



CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Meeting Minutes December 9, 2024

Mayor Drotzmann called the work session meeting to order at 6:00pm. Present were Councilors Primmer, Peterson, Myers, Duron, Linton, Hardin, McCarthy, and Barron. City Staff in attendance included: City Manager Byron Smith, Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan, City Attorney Rich Tovey, Finance Director Ignacio Palacios, City Planner Clint Spencer, HES General Manager Nate Rivera, and City Recorder Lilly Alarcon-Strong.

Meet & Greet Reception- Thanking outgoing Council Members and Congratulating New Elected Officials

Councilor Peterson

Mayor Drotzmann recognized Councilor Peterson for 4-years of service with a plaque and flowers and spoke regarding the unique perspective and underserved demographic Councilor Peterson brought to the Council that had been previously missing, making sure that these groups were advocated for. Councilor Peterson has struggled with health challenges but has worked hard to overcome them and make sure Councilor Peterson is present and engaged when able and has been a valuable resource to the Council and Community.

(Applause from the audience.)

Councilor Duron and Barron echoed Mayor Drotzmann's sentiments.

Councilor Peterson spoke regarding always wanting to live a life of service and has been grateful for this opportunity and being able to focus on staying true to priorities and values that were important for Councilor Peterson.

Councilor Hardin

Mayor Drotzmann recognized Councilor Hardin for 32-years of service with a custom engraved wallet and plant for his garden to never forget his time with the City and spoke regarding how Councilor Hardin has always been very thoughtful and kind with the best interest of the community at heart. Councilor Hardin has served in many committee's including the National League of Oregon Cities and has helped make a difference in Hermiston by attending these local and national conferences making sure to be engaged and bring back suggestions and answers for the betterment of Hermiston. Mayor Drotzmann thanked Councilor Hardin for 32 years of leadership, engagement, dedication, wealth of knowledge, and friendship; and thanked Councilor Hardin's family for supporting his commitment and time on the Council and to the City as this is time away from family.

(Applause from the audience.)

Councilor Myers, Duron, Barron, Linton, Primmer, echoed Mayor Drotzmann's sentiments.

Councilor Hardin stated he has enjoyed every minute of his time on the Council and has never felt that this role has been a burden. He has never had an agenda on wanting to serve in this role, and has only ever wanted what's best for Hermiston and had the pleasure to be involved in changes and see others take action, like Chet Prior and Dan Burns, to help our community grow from when he moved to Hermiston in the 80's with his young family with a population of about 8,000 to now being the largest City in Eastern Oregon. Councilor Hardin thanked everyone for their kind words and thanked all of his family to attending tonight's meeting.



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Public Comment

Joe Harns stated he was also a City Councilor who served with Councilor Hardin and knows first-hand the hard work that is involved with being a public servant, in this capacity, and thanked all the Council members and their families for their service.

Greg Hardin stated he is the youngest son of Councilor Hardin and also works for City County Insurance Services which has a relationship with the City of Hermiston, and many people whom he works with stated they have had many pleasant interactions with his father in his official capacity. Mr. Hardin stated he wanted the City to know Councilor Hardin has represented the City well. Mr. Hardin stated "I love you dad, and thank you so much for your service to your community."

Mayor Drotzmann

Council President Primmer recognized Mayor Dr. Drotzmann for 12-years of service with flowers and a shadow box filled with his gavel and name plate and thanked Mayor Drotzmann for his inspiring leadership filled with vision, wisdom, and tireless work ethic that has shaped Hermiston into a thriving community where families can prosper and businesses can grow. Mayor Drotzmann has championed initiative that have improved the quality of life for our residents, enhanced parks and recreation facilities, and fostered economic growth all while ensuring our children reap the benefits of what a good community can provide. Besides the many accomplishments of Mayor Drotzmann, what has set him apart is his character, integrity, compassion, and selfless and unwavering dedication to public service which has earned him respect and admiration of the entire community. Council President Primmer thanked Mayor Drotzmann for his service and asked that he continue to inspire and uplift others in the way only he can.

(Applause from the audience.)

Councilor Myers stated Mayor Drotzmann stepped in and was elected during a very contentious time where the City desperately needed a stoic and pragmatic leader. Mayor Drotzmann spent a countless amount of time and effort to bring peace and trust back into the community and stated she will miss him greatly.

Councilor Duron thanked Mayor Drotzmann for his leadership and being a mentor to not only all Council members, but to all that have the pleasure of being in contact with him, stating he is an amazing advocate for Eastern Oregon and represents the City of Hermiston well in all local and national platforms and has been grateful to serve with him.

Councilor Barron, McCarthy, Linton, and Hardin echoed the sentiments of the Council members.

Mayor Drotzmann thanked his family for their support and willingness to stand with him in this journey as he felt there was a need on the Council that he had the skills to address. Mayor Drotzmann thanked the three Council members elect for their willingness to step into this role and asked that each of them bring their voice, demographics, and life experiences to the table, but remember the most important thing is to represent Hermiston as a whole; listen more and talk less, always be informed, read agenda packets ahead of time, come to meetings prepared with good questions, never try to embarrass anyone in public and have those criticisms in private, have those hard conversations and voice your opinions but once a Council decision has been made-stand behind that decision, and is looking forward to seeing the changes they will be making.



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Mayor Drotzmann stated City staff, under the leadership of previous City Manager Ed Brookshier and current City Manager Byron Smith, have hired competent and intelligent administrative staff who has had virtually no to minimal turnover. Staff members are offered and take advantage of growth and development opportunities and become long-term employees, which is not common in government, and is a direct result of the quality of administrative leaders. City staff is hardworking, patient, and make themselves available for the Council and public alike and working with them has been a great experience.

Mayor Drotzmann stated 13 years ago, Council meetings were very different from how they are now. Council meetings were filled with rambunctious people and Council members endured a lot of verbal abuse and experienced recall efforts. However, these experiences helped create a different kind of Council meetings filled with more transparency and inclusiveness. Participation was still highly encouraged, but proper decorum was requested of each audience member so a productive meeting could be obtained. Mayor Drotzmann thanked the Council for all the work they have done to literally place Hermiston on the map, including road signs, as Hermiston became the largest city in Eastern Oregon; Funland Park and our parks systems in general are inclusive and amazing; our sustainable infrastructure, street, water, recycled water are safe, which is not always the case in many cities. These were some difficult conversations and decision that were had as many members of the public were very angry about rate increases, but safety and reliability are vital and now the city has both with the added benefits of implementing long-term growth into these plans. Please keep making the positive progress that we have made, challenge yourself, ask the hard questions, make the decisions, and let administration handle the rest.

Mayor Drotzmann quoted Teddy Roosevelt from 1910, "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if they fail, at least fails while daring greatly, so that their place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat." Mayor Drotzmann encouraged current and future Council members to be the leaders the community needs them to be and thanked them for their partnership and friendship.

City Manager Smith thanked the outgoing council members for their leadership and announced the City is commissioning two benches, one in recognition of Mayor Drotzmann which will be placed at Funland Park for all of his efforts in this area, and the other in recognition of Councilor Hardin which will be placed in front of City Hall.

(Applause from the audience.)

Adjournment

Mayor Drotzmann adjourned the work session meeting at 7:01pm and stated the Council will take a 10-minute break and then convene for their regular council meeting.