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Administration



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Jackola and City Council

Date: December 31, 2024

From: Ron Whitlatch, Interim City Manager

Subject: **Administration Update – December 2024**

- Staff will continue to pursue options for a solar array at the Wastewater Treatment Plant Facility. We will likely enter into a contract with a solar designer and start pinning down additional details, agreement with Pacific Power, and grant opportunities in early 2025.
- We are moving forward with relocating the City Council Chambers to the Library Community Room. We have obtained pricing for the audio/visual aspects that will be needed and a new Dias.
- The City had multiple permit violations at the Wastewater Treatment Plant of our National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from April 2022 to July 2023. A majority of the violations were reporting errors, which have since been corrected. In December of 2024, we received notice from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) that the City will face a civil penalty (monetary fine) for these violations. Staff will request a hearing with ODEQ to appeal some of the violations as we believe they are incorrect. We will work through this process with ODEQ and the City's consulting firm, Kennedy Jenks. Staff will provide an update as we learn more moving through the process.
- Staff continues to spend considerable time answering questions/complaints regarding the new City Services Fee. We are also continuing to review individual accounts, meter sizes, and door counts for multi-family complexes. With any new billing of this magnitude, we expect changes and corrections to individual accounts will be needed within the first

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six months as it is rolled out. Staff will work diligently to ensure that these are handled timely.

- Staff continues to work with Sean Tate (Tate Public Affairs), who is helping the City navigate legislative affairs and advocate for the City. We currently meet with Sean every other Wednesday.
- Mayor Jackola, Kelly Hart, and I attended Legislative Days in December. We were able to sit in on several committee meetings and will be gearing up to provide testimony during hearings that directly impact Lebanon.
- Staff is still focusing on the Green Peter Reservoir drawdown. Although it was halted this year due to issues related to water plant operations, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers has indicated that the drawdowns will continue in future years. Staff will continue to seek ways to stop it and follow through with the Tort Claim filed for damages.
- Holding regular Department Director Meetings (every two weeks) to keep moving priorities forward.
- Continue participating in the Department of Land Conservation and Development's completion of Linn County's Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan update. This plan includes updates for all cities in Linn County and will be presented to the City Council for approval in 2025.
- We are working on a new agreement with Lebanon Farmers Market to move their location to the Holiday Station at the corner of Park and Oak Streets. The goal is to have this in place by 2025.
- Kelly Hart and I continue to meet with Susan Patterson from the Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments twice a month to identify grant opportunities that could benefit the City. We are currently working on funding opportunities to support wastewater plant projects, water service line replacements, street projects, and any other projects that could benefit the city.

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