

January 18, 2007
City Council Regular Session
City Council Room
48318 E. First Street, Oakridge OR 97463
7:00 p.m.



MINUTES



1.0 CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Hampton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Council Present: Donald Hampton, Mayor
Carina Schorer
Dan Rehwalt
Rayetta Clark
Randy Dreiling
Amy Kordosky
Glenn Fortune

Staff Present: City Administrator Gordon Zimmerman
City Recorder Chantell Steiner
Community Services Director Kevin Urban
Police Chief Louis Gomez
Fire Chief Jerry Shorey

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

Bill Keene, 47863 Highway 58, Oakridge: Mr. Keene has come this evening to ask the Council to review a situation with the property that he and his ex-wife own on Highway 58. The Hitching Post mini-mall has been vacant for some time and they are currently trying to sell the property. In the past the property was zoned and approved for a small storage unit facility. After reviewing the zoning with the City Administrator and Community Services Director he has come to the Council for their interpretation of the zoning. He has been told that the property can no longer be used as a storage facility and that is what he would like the Council to consider. He said that he was planning to attend the Planning Commission meeting to resolve this issue but since that meeting was cancelled, he would like a review of the property zoning rules from the Council. Mr. Keene will provide copies of the permits purchased in 1999 and 2001.

Mayor Hampton said this would be referred to a Council Committee later in the meeting.

Jess Henryes, 47737 Portal Drive, Oakridge: Mr. Henryes has come for clarification from the last meetings minutes. He said that he noticed that Mayor Hampton has made some changes to the process of allowing citizen input. As he understands it, citizens

will be allowed to speak at the beginning of a meeting on any topic including agenda items. After that, they may not be allowed to speak later on specific agenda topics unless recognized by a Council member. He asked Mayor Hampton to understand and consider hearing public comments on topics after they have heard Council discussion. He said that the Council discussion could create new information that a citizen may be able to elaborate on.

Mayor Hampton clarified that the Council will have the ability to call on a citizen for additional comments during a specific topic discussion if it chooses. He said that if the Council has decided that it has enough information to make a decision, then it is not required to listen to additional comments. He said that the public has time before a meeting to talk with the Mayor or Councilors if they need to.

Mr. Henryes said that some people may not have that opportunity and he would like the Council to consider recognizing those people throughout the meeting.

Mayor Hampton replied that he would have to make a judgment call in that type of situation and he would allow the Council to decide.

Mr. Henryes reiterated that from his perspective it is possible at times for new topics to appear on the agenda and he would like to have input on them. He said the discussion of the Council would allow him the information needed and he would like the opportunity to input his own comments as well.

Mayor Hampton said it would ultimately be up to a Council member to recognize a citizen for comment during a specific agenda topic.

3.0 ADDITIONS, CORRECTIONS, OR ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Mayor Hampton informed the staff department heads that items seven, eight, and nine of the agenda should be reported on if there is new information that may assist the Council in making decisions. If someone is voting on something, it is helpful to have as much information as possible in the packets.

Gordon Zimmerman said he has spoken with the staff and they understand the process.

4.0 CONSENT AGENDA

- 4.1 Minutes of Regular Session of January 4, 2007
- 4.2 Minutes of the Work Session of January 11, 2007
- 4.3 Resolution 1-2007 Accounting Adjustments

Councilor Rehwalt asked to have a correction to the minutes of January 4, 2007 and remove item 4.1. He said in the interest of historical accuracy, the circumstances of Councilor Dreiling's changed vote on the amendment to refer to a committee should be recorded.

Mayor Hampton said he would like to remove item 4.3 as well. He explained that he feels anything pertaining to money and finances should never be put in the consent agenda and be somewhat hidden from the public view. He does not have a problem with the item itself, he just feels that if money is being moved, added, or transferred, that it should be an individual item for the Council to vote on.

Motion by R. Clark and seconded by A. Kordosky to approve item 4.2 Minutes of the Work Session of January 11, 2007. G. Fortune (Aye), R. Clark (Aye), C. Schorer (Aye), D. Rehwalt (Aye), A. Kordosky (Aye), R. Dreiling (Aye), and Mayor Hampton (Aye). Motion carried 7-0.

Mayor Hampton reminded the Council that in the future if they have a question about the motion, or if they are confused, they should ask for clarification before making their vote. He said a point of order would need to be asked and the Recorder could restate the motion.

Mayor Hampton asked that the January 4, 2007, minutes be modified and voted for approval at the next meeting.

Motion by R. Clark and seconded by R. Dreiling to approve item 4.3 Resolution 1-2007 Accounting Adjustments. A. Kordosky (Aye), R. Dreiling (Aye), G. Fortune (Aye), C. Schorer (Aye), Mayor Hampton (Aye), D. Rehwalt (Aye), and R. Clark (Aye). Motion carried 7-0.

5.0 STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Mayor Hampton gave a "State of the City" address. The speech is attached to these minutes.

6.0 ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

6.1 Lane Regional Air Protection Agency (LRAPA) At Large Position Discussion

Mayor Hampton noted that it is up to the Council as to what course of action to take. He said the Administrator's opinion is expressed in the packet and the Mayor's opinion was expressed at the last work session. He said the decision needed with be whether the Council will endorse an individual person or not for the vacancy.

Motion by D. Rehwalt and seconded by R. Clark to support Glenn Fortune as the City of Oakridge candidate in seeking the at-large position on the LRAPA board.

Councilor Clark noted that it is only logical to support Councilor Fortune due to his recent appointment on the board and his past involvement with the program.

Councilor Rehwalt added that this seems to him that a clear message is being sent if the City Council is solidly behind a single candidate.

Councilor Dreiling agreed with this comment.

Mayor Hampton does not agree with this and it is mostly due to the make-up of the LRAPA board. He previously told the Council that he is unclear of the direction of the board. It sounded to him like they are not clear on what they want to do with the position. He said we could endorse Councilor Fortune and the LRAPA Board may decide to just pick someone else anyway. He did review the application form and website. It does say that preference will be given to someone outside the Eugene/Springfield area. This creates an advantage to someone outside that area. He intends to apply for the position in hopes that that will give the board more candidate choices. He reiterated that anyone, even a citizen of Oakridge, could apply. His strategy is to give LRAPA a choice even if the Oakridge Council chooses to appoint a single person.

Councilor Kordosky noted that she believes she read in the minutes of the board that the board had noted Councilor Fortune as being a recent member. It would make sense for him to reapply. She could not find the location of this statement.

Councilor Fortune said it seems to him that a majority of the LRAPA board agrees that there should be a representative from Oakridge. After thinking it over and reviewing the LRAPA minutes, he believes that Oakridge would benefit most from a single applicant that is endorsed by the City and does not think two applicants from Oakridge should apply.

Motion by D. Rehwalt and seconded by R. Clark to support Glenn Fortune as the City of Oakridge candidate in seeking the at-large position on the LRAPA board. A. Kordosky (Aye), D. Rehwalt (Aye), R. Dreiling (Aye), R. Clark (Aye), C. Schorer (Aye), Mayor Hampton (Nay), and G. Fortune (Nay). Motion carried 5-2.

Mr. Zimmerman asked Mayor Hampton if he still intends to apply.

Mayor Hampton said he would still apply and any other citizen could apply.

Councilor Clark said that this could make it seem like the Council does not have faith in the person that it is recommending for the position.

Mayor Hampton said the LRAPA board would receive the Council's recommendation as well.

Councilor Clark asked if Mayor Hampton has faith in Councilor Fortune applying.

Mayor Hampton replied that he had told the Council of his intention at the Work Session and that intention is to get somebody from Oakridge appointed to the LRAPA board.

Councilor Clark asked if Mayor Hampton thinks they would choose him instead of Councilor Fortune.

Mayor Hampton said it could be the other way around. He thinks a better strategy is to give them a choice. Some more discussion continued before Mayor Hampton moved the meeting to the next agenda item.

6.2 Rural Tourism Marketing Program (RTMP) Process Review

Motion by R. Clark and seconded by A. Kordosky to affirm the Oakridge/Westfir Area Chamber of Commerce as the RTMP grant dollar distribution agent for the City of Oakridge.

Mayor Hampton said he disagrees with this because we have public money that is being authorized for distribution through a private agency. He is opposed to a private agency having the ability to expend public funds. He is also dissatisfied with the list of recipients. One of the key provisions of this money is that the event increases the number of overnight stays in Oakridge. He said the businesses only have to estimate their impact on overnight stays without any research being provided. After reviewing the events, he wonders if there is any evidence of stays. For the Fireworks, some concerts, and the bike events he thinks there are definite stays. He would question whether the trail running and 100K run brought any and did not believe there are any. This is why he would like the Council, or a designated Council Committee, to review the applications and make the recommendations to the Council. This would create a public body distributing the money for a public body.

Several Councilors noted that there are definitely more than three overnight stays for the Sugar Plum because they know there is that many vendors that stay.

Mr. Zimmerman noted that the Chamber Committee does rely on good faith when reviewing the estimates by the event coordinators pertaining to overnight stays. He said the information would be most accurate coming from them because they are the ones that track their events.

Mayor Hampton said that there should be a way to follow-up with the local hotels if they choose to.

Gordon said it is important to trust the people that fill out the application. He continued to note that the Council is the ultimate decision maker of who receives the money because the Council must approve the recommendation from the Chamber. He said the Council does not have control of the process the Chamber uses to determine who gets what. That could be what Mayor Hampton is concerned about.

Mayor Hampton agreed that the process is what he does not agree with.

Councilor Dreiling made a point of interest to recognize Rustie Ackland, Joy Kingsbury, and Vivian Erickson to speak for the Chamber and as motel owners.

Rustie Ackland reminded the Council that when this was assigned to the Chamber, it was common knowledge that any member of the Council was welcome to attend the interview process and participate in the distribution. She said that offer is still valid and the Chamber welcomes any Council member that wants to participate and/or make recommendations to the procedure process. She explained some changes that were done in the last year's process and any new suggested changes would be openly welcomed.

Mayor Hampton asked if the Council could be notified when that process will be taking place this year.

Rustie said it is always published and they will make sure to inform the Council.

Joy Kingsbury reported that her motel does get stays for the fireworks and bike events with a few for the Sugar Plum. She said she does not normally get them for concerts but believes that as the events grow that will change.

Vivian Erickson agreed with Joy that the bike events and in her case the concerts bring a lot of customers. She also gets many skiers but generally not much from the Sugar Plum. She noted that her motels income has nearly doubled in the last year so she believes these events are very helpful.

Councilor Dreiling has been assured that at least three vendors for the Sugar Plum stay the night in hotels and there are likely others. He thinks the Sugar Plum is justified for the five overnight stays that they have estimated. On the scale of things, he said that the \$300 that they request is hardly anything compared to the other events and does bring overnight stays.

Mayor Hampton asked if the process is only done once per year and if that is required.

Gordon said that the applicants normally request all of the money available. This last year has been the first year that there was more money than requests. He noted that it is awarded only once per year. However, the recipients will be reimbursed at all different times throughout the year. He also noted that the events are only allowed to request up to 50% of the events budget so that they will not be sustained based on the grant monies alone.

Mayor Hampton asked if there was remaining money, could the committee request for more applicants to distribute the remaining funds?

Gordon agreed that it could be done.

A small discussion continued on the events that do generate overnight stays and the process of offering remaining funds.

Councilor Clark thanked the Chamber for doing a great job with this program and noted that she was always aware that she was welcome to attend the application screening.

Mayor Hampton thanked Rustie for the invitation to attend the application screening.

Motion by R. Clark and seconded by A. Kordosky to affirm the Oakridge/Westfir Area Chamber of Commerce as the RTMP grant dollar distribution agent for the City of Oakridge. R. Clark (Aye), C. Schorer (Aye), Mayor Hampton (Aye), A. Kordosky (Aye), R. Dreiling (Aye), G. Fortune (Aye), and D. Rehwalt (Aye). Motion carried 7-0.

6.3 Recognition of City Employee Service Award

Gordon explained that the City recognizes employees with a Years of Service Award plaque and pin in five-year increments. He is proud to announce this evening that the Community Services Director, Kevin Urban, has now been with the City for five years. He said in all his years as an Administrator, Mr. Urban is one of the most creative and productive public service directors that he has every seen.

6.4 Goal Planning Issues and Concerns

Gordon said the Council could either review this tonight or set a date to discuss the issues and concerns relating to goals.

Mayor Hampton said he would like for the Council to have some time to absorb what was said tonight and review the staff recommendations.

The Council scheduled the next work session in the council chambers for Monday, January 29, 2007 at 5:30 PM.

Mayor Hampton confirmed that the February 15, 2007 meeting would be cancelled due to the staff and some council members' schedules with conferences.

7.0 COMMUNITY SERVICES

None.

8.0 POLICE SERVICES

None.

9.0 EMERGENCY SERVICES

None.

10.0 REPORTS FROM BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Gordon attended a Regional City Managers meeting today and was appointed to the board of the Lane Metro Partnership. This makes Gordon the rural member of the board.

Mayor Hampton said he was not able to attend the annual Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council potluck. He said they had some people reporting on restoration activities on their private property. He said there is not that much going on around here because there is not that much private property. If you are interested in seeing some restoration activity, you can view the Haws property on LaDuke Road as well as the Buckhead Natural Area.

Councilor Dreiling reported that the trails committee is moving along nicely and will be meeting next week to review the 67 trails that they have identified. All of the trails will be prioritized by high, medium, and "not going to happen." Anyone is welcome to attend the meeting at City Hall on Wednesday, January 24th at 6:00 PM.

Mayor Hampton reviewed the committee assignment sheet. He noted that some of the committees have not been assigned because no one volunteered for them. Several Council members discussed ones that they would be interested in. Mayor Hampton noted each request and said he would get back with the final assignments later.

Gordon Zimmerman requested to be excused for the February 1, 2007 meeting so he could attend a retirement party with a former employee. The Council excused him from the meeting.

Gordon requested permission from the Council to take the month of July off so he and his family could attend a church history tour across the United States.

Mayor Hampton said it is not unusual to cancel the first July meeting due to the holiday but said the Council could deal with that later. He said this would leave another staff member in charge of the second meeting in July. He asked the Council if it has any objections to this request. The Council had no objections.

Mayor Hampton continued to address Mr. Keene's request for a council committee to review his property zoning laws. The Council agreed that the Community Services committee should review this issue and report back to the Council with its findings.

11.0 MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Hampton noted a courtesy letter that was received from Charter Communications informing its customers of the upcoming rate increases. He said, "As some of you know, I am not a big fan of Charter and here is another reason why that is." He showed the other Councilors the letter that misspells the names of the local cities as Oak Ridge

Mayor Don Hampton's 2007 State of the City Address

History is often one of our best teachers when it comes to evaluating whether or not you've made any progress. In previous state of the city speeches I limited my remarks to events of the past year when stating the City's accomplishments. But this year I decided to take a look back—reviewing some of my former speeches to refresh my memory as to what the issues were in previous years. And in this way I thought we all could see if the City has progressed in the past eight years. In addition, I intend to use my 40 years as a resident of this area and my brief experience as a county commissioner to give added perspective to where we've been, where we are, and where I'd like to see us progress.

In 2000 we had job descriptions written and annual employee evaluations in place for the first time. We had just hooked up our library to the internet, had the beginnings of a city website, and were talking about the potential of fiber optics; but our telephone system at City Hall was so archaic that it needed replacement. Anyone who wanted to check on our city ordinances had to do a hand search to find relevant documents. We were debating whether or not to allow alcoholic beverages at events at Greenwaters Park. And for the youth, we were discussing how to build a skateboard park. We had just qualified for a \$300,000 grant to upgrade our industrial park—but we had no new tenants. Because of differing viewpoints, we had two chambers of commerce. The Federal Government had just notified us that we had again violated Federal clean air standards and needed to do something about it.

So have we made any progress? Yes! Not only do we have job descriptions and annual evaluations for all City employees, we now have these records in the most organized and accessible form. And this better organization has extended to all city records including property liens and historical documents. And to check on city ordinances, all one has to do is access the user-friendly city website and do a search. And by the way, this website is easy to maintain, so all of the information which you can find there is up to date. Thanks, Chantell and the entire office staff, for these improvements.

We now have a library operating with expanded hours, thanks to volunteers and one recent employee addition. We have a public-access computer available for use by anyone who needs internet access. And best of all, plans are afoot for a new library building right next door to city hall. Not only will this library allow more space for library operations, but it will allow some of the other city hall occupants to have more breathing room.

I cannot underestimate the importance of radio communication among city departments and with those in other agencies. In this area of emergency preparedness and increased security concerns, adequate radio communication is essential. Both our police and fire departments have upgraded their radio equipment to improve communications. And our police department has an enhanced 9-1-1 system that can provide the department with quicker, more detailed information in emergencies and an improved LEADS software for use on any investigation.

And to those skeptics who ask the question, "Why do you have a police department when the crime rate here is so low here?" I reply—it's because we have such a fine police department that the crime rate is so low. Keep up the good work, police department.

While I know that some local rural residents did not like the idea of forming the Hazeldell Rural Fire District, the collaboration of this district with the City of Oakridge has been good for both. The sharing of equipment and volunteer help has made each department better. And our recent weather has increased my appreciation for the ambulance service, which I feel is second to none.

As we attempt to make this a more livable city for both those who currently live here and for those we would like to attract, I think of the city parks. We now have in place an alcohol use policy for Greenwaters Park, some new playground equipment destined for Salmon Creek Park and an almost-completed trails plan for the city and surrounding area. Let me assure some local residents that the soon-to-be-finished trails plan does not include any trail construction on people's private property. And the trails plan will allow local families and visitors to further appreciate their outdoor experiences. The Siuslaw Bank Amphitheater at Greenwaters Park and the newly-constructed concession stand will only add to this park's popularity. And if it isn't already, the skateboard section of the Horton Sports Park will become the responsibility of the City. The Oakridge Parks survey will give us a better idea of how you, the citizens, would like to use our parks. And the Community Garden next to Salmon Creek will provide an area for the growing of fresh produce.

Thanks to work of our staff and the planning commission, the City of Oakridge is now 100 acres larger than it was at this time last year. And four new subdivisions could be the location for several hundred new homes. Street improvements on Rainbow Road and West Second Street have improved the drivability of these streets and the beauty of the neighborhoods. And the Highway 58 refinement plan will give the community at large a chance to see if there's another way to make our highway more attractive and inviting to tourists.

While we still have the industrial park as an economic development tool, the most important asset now is our enterprise facilitator, who already is helping over 30 clients to develop or improve their business ideas or plans. While it doesn't directly relate to city government, we now have one chamber of commerce with more members than it has ever had. And the City's giving the chamber office space has made the day-to-day operation of the chamber more effective and its communication with the City easier.

Now as good as things seem to be going, I do have some suggestions for how we could make city government even better. My first suggestion has to do with the way the City expends its money. Currently we do not use a purchase order system, so there is no oversight of spending above the department level. I would like to see the purchase order system used so that one person in city government would have oversight of all of

the spending. I also think that the Council needs to have a discussion about where our city spends its money. I will talk to the Council about this at a later work session.

Some of you who have been on this council for a few years know that we have been working on having a completed asset inventory. Most of this is completed now but still more needs to be done. We will know that we are truly finished with this process when our auditor gives us unqualified reports.

Each department recognizes outstanding employee performance in a different way, and some departments make a bigger deal out of it than others. I would like to see more uniformity about how employees are recognized and have more Council involvement in this process.

This town does have what I would call “a small-town friendliness” to it, but I think that the City could enhance this friendliness with an emphasis on what is normally called “customer service.” And by this I’m not just talking about the front office staff—I’m talking about every City employee. Ideally, no employee would ever say to a citizen, “Sorry, that’s not my department.” Instead, the employee should offer assistance in helping the citizen find the information or service being requested. I feel that we should utilize the new water/sewer billing system to include a city newsletter with this mailing. We could work on format, content, etc., to make it an informative, inviting newsletter to read. And it could be sent in electronic form to all those who currently are on the “city news” e-mail list. To make the town more appealing to tourists and residents alike, I suggest we follow through with the proposal to install city-wide Wi-Fi.

I’ve never been satisfied with the departmental “feel” of this city government. I propose that we offer an opportunity for employees of one department to visit or work in another department for a day to see what it is like. I feel that this will create more of a “big picture” idea and make employees feel more like City of Oakridge employees than departmental employees.

And I think how we operate at City meetings needs to be welcoming and inviting. Undoubtedly, before your service to the City is over, someone will offer public comment with which you disagree. But our courtesy should prevail to anyone who takes the time and effort to communicate with us. I have seen some governmental bodies not be this inviting to citizens.

I also want to mention the concept of inclusiveness. As it stands right now, the City has no formal connection with the youth of the community. For this reason, I will attempt to revive the Youth Advisory Council. We also have no organized way of finding out the interests of the senior citizens. I’m open to ideas about how to make this connection. And we have an Hispanic sector of our community that isn’t as visible as I would like. I’ll be working on a plan to get these people more involved in the life of the community. And although it is a worthy and noble effort, the Team Oakridge concept has not been successful in getting representatives from all the key local agencies together to communicate. We’ll work to address this issue.

I applaud the fire department for beginning first responder training. But I feel that we need one or more Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) to be ready for any emergency actions, which the City might have to take.

I was pleased last fall to see most of the city councilors attending the League of Oregon Cities Conference. And I understand that we will be receiving Ford Foundation grant money for some community leadership training. There is no better investment that a community can make than investing in its citizens. I would like to see more involvement on the part of city employees and councilors in the events and activities that take place in this community. Mutual support makes a community feel more connected.

For the welfare of our citizens we need to continue to work on our air quality. I propose once again that we make the purchase of a leaf vacuum a high priority and ban any form of backyard burning.

And for the benefit of our renters, I suggest that we take a look at what ordinances exist and strengthen them with what is normally called a "renters' bill of rights." I think that this will improve the renters' standard of living and help to beautify some of the houses in this area.

And finally, I'd like to direct some comments specifically at my fellow councilors. I have mentioned to you before how pleased I am with the makeup of this council. I have already told you how important it is to continue your "on-the-job training." I also want to remind you that I feel that you as elected leaders of this community are held to an ethically higher standard. The citizens of this community have entrusted you to operate in their best interests. What this means to me is that you not only comply with the existing laws that regulate your activity, but you also hold yourself to a higher ethical standard not governed by any laws. I'm still taken aback and amused at the way letters are formally addressed to me: "The Honorable Donald E. Hampton." I intend to make all my actions "honorable" and I encourage you to do the same. In this way city government will be respected instead of suspected.