



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE TUALATIN CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION FOR FEBRUARY 12, 2024

Present: Mayor Frank Bubenik, Council President Valerie Pratt, Councilor Maria Reyes, Councilor Cyndy Hillier, Councilor Christen Sacco, and Councilor Octavio Gonzalez

Absent: Councilor Bridget Brooks

Mayor Bubenik called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Basalt Creek Park Update.

Parks and Recreation Director Ross Hoover and Parks & Planning Manager Rich Mueller provided an update on the Basalt Creek Park. Director Hoover stated the City acquired land for parks and trails near Plambeck Gardens and Autumn Sunrise near Boones Ferry Road. He emphasized the park's potential to connect people to nearby areas and public transportation, highlighting features such as trails, bus stops, an 8-foot path, and seating areas. Additional future amenities being considered include picnic shelters, play structures, community gardens, and native habitat areas.

Councilor Pratt expressed her appreciation for the work considered and other projects finished.

Councilor Sacco commended the grass and wildflower mixture.

Councilor Hillier inquired about the possibility of an off-leash dog park. Director Hoover explained that the idea came up during the engagement process led by Rich Mueller, reflecting residents' and business owners' interest in having spaces for off-leash dog activities.

Mayor Bubenik raised concerns about the width of the path, particularly in relation to accessibility for people in wheelchairs, echoing feedback from the Aging Task Force. Manager Mueller explained that while regional trails typically have a width of 12 feet, the current standard for connecting areas is 8 feet.

City Manager Sherilyn Lombos stated that the project would return to the consent agenda for the design and construction contract at the next Council Meeting, with funding provided by ARPA money.

Councilor Gonzalez inquired about water conservation measures. Director Hoover mentioned plans to upgrade irrigation systems with new, smart controllers.

2. Government Affairs & Lobbying Services Discussion.

Deputy City Manager Megan George presented information on government affairs and lobbying services, aiming to define the scope of services desired by the Council. She outlined the current landscape, where Tualatin is already part of member organizations providing advocacy for cities but lacks specific representation. Manager George stated Council members and staff currently handle funding requests, track legislative issues, and advocate when resources allow. She stated the city has allocated \$100,000 in the FY 2023-2024 budget for government affairs and

lobbying services. Manager George consulted with staff from neighboring cities like Wilsonville, Happy Valley, and Tigard, finding various approaches including dedicated city staff positions, shared responsibilities among staff, or hiring lobbying firms. She provided a list of firms offering these services.

Manager George explained possible services are categorized into six groups, applicable at both state and federal levels: developing legislative priorities, building relationships, facilitating development of project funding asks, bill and issue tracking, advocating for legislative priorities, and communicating progress. She stated the estimated cost for comprehensive support across all categories at both levels is \$150,000-175,000 annually, surpassing the current \$100,000 budget. Manager George explained after internal discussions, priority was given to all state-level categories except advocating for legislative priorities, and only building relationships and facilitating development of project funding asks at the federal level. She stated next steps involve establishing timelines, with the issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) scheduled for February 21st, a pre-proposal meeting on February 28th, RFP closure on March 20th, committee review of proposals from March 21-29th, interviews conducted from April 1-5th, and contract awarding on April 15th.

Councilor Pratt inquired about the potential rollover of allocated funds for the current fiscal year since the contract award would occur after the legislative session ends. Manager George stated rollover is possible.

Councilor Sacco voiced concern about ensuring measurable outcomes for the invested funds.

Councilor Pratt emphasized the importance of focusing on state-level advocacy, noting its direct impact on the city. She highlighted the value of insider information and expertise in navigating state-level affairs.

Councilor Hillier highlighted the critical nature of building and maintaining relationships at both state and federal levels, particularly given term limits within the city council. She questioned the removal of advocating for legislative priorities from the list of priorities. Manager George responded that while advocacy is already happening to some extent, the contract could enhance these efforts if necessary.

Councilor Sacco inquired about the flexibility of the contract, asking whether it would allow for shifting focus as needed. Manager George clarified that the contract would outline specific services at a flat fee, with the city providing direction within that framework.

Mayor Bubenik shared his belief that categories two, three, and six could provide significant value, especially at the federal level. He cited a successful example from Sherwood, where a lobbying firm helped secure \$3 million in road projects.

Councilor Gonzalez agreed with Councilor Hillier on the importance of bridging gaps in relationships as council members come and go due to term limits.

Mayor Bubenik asked the Council to prioritize which categories they believe are most important.

Councilor Hillier suggested that the City Council could establish priorities to streamline the list of services.

Manager George mentioned that other cities involve both council members and staff in developing priorities and seek input from lobbying firms before finalizing them.

Council consensus was reached to prioritize category one for state-level advocacy and categories two, three, and six for both state and federal levels.

Mayor Bubenik suggested adding PacWest and GPI to the list of firms in the RFP.

Councilor Sacco and Councilor volunteered to sit on the RFP committee.

3. Council Meeting Agenda Review, Communications & Roundtable.

Councilor Sacco stated she attended the IDEA Committee Meeting.

Council President Pratt stated she attended the Tualatin Moving Forward Bond celebration, the ODOT Tolling meeting, the C4 meeting, and the Region 1 Active Transportation meeting.

Mayor Bubenik stated he attended the regional mayors meeting, the council advance, the League of Oregon Cities legislative updates meeting, the Washington County Mayors meeting, and the Public Safety Coordinating Council meeting

Mayor Bubenik adjourned the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Sherilyn Lombos, City Manager

_____ / Teresa Ridgley, Recording Secretary

_____ / Frank Bubenik, Mayor