

**City of Milton-Freewater  
City Council Minutes**

The Council of the City of Milton-Freewater met Monday, February 8, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Albee Room of the Library.

The following members were present: Mayor Lewis Key, Councilors Orrin Lyon, Ed Chesnut, Sam Hopkins-Hubbard, Steve Irving, Brad Humbert and Jeff Anliker.

Staff members present were: City Manager Linda Hall, City Recorder Leanne Steadman, Public Works Superintendent Dave Bradshaw and Lead Heavy Equipment Mechanic Jim Olsen.

Citizens present were Tara Patten and Steven Patten.

Press members present were Melanie Hall of the Valley Herald and Samantha Bates of the East Oregonian.

**CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS:**

The consent calendar items consisted of council minutes from the January 25, 2010 meeting and accounts payable from January 20, 2010 through February 3, 2010.

Councilor Humbert motioned to approve the consent calendar items. Councilor Chesnut seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**PRESENTATION:**

**RECOGNITION FEBRUARY 2010 EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH – JIM OLSEN, LEAD HEAVY EQUIPMENT MECHANIC**

Councilor Anliker, on behalf of the other councilors, presented Jim Olsen with the February 2010 Employee of the Month Award. Jim has been keeping the city's fleet and the school district's buses running since August of 1990. Jim is the senior mechanic in our busy shop and has proven himself to be absolutely vital to the operations of our city. Jim goes the extra mile for his teammates, the city's citizens and the school district as a regular course of his day. He burns the midnight oil studying complicated problems that other mechanics might try to solve by just replacing parts until the equipment runs. Jim's diagnostical talents are nothing short of phenomenal. He gladly helps out with all mechanical challenges from the smallest engine on a lawn mower in the parks department to the huge garbage compactor at the landfill. Councilor Anliker, on behalf of the other City Councilors, presented Jim with a one-hundred dollar (\$100) check to show their appreciation.

**BUSINESS ITEMS:**

**AUTHORIZATION TO PROCEED WITH AN AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (ARRA) GRANT THROUGH THE STATE OF OREGON DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**

Public Works Superintendent reported that staff had applied for and received notice of a grant award for up to \$158,900. The grant was through the State of Oregon Department of Energy American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The grant funds will be used towards upgrading the lighting, HVAC and windows at City Hall along with lighting and windows at Saager Fire Station and lighting for the City Shop and South Fire Station. Bid proposals were being sent out for each of the measures the following day. The project has a completion date of no later than February 15, 2012. No matching funds were required.

A discussion was held on what type of windows and lights would be installed and how much of an energy savings would it create. Mr. Bradshaw said the energy savings and payback time frame had been penciled out but they would have more exact numbers once they received all the bids back. The windows for city hall would be as close to the original windows that were once installed. For the Saager Fire Station double pane windows would be installed. The plan for the lighting is to standardize the light bulbs to help reduce inventory and have more efficient lighting for staff.

Councilor Chesnut motioned to authorize staff to proceed with grant application process with the State of Oregon Department of Energy for receipt of up to \$158,900 in grant funds for the purpose of improving City Hall, City Shop, and both Fire Stations. Councilor Anliker seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### **APPOINTMENT OF TWO COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO ASSIST WITH DEVELOPING CITY COUNCIL'S BUDGET**

Manager Hall suggested having two (2) members of the council help in the process of developing the city council budget. She said last year's representatives were Councilor Humbert and Councilor Irving.

Council consensus was to have Councilor Hopkins-Hubbard and Councilor Anliker participate in the development of the preliminary fiscal year 2011 Council budget.

### **WORK SESSION: DISPOSITION OF CURRENT GOALS AND DISCUSSION OF FUTURE GOALS**

Manager Hall reviewed the current goals and disposition of each one which included:

### **DIRECTIVES**

#### **Partner with Walla Walla Valley and Milton-Freewater Area Chamber of Commerce to promote our community's viability**

##### **Progress to date:**

- \*We are a member of both WW and M-F Chambers
- \*We have coordinated promotions of the VALLEY with the cities of Walla Walla, Community Development Partnership, Blue Mountain Community College, Pendleton, and surrounding areas.
- \*Member of "Oregon's Rugged Country" which promotes the entire NE region of Oregon
- \*We participate in CVAC—Creating a Value Added Community—with the cities of Walla Walla, Dayton, Waitsburg, and Milton-Freewater to improve and promote our Valley
- \*We participated with the Chamber and Umatilla County officials to market our area at the Oregon State Fair for several consecutive summers
- \*Maps, Brochures, WW Directory, Chamber Directories, etc.
- \*Revived working partnership with Port of Walla Walla

#### **Remain Committed to Citizen and Community Involvement**

##### **Progress to date:**

- \*recruitment for advisory committees
- \*youth in government program
- \*City-wide newsletter in place
- \*improvements to our web site
- \*council agendas on the web, packets to the library, opportunity for citizens to speak at every meeting

- \*extension of ordinance adoption timeline to allow for more citizen input/review
- \*New Customer Service Training implemented this year

**Continue to Explore New Revenue Sources and Cost Savings to Maintain Financial Stability**

**Progress to date:**

Added Revenues:

- \*Staff written grants: \$ 4,966,503 this fiscal year!
- \*Transient Tax: est. \$20,000 annually
- \*Ramped Up Dog Licenses: \$1,560 to date (In the past this number was under \$50 a year!)
- \*Established Electric, Water and Sewer Infrastructure Fee: Bring in approximately \$224,000 annually---currently paying For Upgraded Automatic Meter Reading System along with grants—last year these funds paid for a massive water main replacement project up south Main Street
- \*Voters Approved Continuation of Transportation Local Option Tax: \$60,000 per year

***Total New Revenues: \$5,272,063 THIS YEAR***

**Savings:**

- \*Refinanced Golf Course Irrigation System Loan: 10,000 per year (\$42,000 savings over the life of the loan)
- \*“in-sourced” work we used to “out-source” for our worker’s comp and liability insurance: \$8,500 annually
- \*Reorganized staffing positions and job responsibilities: \$93,000 last fiscal year and this year.
- \*Labor for Public Works projects done with existing staff rather than contracting out \$155,000
- \*Labor for Electric Utility projects down with existing staff rather than contracting out \$23,500 this fiscal year
- \*Re-evaluating Supervisory positions, cutting down on mid-level administration costs: \$75,288 annual savings
- \*Negotiated Labor Agreements with new employees paying portions of health insurance premium costs: \$2,564 per year for each new employee

***TOTAL SAVINGS: \$399,044***

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY:**

- \*Milton-Freewater in good shape---\$7,283,555 in cash reserves
- \*Caution: shrinking revenues ahead
  - Interest earnings—little to nothing
  - Shrinking state street tax revenues---fuel efficient cars!
  - Utility conservation movements---less revenues
  - Surplus Electric Power Sales: Budgeted to receive \$500,000---we have received \$5,900 to date—NOT GOOD
- \*Caution: costs on the rise
  - Health insurance and PERS costs continue to increase each year (PERS will eventually level and then drop as more and more Tier 1 employees retire)
  - More mandated utility testing required each year (water tests, landfill monitoring, fire retardant electric crew clothing)

## **SHORT TERM GOALS**

### **Complete the Economic Opportunities Analysis and implement recommended strategies:**

#### **Progress to date:**

- \*This process is 95% completed to date
- \*The only task remaining on the Analysis work products is the joint agreement with the County to work together to jointly manage an area of mutual interest up the Highway 11 corridor. This should be brought before the Council in the next few months. We were waiting on reaction on the first draft from the County Planning dept.

### **Increase the Availability of Retail and Industrially Zoned lands**

#### **Progress to date:**

- \*One of our tougher goals to accomplish---State determined through our EOA analysis that we had sufficient inventory of these zoned lands for our population and projected growth. We will continue to try to use URA monies and Community Development staff and resources to help broker development through combining parcels of property owned by different people.

### **Explore the Implementation of a Transient tax**

#### **Progress to date:**

- \*100% accomplished

### **Amend the Existing Urban Renewal Agency Plan to focus its primary purpose and use toward “brick and mortar” projects and physical improvements to our City**

#### **Progress to date:**

- \*Consultant’s job complete---draft being reviewed by City Manager
- \*Amendments to be before the URA Board this calendar year
- \*Because of this project, an error was discovered in the County’s assessment of URA taxes---resulting in an increase of \$60,000 per year in additional revenue
- \*Partnering with Community Development Partnership to offer city-wide fix-up grants to all local businesses. Last year we funded \$140,000 worth of improvements for an investment of \$34,505. Very nice return on investment!
- \*We have increased the assessed value of the Urban Renewal Agency district by OVER \$16,000,000 during the life of the Agency.
- \*Exploring new DEMOLITION Program (modeled after Pendleton) would it help South Main?
- \*Caution: This district is set to sunset in May of 2014.

### **Revive Community Policing Program**

#### **Progress to date:**

- \*The police department has hosted neighborhood watch organizational meetings
- \*We have hosted community information meetings on gang resistance
- \*We have assigned an officer to gang resistance education training and support
- \*We have partnered with private citizens to continue to revive our VIPS program and community policing
- \*Chronic Crime Nuisance Property Ordinance

## **LONG TERM GOALS**

**Undertake an overall commitment and on-going goal of “Sprucing Up/Cleaning Up” our city. Establish a Council appreciation award program to recognize citizens who have made substantial improvements to cleaning up or sprucing up their homes and/or businesses. Continue to encourage participation in clean up and beautification efforts by citizens.**

**Progress to date:**

- \*over 250 properties cited per year on average
- \*95% compliance rate since citing them into municipal court
- \*challenges---where to draw the line???
- \*Handful of properties continue to be an issue due to challenges with cost of abatement
- \*Council's "spruce up clean up" award program
- \*Participation in fall and spring clean up days continues to grow

**Continue to Support and Retain Current Businesses and Recruit New Businesses to Milton-Freewater**

**Progress to date:**

- \*Helped recruit El Sombrero restaurant to town through \$50,000 economic development stimulus loan
- \*Established a \$30,000 URA grant program to fix up store fronts for business owners
- \*Have implemented zoning changes and strategies as per our completed Economic Opportunities Analysis
- \*Whenever feasible staff buys operating supplies and services locally---supporting many businesses and spending over \$300,000 on average per year
- \*Placed decorative Christmas lights and banners across North and South Main Streets
- \*\$500,000 invested in Milton-Freewater banks
- \*Make "one stop" permitting for zoning and planning for expedited service to developers
- \*Supported and completed business directory for Milton-Freewater
- \*Financially supporting the Chamber of Commerce (transient tax, dues, donations, partnering on events and projects)

Manager Hall reported she had asked staff for their thoughts and ideas of new goals or direction for the future. Listed are some suggestions.

- \*Get through the FEMA floodplain map process
- \*Get the least expensive insurance flood rates possible for our citizens
- \*Assist with the Water Control Board in educating the public on the need for adequate funding for the maintenance of the levee
- \*Lead and work with Oregon Solutions Team in securing any and all funding solutions toward repair of the levee
- \*Get the levee repaired and recertified/accredited
- \*Complete and submit our letter of map revision request to FEMA and get Milton-Freewater deleted from the floodplain maps
- \*Complete the automated water and electric meter reading and Smart Grid project
- \*Plan for the sunset of the Urban Renewal Agency to the benefit and least negative impact of our citizens
- \*Develop an Endowment Fund for ongoing financial support of our Library
- \*Pave all unimproved streets in the City of Milton-Freewater
- \*Continue developing a larger, more functional VIPS/Community Policing Corp
- \*Develop a School Resource Officer position from within the Police Department without adding additional staff
- \*Increase training for dispatcher, while maintain training program for patrol officers
- \*Continue to plan for the financial health and solvency of our utilities
- \*Retain and build the City's financial reserves
- \*Seek funding for community reader board in front of city hall

Councilor Anliker suggested that police

officers take 20 minutes out of their schedule to

pick an area of Milton-Freewater to go door-to-door and introduce themselves to the citizens.

Mayor Key suggested looking at tax bases 5 years in advance to get an idea of where the city would be financially.

Councilor Humbert suggested picking the worst paved street and grind it up to help improve alley ways and other unimproved streets. He said once the asphalt was ground up it was very similar to asphalt and it could be overlaid. He also suggested conducting a survey of what citizens felt were priorities for the Council's goals.

It was decided to see if a survey could be posted on the city's website and possibly putting the survey in the next city wide newsletter.

Councilor Hopkins-Hubbard suggested looking at other avenues to increase revenues with the city's cash reserves.

A discussion was held regarding the city's investment policy and the perimeters the State Investment Board can impose.

Councilor Chesnut suggested establishing a long term plan for City Hall and the Community Building to retain the structural integrity due to the age of both buildings.

Manager Hall gave an update of a conference call she had with FEMA regarding flood insurance. There was discussion regarding a comment made by a local citizen from the last Oregon Solutions Team meeting about opting out of the water control district.

Councilor Chesnut asked if it was know how many homes in the floodplain held mortgages.

Manager Hall said that was being researched. She said there will be an outreach to the citizens to help answer any of their questions and explain the importance of the timeline of the flood insurance purchase. There will be training offered to insurance agents and lending agencies as well. There have been five citizens who have stepped up and have volunteered to serve on the Water Control Board. Manager Hall said she and Dick Townsend, Project Manager for the Oregon Solutions Team, have been working on finding insurance coverage for the board members. They have been successful and have found coverage with the exception of flood damage claims.

### **COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councilor Irving announced the Annual Chamber Banquet was on Thursday, February 18, 2010. He also announced the lighting project for Pendleton Grain Growers was almost complete and welcomed anyone to come take a look at it.

Councilor Chesnut said the Grace Presbyterian Church also had a lighting project as well.

Councilor Humbert announced he would like the house on Columbia Street, which is owned by the city, be on a future agenda for discussion.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

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Lewis S. Key, Mayor