moving forward on transparency**

A discussion was held again on moving forward on making public records available on the city’s website by digitizing records. Mayor Heisler stated, “We have operating procedures, we have software now and we have hardware. So let’s do it.”

Several of the city’s current councilors have been pushing for this added transparency since before they even took office. Now that the city has the hardware and a new server to accommodate the digitizing, they are following up to make sure progress is being made.

Wrabek responded, “We’re doing it. The software is separating stuff out and now we have a new server.” Wrabek continued, “We are already in process. The next step is online.”

### **It’s final; automatic water rate increase stopped**

Final council approval was given on the resolution to eliminate automatic water rate increases. City staff had added to the resolution that the City Administrator was to evaluate rates on an annual basis. Mayor Heisler argued for that statement to be stricken from the new resolution, asking why a statement would be added to the resolution prodding the Administrator to look to see if rates needed to be increased.

He stated several times, “This shouldn’t be in here.” Citizens in the audience agreed with the Mayor and the Council voted to strike the statement from the resolution.

### **Resident costing taxpayers thousands per year**

Attorney bills were discussed and Council President Chris Pagella stated his concern that one resident is costing the city an average of \$1,000.00 per month with frivolous complaints.

The Mayor and Council receives lengthy emails from the resident regularly and now the citizen is sending complaints directly to the city attorney as well. Some council members stated their concern that tax payer money is being spent to answer her continual complaints, but Wrabek stated the city cannot ignore even frivolous complaints because they need to be careful to avoid lawsuits.

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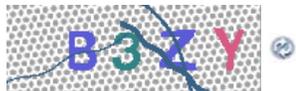
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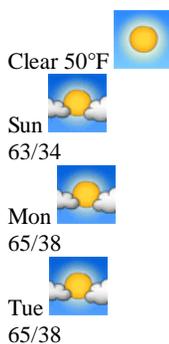
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