

MINUTES

**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
29592 ELLENSBURG AVE
GOLD BEACH OR 97444
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2007
SPECIAL MEETING-WORKSHOP 12:15 P.M.**

CALLED TO ORDER AT 12:15 P.M. by Mayor Popoff

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL:

	<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Mayor Karl Popoff	x	
Council Position #1 Sue Johnson	x	
Council Position #2 Don Flynn		x
Council Position #3 Peter Peterson	x	
Council Position #4 Vacant		
Council Position #5 David Alexander	x	
Police Chief Russ Merkley	x	

Flynn was unable to attend due to illness.

SPECIAL ORDERS OF BUSINESS:

Presentation by Chief Merkley of a proposed tax levy for
The police department

Merkley-Discussed an article from the Oregonian (A) regarding special fees for overtime expenses for special events. He also mentioned draft letters (B) to the Fair Board and Chamber of Commerce and asked the councilors' input and approval prior to being sent out. He handed out a breakdown (C) of the OT requirements in the event the council passes a special events fee. He also presented a copy of the breakdown of costs required for the levy. It would be approximately 70 cents per thousand for two officers. Approximately \$650K for two officers for five years.

Merkley referred to the contributing factors that directly affect the PD and provided supporting facts to validate the increase in man-power. The City will be the investigating agency for the recent thefts at the Port of Gold Beach. The City is limited by the fact that we don't have someone to go out of town to investigate the thefts and follow leads. The City would have a better "solve" rate if they had a designated detective. There will be no help from the county in the investigation-no one from the sheriff's office will be involved.

Alexander-asked Merkley if he felt we were specifically targeted because of it being a small town with less police protection?

Merkley-that is probably a motivating factor. Clearly the undesirables of this world are aware of lack of enforcement after certain hours and they take advantage of that.

Johnson-All the undesirables wouldn't know all that if we would not continue to publish and advertise it. I am appalled every time I hear something said at one of the meetings about the hours that we don't have police coverage-I don't know why we continue to advertise that fact. It is just a guess if that was a motivating factor, no one knows. Port Orford has boats with lots of equipment too and they don't have 24 hour coverage.

Popoff-Agrees with Johnson re the advertising of coverage hours. I'd like to see us have 24/7-maybe it would eliminate some of the bad-guy activities. Some nights there is a lot of activity on 101.

Popoff stated what we have been talking about is exactly what we have said should not be talked about and there is a reporter in the audience, unless the reporter decides to leave that out, it will be another written advertisement.

Johnson-I did not say the hours of no coverage. We have never had 24 hour coverage in the city as we have never had the staff or resources.

Alexander-addressed Merkley's suggestions regarding annexation, taxing the port, etc., by going through his letter (D) to the council. (Merkley said they were only suggestions)

Popoff-The idea behind this meeting is to determine whether or not the City allows the chief to put a levy out before the voters.

Johnson-asked Merkley if the \$650K five-year levy figure is pretty accurate?

Merkley-It is my best estimate. I'm not going to sit down and spend hours and hours doing the exact thing until I find out if the Council approves going out for the levy. Once that is done, I can put more accurate figures together.

Johnson-We have to consider everything. The City is self-insured. I called the employment office and found out that after five years, if we have to pay unemployment costs, at the rates today it could amount to \$15K, if they drew the full 26 weeks. In five years, it might be \$25K. (Merkley said at that time, after five years we wouldn't have to lay anybody off) Where would we get the money to support them? (Merkley-I will not be here at the end of five years) You might not be here, but the tax-payers will be. (Merkley said it would be his pleasure to offer a 20-year levy but he didn't think that would be possible).

Alexander-Good point-the unemployment factor should be considered-perhaps it could be addressed within the body of the levy.

Johnson-I don't think we could build those costs into the levy. My understanding is that in September, Merkley would bring us figures at our meeting; we would look at them and consider whether or not we would let it go out for a levy. (Merkley said the estimated cost would be about .70 per thousand.) On a home assessed at \$200K, the cost would be around \$140.00 per year. We have to be able to tell people a realistic figure.

We should also discuss spending city resources to promote this levy. The commissioners spent a lot of time and resources trying to get their levy passed. I would be very concerned if the City used city resources trying to get this passed. We should put it out there to the people, give them the facts, and let them vote. (Alexander agreed-put it out there to the people, give them the facts and let them vote)

Merkley-You're saying not to advertise, not give people the pros and cons, nothing?

Alexander-Not on the City's nickel. I would not be able to justify it if a voter came to me and asked why we were spending money to promote a levy that wants me to give you more money. (Merkley said the City would receive a direct benefit from this levy by having more manpower-doesn't have any money in his budget to run an ad anyway).

Johnson-I'll be very frank with everyone-I will not vote for it in my personal life, I am not supportive of it, but if the council votes to support it, then of course, that is the way

it would be. I've already been asked why we would be asking for a levy when we are already taking so much from the residents for the sewer project.

Merkley-I have the best interest of the citizens and employees of the City in mind. (Johnson said there is no question about that). Just because the sewer project wasn't taken care of when it should have been, doesn't negate the fact that we are short handed and the citizens and officers are at risk.

Johnson-Going back to what we talked about a few months ago-Merkley keeps saying we're understaffed. According to every other agency I have contacted, which is always Myrtle Point, Coquille, Powers, Port Orford, Bandon, Brookings and us...we are not understaffed, we are over staffed compared to them. (Merkley said we are unique-we are not Port Orford)

Peterson-What effect has the cut in the sheriff's department had on us? (Merkley-multifaceted because more stress is placed on that officer knowing there is not going to be any backup. Increased stress and increased risk to the officer. We always had the potential for back up from the county and now we don't) If we added two more policemen, would it eliminate the problem? (Merkley said Yes)

Johnson-Speaking of backup-I would think most of the violent things would happen during the night rather in the light of day. I wonder why we have two officers on every day and only two on two nights a week. (Merkley-I believe that is the best use of manpower) Is it more important to have backup during the day than at night? (Merkley-depends on the situation) Generally speaking, is that true?

Merkley- I'm charged with being the head of that department and I believe that is the best use of resources..it is not perfect. A quarter or third of the time I am the duty officer due to sickness or vacation, just normal every day, year to year, I am the duty officer for as much as a third of the time, not counting holidays, call outs and other things I respond to. I have never worked more hours for less money in my life than since I came to Gold Beach.

The job is incredibly stressful and part of the reason is that as of right now, I have five bosses. In essence, I have five bosses because people want to dictate or have their say in how he runs his department and that is not the way it is supposed

to happen, I should have one boss. (Johnson said Merkley has always said his door is always open) Yes it is, all the time.

Alexander-Merkley is indeed the head of his department and the last thing I want to do is micro manage how he does his job. Having done a lot of scheduling, I have a lot of empathy for the scheduling problems he faces. I think he does the best job of scheduling he can do, it is not our call how many officers work days or nights. It is not fair for us to micro manage what he does.

Johnson-I agree with David; however, I do not feel that questioning is the same as directing Merkley to do anything. I have the right to ask Merkley any question I want to about the way he runs his department. I know that I have no right to tell him how to do it but I can ask questions. (Merkley said he has the right to tell her to mind her own business) I have a right to know what goes on in the city-I do not have the right to tell Merkley how to run his department.

Popoff-Agreed with Johnson. Every councilor and the mayor deserve to know what is going on, we can't be in the blind. (Johnson said she is not going to be) When I get back from the LOC conference, if we do not have applicants for the position of city administrator, I am going to have to appoint an interim. We have been without an administrator since February. It is my right to be able to do that but the council could look at the applicant and the person. I also feel the people have the right to decide if they want to fund two more police officers.

MOTION:-> Alexander move that the council grant authority to the chief to seek a levy to provide additional police services to the city, second by Peterson. Alexander and Peterson voted "AYE", Johnson voted "NAY". VOTE 2 AYES 1 NAY 1 VACANT

Johnson-Do we need to discuss the letters to the Chamber of Commerce and the fair? (they would be considered later-read them and make notes for Merkley) Who proposed the amount? (Merkley said he did). If the amount was proposed by Merkley, she wants it made clear it was not proposed by the council.

ADJOURNED AT 1:07 P.M.

The location of the hearing/meeting is accessible to the disabled. Advance notice is requested if special accommodations are needed. Call (541) 247-7029 so that appropriate assistance can be provided. The City of Gold Beach is an affirmative action EEOE and complies with section 504 of the rehab act of 1973. Complaints of Discrimination should be sent to: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, D.C. 20250-9419

Approved by the Gold Beach City Council on October 8, 2007.



Karl Popoff, Mayor

ATTEST:



Shirley Walker, Recorder