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MEMORANDUM

Administration

To: Mayor Jackola and City Council
From: Ron Whitlatch, City Manager
Subject: **Administration Update – July 2026**

Date: August 3, 2026

- We have received the draft Wetland Delineation Report for several parcels off of West Oak Street. This is in conjunction with a potential Industrial Economic Development, in which the company is looking to expand on the West Coast. Lebanon is one of two sites being considered in Oregon. We will be submitting the wetlands delineation to the Division of State Lands for concurrence in the next couple of weeks.
- On July 8th, Commissioner Sprenger, Mayor Jackola, Sean Tate (Tate Public Affairs), David Monnin (Swale Environmental), Shana Olson, and I met to discuss possible legislation to propose for wetland reform during the 2027 Legislative Session. We will be looking to form a coalition of cities and counties to develop a Bill. This is a large undertaking with quite a few moving parts. We will update the City Council as things progress.
- Due to increased operating costs, LINX Transit will not be operational on Saturdays throughout the summer. This is being done to avoid overrunning the projected funding from the biennium Federal and State Grants used to operate LINX Transit. We will assess this in the fall to determine if adequate funding will be available to bring back the Saturday Service.
- In conjunction with the Wastewater Treatment Plant Biosolids Improvements Project, we have initiated the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund Program with Oregon DEQ. The initial steps include a review of our Wastewater finances from DEQ to determine the loan amount we would be eligible for and how much Principal Forgiveness (essential grant) we could expect. We intend to submit our formal application in the next couple of weeks.
- Staff has met with Oregon DEQ to determine next steps of environmental review for the Champion Mill Site. Based on this meeting, Staff will likely propose a work session with the City Council later this year to determine our next steps.
- The informational flier and web page for the upcoming Municipal Jail Levy measure are set to go once we have confirmation from Linn County that our Ballot title has been accepted. We anticipate this to happen on August 10th. We will likely be hosting an “open house” at the Police Department later this summer, in conjunction with another event, for citizens who would like to tour the Police Department and Jail.

- 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. An amended complaint will be filed in early March. This is likely to be a lengthy (and slow) process, and we will provide more information as it becomes available. Albany and Millersburg have now joined the lawsuit and will share in attorney fees with Lebanon and Sweet Home.
- Staff continues to work with Sean Tate (Tate Public Affairs), who is helping the City navigate legislative affairs and advocate for the City.
- We have been made aware that Congresswoman Bynum will be recommending our Wastewater Project for \$2.0 million in funding. This will be a lengthy process, as it must go through Congress and be appropriated before Lebanon receives the funds. I will continue to share information as it becomes available. No new information this month.
- The City of Lebanon and Western U Oregon have submitted a joint application for a Connect Oregon Grant. If awarded, the grant would fund the improvements needed to gain access to the proposed future campus site. Aspects of the project include new street access off of East Grant Street, a railroad bridge (allowing vehicular traffic to travel underneath, and the corresponding utilities. The City of Lebanon has agreed to hire an Engineering Intern for the duration of the project (approximately 3 years), with grant funding. This position would support day-to-day oversight of the project during its design and construction. We are still waiting to hear whether the grant will be approved.
- Staff, along with Pacific Habitat Consulting, is completing all required environmental review documents for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application for the Library Children's Room Expansion. The City submitted a CDBG pre-application in June and, following Business Oregon's review, has been invited to submit a full application this fall. Including the completed environmental review with the application will strengthen the proposal and increase the project's overall scoring.
- Holding regular Department Director Meetings (every two weeks) to keep moving priorities forward.
- 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 benefiting the city.
- When time allows, Staff has been reviewing all city-owned properties in an effort to identify properties no longer needed. Once the list has been updated, Staff will engage the City Council to recommend any that should be declared surplus.
- The System Development Charges Citizens Advisory Committee will meet again in early August to continue the process of updating the City's Wastewater and Storm Drainage System Development Charges.