

Council Present:

Dave Stram
Holly Campbell
Jacob Daniels

Brent Gifford
Adam Pelatt
Jane Vincent

Michelle Amberg
Roberta Tharp
Layli Nichols
Madeline Philips
Scott Denham

City Administrator
City Recorder
Finance Director
RARE Intern
Land County Sheriff
Deputy

Staff Present:

Council Absent: 0

Press: 1 – Carolanne Sudruth

Audience: 9

The City Council work session was called to order by Mayor Dave Stram at 6: 52 PM.

Public Safety – Third Deputy

Mayor Stram opened the Work Session with Public Comment.

Tony Marquess, addressed the Council with questions regarding the proposed Public Safety Surcharge.

- Would this fee be placed on the utility bill?
- How will that be applied to multi-family housing? And will it be a charge based on meters or per bill?

He stated he supports the Sheriff and asked the Council keep in mind many of his tenants are on fixed incomes and he works to keep the park affordable for them.

Michelle Amberg said there have been discussions but it really is a policy question. She recommended the Council try to make the fee suit the purpose of the fee in order to make it supportable, defensible, and have a nexus. The fee should reflect the level of service and a discussion needs to take place about what the service level means.

Brent Gifford chair of the Public Safety Committee reported the committee has discussed several different ways the fee could be applied: per household address, per utility bill, but in all fairness they would like to find the best way to apply the fee to those who are using the services.

A discussion was held regarding that some utility bills have water and sewer service fees while others may only have just water or just sewer. Ms. Amberg pointed out a utility bill can carry a variety of fees from street utility fees to storm drain fees and there are various ways to create a fee structure but whatever you create, you have to be able to defend it.

Omar Bowles addressed the Council to ask if they have received any statistics on the City's Public Safety Survey, specifically on the willingness or desire of the public to pay a fee.

Brent Gifford replied to Mr. Bowles that there are approximately eighteen hundred utility bills for Creswell; of those there are just a few more than a hundred who live outside City limits who would be outside the contract area. Holly Campbell inquired about landlords who pay the utilities for their tenants and Ms. Amberg stated the fee would have to reflect the service level. It is her recommendation to structure the fee around zoning; a commercial business could be assessed by square footage or possibly by the type of business.

Jack Gradle addressed the Council to say his personal preference would be to assess the fee by a property tax levy in order for property owners to receive a tax write off.

Brent Gifford reviewed the Public Safety survey results:

- One hundred and thirty five (135) respondents
- Average rating on feeling safe in Creswell is 3.72 (1-5 Scale)

- Majority of respondents felt the City should have three deputies
- Seventy five percent of respondents would be willing to pay a Public Safety fee
- Fifty nine percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed to pay a \$5 fee for three deputies
- Seventy two percent of respondents would be willing to pay an \$8 fee for three deputies
- Eighty percent would be willing to pay a Public Safety fee on the utility bill or property tax
- Forty six percent of the respondents said they would be willing to pay \$15 for four deputies

Jacob Daniels commented as to whether or not the results truly reflect all the citizens of Creswell and doesn't feel the survey accurately reflects input from folks who are on fixed incomes. He is in support of keeping the third deputy but is worried the definition of Public Safety could change in the future to include things other than policing services. He would like to see the City partially fund a deputy and then in November go out for a local option levy.

Jane Vincent questioned the annual increase in the Sheriff's contract asking how that would be handled. Mr. Gifford responded it would be dealt with during the budgeting process.

Mr. Bowles reiterated that the results of the unscientific survey reveal the community feels strongly about keeping the third deputy for public safety and their willingness to pay. He on the other hand, doesn't like the idea of a tax levy as the landlords who don't live in Creswell would be responsible for paying the fee for their tenants. Mr. Bowles went on to say by creating a temporary fee to pay for public safety it would give the Council time to research ways to fund the third deputy. He continued by pointing out that should we do a special policing district but it could take anywhere from three to five years to begin seeing enough funds for the third deputy. A tax levy would mean policing services to include everyone in the Creswell taxing district which would require five or six deputies and consider a higher cost for law enforcement.

Adam Pelatt reiterated a special district could take three to five years to get up and running and be the best long term outcome , but a tax levy could be placed on the ballot in November.

Maddie Phillips, RARE Intern reported according to the last census there are approximately 2,078 households of which 71 percent are owner occupied.

Michelle Amberg clarified that if a property tax were on the November ballot, the city would not be collecting that tax until the following year.

Jack Gradle asked what would happen to the fee if it was placed on the utility bill and customers refuse to pay it. Ms. Amberg explained when setting up your utility bill you can determine which costs get paid first; the first would be the public safety fee followed by water and sewer service fees. This would allow the City to disconnect the water services for nonpayment.

Mayor Stram asked about the amount of funds generated and used by the H2O (Help to Others) program associated with the water services. Layli Nichols replied she will receive an end of the year report sometime after June 30th from Community Sharing with that information that she will provide to the Council. Mayor Stram suggested changing the H2O program to a program for utility assistance instead of water and sewer only to help others who have difficulty paying their utility bill.

Tony Marquess asked about compression if a property tax was passed. Ms. Amberg said the City has a few properties that would be affected in Creswell but it is going to hit some of our other taxing agencies such as the School District much harder. A discussion ensued regarding compression.

Brent Gifford reported the Public Safety Committee needs to continue with their discussions. The finance committee has helped prepare a proposed draft beginning budget that includes a third deputy; making it budget neutral by offsetting with fees to be collected. Mr. Gifford stated the proposed budget is extremely lean as expenses are out pacing the revenues and it will be difficult to find any additional funds.

Visioning – Madeline Phillips

RARE Intern Maddie Phillips gave an update on the visioning process. She presented input from students of the Creswell School District. This process will help us explore and provide a direction in which to move and plan for the future. She is planning to hold a community work session at the end of May to bring the citizens of all ages into this process. Ms. Phillips asked the Council to report on their homework assignment: "What will Creswell's identity be defined by and why should your children want to live in Creswell in the year 2040?"

- Brent Gifford reported the more mature generation wants Creswell to remain a small community while the younger generation looks forward to growth within the next twenty years.
- Jane Vincent spoke with a number of business owners who like the small town feel but would like to see districts formed within the City; industrial and downtown.
- Holly Campbell spoke with the older generation who are concerned their grandchildren won't stay around here; they don't see the kinds of jobs in our community the younger generation is looking for. We need to look at things that entice young families to this area.
- Mayor Stram reported Creswell has the largest elementary school in the county. We have a growing segment of younger families living in Creswell but earning their living in nearby towns. The older folks he spoke with suggested a thriving Airport that attracts tourists; good schools; new amenities and businesses; Creswell's own identity, the new U of O Golf Course as well as Emerald Valley Golf Course, make Creswell a destination.
- Jacob Daniels reported his interviewees think it is important to preserve the west side of town as a historic district, erect an archway like Cottage Grove has done. On the east side of Creswell they would like to see industrial type jobs come to town that pay a living wage. They would like to keep the cost of living in Creswell low, make it an affordable and safe town to live in while preserving our history.
- Jane Vincent said she had a few folks who would like to see a Casino put in Creswell as they are known for supporting schools. A discussion ensued how that was previously presented and shot down by the citizens of this community. Ms. Amberg reported other cities have tried to place one outside of the Indian tribe, but it would take a vote of the citizens.
- Holly Campbell added she has heard folks would like to see an outlet mall in Creswell. Tony Marquess commented that when we get people off the freeway coming in to Creswell it is a good thing. One thing to remember is the City will have to work with property owners as well as ODOT (Oregon Department of Transportation) for traffic flow. The proposed interchange management plan restricts a lot of access into Creswell which would kill any commercial development like we are talking about.

Ms. Phillips encouraged the Council to speak to citizens about visioning and to think big and encourage residents to join us for a work session at the end of May.

Water Rates Public Forum Discussion

Adam Pelatt, Chair of the Transportation and Public Works Committee reported The FCS Group has not provided the committee enough information in regards to the Water Rate Study for them to present a recommendation to the Council. FCS Group will be coming to give a presentation and the committee would first like to receive more information on what their findings were and how they arrived at the findings.

Ms. Amberg said a discussion was held at the last Council meeting in regards to the number of and what kind of meetings need to be held with the FCS group. As it stands right now it is on hold until the Council or subcommittee provides feedback as to how they would like to proceed. The committee has received a draft document that is not what Ms. Amberg expected or was hoping for. Ms. Amberg asked if the committee would like to address the decision about the meetings with the FCS Group. Jacob Daniels, committee member doesn't see the necessity for paying for additional meetings; they provided a powerpoint presentation instead of a study that was asked for. Ms. Amberg reported she received a draft document and an updated powerpoint presentation when she had specifically asked for a decision making matrix and other information.

Discussion ensued regarding the approval of additional funds to schedule extra meetings at the April Council meeting. Ms. Amberg said there are three more meetings that can be scheduled, but she is unclear what the committee and council wants to do. She asked if they wanted to have FCS Group provide a community meeting to present their findings or did they want to take a different route? Mr. Pelatt stated the FCS Group is doing just the skeleton outline of what the contract requires. Discussion continued about FCS Group presenting to the community when their work was unacceptable to the committee. Mayor Stram recapped the conversation; their product is incomplete, the committee isn't thrilled about paying them additional fees to present their findings, and folks are frustrated. Ms. Amberg commented that the FCS Group has done a solid methodology but they haven't given the committee what they need to communicate the findings to the public. She would like them to develop a tool that will explain how they came to the two options they presented to the committee. More discussion was held about the possibility of the committee/staff creating and finishing the matrix we are looking for. Ms. Amberg reported we have the skill on staff but there are time constraints. Mr. Pelatt said taking the data and creating our own matrix would be a huge undertaking that would require both staff and the committee and could possibly take the course of six to eight months to complete.

Discussion ensued as to whether or not the proposed budget for next year will include an increase to the water rates. Mr. Gifford explained the draft budget maintains our current water and sewer rates. Ms. Amberg suggested holding off on implementing the water rate increase until October allowing more time to do a better job.

A discussion ensued regarding debt service and the need to implement an increase, the question is when. Mayor Stram asked staff to check the records to verify the length of time set on the moratorium of increases to the water and sewer rates and directed the committee to bring a strong recommendation back to the Council on how we move forward.

Jane Vincent commented she would like to see the City switch from a base and overage rate to a user rate. Ms. Nichols commented there are many factors that go into rates in order to pay for the services provided. Ms. Amberg commented by using a straight fee, you could jeopardize your credit rating. Lenders want to know you will be receiving enough revenue every year to meet your expenses. Michelle said maybe she needs to bring a rate setting 101 course forward so everyone can understand what goes into rates.

Ms. Amberg asked the committee to consider a recommendation to the Council to not make a decision without any public education and consider not looking at a rate increase until October to allow time for some rate training.

Mr. Pelatt said he would like to recommend moving forward with the annual rate increase. He will meet with Ms. Amberg in the near future and bring a recommendation to the Council at the May meeting.

Council Governing Rules

This item was removed from the agenda.

Emerald Valley Well Water

Michelle Amberg reported in the past the City was approached by a representative of the Villas at Emerald Valley Homeowners Association to discuss the possibility of using well #3 for irrigation purposes. Ms. Amberg said the City's wells are not sending water to the treatment plant because of arsenic levels. She reported they are in a state of having been decommissioned, but they still belong to the City and at some point we may need them again in the future and will have to treat the arsenic. In the meantime, the Homeowners Association wants to use them for irrigation purposes. She provided a list of discussion items compiled by Public Works Director Cliff Bellew and City Attorney Ross Williamson.

Ms. Amberg reviewed the list with the Council and suggested that if the City sells the water to them, it would require developing a city policy/ordinance that would allow the practice of selling water that is not treated; a fee structure; and agreements would need to be put in place regarding hook ups, equipment and maintenance.

Ms. Amberg reported there was a draft agreement put in place in 2010 to lease the facility but was never signed.

Councilor Pelatt recommended Ms. Amberg research to see what the potential is for this project.

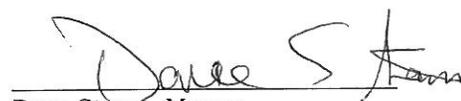
A discussion ensued that Ms. Amberg has not spoken to anyone from the association about this project; the Mayor was approached by a citizen.

Larry Patterson reported the association assumes that with future development on that side of the freeway, they are afraid they will lose all their irrigation water. He went on to say the Council needs to determine if this is an issue or not. Mayor Stram asked Ms. Amberg to keep this on her list of projects but not as a priority.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion Mayor Stram adjourned the work session at 8:47 pm.


Roberta J Tharp, City Recorder


Dave Stram, Mayor