

November 20, 2024 City Council Meeting

Meeting minutes

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and roll call

Mayor Rod Cross called the regular City Council meeting for November 20, 2024, to order. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, City Recorder Lisa Figueroa conducted a roll call. Present were Mayor Cross, Councilor Strong, Councilor Silvia, Councilor Burns, and Council President Bush. Councilor Mix was excused. Councilor Kauffman arrived later in the meeting. A quorum was established.

Presentations

Library Director Harrison Baker introduced Cindy Belleque, the new Assistant Library Director. Director Baker shared that she brings experience from public and school libraries and has already begun implementing new programming including a cookbook club and a holiday-themed Dungeons & Dragons event. The council welcomed Ms. Belleque to the city team.

Mayor Cross and several councilors praised the library staff for their dedication, particularly Denise who had stepped up while they were shorthanded during the search for the new assistant director. The council expressed enthusiasm about the upcoming library events, especially the umbrella parade.

Visitors/Public Comment

Jim Chambers addressed the council regarding the Toledo swimming pool replacement and community center project, expressing concern that momentum had slowed. He stressed that decisions need to be made soon and urged forward movement on the RFP (Request for Proposal) process, ideally aiming to have it ready to open by January.

Discussion followed regarding the relationship between the city and the pool district, with City Attorney Mike Adams explaining that an IGA (Intergovernmental Agreement) between the two entities needs to be completed, as well as a joint resolution for the CMGC (Construction Manager/General Contractor) process. Council members and Mr. Chambers discussed the timeline requirements for the project funding and agreed that the paperwork needed to be completed by December 18th.

Mayor Cross stated he would contact Representative Gomberg to confirm the deadline requirements for the project funding.

Consent Agenda

Motion: Councilor Strom moved to approve the consent agenda, including the minutes from the meetings held May 1, 2024, May 15, 2024, September 17, 2024, and the executive session held September 17, 2024. Councilor Burns seconded the motion. The motion Careyd 6-0.

Discussion Items

2025 master meeting calendar

Lisa Figueroa presented the 2025 master meeting calendar, noting several holiday conflicts including the January 1st meeting. She proposed moving that meeting to either January 7th or 9th, with council agreeing on January 9th. Regarding the July meeting near the Fourth of July

holiday, the council decided to wait until closer to the date to determine if it should be held. Ms. Figueroa mentioned she would bring the calendar back in December with additional dates for the budget committee.

Police Department Bonuses

Councilor Burns requested consideration of bonuses for the police department, noting that when the council established the pay scale, they had selected the low end of the range. She expressed concern about the difficulty of retaining officers who often come, get trained, and then leave for better-paying positions. She highlighted the especially challenging working conditions for both the police department and dispatchers.

City Manager Pro Tem Amanda Carey acknowledged the need to review salaries and confirmed a salary survey was planned for all employees to be incorporated into next year's budget. She noted that a one-time bonus would be possible given current staffing levels and available budget. The council agreed to have Ms. Carey return at the December 4th meeting with specific budget information and bonus proposal options.

Mayor Cross noted he would recuse himself from this decision due to a conflict of interest, as his son works for the police department.

Decision Items

Consideration to fill the positions of Municipal Maintenance Worker II and Equipment Maintenance Mechanic

City Manager Pro Tem Carey explained that as interim city manager, she needed council approval to hire for these positions. Public Works Director Lorimor had interviewed applicants and made tentative offers pending council approval.

Motion: Councilor Bush moved to authorize the City Manager Pro Tem to hire two selected candidates for the municipal maintenance worker II positions and one candidate for the equipment maintenance mechanic position. Councilor Kauffman seconded the motion. The motion carried 6-0.

Consideration of expense of \$35,000 to repair a fire department vehicle

Interim Fire Chief Ryan Harris requested approval for up to \$35,000 to repair Engine 41, explaining that the gearbox on the pump was damaged. He noted the engine is a prototype model with no others like it, and the manufacturer is no longer local. Benton County shops located the parts needed but estimated a 10-14 week lead time. Chief Harris emphasized that the engine has significant life left in it and has served well on numerous fires, including being deployed to California.

Motion: Councilor Strom moved to approve an expenditure of \$35,000 to repair Engine 41. Councilor Kauffman seconded the motion. The motion carried 6-0.

Reports and Comments

City Recorder

Lisa Figueroa reminded council members about the League of Oregon Cities Elected Essentials training scheduled for December 3rd in Newport. She noted that all current councilors were registered, and Council-elect Andrew Keating had also been invited.

Public Works Director

Public Works Director Lorimor reported on several department activities including:

- Beautification work at Lions Park in collaboration with Job Corps
- Keeping storm drains clear
- Confined space training with safety personnel
- Upcoming large meter testing and sidewalk repairs
- Progress on an agreement with Georgia Pacific to contribute \$45,000 over three years for maintenance of Butler Bridge Road
- Discussions with GP regarding an easement for a water looping project

Fire Department

Interim Fire Chief Harris presented statistics on call responses, noting 90 emergency calls in October and 61 so far in November. He reported strong volunteer response rates averaging three people per call and increased training attendance with about 15 people at drills. Ten students graduated from the Fire 1 Academy, with four from Toledo. He mentioned completion of annual hose testing, with plans to replace hoses that failed using grant money from GP. The department also completed ladder testing with all ladders passing inspection. Chief Harris discussed ongoing issues with the ladder truck that continues to have electrical problems despite repairs.

Police Department

Chief Pace provided a brief update, mentioning that a new police vehicle should be arriving the following week.

City Attorney

City Attorney Mike Adams updated the council on FEMA flood plain compliance matters, noting the December 1st deadline to notify FEMA of which option the city would select. He detailed the current development applications in process before the deadline and recommended setting a public hearing for December 18th to consider the three options. Mr. Adamson also mentioned that the final interviews for a position were scheduled for the following week.

City Manager Pro Tem

City Manager Pro Tem Carey thanked the council for attending the recent training and encouraged them to utilize CIS (City County Insurance Services) attorneys as a resource if they had questions. She provided updates on several matters:

- Progress on addressing dispatch staffing issues
- A court case involving a former employee charged with theft that is now set for trial in April 2025
- Completion of current unclaimed property reporting and entering into a voluntary disclosure agreement to address reporting gaps dating back to 2011
- Activation of Lexipol for all city departments
- Two grants awarded to the city from Georgia Pacific, with a check presentation scheduled for Friday
- A new Express Pay app for water bill payments

Mayor's Comments

Mayor Cross expressed frustration with FEMA's approach to flood plain regulations and their response to the governor's letter. He shared information about upcoming community events including a dessert auction at Toledo High School to support basketball programs, a winter concert at the high school, Turkey Bingo at the elementary school, and the upcoming tree lighting and umbrella parade.

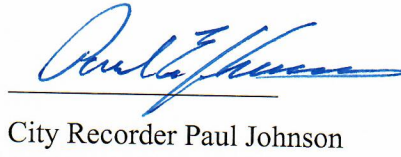
Mayor Cross concluded with reflections on Thanksgiving and expressed gratitude for the community.

The meeting was then adjourned.

Approved:


Mayor Rod Cross

Attest:


City Recorder Paul Johnson