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MEMORANDUM

Administration

To: Mayor Jackola and City Council

Date: September 30, 2025

From: Ron Whitlatch, City Manager

Subject: **Administration Update – September 2025**

- We have spent time this month preparing for Legislative Days (September 29th – October 1st). We have eight in-person meetings with State Representatives in Salem during this time period to discuss issues that directly impact the City of Lebanon.
- A work Session with the City Council was held on September 24th. The work session identified potential solar projects that the City could move forward on. This will be discussed more during the upcoming Goal Setting Session on November 12th.
- Staff has submitted written comments to Oregon DEQ regarding the draft NPDES Discharge Permit for the Wastewater Plant and the associated impacts.
- Staff is continuing to work with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) to determine the final fine that will be assessed to the City for the permit violations at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Staff will provide an update as we learn more throughout the process.
- We are beginning the preparation work with SSW Consulting for the upcoming Goal Setting Session. We will focus heavily on the existing Strategic Plan Task Matrix, along with the information provided during the multiple work sessions held this past summer.
- We are continuing to work with our outside legal counsel for claims against the Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE). The claim will be filed with the Federal District Court in the coming weeks. This is likely to be a lengthy process, and we will provide more information as it becomes available.
- 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.
- We are continuing to implement the Five-Year Strategic Plan goals for year one. We are now preparing for the Goal Setting Session in November.
- With Kelly Hart submitting her resignation, we have begun a recruitment process. While we will miss all Kelly and all the skills she provided as the Community Development Director, we wish her the best in her new endeavor.

- We are continuing to move through the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) process regarding the appeal filed by Laura LaRoque regarding the Code Interpretation of Trails in the RL Zone. The goal is to go to mediation prior to the formal appeal process. We will continue to keep the City Council informed as we progress through the process.
- Holding regular Department Director Meetings (every two weeks) to keep moving priorities forward.
- The Department of Land Conservation and Development's completion of Linn County's Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan update has been delayed due to Federal funding issues. This plan includes updates for all cities in Linn County and was proposed to be presented to the City Council for approval in 2025; however, FEMA has been relatively slow in approving the plan, which has hindered its progress. We will continue to monitor this situation and hope that it progresses in the coming months.
- We 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 exploring funding opportunities to support wastewater plant projects, water service line replacements, street projects, and other initiatives that will benefit the city. Susan is currently writing a DLCD Technical Assistance Grant on behalf of the City to update the Parks and Trails Master Plan. The City Council approved the Resolution to apply for the grant on September 24th.
- We have received a Planning Grant for a sanitary sewer analysis and transportation analysis of the Champion Mill site. We are currently under contract with Kittleson Engineers to complete the transportation aspect of the grant. We will engage a consulting firm to initiate the analysis for the off-site sanitary sewer improvements required for the future redevelopment of Champion Mill.
- Councilor Steinhebel, Chief Stevenson, Captain Hyde, and I met with the Executive Director for CHANCE (Emma Deane) to discuss ways that they can support Lebanon with homeless individuals experiencing addictions and/or mental health needs. We will continue to stay connected with Emma (CHANCE) for help in this area.
- The Communications Survey is out and available on our website, social media, and paper copies. We are seeking feedback from the public on how effectively we communicate and how we can enhance our communication. Results will be shared with the City Council this fall.
- I have started to attend Optimist Club Meetings and plan to become a member in the coming months.